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## Media and Mediation in the Eighteenth Century

Paula McDowell

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### Abstract and Keywords

This article begins by discussing seventeenth- and eighteenth-century notions of media, mediation, and communication. How did early modern notions of the “medium” and of “mediation” overlap with and differ from common understandings of these terms today? The second section provides an overview of media and mediation in the eighteenth century, heeding recent calls for a new history of mediation that includes not only what we now identify as communications media (e.g., print, voice, and script) but also new genres, protocols, opportunities, and infrastructures for communication. The penultimate section addresses eighteenth-century histories of mediation. Enlightenment authors increasingly conceptualized their era as an age in history defined by a particular set of communication practices and tools. The concluding section addresses the challenges and opportunities of the “media turn” in literary and cultural studies and the future of the history of media and mediation.

Keywords: media, mediation, communication, Enlightenment, hearing, sound, oral, gesture, rhetoric, print

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This article begins by analyzing seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ideas and theories of the “medium.” Early modern authors such as philosopher Francis Bacon and anatomist Helkiah Crooke worked to define “*What the Medium Is.*” An understanding of early modern ideas of the “medium”, “mediation”, and “communication” sheds new light on the development of our own different notions of “media” and “the media”; at the same time, it provokes us to think about eighteenth-century media and mediation in new ways. The article then surveys communications media in the eighteenth century. In so doing, it reviews and responds to recent calls for a new broader definition of *mediation*. Thinking about media and mediation in the eighteenth century means thinking not only about print, manuscripts, performance, and voice, but also about a wide range of objects, interactions, practices, actions, and technologies that differentiate this new history of mediation from “media history” as it has thus far been practiced and understood.

Eighteenth-century authors worked to come to grips with a historically unprecedented flood of print, and this article argues that the perception of change gave rise to new efforts to historicize different communicative modes (print, script, voice, gesture, etc.) and to understand their unique powers. The penultimate section of this article posits the eighteenth-century emergence of a new genre that we might call “histories of mediation.” Confronted with new—and newly available—tools for communication, as well as with new information about different tools and practices of societies across the globe, eighteenth-century theorists of mediation increasingly conceptualized their own era as an “age” or stage in human history that was defined by a particular set of communications practices and tools. Philosophers, theologians, rhetoricians, and others worked to describe humankind’s tools and practices of communication, from the first savage cries and gestures, to the invention of letters, to the spread of print. The article concludes by addressing the “media turn” in current literary and cultural studies, identifying new opportunities as well as an emergent set of corresponding concerns. Are “media”, “mediation”, and “communication” anachronistic abstractions that reduce historical complexity to barren schemes? Or are they valuable coordinating concepts, parts of a heuristic that is currently enabling groundbreaking interdisciplinary work by scholars in Enlightenment studies, literary history, and media archaeology? If the “media turn” necessitates interdisciplinary (or de-disciplinary) study, what are the implications of this focus for literary study?

## “What the Medium Is”: Early Modern Notions of Media and Mediation

The word *media* stems from the Latin *medius*, or middle. Early modern authors typically used *medium* as a term for a “connecting substance, agent, or milieu”, as “water is a ‘medium’ for sound.”<sup>1</sup> Today we have the terms *media* and *the media*, referring to the means of mass communication (such as television or radio) or to the human agents who make these tools work. But early modern authors used the plural *mediums* rather than *media*, and *media* as a “collective noun for our most advanced communication technologies” did not emerge until the late nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> From antiquity to the Renaissance, the senses were believed to operate by the communication (or connection) of particular organs and their objects by a plurality of “mediums.” Early modern natural philosophers believed that the operation of sight or sounds “needed a medium, however imperceptible. If that ‘ethereal’ element was not the air itself, it was like air.”<sup>3</sup> Francis Bacon wrote extensively about hearing, acoustics, and issues of what we would now call communication. In addressing the phenomena of sounds and hearing in *Sylva Sylvarum* (1626), he observed, “the Mediums of Sounds, are Air, soft and porous Bodies; also Water, and hard Bodies refuse not altogether to be Mediums of Sounds. But all of them are dull and unapt deferents, except the Air.”<sup>4</sup> Note that whereas today we might conceptualize

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sound or speech as media forms, for Bacon the most common “Medium ... of Sounds” is “Air.”

In two closely related essays addressing the “genesis of the media concept”, John Guillory has offered a philological genealogy of a network of related terms from Bacon through the twentieth century. Guillory links Bacon’s discussion of tradition (or transmission) in *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) to issues of media and communication in their modern sense. In the following passage, Bacon addresses “the organ of tradition” in the context of the Renaissance scholastic curriculum:

For the organ of tradition, it is either Speech or Writing ... but yet it is not of necessity that cogitations be expressed by the medium of words. For whatsoever is capable of sufficient differences, and those perceptible by the sense, is in nature competent to express cogitations. And therefore we see in the commerce of barbarous people that understand not one another’s language, and in the practice of divers that are dumb and deaf, that men’s minds are expressed in gestures, though not exactly, yet to serve the turn.<sup>5</sup>

Bacon initially states that “the organ of tradition, it is either Speech or Writing.” But he then says that whatever “medium” is capable of communicating differences perceptible to the senses can be an organ of tradition. Along with “the medium of words”, he includes “gestures” as a means of “express[ing] cogitations.” (As we shall see, the “medium” of gesture became a topic of intensified interest and discussion in the eighteenth century.)

Guillory proposes that “the substantive noun medium was rarely connected with matters of communication before the nineteenth century.”<sup>6</sup> He suggests that before the emergence of a particular concept of “communication” in the late nineteenth century—one based on the interposition of distance between the poles of the communication process—authors “had no agreed-upon way to abstract concepts like ‘information’ or ‘communication’ from their material or symbolic embodiments.” For this reason, although Bacon’s discussion of the “organ of tradition” in the passage above “skirts very near to the concept of communication” in its modern (late nineteenth- and twentieth-century) sense, Bacon “was unable to assign speech, writing, [and] gesture ... to one larger category or genus to which all belonged.” Furthermore, while Bacon “may appear to have crossed a certain threshold of conceptual innovation by offering the ‘medium of words’ as an equivalent for ‘organ of tradition,’ ... it is not, in the sense we are inquiring after, a medium.”<sup>7</sup>

But although early modern authors did not typically link “communication” to the *long distance* exchange of information, I argue that they did understand mediation to be a matter of *communication* in this term’s most common earlier sense. Before the nineteenth century, when new technologies such as the telegraph and phonograph extended sound across long distances, *communication* typically implied physical contact or nearness—as one might “communicate” a disease by touch or breath. In a section of *Sylva Sylvarum* addressing “the communication of sounds”, Bacon used “communication” in the older sense of adjacency or touch. Describing the workings of the “medium” of air in a wind

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instrument, he wrote, “when the sound is created between the blast of the mouth and the air of the pipe, it hath nevertheless some communication with the matter of the sides of the pipe, and the spirits in them contained.”<sup>8</sup>

An immediate contemporary of Bacon, physician and anatomist Helkiah Crooke, addressed the nature and workings of the “Medium” in his own more than one-thousand-page work, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (1615). A compilation of the best anatomical knowledge of the day, *Mikrokosmographia* remained one of the most important anatomies well into the eighteenth century. Like Bacon, Crooke devoted particular attention to the sense of hearing. For Crooke, the ear and hearing were matters so complex and important that before addressing them he paused to pray for divine assistance:

[W]ee come unto the organ of hearing, which *Aristotle* calleth *Sensum disciplinae*, because it was created for the understanding of Arts and Sciences: for Speech, because it is audible, becommeth the Cause of that we learne thereby.... This instrument of the Hearing is the Eare.... Yea so full of intricate Meanders is it; that it will be very hard to be disciphered.... [I]n the pursuite of this so difficult a task, we stand in neede and doe implore the help of Almighty GOD, that hee would set an edge vpon my wit.<sup>9</sup>

As this passage suggests, the human body is among the most complex of media forms.<sup>10</sup> Hearing involved the coordination of a complex corporeal apparatus including the brain, muscles, inner and outer ear, and so forth. In describing the body parts involved in speech and hearing, Crooke illustrated with woodcut engravings the ear’s “intricate Meanders”, “smal ... particles”, and “nookes between the bones.” He also described and illustrated elements of the vocal and auditory apparatus such as the “tympan” (eardrum), larynx, pharynx, epiglottis, “throttle”, and “gristle.” As for Bacon, so for Crooke: “In every Sense there be three things especially to be stood vpon, the Object, the Medium and the Organ” (722). In addressing “*What the Medium Is*”, Crooke observed that the most common medium is air: “The *Medium* ought alwayes to be present.... Wherefore the *Medium* by whose interposition wee *Perceive* is not Fire, for this is not alwayes at hand but Ayre, for this doeth always encompasse vs about” (664–665). Crooke’s use of *medium* makes clear its etymological descent from the Latin *medius*, or middle: the “*Medium* should alwayes consist in a middle place between the Organ and the object; for hence it hath the name of a *Medium*, yet so, that it touch both the Organ and the object, for otherwise it could not performe his office.”<sup>11</sup>

Crooke explicitly theorized the operation of the medium as part of a process of “mediation.” Describing the communication (or connection) of the “object” and “organ” via the “medium”, he wrote: “As ... no sound is made without two bodyes mutually impeaching or offending one against another, ... so ... without the mediation of a third thing ... there can no sound at all by the concussion of those bodyes be produced” (692). The verb “to mediate” stems from the Latin *mediare*, to intercede, be in the middle. Mediation is a process or phenomenon, a linking of two or more entities via a medium. In

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the early modern period, *mediation* was typically used in reference to divine or human intercession. The grandest example was Christ as a mediator between man and God, but for a humbler example, one might point to Margaret Cavendish's character "Madame Mediator" in her closet drama *The Convent of Pleasure* (1668). Madame Mediator is a lady-in-waiting to Lady Happy. As such, she serves as a go-between who mediates between the worlds inside and outside of the convent in which her mistress has chosen to reside.

Six years after Crooke published *Mikrokosmographia*, Robert Burton published the first edition of his encyclopedic work *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Burton's increasingly comprehensive, nearly nine-hundred-page tome was expanded incrementally up to and including the sixth edition of 1651, and it went through two further editions by 1700. Widely read throughout the eighteenth century, the *Anatomy* was a favorite of literary authors as diverse as Samuel Johnson, Lawrence Sterne, and John Keats. Addressing the "most excellent ... sense" of hearing, "*by which we learn and get knowledge*", Burton echoed Bacon and Crooke in his statement that the operation of hearing requires "three things": the "object, ... or that which is heard", "the organ, the ear", and (to connect these) "the medium, air."<sup>12</sup>

The early modern ways of understanding "medium[s]", "mediation", and "communication" that I have outlined above persisted throughout the eighteenth century, and our now-familiar trio of terms—*object*, *organ*, and *medium* (as well as their companion term, *communication*)—became a refrain in medical, anatomical, and philosophical texts. The eighteenth century saw the emergence of the modern discipline of hearing science, or acoustics.<sup>13</sup> Treatises, pamphlets, and periodical essays addressed the physiological mechanisms of hearing and the spatial and psychological factors affecting the perception of sounds. In 1737 anatomist Guichard Joseph Du Verney's account of the ear and hearing, first published in Latin in 1683, was translated by surgeon John Marshall as *A Treatise of the Organ of Hearing: Containing the Structure, the Uses, and the Diseases of All the Parts of the Ear*. Like his predecessors, Du Verney used the Latin *medius* in the context of sound and hearing. In discussing the anatomy of the ear, he distinguished among three areas of the ear canal: "The first I call *Superior*, because it takes up the upper Part of the Arch of the *Vestibulum*; the second *Inferior*, because it surrounds its lower Part; and the third, which is ... situated between the other two, *Medius*." As for "Communication", Du Verney (or his translator) uses this word in a sense that appears to merge early modern and modern meanings (on the one hand, adjacency or nearness; on the other, communication across distance). *A Treatise of the Organ of Hearing* states: "*it is by the Communication of the auditory Nerves with that of the Voice, That the Sympathy between the Voice and the Hearing is caus'd.*"<sup>14</sup>

Eighteenth-century literary authors, too, engaged with these discourses on hearing. Many eighteenth-century texts addressing "print culture", for instance, can also be read in the context of the development of ideas about aural (and oral) communication.<sup>15</sup> In *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), Jonathan Swift engages with ancient and modern discourses and debates about sound, speech, and air. Throughout the *Tale*, he satirizes ideas and assumptions

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about *both* print and oral discourse—such as those encapsulated in the truism *vox audita perit, scripta manet* (the spoken word perishes; the written word survives). On the one hand, Swift's satire on "corruptions in religion and learning" mocks the ephemerality of Grubstreet writings; on the other hand, Swift foregrounds everything that is material, corporeal, and even (according to some ancient philosophers) permanent about sound and speech. As a clergyman as well as satirist, he was especially interested in the acoustics of the pulpit and the technologies by which preachers and other orators sought to enhance their power. He extensively criticized "enthusiastic" preaching and what he saw as dissenting preachers' self-conscious (and corrupt) manipulation of their audiences through their eyes and ears. (Addressing similar issues of oratory, acoustics, and oral/aural manipulation, Bacon questioned whether "sounds do move better downwards than upwards. Pulpits are placed high above the people. And when the ancient generals spake to their armies, they had ever a mount of turf cast up, whereupon they stood."<sup>16</sup>)

Swift quotes a passage from Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* on the materiality of sound. He quotes both the Latin original and Thomas Creech's 1682 translation: "'Tis certain then, that *Voice* that thus can wound / Is all *Material; Body* every Sound." As an Epicurean philosopher, Lucretius held that everything consists of particulate matter. Sound and voice are material substances: when we speak, we squeeze out voice-constituting atoms through our windpipes and out our mouths. If we speak too loudly or too long, this particulate matter scrapes our throats.

Swift satirically foregrounds the materiality of the auditory: the measurable and manipulatable qualities of sound and air, the acoustics of different spaces and places, and the body parts of speakers and hearers. Like Lucretius, he foregrounded the corporeality of hearing. The tools of oral/aural communication are rooted in the body: "Ears", "Tongue[s]", and "Mouths." On the one hand, Swift's satire depicts written and printed texts as ephemeral and immaterial; on the other, it depicts spoken words as "weighty", material substances that hearers "intercept" with their ears, mouths, and "Jaws." Finally, for now, *A Tale of a Tub* also engages with contemporary experiments with sound and the medium of sound, or air. One of Swift's satirical targets was a just-published, much-touted work by a leading member of the Royal Society, Robert Boyle. Boyle's *The General History of Air* (1692) includes, among other relevant topics, the chapter "Of the Air as the Medium of Sounds."<sup>17</sup>

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In their introduction to a volume of collected essays titled *This Is Enlightenment*, Clifford Siskin and William Warner propose that "Enlightenment" may be seen as "an event in the history of mediation." They state: "We use 'mediation' here in its broadest sense as shorthand for the work done by tools, by what we would now call 'media' of every kind—

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everything that intervenes, enables, supplements, or is simply in between.” Siskin and Warner call for a new history of Enlightenment mediation, one that includes not only what we now identify as communications media (such as print), but also new infrastructures, genres, tools, and opportunities for communication. They suggest that the “wide range of objects, forms, technologies, agency, and interactions” they conceptualize as part of the history of mediation differentiates it from current media theory.<sup>18</sup>

Thinking about eighteenth-century media and mediation in these broad terms means thinking about Enlightenment communications media in all their diversity: not only about print, ink, engravings, and so forth, but also voice, gesture, performance, and new sites for communication such as coffeehouses, oratories, lecture halls, libraries, and venues for scientific demonstration and display. It means thinking about developments in the nation’s infrastructure for communication and transportation, such as fixed mail routes and improved roads. In 1660 Charles II established the General Post Office, and the regular mail routes that resulted greatly facilitated the circulation of news. Shortly thereafter the government granted a small number of trustees authority to bar roads and charge tolls to raise money for improvements, and by 1800 there were more than a thousand such “turnpike trusts.” For most Britons the primary mode of transportation was on foot, but for persons able to afford wheeled transportation, travel times were substantially reduced. In 1754 the four-hundred-mile journey from London to Edinburgh took at least ten days in summer and twelve in winter. Twenty years later the same trip in the other direction was advertised as taking only four days. The nation’s road network was literally “the basis of physical communication.”<sup>19</sup> The Restoration and eighteenth century also saw the proliferation of new venues for oral exchange such as coffeehouses, clubs, and societies. In 1662 the Royal Society of London for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge was officially founded, and its members took full advantage of communications innovations and developments, circulating their findings and arguments by means of printed texts and images, manuscript correspondence, and face-to-face oral exchange.

In the eighteenth century the English press underwent some of the most important transformations in its history.<sup>20</sup> In 1695 the Printing or Licensing Act of 1662 lapsed for good, ending prepublication censorship and restrictions on the number of printers and presses throughout England. For the first time in history the print trade was made open to all. The following decades were a time of anarchic expansion. Whereas the act of 1662 had tried to limit the total number of printers in all of England to twenty-four, within a decade of 1695 there were sixty-five to seventy printing houses in London alone.<sup>21</sup> Parliament tried repeatedly to renew licensing but failed to agree on specifics. Significantly, none of the bills for renewal put forward over the next decade made any mention of the traditional privileges of the Stationers’ Company, dating back to 1557, such as the right to control the number of printers and what we would now call “copyright.”<sup>22</sup> In the eighteenth century the company’s historic monopoly over the publishing industry was undermined, and an older guild-based model of trade was

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displaced by a more openly competitive commercial model. The eighteenth-century proliferation of print was triggered *not* by technological developments, but rather by legal, political, and trade-specific factors.

Between 1663 and 1666 there were only three regularly printed sources of news: two-eight page newsbooks, *The Intelligencer* and *The Newes*, and a government organ, *The Oxford* [later *London*] *Gazette*. But in 1702 the first daily newspaper appeared (*The Daily Courant*), and by 1712 “about twenty single-leaf papers were regularly published in the capital each week.”<sup>23</sup>

Printing was not a new technology, but the *uses* of printing were changing. This period saw “an explosion of cheap mass print together with the proliferation of newspapers.... The bulk of these thousands ... of new printed publications consisted ... of tracts and pamphlets: cheap publications, typically unbound, hastily produced, dealing with events of the moment, and often responding to one another.”<sup>24</sup> Regularly published political journals made state affairs a matter of open discussion, and “public opinion” was established as a political force. Print entrepreneurs took full advantage of developments in the nation’s infrastructure for transportation and communication, and new kinds of serial publications flourished. In the inaugural issue of the *Tatler* (1709), Richard Steele announced that his innovative essay journal would be published “every *Tuesday*, *Thursday*, and *Saturday*, in the Week, for the Convenience of the Post.”<sup>25</sup> The eighteenth century saw the emergence of a professional literary subculture that was satirized as “Grub Street.” But significantly, in declaiming “against the Multitude of Writers whereof the whole Multitude of Writers most reasonably complains”, authors who satirized the literary marketplace also chose to exploit print themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Efforts to regain institutional control included the passage in 1710 of the first copyright law, the Statute of Anne, 8 Ann. c. 21, vesting rights in authors rather than publishers. But copyright laws were notoriously difficult to enforce, and in any case, they always benefited publishers the most. The decades from 1710 to 1774 were characterized by the cartel-like power of major copy-holding publishers, but in 1774 a decision in the House of Lords in the case of *Donaldson v. Beckett* ended perpetual copyright and what William St. Clair has called “the high monopoly period.”<sup>27</sup> With the collapse of permanent copyright, thousands of books previously subject to monopoly power were now publishable by anyone, and new publishing opportunities fueled another “‘print avalanche’ in the trade.”<sup>28</sup> Reprinting became a cornerstone of the book trade, and publishers began producing series of now “classic” literary texts. The eighteenth century also saw the development and proliferation of lending libraries. In 1725 Allan Ramsay opened Britain’s first lending library in Edinburgh, and by 1800 there were about one thousand circulating libraries throughout Britain. In the 1790s the Minerva Press Library in London, established by publisher John Lane, advertised more than twenty thousand titles.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the eighteenth century also saw advancements in technical methods for producing printed images. Readers (and viewers) encountered an explosion of visual



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materials such as maps, charts, diagrams, atlases, diagrams, illustrations, and satirical prints.

Yet practices of manuscript circulation continued and even flourished. In the case of “the transition from manuscript to print in English letters”, print did not replace manuscript culture; rather, “manuscript culture ‘grew into’ print culture, existing alongside it ... and often influencing both textual production and the texts themselves.”<sup>30</sup> Paper remained expensive, as most paper was imported. But the number of paper mills in Britain quadrupled, from about 100 in the 1690s to 420 by 1800.<sup>31</sup> Encouraged by fixed mail routes (and the vogue for epistolary fiction), personal letter writing became an increasingly widespread art. The widespread circulation of manuscript correspondence, as well as of print, challenges any easy alignment of print with “publication” or manuscripts with the “private sphere.”

Before 1695, then, the book trade was small, closely knit, and highly centralized. But by 1800 there were hundreds of presses located throughout Britain, and the products of the press affected social, political, and literary life at every level. Contemporaries clearly had a sense that some kind of major change was taking place, and that this change had vast implications not only for the book trade but also for society at large. The perception of change triggered new efforts to historicize different media forms and to understand their distinctive powers.<sup>32</sup> In Christina Lupton’s helpful paraphrase, the editors of *This Is Enlightenment* suggest that we should “think of Enlightenment as a relation to mediation; an understanding of its history.” The Enlightenment was “the moment at which structures for communication becomes ‘socially realized,’ or understood as media.” “Although media like paint and ink existed before the eighteenth century, they were never understood as mediating between *people* before communication across time, distance, and diverse interest groups became the norm in the eighteenth century.”<sup>33</sup>

Attempts to theorize the implications of the spread of *print* triggered heightened reflection on *oral* communication and tradition and their intersection with the products of a newly unrestrained press. At a time when the majority of the population could not (or did not) read, oral discourse was not something to be especially valued.<sup>34</sup> Elite authors typically associated “the voice of the people” with dissent and disorder, and they castigated popular oral practices such as fortune telling, ghost stories, and the singing of bawdy ballads. But partly as an epiphenomenon of reflection on the nature and implications of print, the eighteenth century also saw increasing attention to the distinctive characteristics (and power) of oral communication. In their own era of print, rhetoricians, authors, antiquarians, and others began to rethink and reconceptualize “oral tradition” (and even popular oral tradition) and to valorize the spoken word in new ways.<sup>35</sup>

The mid-eighteenth century saw the rise of the “elocution” movement. A variety of oral entrepreneurs sought to restore “ancient eloquence” for distinctly *modern* purposes. From 1726 to 1756, one-time Anglican minister John “Orator” Henley operated a London Oratory where he offered sermons, lectures, and courses on the arts of public speaking.

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Another proponent of the “elocution revival”, Anglo-Irish actor and theater manager Thomas Sheridan, endeavored to transform Henley’s innovative operation into a national (and even international) movement. Sheridan lectured on elocution in major urban centers in England, Scotland, and Ireland. In both his lectures and his coordinated print publications, he pronounced that “some of our greatest men have been trying to do that with the pen, which can only be performed by the tongue; to produce effects by the dead letter, which can never be produced but by the living voice, with its accompaniments.”<sup>36</sup> As an Anglo-Irishman himself, Sheridan held that regional dialects hampered full participation in the still-new political entity “Great Britain.” He aspired to homogenize linguistic practice, ostensibly for democratic reasons, and he argued that oratorical excellence was essential to the greatness of the nation as a whole.

For the elocutionists and other eighteenth-century thinkers, heightened attention to oral communication included renewed attention to the “mute language of the body”, or gesture. As we have seen, seventeenth-century natural philosophers held that gesture was a universal language. Bacon proposed that gesture should be the focus of a new scientific enquiry, “for all men laugh, weep, blush, frown, &c. alike.”<sup>37</sup> The earliest known proponent of deaf education, physician John Bulwer, published *Chirologia: or the naturall language of the hand. Composed of the speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof* (1644). Bulwer proposed that the “speaking motions” of gestures were used most expertly by the deaf, “who can argue and dispute rhetorically by signes.”<sup>38</sup> In rhetoric, gesture was a broad category that included not only body movements and positioning but also aspects of vocal expression such as cadence, accent, emphasis, tones, and pitch. *Actio* or *pronuntiatio* (precepts of voice and gesture) was one of the five parts of classical rhetoric, but eighteenth-century rhetoricians increasingly foregrounded it above all other parts. The elocutionists turned gesture into a distinct course of study. Sheridan argued that the most “essential articles to a good delivery” could not be taught by writing, for tone, accent, emphasis, and the proper manipulation of one’s body parts (hands, arms, glances, etc.) “have been wholly left out of the graphic art.”<sup>39</sup>

Throughout the eighteenth century Anglican authors widely debated the question of “action in the pulpit.” Joseph Addison and Richard Steele argued that Anglican preachers made too little use of “Gesture or Action”: “Our Orators are observed to make use of less Gesture or Action than those of other Countries. Our Preachers stand stock-still in the Pulpit, and will not so much as move a Finger to set off the best Sermons in the World.” Addison wrote that the benefits of action in the pulpit made it worth the risk of impropriety, for “gestures, tones, and looks” “fix the ... Attention” and “keep the Audience awake.” After the Toleration Act of 1689 allowed Dissenters from the Church of England to worship openly, Anglican authors such as Addison and Steele hinted that Church of England ministers needed to improve their preaching skills. Dissenting preachers were widely criticized for their conscious (and to Anglicans, corrupt) manipulation of tone, cadence, and gesture. After the Methodist movement gained headway in the 1730s, Anglican critics lambasted Methodist preachers, especially George Whitefield, who was known for his “field” preaching to enormous crowds. Like the elocutionists, Methodist leaders such as Whitefield and John Wesley made extensive, coordinated use of print

publication and manuscript correspondence along with their notable preaching skills. In 1749 Wesley published a guidebook for Methodist lay preachers, *Directions Concerning Pronunciation and Gesture*, which includes instructions on how to manipulate one's body parts in public speaking (hands, arms, shoulders, lips, mouth, ears, eyes, stance, etc.). At the same time, though, virtually all eighteenth-century commentators on "action" in preaching—including Wesley himself—urged proper containment of the body.

## Eighteenth-Century Histories of Mediation

While the elocutionists pitched their case for the distinctive powers of the spoken word, literate attitudes toward oral tradition also changed. For most English authors in 1700, "oral tradition" would have first brought to mind a Catholic theological notion. Catholics held that textual interpretation was unreliable; therefore believers must ultimately put their trust in the "Tradition" of the Roman Church. (Meanwhile, Protestants argued the scriptures were the rule of faith.) Enlightenment historians continued to draw on oral methods and sources in their histories, but they were expected to supplement oral testimony and tradition with the "hard" evidence of material objects and written texts. In the courtroom, oral testimony remains important even today, but in the eighteenth century the first history of English law was published, jurist Matthew Hale's *History and Analysis of the Common Law* (1713), and the written word became the basis of law and legal training.

Yet over the course of the century a host of factors contributed to yet another shift in ideas of (and attitudes toward) oral testimony and tradition. The later eighteenth century saw groundbreaking arguments for oral tradition in our modern secular sense of the handing-down over generations of histories, genealogies, and works of verbal art. In 1760 Scottish Highlander James Macpherson claimed in his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* to have translated the originally oral poetry of a third-century Gaelic bard, Ossian, passed down across generations by word of mouth. Macpherson's print publications, endorsed by eminent clergyman and rhetorician Hugh Blair, generated unprecedented interest in the possibility of recovering a once-thriving, native oral tradition. In 1765 another clergyman, Thomas Percy, published his phenomenally influential collection *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (3 vols.). Percy gathered his "reliques" exclusively from print and manuscript sources, and he extensively edited them to suit polite taste. But in a lengthy prefatory "Essay on the Ancient English Minstrels", he proposed that the "Old Heroic Ballads" in his print collection were the legacy of esteemed feudal bards, whom he depicted as "oral itinerant poet[s]."<sup>40</sup> In 1769 classical scholar Robert Wood proposed in *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (my emphasis) that the "Prince of Poets" might have been unable to read or write. The 1780s and 1790s saw an explosion of interest in what would later be labeled "folklore." Like certain *kinds* of ballads (chiefly heroic and sentimental ones), the traditional tales, songs, customs, and proverbs of the

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common people were increasingly valorized for their presumed distance from the commercial print market.

While antiquarians and scholars of Homer debated the proposition of oral poetry, biblical scholars debated the reliability of oral tradition as recorded in the scriptures. Attempting to protect Christianity from skepticism, they subjected the scriptures to new standards of documentary historicity. Questions of the passing-down of God's word via oral tradition, manuscripts, and print were central to Enlightenment debates about what we would now call media and mediation.<sup>41</sup>

By considering examples of an emergent genre that I have called "histories of mediation", we can begin to see the eighteenth century as a pivotal period in ways of thinking about what we now call media, mediation, and communication. In a 127-page book titled *An Essay Upon Literature: Or, An Enquiry into the Antiquity and Original of Letters* (1726), for instance, Daniel Defoe addresses the origins of letters, or writing, but his more general concern is all means for passing down knowledge across time and space. *An Essay Upon Literature* begins by addressing mediation in the sense of divine intercession. Defoe argues that the technology of writing is of divine origin, and that God gave Moses letters at Mount Sinai to mediate between himself and man. But about halfway through his text Defoe's biblically based account of the origin of letters and the relation of oral tradition to writing gives way to a new kind of history of mediation, one fundamentally concerned with the development and consequences of what we now call "media." Defoe attempts to merge scripture-based explanations of the origins of writing with a new, stadial model of human communications developments that makes room for modern inventions such as printing. In so doing, this Enlightenment Christian author skeptically assesses the reliability of oral tradition.

In the later eighteenth century a type of moral philosophers now called "conjectural historians" developed a new stadial (and remarkably secular) model of human history. They proposed that human societies naturally progress through a succession of four "stages" or "ages", each with its own institutions, economy, and social arrangements (hunter-gatherer, pastoral, agricultural, and commercial societies). Around the 1790s, I suggest, we begin to detect the idea of communications technologies as part of this unfolding sequence. Stadial theorists began to link phases in the development of societies not only to their mode of sustenance or production but also to advances in the history of communications, including the origins of language, the invention of writing, and the introduction and spread of printing. Some conjectural historians suggested that shifts in communication practices and tools *themselves* triggered stages in human history. In 1792 Edinburgh philosopher Dugald Stewart declared that "the invention of printing" was the "single event, independently of every other" that was "sufficient to change the whole course of human affairs." Anticipating our modern notion of "communication" and even of communications "media", Stewart asserted that "the means of communication afforded by the press, have, in the course of two centuries, accelerated the progress of the human mind."<sup>42</sup>

# The “Media Turn”: The Future of the History of Mediation

“Something is happening here, but what to call it?” So writes Jon Klancher in his contribution to the aforementioned collaborative review of *This Is Enlightenment*. “For several years scholars have been trying to give it a name”, he continues, “but my own choice would be to call it a ... ‘media turn’—on a scale that rivals the scope of earlier linguistic and cultural turns.”<sup>43</sup> The media turn in literary studies and eighteenth-century studies has had many advantages, and it continues to generate important work. An organizing rubric of “mediation” allows new kinds of scholarship (digital, historical, bibliographical) to flourish—and equally important, to intersect. The idea of a “history of mediation” is “attractive as a counter-weight to, or a way of collecting together” many different kinds of important, yet often highly localized, studies.<sup>44</sup> The diverse collection of essays *This Is Enlightenment*, for instance, “gather[s] scholars ... in literary history, Enlightenment studies, and media archaeology and ask[s] them how to put those field together, accentuating and even redefining ‘media’ as the historical operator.”<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile new technologies of mediation are transforming not only how we access eighteenth-century texts but also what we understand as “texts.” In imagining the place of the eighteenth century in what he called the “Gutenberg era”,<sup>46</sup> media theorist Marshall McLuhan did not have use of *The Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*; by our standards, he relied on a relatively small number of canonical works. One of the most ambitious scholarly digital reproduction projects ever undertaken, *ECCO* allows users to access more than six million facsimile images of eighteenth-century texts.

But there are concerns about the “media turn” in eighteenth-century studies, especially in literary studies, and these concerns are generally of four main types. The first (and aforementioned) concern is anachronism. As we have seen in Helkiah Crooke’s discussion of “*What the Medium Is*”, early modern authors discussed the nature and operation of various “mediums” and articulated a concept of mediation. Nonetheless, they did not conceptualize print, paint, or speech as “media.” The second concern is abstraction. Is *mediation* as Siskin and Warner define it too broad a concept to be useful? Is *media* now a hollowed-out cliché, one that too often signals the reduction of “the rich multiplicity of experience to an arid schematism”?<sup>47</sup> While this is not the place to engage these debates in detail, one might respond that there are good abstractions and bad ones. At their best, abstractions are not “static product[s]”<sup>48</sup> but one stage of a complex process of intellectual inquiry. Powerful abstractions can generate new work and even fields of study. One thinks, for instance, of the role played by McLuhan’s coinages (“Gutenberg era”, “print culture”, “electronic culture”, etc.) in the development of the then-new field(s) of “communication studies” and “media studies.” Abstractions are “important to historical study not because they seek a specious and unavailable ‘mastery’ of the

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phenomena but because they provide a conceptual framework broad enough to set the engine of historical study in motion."<sup>49</sup>

The flip side of the concern about abstraction is the third concern, about limitless pluralization. In his study of "elemental media", communications theorist and environmentalist John Durham Peters has recently pushed the concept of media to a global (even galactic) level. In offering a philosophy of media (rather than, say, an inventory or history), Peters acknowledges that "there is a danger ... of losing one's grip on what media are." With regard to his own study of the natural environment as media, he anticipates objections such as the view that

[m]edia ... are ... about vehicles that mark human meaning and intention. To say that the sea, the earth, fire, or the sky is a medium, in this view, is to dilute the concept beyond the limit of utility; and even more, it is to burden media scholars ... with ... impossible demands for interdisciplinary mastery. What, many have asked me, is not a medium?"

To this line of reasoning, Peters responds with regard to his own study of "elemental media" that "'media,' understood as the means by which meaning is communicated, sit atop layers of even more fundamental media that have meaning but do not speak."<sup>50</sup>

The concern with "impossible demands for interdisciplinary mastery" brings us to the fourth (and for now, final) concern with the heuristic of "media" and "mediation", a concern of particular importance to literary scholars. The "media turn" in literary studies presents literature departments with daunting questions of disciplinary identity and purpose. If the media turn encourages interdisciplinary (and even de-disciplinary) study, what are its implications for literary study? If language is one of (if not the) most important form(s) of mediation ever invented, shouldn't literary scholars focus on language, rather than on "media"? Furthermore, if "literature" has its own medial specificity as a particular *kind* of language use, shouldn't literary scholars focus on literary language as a unique kind of mediation, one that requires careful interpretation (and thus our skills)? What do literary scholars have "to contribute to the study of media in contexts where what is communicated is not linguistic"?<sup>51</sup>

Again, this is not the place to begin to answer all of these questions, but one might start by pointing out that not all "language" is verbal (let alone vocal). One meaning of language is "the system of spoken or written communication used by a particular country, people, community, etc." But another meaning—one that eighteenth-century theorists of the "mute *language* of gesture" (emphasis added) would have thoroughly understood—is "a means of communicating other than by the use of words, as gesture, facial expression, etc.; non-verbal communication."<sup>52</sup> (A third meaning of "language", one employed by Peters in a chapter on dolphins and whales in his book articulating an "elemental philosophy of media", is "signals used by animals to communicate.") Furthermore, whether or not there is a distinctive form of language use that we can call "literary language" (a much-debated question), one of the most important lessons that the now-thriving field of "book history" has taught us is that we can't study "literature" apart from

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the material forms, formats, and processes that mediate literary texts. The physical format of works, the paper that words are written or printed on, the marketing industries that shape reception, and many other factors profoundly shape our notions of what literature is.

As recent scholars of the eighteenth century have pointed out also, there is considerable justification for a focus on media and mediation in eighteenth-century literary texts themselves. In *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Christina Lupton grants that “the history of mediation as it is currently being told often comes across as being the result of our theoretical orientation.” But she counters that this history of mediation—or something like it—was “a phenomenon that was apparent to the writers and readers caught up in its development.” Eighteenth-century novels, poetry, and other texts are distinctively “self-reflexive ... about the material [and] economic ... contexts of textual production.”<sup>53</sup> Laurence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767), for example, appears to display a lifelike self-consciousness about its own status as a material artifact. Sterne famously foregrounds the paper that his text is printed on and the process of its physical making (printing, illustration, and even binding). He also pays detailed attention to oral discourse and to gesture as the language of the body. Along with his *thematic* concern with the arts of oratory and conversation (including specific issues of tone, cadence, pitch, etc.), this clergyman-author famously experiments with typographical layout, punctuation, and illustrations in an attempt to make the printed page reflect the *multiple* communicative tools of speech.

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In 1810 printer Friedrich Koenig and his associates patented the steam press. Four years later they sold a model to *The Times*. The nineteenth century would see the emergence of the modern publishing industry. Specialized firms such as John Murray, the Longmans, and W. H. Smith dominated the trade in Britain and profited from exports to the nation’s colonies abroad. In 1784 Scottish inventor William Murdoch built a prototype of the steam road locomotive. In 1830 the opening of the Manchester and Liverpool railway signaled the beginning of a new era in transportation and communication. The expansion of the railways and exponential proliferation of cheap, diverse printed products triggered corresponding social, cultural, and political developments. A national education system was instituted, daily newspaper reading became common, and by the turn of the twentieth century near-universal literacy was achieved.

In his 1985 Panizzi Lectures at the British Library, bibliographer and textual critic D. F. McKenzie declared, “I define ‘texts’ to include verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data, in the form of maps, prints, and music, of archives of recorded sound, of films, videos, and any computer-stored information.... There is no evading the challenge which ... new forms have created.”

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To justify his forward-looking move in embracing new media such as films and videos as parts of the vast subject matter of bibliography, McKenzie turned back in time to the historical origins of *text*:

We can find in the origins of the word “text” itself some support for extending its meaning.... It derives ... from the Latin *texere*, “to weave”, and therefore refers, not to any specific material as such, but to its form or state, the web or texture of the materials. Indeed, it was not restricted to the weaving of textiles, but might be applied equally well to the interlacing or entwining of any kind of material.

The root word of *text*, *texere*, foregrounds the materiality of texts and of textual production and the process of their making: “The idea that texts are written records on parchment or paper derives ... from the secondary and metaphoric sense that the writing of words is like the weaving of threads.”<sup>54</sup> McKenzie’s then-futuristic definition of *text* anticipated our current concern with media and mediation. It also reflected early developments in digital media. In 1965 computer scientist Ted Nelson coined the term *hypertext* for digital text that contains links to other texts. In 1989—a few years after McKenzie delivered his Panizzi Lectures—another computer scientist, Tim Berners, invented the World Wide Web. In 1994 literary critic Alan Liu pioneered *Voice of the Shuttle: Web Page for Humanities Research*, a digital humanities project offering seventy-plus pages of humanities and humanities-related links. Liu’s breakthrough Web tool for literary scholars (among others) offered not so much new content as a new way of navigating existing content. The project’s name, *Voice of the Shuttle*, echoes Aristotle’s account in the *Poetics* (16.4) of the silenced Philomela weaving her story into a tapestry—a textile—in order to “speak.”

Today new communications media are challenging distinctions among “oral”, “written”, and “electronic” communication and between “human” and “nonhuman.”

Videoconferencing and Internet-based telechat allow simultaneous, co-present electronic communication between individuals across the globe. Microchips implanted in humans and other animals allow biological organisms to transmit information by digital means. The use of emoji, or digital ideograms, in cell phone text messaging transforms text messaging into a means of visual art as well as a kind of “distance-projection of the gesticulating body.”<sup>55</sup> (Emoji give a new meaning to what eighteenth-century theorists of gesture called “this silent Language of ... [the] Hands.”<sup>56</sup>) The history of media and mediation is an ongoing one, but as I hope I have shown in this article, it is also one in which our seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors played a pivotal part. The new history of “media and mediation in the eighteenth century”, we are increasingly coming to realize, while valuable in itself, also has much to offer contemporary media studies.

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## Notes:

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(<sup>1</sup>) Clifford Siskin and William Warner, “This Is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of An Argument”, in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 6.

(<sup>2</sup>) John Guillory, “The Genesis of the Media Concept”, *Critical Inquiry* 36 (2010): 321. See also Guillory, “Enlightening Mediation”, in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 37–63.

(<sup>3</sup>) Guillory, “Enlightening Mediation,” 37. Philosophers acknowledged that the sense of touch appeared to elude this general pattern, as it seemed to occur through direct contact of organ and object (without a “medium”).

In a recent book advancing a philosophy of the natural elements as “media,” John Durham Peters draws on—and extends—the seventeenth-century idea of air, water, fire, and other ethereal substances as the medium(s) of sensation. He observes that “the idea that media are message-bearing institutions such as newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet is relatively recent in intellectual history.... ‘Well into the nineteenth century, when one spoke of media, one typically meant the natural elements such as water and earth, fire and air.’” In the life sciences today, “‘media’ ... means gels and other substances for growing cultures, a usage growing from the older environmental meaning of medium.” See John Durham Peters, *Marvelous Clouds: Towards an Elemental Philosophy of Media* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2015), 2, citing Jochen Horisch, *Ende der Vorstellung: Die Poesie der Medien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1999), 134.

(<sup>4</sup>) Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum: A Natural History in Ten Centuries* (London, 1627), cent. III, par. 217, in *Works, 1857–74*, ed. James Spedding et al. (Boston, 1900), 2:418. All further references to *Sylva Sylvarum* are to this edition.

(<sup>5</sup>) Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* [1605], in Bacon, *Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 230–231.

(<sup>6</sup>) Guillory, “Genesis of the Media Concept”, 321. See also Guillory, “Enlightening Mediation”, 37–63.

(<sup>7</sup>) Guillory, “Genesis of the Media Concept”, 330–331, 328–329.

(<sup>8</sup>) Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum*, cent. III, pars. 165–168, in *Works, 1857–74*, ed. Spedding et al., 2:404–405.

(<sup>9</sup>) Helkiah Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London: W. Iaggard, 1615), 573.

(<sup>10</sup>) As Knut Ove Eliassen and Yngve Sandhei Jacobsen have suggested, in the Enlightenment communication was conceived along the lines of the human sensorium. The break between Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment ideas of the medium arrived only in the later nineteenth century, when new technologies such as the telegraph and the photograph appeared to separate information processing from the human body. See

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Eliassen and Jacobsen, "Where Were the Media before the Media? Mediating the World at the Time of Condillac and Linnaeus", in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 64–86.

(<sup>11</sup>) Crooke, *Mikrokosmographia*, 664–665.

(<sup>12</sup>) Richard Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* [1621] (New York: Penguin, 2016), pt. 1, sec. 6, 84.

(<sup>13</sup>) See Penelope Gouk, "English Theories of Hearing in the Seventeenth-Century", in *Hearing History: A Reader*, ed. Mark Smith (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 136–150; and Gouk and Ingrid Sykes, "Hearing Science in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain and France", *Journal of the History of Medicine* 66 (2011): 507–545.

(<sup>14</sup>) Guichard Joseph Du Verney, *Treatise of the Organ of Hearing*, trans. John Marshall (London: Samuel Baker, 1737), 32, 88; emphasis in original.

(<sup>15</sup>) I argue this in detail in McDowell, *The Invention of the Oral: Print Commerce and Fugitive Voices in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

(<sup>16</sup>) Bacon, *Sylva*, cent. III, par. 205, in *Works, 1857–74*, ed. Spedding et al. (Boston, 1900), 2:415.

(<sup>17</sup>) Robert Boyle, *A General History of Air* (London, 1692), ch. 16.

(<sup>18</sup>) Siskin and Warner, "This Is Enlightenment", in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 1, 5, 11.

(<sup>19</sup>) Michael Harris, "London Newspapers", in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. D. F. McKenzie, David McKitterick, and I. R. Willison, vol. 5, 1695–1830, ed. Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 414.

(<sup>20</sup>) Since the 1980s especially, excellent detailed studies of the British book trade by bibliographers and historians such as David Foxon, John Feather, Michael Harris, Michael Treadwell, D. F. McKenzie, Maureen Bell, Terry Belanger, James Raven, and William St. Clair have greatly expanded our knowledge. For a convenient (and exemplary) collection of essays addressing the period covered here, see *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4, 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie with the assistance of Maureen Bell (2002), and vol. 5, 1695–1830, ed. Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (2009). For concise overviews of key eighteenth-century developments, see Terry Belanger, "Publishers and Writers in Eighteenth-Century England", in *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Isabel Rivers (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 5–25; and James Raven, "The Book Trades", in *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays*, ed. Isabel Rivers (New York: Continuum, 2001), 1–34. I discuss the role played by women printers, publishers, authors, and others

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involved in the production and circulation of print in McDowell, *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics, and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

(<sup>21</sup>) Michael Treadwell, "London Printers and Printing Houses in 1705", *Publishing History* 7 (1980): 6.

(<sup>22</sup>) For helpful background, see John Feather, *Publishing, Piracy, and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (London: Marshall Publishing, 1994), 50-53, and the works cited there.

(<sup>23</sup>) Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study of the Origins of the Modern English Press* (London: Associated University Presses, 1987), 19.

(<sup>24</sup>) Dror Wahrman, *Mr. Collier's Letter Racks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 20.

(<sup>25</sup>) Richard Steele, *Tatler* no. 1, April 12, 1709.

(<sup>26</sup>) Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*, ed. Marcus Walsh, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28.

(<sup>27</sup>) William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 84-102.

(<sup>28</sup>) Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 4; and Raven, "The Book Trades", 2-3. See also St. Clair, *Reading Nation*.

(<sup>29</sup>) Lee Erickson, "The Economy of Reading: Jane Austen and the Circulating Library", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 30 (1990): 574, 580.

(<sup>30</sup>) Levy, *Family Authorship*, 5, citing George L. Justice and Nathan Tinker, eds., *Women's Writing and the Circulation of Ideas: Manuscript Publication in England, 1550-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

(<sup>31</sup>) John Bidwell, "The Industrialization of the Paper Trade", in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vol. 5, 1695-1830*, ed. Suarez and Turner, 202, citing D. C. Coleman, *The British Paper Industry, 1495-1860: A Study in Industrial Growth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1958] 1975), 94.

(<sup>32</sup>) I argue this in detail in McDowell, *Invention of the Oral*.

(<sup>33</sup>) Christina Lupton, in Alan Bewell, Christina Lupton, John Klancher, and Ted Underwood, review of *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, *Studies in Romanticism* 50 (2011): 537 (emphasis added).

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<sup>(34)</sup> What figures we have for literacy in the early modern period are far from definitive. For a sense of the issues at stake in defining and assessing “literacy”, see David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Keith Thomas, “The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England”, in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 97–131; and R. S. Schofield, “The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England”, in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 310–325.

<sup>(35)</sup> See McDowell, *Invention of the Oral*.

<sup>(36)</sup> Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution: Together With Two Dissertations on Language; And Some Other Tracts Relative to Those Subjects* [1762] (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), xii.

<sup>(37)</sup> Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623), vol. 1.

<sup>(38)</sup> The subtitle of *Chirologia* adds: *Whereunto is added Chironomia: or, the art of manuell rhetoricke. Consisting of the naturall expressions, digested by art in the hand, as the chieftest instrument of eloquence* (1644), 5.

<sup>(39)</sup> Sheridan, *Course of Lectures*, 10, 113, 11.

<sup>(40)</sup> Thomas Percy, ed., *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of Our Earlier Poets, Together with Some Few of Later Date*, 3 vols. [1765], ed. Henry B. Wheatley (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1886; New York: Dover, 1966), 1:348, 380.

<sup>(41)</sup> I argue this in detail in McDowell, “Defoe’s *Essay Upon Literature* and Eighteenth-Century Histories of Mediation”, *PMLA* 130, no. 3 (May 2015): 566–583.

<sup>(42)</sup> Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* [1792], pt. 1, in *Collected Works*, ed. Sir William Hamilton, 11 vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854–1860), 2:242.

<sup>(43)</sup> John Klancher, in Bewell et al., review of *This Is Enlightenment*, 531.

<sup>(44)</sup> Lupton, in Bewell et al., review of *This Is Enlightenment*, 534.

<sup>(45)</sup> Klancher, in Bewell et al., review of *This Is Enlightenment*, 531.

<sup>(46)</sup> See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

<sup>(47)</sup> See Michael McKeon’s clarifying discussion of the role of abstractions in historical study in *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 25.

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<sup>(48)</sup> McKeon, *Secret History*, 25.

<sup>(49)</sup> McKeon, *Secret History*, 25–26.

<sup>(50)</sup> Peters, *Marvelous Clouds*, 29, 3–4.

<sup>(51)</sup> Bewell, in Bewell et al., review of *This Is Enlightenment*, 538.

<sup>(52)</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* online, s.v. “language, n. (and int.)”, definitions 1.a–c.

<sup>(53)</sup> Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 7–9.

<sup>(54)</sup> D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13–14.

<sup>(55)</sup> Olga V. Solovieva, foreword to *The Ethnography of Rhythm: Orality and Its Technologies*, by Haun Saussy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), ix.

<sup>(56)</sup> See, e.g., Anonymous, *An Essay Upon the Action of an Orator; As to His Pronunciation and Gesture* (London, 1702), 173; and John Wesley, *Directions Concerning Pronunciation and Gesture* (Bristol, 1749), 9.

### **Paula McDowell**

Paula McDowell is Associate Professor of English at New York University. Her publications include *The Invention of the Oral: Print Commerce and Fugitive Voices in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2017), *Elinor James: Printed Writings* (2005), and *The Women of Grub Street: Press, Politics and Gender in the London Literary Marketplace, 1678-1730* (1998).

