

1. **Abstract:** We are applying for a DRC Development grant to extend, deepen, and refine the past two years' work funded by the DRC, which analyzed the writing and genres published in the year 1771 in three British Atlantic cities (London, Edinburgh, and Philadelphia). Now we would like to take our research findings, a longitudinal, cross-sectional study of the categories and genres of writing prevalent in each city, and investigate two questions: 1) the interpenetration of the generic and temporal categories outlined in the earlier phase of research, and 2) the manner in which all these complex categories and infrastructures conditioned the production, understanding, and reception of the specifically *literary* genres of this moment.
2. **Team members:**
RAs (grad or post-degree) Walter Barta and David Bishop: data gathering, collecting, cleaning, coding, analysis; editorial work on the article;
RA (undergrad): data gathering, collecting, cleaning, coding;
Project Manager: coordinating, scheduling, facilitating team activities and meetings; managing communications and documentation; liaising with DRC
[to be paid for by DRC]
3. **Budget:**
2 RAs (grad): 120 hrs each x 15/hr=\$3600 [data wrangling + editorial work]
RA (undergrad): 107 hrs x 13/hr= \$1391 [data wrangling]
\$4991
4. **Project Narrative:**

Research Question, Aims. Since its inception, the 1771 project's research aims have expanded from generating an inventory of the writings published in a particular year in particular cities, to organizing those writings by category, genre, and subgenre (along with individual and corporate authors and printers and their respective locations). The second phase of research has also shown how that year's configuration of categories and genres was conditioned by each city's longer term, infrastructural "reading environment" (e.g., its population size, occupational structures, education and literacy levels, and institutional supports for print). Shrinking the temporal scope of the study to a single year made it possible for us to produce a longitudinal, cross-sectional analysis, which should now help us recognize how the distribution of these 10 categories and 100+ genres allowed each city's inhabitants organize their local temporal experiences of present, past, and future. This, in turn, should help us understand how each city or region's genre-systems operated within a larger economy of genre and temporality across the British Atlantic world.

In the next phase of research, the 1771 team's investigations will need to confront, first of all, conceptual problems like the proximity, interpenetration, or discreteness of generic categories, the complicated authorial and temporal status of artifacts like reprints, periodicals, or collections, and ultimately the messy yet recognizable boundaries of a gathering concept like

“year.” We would also like to see if it’s possible to discern specific temporal orientations or keywords for particular categories/genres/subgenres.

Secondly, the next phase of investigations will need to confront the degree and manner in which the specifically *literary* genres (roughly 349 out of 2000+ items, or about 17%) were affected by their interpenetration, proximity, or distance from the non-literary categories and genres, especially in regard to their temporal orientation and keywords. Answering these questions should take the study out of the realm of descriptive history of the book and into the socio-cultural history of genres.

Contribution. My starting point for this study was the realization that the usual critical frameworks for late eighteenth century British literature were inadequate for the range and variety of its leading writers (e.g., Hume, Franklin, Smollett, Wheatley, Collins, Gray, or Goldsmith), both in terms of geography and the era’s sometimes peaceful, sometimes violent imperial politics. This entire era’s dispersed and irregular events made developmental narratives of late 18th century writing either useless or misleading, so I decided instead to organize my account around the literary history of a single year, a “micro-period” (Phillips) that could highlight the geographic spread and simultaneity not just of key concepts, but also the differentiation and elaboration of those concepts within particular genres and settings.

At the most fundamental level, this project is a contribution to the emerging genre of “annualized literary histories” represented by Gumbrecht, Kittler, North, Chandler and others. It is also worth noting that none of those earlier examples were researched or written with the benefit of DH tools. The hallmarks of the annualized approach to literary history are the reconfiguration of existing critical narratives, the reintroduction of a host of unfamiliar authors and works to critical notice, the identification of new particulars to test existing critical generalizations about the period, and the production of new critical arguments about the connections between the eighteenth-century field, its writings, and its authors. In this respect, because of its decision to construct an evidentiary base from a particular set of locations in space and time, rather than the received frameworks, themes, and canonical authors and works of eighteenth-century British and American literature, this study offers a different synthesis of literary studies, social history, and critical theory than what is conventionally found in recent studies that thematize “the post-colonial,” “the global” or “the imperial” (Withers and Ogborn). Unlike most of these earlier studies, however, this study pays especially close attention to the findings of book history (Wolf et al.) and the elaboration of genres (Frow) as these organize the circuits and transmission of texts in and around this year. The inclusion of Philadelphia should help displace some of the usual metropolitan or London-centric narratives about the writing of this period, and provide better understanding of, for example, the emerging colonial or African writers (e.g., Wheatley, Equiano, Sancho), whose trajectories, whether in flight, freedom, or exile, were rarely confined to a single geographic or national location. I believe that anchoring this study in a very specific temporal micro-period and set of locations could become a model for future transnational literary studies, especially for the study of emergent or diasporic writers and genres.

Audience. This project will be of interest to specialists in eighteenth-century British, colonial era, and Anglophone transnational literature in Britain, British North America, and the

English-speaking parts of the “West Indies,” as well as the British and colonial-era contributions to the European enlightenment movements. Those pursuing the intellectual and cultural history of the British Empire in the eighteenth century will also appreciate having the comparative case studies of these important cities. Literary critics of eighteenth-century literature should also be interested in this book’s single-year approach to literary history and periodization; and its comparative, geographically inflected treatments of temporality and genre.

Collections Used: ESTC and ECCO.

Work to Date. Since our initial funding, the 1771 research team has produced a comprehensive inventory of the 2000+ English-language works published during this year, breaking these down by category, genre, and subgenre, as well as their authors’ and printers’ gender and location. The results of this research are being prepared for submission to an open access, peer-reviewed publication in Eighteenth Century British and DH studies, *Aphra Behn Online*. The drafted article outlines the 10 categories of ESTC items and their degrees of prevalence, along with the 100+ genres found throughout. It also explains how their distribution relates to the demography, occupational structures, literacy levels, and institutional proxies (numbers of printers, newspapers, and periodicals) for each city. Finally, it identifies the categories and genres of ESTC items most strongly correlated with the presence of female authors and printers. A preview of the specifically literary dimensions of the 1771 category- and genre-system was presented at Historical Poetics Now 2019 conference at Austin, breaking down the “poems” category into 17 distinct genres available at this time.

Final Product. The results for this phase of the 1771 project will be submitted as an article to a peer-reviewed literary historical journal like *MLQ*, with linked results made available and Open Access on UH servers.