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Futures Past: Prophecy, Periodization, and Reinhart Koselleck

Eric Weiskott

BY THE TIME OF HIS DEATH IN 2006, the German social historian Reinhart Koselleck had become a major figure in the philosophy of history. He is less well known in literary studies circles. Certainly scholars of English literature are much better acquainted with the work of Koselleck's French near-contemporary, Michel Foucault. Yet Koselleck and Foucault share a number of topical concerns, such as intellectual history and social structure, as well as methodological assumptions, especially the need to interrogate the historicity of knowledge. Foucault formulated the latter approach as "archaeology" (*archéologie*), while Koselleck's partially overlapping, partially distinct term is "conceptual history" (*Begriffsgeschichte*). Koselleck's work supplies a footing from within a different discipline for approaching a much-discussed problem in literary studies, that of periodization. The most fundamental periodization in the study of literature as well as in Koselleck's writing is medieval/modern.

Koselleck theorizes modernity as an unprecedented expansion in the space of human experience and the horizon of human expectations. In the opening chapter of his 1979 book *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, translated into English in 1985 as *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, he associates the Middle Ages with eschatological prophecy and modernity with rational prognosis and philosophical reflection on history. Koselleck's "semantics of historical time" build on the secularization thesis of Carl Schmitt, whom Koselleck came to know personally in the 1950s and whom he considered his most important intellectual influence.¹ According to the secularization thesis, modernity transpires through the subsumption of religious institutions by secular political and social functions, which are nevertheless related to those institutions as their secular reformation. Koselleck's analytical terminology is extraordinarily coherent, but his reliance on modernity as a break with a past that can be sealed off and discarded generates a curious self-contradiction in his research program. Consideration of the "already" secular early English literary genre of political prophecy, to

which Koselleck alludes in the opening chapter of *Futures Past*, elucidates the structures of thought that Koselleck regards as modern within the centuries that Koselleck excludes from modernity. At the same time, Koselleck's decision to locate the break with the past in a "saddle time" (*Sattelzeit*), c. 1750–1850, stands in productive tension with the dominant medieval/modern periodization in English studies, which posits a historical dividing line much earlier, at or around 1500.² Koselleck's periodization aligns with those of Karl Marx, Foucault, and a number of medieval literary scholars and historians who have challenged the historical centrality of the Renaissance. Chronological disjuncture between available periodizations of the same temporal categories—disjuncture in their definition and in their elaboration in disciplinary history—exposes the historicity of periodization. This perspective validates, in intellectual history, Koselleck's theorization of the simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*) in social history, a capacious concept that offers a means of resisting periodized thinking. Read through the work of medievalists and others who question a teleological narrative of modernization that continues to shape the prestige economy in academia, Koselleck's historical theory ironically deconstructs the periodization on which it relies.

An unfamiliar perspective on the familiar problem of periodization may be needed because research into periodization has reached an impasse. Periodization characterized the discipline of English studies almost from its inception.³ In the 1990s and 2000s, periodization had a moment. The numerous critical reassessments of period categories and periodization at that time, peaking in 2008 with the selection of "Periodization" as the theme of the English Institute conference, changed minds but not institutions. The intellectual case against periodization can be summarized: it exaggerates discontinuities and occludes continuities in literary practice; it dichotomizes critical response to literature along preset tracks; it homogenizes works that fall within a given period by installing a supervening rubric for their study; it is political history masquerading as literary history, and not interesting political history, either; finally, by dividing the scholarly community into guilds, periodization impedes the study of research questions not reducible to its organizational logic. All these points had been made well by 2008. But the historical distribution of courses in curricula survived, even as the texts assigned in them changed. Methodological trends came and went, but the periodized structure of graduate training and tenure-track hiring survived, to the extent that departments had the wherewithal to fulfill either function. (Instead of grimly dissolving period boundaries, as one might have expected, the crescendoing crisis in the provision of tenure-track em-

ployment has impelled departments into a renewed, cynical embrace of the logic of period. Indeed, the critical conversation about English literary periodization is a luxury relative to other language fields in which study of the past has already been hollowed out institutionally.⁴) The periodization moment taught a generation of scholars to acknowledge the ultimate artificiality of periods, but periodized graduate training, periodized hiring, periodized scholarship, and a periodized curriculum inevitably work to renaturalize period. It is hard to remember to see an artifice as such when that artifice shapes one's professional existence. As Ted Underwood observed in a 2013 monograph that could have been published in 2021 without changing a word, the intransigence of literary periodization is a symptom of its totalizing force.⁵ Unlike our colleagues in history, for whom period and area are organizational principles of roughly equal professional consequence,⁶ periodization is for English literary historians virtually the only method of dividing up the field that is in common use. As if to illustrate the asymmetry between ideas and institutions, decades of astute commentary on the weaknesses of periodization have done nothing to dislodge periodization. Notwithstanding the valuable theoretical and historical scholarship that came out of it, by routinizing the attack on periodization, the periodization moment unintentionally inured scholars to its effects on knowledge production. The English Institute has moved on, but period categories have not.

The solution to periodization as an institutional problem must take the form of department meetings, annual budgets, and curricular redesign, not journal articles. This essay aims to do something different. It redescribes Koselleck's *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* as an alternative strategy for holding the strangeness of period in mind, a strategy Koselleck himself did not pursue to its logical conclusion. Coming to literary periodization through Koselleck's conflicted thinking about history provides a theoretical rationale for opposing periodization not by undoing it but by multiplying it. This essay is, against the grain of much of the 1990s–2000s scholarship on which it builds, tantamount to a defense of periodization, but a melancholic defense in that it defuses what it defends. In a widely misread maxim, Fredric Jameson writes, “we cannot not periodize.”⁷ The sentence does not signify “resignation to defeat” but “a return of the repressed of narrative,” Jameson says.⁸ It is a melancholic realization, articulated in the face of hope for deperiodization. And Jameson arrived at that realization nearly twenty years ago, in 2002. I write in a moment of disciplinary exhaustion, when the promise of overleaping periodization to discuss only the *longue durée*, or temporality, or nonlinear history, or the experience of the everyday, has worn thin and has not done away with periods as institutionally enforced incisions in the English literary field.

The point of contact between Koselleck and literary periodization is the genre of political prophecy in the tradition of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophecies of Merlin*. Political prophecy, itself situated on the extreme margins of the English literary field, supplies another footing for reconsidering medieval/modern periodization.⁹ Prophecy concerns the everyday political world rather than the end of time, and it straddles the centuries now classified as medieval or modern. It is a literary archive that evades the historical prescriptions of periodization. *Pace* Koselleck, prophecy particularly evades the historical prescriptions of periodization when periodization calls on a narrative of modernization as the displacement of religious institutions and religious writing by secular institutions and fiction.

Modernity, Historicity, Historicism

When did modernity begin? In *Futures Past*, with primary reference to the German-speaking area, Koselleck gives a specific answer. For him, modernity began around 1500 and reached fruition about 1800. Separating early modernity (*frühe Neuzeit*) from modernity (*Neuzeit*) for Koselleck is the *Sattelzeit*. On one level, the *Sattelzeit* was certainly a research expedient, a strategy for restricting the scope of the ambitious *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* project that Koselleck edited in collaboration with Otto Brunner and Werner Conze.¹⁰ The *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, a social-historical lexicon published between 1972 and 1997, encloses *Futures Past* in terms of the periodization of Koselleck's academic career. It was only natural for Koselleck to transpose the concept of the *Sattelzeit* into the historical-theoretical nomenclature of his book. On another level, however, and notwithstanding Koselleck's later dismissal of it as "a catchword in a grant application," the *Sattelzeit* functions in *Futures Past* as a fundamental periodization.¹¹ It is in the *Sattelzeit* that Koselleck situates the "temporalization [*Verzeitlichung*] of history" that encapsulates the historical contribution of *Futures Past*.¹² The *Verzeitlichung* of history is the process by which modernity emerges in the first place, according to the arguments of the opening chapter of *Futures Past*, "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity." This chapter was Koselleck's inaugural lecture at Heidelberg in 1965, well before the appearance of the first volume of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* in 1972, and even before publication of the guidelines for the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* project in 1967.¹³ The word *Sattelzeit* does not appear in "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity," but the concept already undergirds Koselleck's historical inquiry.

Koselleck chooses to illustrate his historicization of history through an examination of premodern prophecy. In "Modernity and the Planes

of Historicity,” he draws a broad contrast between eschatology, represented by Albrecht Altdorfer’s painting *Alexanderschlacht*, and prognosis and progress, represented respectively by political calculations and self-conscious historical understanding. Progress (*Fortschritt*), a long-term preoccupation of Koselleck, corresponds to modernity.¹⁴ Prognosis corresponds to early modernity. Echoing Schmitt, Koselleck describes the historical difference between these modes of historical thinking in terms of the political difference between religious and secular formations. (The essay first appeared in a *festschrift* for Schmitt.) According to this periodization, the institution proper to medieval historical time is the church: “the end of time can be experienced only because it is always already sublimated in the Church” (*FP* 13).¹⁵ The institution proper to early modern historical time is the state. The advent of properly philosophical reflection on history, which Koselleck equates with the idea of progress again and again in his writing, “first detached early modernity from its past and, with a new future, inaugurated our modernity” (*FP* 21). In other words, the institution proper to modern historical time is the academic discipline, though Koselleck doesn’t say as much. The Middle Ages and early modernity share a closed or predictable future, whether expressed in religious or secular terms. Only modernity affords an “open future” (a favorite phrase), in which understandings of the past, experiences of the present, and expectations for what is to come enter into a reflexive negotiation whose result cannot be prophesied (*FP* 41, 143, 201, 247, 265).

Prophecy has a role to play in both of the first two steps in this tripartite historical gradation. It typifies the structure of thought characteristic for Koselleck of medieval anachronism. Then prophecy is a locus of repression by early modern states. As prognosis displaced prophecy as the vehicle for historical time, “the state enforced a monopoly on the control of the future by suppressing apocalyptic and astrological readings of the future” (*FP* 16). Koselleck cites Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I as monarchs who outlawed religious prophecy. The prominent astrologer William Lilly, who issued print collections of political prophecy in the middle of the seventeenth century, makes an appearance in the same passage as a practitioner of prophecy who nonetheless anticipates “critical philology” (*FP* 16). However, Koselleck misrepresents the prophetic discourse targeted by Tudor legislation. As discussed in the next section, Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I sought to secure the state and the nobility against a specifically secular, political form of prophecy, derived at several removes from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Prophecies of Merlin*. Furthermore, by extracting the confrontation between prophecy and the state from its longer literary- and

social-historical context, Koselleck misses what is historically suggestive about the scene. The criminalization of political prophecy by the Tudor state had a much earlier precedent in antiprophetic legislation of 1406 under Henry IV. What is more, the church played no discernible part in efforts to censor political prophetic discourse in England prior to the reign of Henry VIII. Koselleck has political prophecy pointing the wrong way in time in his narrative of secularization. Lilly marks a threshold between prophecy and something else, but this transition unfolded outside of the church and concluded a complex political and discursive accommodation stretching back two hundred years.

There is a reason “Modernity and the Planes of Historicity” comes first in *Futures Past* and early in Koselleck’s career. The following chapters, like the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, rely to a greater or lesser extent on the narrative of modernization explicated there. The second chapter, for instance, restates the significance of the Sattelzeit in terms of the conceptual-historical determinations of history itself (FP 26–42).¹⁶ Even in the more theoretical second and third parts of *Futures Past*, Koselleck’s best examples of historical-conceptual change normally come from in or near the Sattelzeit. The French Revolution, located at the center of the Sattelzeit, is a recurrent point of reference.¹⁷ The final essay, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” expounds a brilliantly subtle interaction between experience and expectation but does so in order to argue that whereas “biblical revelation and Church administration had limited the tension between experience and expectation in such a way that it was not possible for them to break apart,” “during *Neuzeit* the difference between experience and expectation has increasingly expanded” (FP 264, 263). The argument for a total shift in historical consciousness during the Enlightenment appeared already in the final part of Koselleck’s first book, *Kritik und Krise: Ein Beitrag zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (1959). *Kritik und Krise* was belatedly translated into English as *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* in 1988. At that point, in view of Koselleck’s contributions since 1959, it made sense to substitute *modern* for *civil* (*bürgerlich*) in the subtitle. In Koselleck’s 2002 book *The Practice of Conceptual History*, the chapter title “The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity” could not be more blunt.¹⁸

Kathleen Davis criticizes Koselleck’s work on historical time from the vantage point of her study of the politics of medieval/modern periodization (PS 87–95). Davis isolates Koselleck’s “foundational exclusion of ‘medieval’ time” through a reassessment of Koselleck’s interlocutors, particularly Brunner, Schmitt, and Karl Löwith, another proponent of the secularization thesis (PS 90). Davis demonstrates that Koselleck’s

reliance on medieval/modern periodization guarantees his theorization of historical time will be Eurocentric and presentist. This conclusion is especially disturbing given the close ideological rapport that Brunner, Conze, Martin Heidegger (another key influence), and Schmitt had with National Socialism. All four had been members of the Nazi Party (NSDAP). Koselleck took steps to distance himself from Nazism, such as assigning fascist ideology to the Middle Ages in his historical scheme, but nowhere does he consider the political ramifications of a teleological modernity articulated through European history and universalized through colonial domination (*FP* 23).¹⁹ Davis adds that Koselleck's periodization is far more "binarized" than Schmitt's had been (*PS* 93). Far from positing a clean break with the past, Schmitt had argued that theology remained "immanent" in secular politics (*PS* 14, 78). According to Davis, Koselleck has narrativized political claims that originally referred to theology and sovereignty into an account of a historical break. Throughout Koselleck's work, and most clearly in "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity," the one type of claim has been substituted for the other. The result is an impoverished perspective onto early European societies. "Medievalists have long since tired of such attributions of stasis, closure, and homogeneity, so distortive that they nearly defy response," writes Davis, speaking for many in the field of medieval studies (*PS* 94).

Modernity is by no means Koselleck's only quarry. *Futures Past* delivers an immensely fruitful analysis of the relations among social experience, concepts, the passage of time, and the practices of historical research itself. At least within modernity, defined sociopolitically with reference to the French Revolution, conceptually with reference to *Verzeitlichung*, and historically with reference to the *Sattelzeit*, Koselleck links experiences of past, present, and future in a single dynamic relation. Hence the title, *Vergangene Zukunft*. Every present is a former future; every imagined future expresses present realities; every past is a retrospective articulation of the present with its characteristic aspirations and fears for the future. Historicism, expectation, and the contingency of the present moment come together. Probably the most portable concept developed in the book is one that would seem to contradict any strict periodization scheme. Koselleck envisages historical time in the plural. He writes of "the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*) that can be contained within a concept" when concepts are viewed historically as possessing "historical depth" (*FP* 90).²⁰ That is, conceptual history shapes time otherwise than the calendar does. There are "many forms of time superimposed one upon the other," "a coexisting plurality of times" (*FP* 2, 69).

Yet the richness of the idea of the *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* only accentuates the limitation that Koselleck builds into his analysis through commitment to a traditional narrative of modernization. The problematic of modernity in *Futures Past* tests the limits of the historicism the book models and recommends.²¹ Through the hypothesis of the *Sattelzeit*, modernity becomes a limit case for historicism: a historiographical category that supposedly gives the conditions for all historiography, a historical period in which the possibility of historicism supposedly arose for the first time. Modernity, that is, becomes the place where historicism and historiography are made to align historically. The *Verzeitlichung* of history that generates modernity constitutes a broaching of historicism *per se*.²² Modernization, in short order, opens up nothing less than “the sphere of a genuine human history” (*FP* 48). It is here that Koselleck loosens his grip on his stated commitment to discover concepts and time in dialectical relation. Time arrives from outside of history to temporalize history. Modernity convenes historicism, yet, as the total unit of human spacetime thought capable of incubating historicism, modernity escapes historicism. Viewed from the perspective of this paradoxical recursivity, it is no coincidence that the *Sattelzeit* spans the centuries in which the European discipline of modern history became established in institutions of higher education. Nor is it a coincidence that Koselleck focuses on Germany, where the European discipline of history attained its earliest institutional consolidations. Indeed, Koselleck’s ultimate target was less a *Begriffsgeschichte* of modernity than a *Begriffsgeschichte* of the discipline of history.²³ The former appears in his writing under the sign of the latter. “The conditions of possibility of real history are, at the same time, conditions of its cognition” (*FP* 258). One can readily understand Koselleck’s boundary-drawings from the standpoint of research pragmatism. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, *Futures Past*, and *The Practice of Conceptual History* will address eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptual history because it was then that the dimensions of possibility for such a history were constructed and began to be institutionalized in academia. When he is discussing history as a discipline, Koselleck is clear on this point. In advancing a chain of arguments about the history of historical study, however, Koselleck allows himself to project these claims into a different level of the analysis, characterizing modernization as the birth of historical perspective from out of a fatalistic past. Theoretically, he recognizes cases in which “the historian makes use of concepts constructed and defined *ex post*, scientific categories applied to the sources without being present within them,” but Koselleck shows no inclination to investigate modernity before Modernity, as it were (*FP* 255).²⁴ Even the *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* can become a medium for

reductive historiography, when synchronic temporal distinctions accrue political valuations, enabling Koselleck to retroject violent present-day realities into the Middle Ages.

In a 2012 essay, Helge Jordheim defends Koselleck against Davis and other critics who charge that strict periodization hamstrings Koselleck's historical theory. Jordheim argues that "periodization appears as one of many elements in a more comprehensive theory of multiple temporalities" in Koselleck's work, "which as a whole seems rather to defy periodization than to support it"; "Koselleck's theory of historical times is *not* a theory of periodization except in a very superficial sense."²⁵ Jordheim is correct that periodization fits into a larger, putatively nonperiodized research program in Koselleck's writing. Koselleck emphasized this aspect of his work later in his career. His *Begriffsgeschichte* of history precipitates logically and biographically his *Historik* or science of history. Koselleck's *Historik* crystallizes in his late essays, which are collected and translated in *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories*. Jordheim elevates that research program as "Koselleck's real theory of historical times" and abstracts it from the narrative of modernization on which Koselleck always makes it depend.²⁶ Jordheim criticizes "attempts to reduce Koselleck's entire work on historical times to a theory of periodization embedded in a theory of modernity." Despite all caveats, Jordheim is engaged in the reverse, an attempt to absorb Koselleck's theory of modernity into a general theory of historical time. On the account of conceptual-historical change elaborated throughout *Futures Past* and *The Practice of Conceptual History* and restated in the very first paragraph of *Sediments of Time*, modernity cannot be merely one example for a general historical method, a "metatheory . . . of historical times," as Jordheim puts it.²⁷ Rather, modernity and historicity are in Koselleck's writing always frustratingly entangled. A Koselleck whose historical theory "def[ies] periodization" does exist, but that Koselleck must be recovered by resistantly reading through the problem of modernity in his work, as opposed to subsuming the problem in generalities.

Insular Political Prophecy and the Asynchronicities of Secularization

Koselleck's predetermined typological association between prophecy and a theologically sealed Middle Ages leads him to miscategorize the tradition of insular political prophecy. It bears emphasizing that he mentions this tradition once, in passing, in an argument not otherwise concerned with England. This is not a profound or persistent scholarly

error, but it is a symptomatic one. In the passage in question, Koselleck speaks of “religious and political predictions” and “apocalyptic and astrological readings of the future” (*FP* 16). These different types of discourse coexisted in early Britain, but the genre of prophecy that provoked the Tudor state to legal action was neither apocalyptic, nor astrological, nor religious. It was political and historiographical. For example, a 1542 act “Touching Prophetes upon Declaracion of Names Armes Badges, &c.” sought to protect “suche persones as have and had suche Armes Badges or Cognisaunces or had suche lettres in theyre names” from “the greate perill and destruccion” of “false Prophetes.”²⁸ The act alludes to the use of heraldic symbolism in political prophecy, by then a vast literary tradition spanning multiple insular languages. Prophecies are usually anonymous, often ascribed to Merlin or another authoritative figure from the past, and mix predictions *ex eventu* (the distant or recent past rendered in the future tense) with true predictions in elaborately coded language. The predictions typically concern national politics and represent these in terms of ancient ethnic strife between Britons and Saxons. Political prophecy enables readers to experience the present and the immediate past as laden with legendary significance. Almost always read for their historical and political meanings by medievalists and early modernists alike, prophecies are also intricate, mind-bending works of fiction that deserve attention from students of poetics.

In the same passage, Koselleck writes that, in early modernity, “the state enforced a monopoly on the control of the future In doing so, it assumed a function of the old Church” (*FP* 16). None of the components of these assertions hold true for early England. The state *attempted* to enforce a monopoly on the control of the future. That the state had its work cut out for it can be inferred from accounts and records of Tudor-era legal proceedings against persons accused of unauthorized prophetic activity.²⁹ These records, many of which quote the offending text in part or in full, afford a glimpse of unofficial prophecies roiling through all sectors of English society. Moreover, antiprophetic legislation under Henry VIII, while enforced with notable vigor and cruelty, was neither unprecedented—a 1406 law, never enacted, had prohibited the dissemination of “false” prophecies—nor a continuation of any published church strictures against political prophecy. Nor was it a success, if the standard for success is “a monopoly on the control of the future.” Political prophecy survived for another century, only receding from view c. 1650. Finally, the earliest formal attempt by the church to regulate insular political prophecy postdates the last antiprophetic legislation by the Tudors. The Council of Trent included Merlin’s prophecies in its list of banned books.³⁰ Koselleck boldly describes the 1555 Religious Peace

of Augsburg as having generated “a new principle, that of ‘politics’” (*FP* 14). Political prophecy in the tradition of Geoffrey of Monmouth belies this story of the parthenogenesis of politics. Koselleck’s narratives of modernization and secularization thoroughly misrecognize the development of this always-already secular early literary tradition.

The seventeenth century in England was an inflection point between prophecy and something else, as Koselleck suggests. But the realignment, whatever form it took, played out *within* the secular sphere. The differential historicity of prophecy and prognosis cannot be recovered synchronically. For example, Merlinic predictions and scientific practice cohabited in Lilly’s mind. Lilly’s patron, the astrologer and Windsor Herald Elias Ashmole, is another bridge figure. Ashmole collected manuscripts of political prophecy, now held by Oxford University’s Bodleian Library, and he also endowed the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. Of course, Koselleck’s theory of modernity is flexible enough to “absorb forerunners and backsliders into its logic” (*PS* 94). “Modernity and the Planes of Historicity” concludes by considering how “the long-lost, salvational-historical task of the Holy Roman Empire shimmered through the supposedly new beginning of the 1789 Revolution” in Napoleon Bonaparte’s partiality to the *Alexanderschlacht* (*FP* 25). But the seventeenth century isn’t the first century with what Koselleck would regard as forerunners and backsliders. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty, in tune with Koselleck’s theory of historical time on this point, the writing of history implies that historical experience as such possesses a double structure. In confronting the past, the present is noncontemporaneous with itself.³¹ The tradition of political prophecy is now remote. What other field of action absorbed it? One appealing candidate is historical writing, which developed a complex poetics of futurity in England in the seventeenth century.³² Another candidate, urged by Koselleck, is early modern statecraft itself. Political prophecy and statecraft share an undeniable homology. Even Koselleck cannot deny it. He associates progress with the “*prophète philosophe*” and describes the Verzeitlichung of history as the invention of a kind of true (because self-fulfilling) prophecy (*FP* 22, 39).³³ However, the future predicted by political prophecy was the present, and the future broached by political prophecy was open to human intervention. These texts very often adopt a sharply partisan perspective onto current events and are meant to incite political action. On both counts, political prophecy fulfills the conceptual functions of progress in Koselleck’s technical sense of the word.

In its imaginative contortions around a contemporary experience of politics, political prophecy contravenes the narrative of the rise of fiction in “modernity.” This narrative, evident in Catherine Gallagher’s

claim that the novel inaugurates fictionality, is the literary corollary of the secularization thesis.³⁴ Davis, Julie Orlemanski, and other medievalists challenge such claims with reference to the imaginative play of premodern genres, including fables, romance, and history writing.³⁵ Orlemanski grounds a theory of fictionality in comparison of modern and premodern literary forms. Political prophecy should join the list of fictional prenovelistic genres. Although its importance initially appears to be strictly topical, read aright, as an engine for envisioning a counterfactual past or present or a possible future, political prophecy qualifies as fiction in Orlemanski's expanded definition: "what is known not to be known as true."³⁶ Prophecy is difficult for us to read as fiction primarily for extrinsic reasons. Prophetic texts are often unedited, untitled, and undated, and they can respond to political moments too evanescent or perspectives too subversive to be recorded in official histories. The precision with which prophecies reshape the materials of history is, in many cases, lost to time or awaiting further scholarly scrutiny.

Koselleck's treatment of political prophecy is emblematic of a rift in his elaboration of his own ideas. Between Koselleck's theory of modernity and Koselleck's theory of historical time there is a contradiction. The one refers to a singularity, the other to a multiplicity. While Jordheim resolves the contradiction from within Koselleck's thought, exploring the extent to which the theory of historical time supersedes the theory of modernity, it is possible to take a different tack. The multiplicity of periodizations currently available for early English literature illustrates, on the plane of intellectual history, Koselleck's idea of the *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*. Set into this wider field of reference, Koselleck's theory of modernity ceases to undermine his theory of historical time. Koselleck's *Neuzeit* (modernity) enters into tension with other periodization schemes, disclosing the historical contingency of periodization, which his narrative of modernization effaces. In this way, Davis's critique of Koselleck's theory of modernity and Jordheim's defense of Koselleck's theory of historical time may be reconciled.

The Simultaneity of Nonsimultaneous Periodizations

When did modernity begin? In England, nineteenth-century writers consistently answered that modernity began in the sixteenth century, at the time of the Reformation and the advent of humanism. Twenty-first-century scholars of English literature inherit this judgment. Faculty hiring, curricula, academic publishing, and critical methods are inflected by the basic distinction between modernity and something historically

prior to it but, in fact, conceptually codependent with it. Medievalists and, increasingly, early modernists have been pushing back against “the cut of periodization” for some time now (*PS* 8).³⁷ Yet the historical turning points encoded in curricula, anthologies, and job advertisements have scarcely budged. The conventional subdivisions of English literary history have not ceded ground to counternarratives.

The standard point of incision between medieval and modern in the English tradition remains what it was in the nineteenth century, the year 1500. The opening decades of the sixteenth century form a firewall between medievalist and early modernist scholarship that does not explicitly respond to the question of periodization. A favorite medievalist strategy for unsettling this status quo is to vault the medieval/modern divide forward three centuries, to the Enlightenment. Positing disjuncture between modernity and the claims of secularization and empire that have defined its historical scope, medievalists destabilize traditional periodization. Dietrich Gerhard argues that the most fundamental economic, political, and social reorganizations in Europe came in the eleventh and eighteenth centuries. He describes the period c. 1000–1800 as “Old Europe.”³⁸ Jacques Le Goff recommends a similar periodization on similar grounds.³⁹ Andrew Cole, writing in the tradition of Marxist historiography, likewise proposes a fundamental change in economic and intellectual conditions in Hegel’s lifetime (1770–1831).⁴⁰ C. S. Lewis had written of a similar temporal scheme as early as 1955.⁴¹ Foucault, though neither a historian nor a medievalist, described the turn of the nineteenth century as the great watershed in the history of European culture and its study.⁴² Across his published work, Foucault designates a “classical period” (*âge classique*) of momentous transition, c. 1650–1800. As often, history and historiography run in tandem. Davis documents how the medieval/modern division as presently conceived was implemented through Enlightenment historiography and European imperial nationalism (*PS* 8–9).⁴³

Gerhard’s notion of Old Europe makes a comfortable fit for early English literature, running roughly from the tenth-century dissemination of vernacular writing associated with King Alfred’s court to Sharon Turner’s dissertation on early medieval English literature and culture (1805), or to the first recorded use of the word *medieval* (1817).⁴⁴ The literary field visible to the first professors of English literature, hired by London universities in the 1820s and 1830s, was more or less coterminous with Old Europe.⁴⁵

Koselleck’s *Sattelzeit* aligns with Marxist and Foucauldian historiography and with the revisionist periodization of Gerhard and the others. Koselleck’s *frühe Neuzeit* matches the prevailing periodization in English

studies, but, as we have seen, he casts early modernity as premature in relation to modernity. The weakness for modernity in Koselleck's theory of historical time becomes, when imported into the discipline of English, a refreshing provocation. Literary scholars of early modernity emphasize *modernity*, bracketing early modernity with modernity. Koselleck places the emphasis in the other available location, on *early*, bracketing early modernity with the Middle Ages.⁴⁶ One should strive to see the justice in both groupings. To do otherwise is to concede periodization as historical fact rather than heuristic.

Where Gerhard pushed the Middle Ages forward into the eighteenth century, other medievalists pull modernity back into (what could no longer be called) the Middle Ages.⁴⁷ Hans Robert Jauss, from whom Koselleck learned to think in terms of horizons of expectation, recommends medieval literature as an antidote to academic received wisdom. Reading this literature involves a dialectical process of estrangement and identification corresponding to its simultaneous alterity and modernity, a process that for Jauss also describes the undulations of the literature's reception.⁴⁸ The reward of historically flexible literary reading is precisely "modernity," redefined as "the recognition of a significance in medieval literature which is only to be obtained by a reflective passage through its alterity."⁴⁹ An earlier and less theoretically acute but more influential example is Charles Homer Haskins's *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*. Though Haskins does not orient his study toward medieval/modern periodization, he redeploys renaissance within the Middle Ages, shifting European history's center of gravity backward in time. The Italian renaissance remains for Haskins "the great Renaissance," but "the great Renaissance was not so unique or so decisive as has been supposed."⁵⁰ It is easy to understand why this book appeals to medievalists.

Gerhard's and Le Goff's postdatings of the medieval/modern periodization likewise take the form of refutations of the narrative of the Renaissance.⁵¹ To Erwin Panofsky's influential view that there was "such a thing as an Italian, or main, Renaissance which started some time in the 14th Century and reached a climax in the 16th and the 17th," being a "total and permanent" reconfiguration of art and culture, "one fatally auspicious moment" of civilizational rebirth, Le Goff responds that this renaissance was "a brilliant but superficial interlude" in (what would still have to be called) the Middle Ages.⁵² Yet the potential value of Old Europe or the Sattelzeit for literary history transcends the particulars of arguments for or against the Renaissance. Koselleck, like Marx and Foucault, does not expend much energy on renaissances one way or the other. This, too, is a refreshing provocation for English studies.

Insular political prophecy yields a periodization scheme "indigenous" to literary history and orthogonal to politically based periodization

(“Anglo-Saxon,” “Tudor,” “Restoration,” “Victorian,” and so on). Call it “the Age of Prophecy.”⁵³ Stretching from the twelfth century to the seventeenth, the written tradition of political prophecy straddles the centuries now classified as medieval and early modern. Alongside the standard line between medieval and modern, Old Europe/the Sattelzeit, and a modern Middle Ages, the Age of Prophecy is a fourth way of keeping time.

By juxtaposing his narrative of modernization with other established or possible historical understandings, one can redeem Koselleck’s “theory of multiple temporalities, organized in the form of temporal layers that have different origins and duration and move at different speeds,” which he developed “as an alternative to the linear and empty time of periodization” (so, Jordheim).⁵⁴ Middle Ages/modernity—Sattelzeit—renaissance of the twelfth century—Renaissance—Age of Prophecy. Examples can be multiplied: Tudor England—990s CE—Age of Colonization—Age of Langland. These are not merely different periods but different kinds of period. In combination they put the quality of historical time into question. Triangulating between them, by reading literary history with reference to more than one of them at once, breaks the spell of periodization. These terms refer to different locations in space, they are sited in different historical series, and they embody different phases of disciplinary history. Some overlap chronologically; others do not. The multiplicity of period categories is one obvious symptom of the fact that every periodization has an agenda. The dissonance between them, available to us all at once, brings to consciousness the *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* in intellectual history and the ineluctably provisional nature of the categories through which we come to know the past.⁵⁵ The challenge for literary history now is to register that dissonance not just intellectually but institutionally.

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NOTES

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1 See Michael Wolfe’s English summary on pp. 61–62 of Niklas Olsen, “‘Af alle mine lærere har Schmitt været den vigtigste’: Reinhart Kosellecks intellektuelle og personlige relationer til Carl Schmitt,” *Historisk Tidsskrift* 104 (2004): 30–62.

- 2 Reinhart Koselleck, "Richtlinien für das Lexikon politisch-sozialer Begriffe der Neuzeit," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 11 (1976): 91.
- 3 Ted Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered: Historical Contrast and the Prestige of English Studies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2013), 95–135. See further Carolyn Dinshaw and Karma Lochrie, "Queering History," *PMLA* 121, no. 3 (2006): 837–38; and Eric Hayot, *On Literary Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 147–70.
- 4 See Joan DeJean, "A Long Eighteenth Century? What Eighteenth Century?" *PMLA* 127, no. 2 (2012): 317–20.
- 5 Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered*.
- 6 See David Blackburn, "'The Horologe of Time': Periodization in History," *PMLA* 127, no. 2 (2012): 301–07; and Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered*, 112–13. The same is true of American studies insofar as it functions as an area studies. See Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2008); Susan Gillman, "Oceans of *Longues Durées*," *PMLA* 127, no. 2 (2012): 328–34; and Lisa Brooks, "The Primacy of the Present, the Primacy of Place: Navigating the Spiral of History in the Digital World," *PMLA* 127, no. 2 (2012): 308–16.
- 7 Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London: Verso, 2002), 29.
- 8 Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 29. My thinking about Jameson's maxims owes something to R. D. Perry, "Periodization and the *Longue Durée*: Heresy and the Salem Witch Trials" (paper, 54th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2019).
- 9 See Eric Weiskott, "English Political Prophecy and the Problem of Modernity," *post-medieval* 10 (2019): 8–21.
- 10 *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett, 1972), 1: xv.
- 11 Reinhart Koselleck, "A Response to Comments on the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*," in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on "Begriffsgeschichte"*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 1996), 69.
- 12 Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985; rev. ed. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2004), 11 (hereafter cited as *FP*).
- 13 See Koselleck, *FP* 277, for details of its earlier incarnations as lecture and essay. The guidelines for *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* are in Koselleck, "Richtlinien für das Lexikon politisch-sozialer Begriffe der Neuzeit," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 11 (1967): 81–99.
- 14 See Koselleck, "Fortschritt," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 2:351–423; Koselleck, *FP* 21–22, 35–42, 139–43, 196–200, 238–40, and 265–75; Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), 34 and n37, 127–37, and 187–88; and Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner, et al. (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002), 5–8, 89–98, and 218–35.
- 15 Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 131, 165, 168, 195, 225, and 226; and Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories*, ed. and trans. Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2018), 3. See also the phrase "unknown future" in Koselleck, *FP* 49 and 114; and Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 131–47. Cf. Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 103–14 (hereafter cited as *PS*).
- 16 Cf. Koselleck, Christian Meier, Odilo Engels, and Horst Günther, "Geschichte, Historie," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 2:593–717; Koselleck, *FP* 222–54; and Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 1–19; and Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*, 41–59 and 177–96.

- 17 See especially Koselleck, "Revolution (Rebellion, Aufruhr, Bürgerkrieg)," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 5:653–788; Koselleck, *FP* 43–57; and Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 148–58.
- 18 Koselleck, "The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity," in *Practice of Conceptual History*, 154–69.
- 19 Cf. Koselleck, *FP* 202–3 and 205–21; Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 141–43 and 327–39; and Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*, 207–24 and 238–49. See further Jan-Werner Müller, "On Conceptual History," in *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, ed. Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014), 81–87; and Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*, xix–xxii and xxvi–xxxii. For limited acknowledgments of the artifice of medieval/modern periodization, see Koselleck, *FP* 17 and 224–36; Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 8, 55, 119, and 155–69; and Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*, 109–10.
- 20 Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, gives an inverted yet equivalent formulation: "The non-simultaneity of the simultaneous (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*)" (159).
- 21 On the limits of historicism cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000; repr. with new preface 2007), esp. 6–16, 30–34, 108–13, and 237–55; Derek Pearsall, "Medieval Literature and Historical Enquiry," *Modern Language Review* 99, no. 4 (2004): xxxi–xlii; and Hayot, "Against Historicist Fundamentalism," *PMLA* 131, no. 5 (2016): 1414–22.
- 22 There is a subgenre of Renaissance studies monographs dedicated to pursuing this claim: Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969); Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972); Anthony Kemp, *The Estrangement of the Past: A Study in the Origins of Modern Historical Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991); and Zachary Sayre Schiffman, *The Birth of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2011) (71–73, 141, and 189 on Koselleck).
- 23 I owe this point to Prasannan Parthasarathi.
- 24 Cf. Koselleck, *FP* 91.
- 25 Helge Jordheim, "Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities," *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 154, 157.
- 26 Jordheim, "Against Periodization," 156.
- 27 Both quotations since the previous note are from Jordheim, "Against Periodization," 152.
- 28 *The Statutes of the Realm* (London: Eyre & Strahan, 1817), 3:850. See Howard Dobin, *Mertin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990), 41–42; Sharon L. Jansen, *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1991), 60–61; and Tim Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 25–26.
- 29 See G. R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972), 58–64; and Jansen, *Political Protest*, 1–6 and 20–61.
- 30 Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1911), 124, 154.
- 31 Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, esp. 108–11 (109, with reference to medieval studies: "the noncontemporaneity of the present with itself"). For two Indian parallels to Lilly, see Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 253–54.
- 32 See Marissa Nicosia, "Reading Spenser in 1648: Prophecy and History in Samuel Shepard's *Faerie Leveller*," *Modern Philology* 114, no. 4 (2016): 286–309; and Nicosia, "'To plant me in mine own inheritance': Prolepsis and Pretenders in John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*," *Studies in Philology* 115, no. 3 (2018): 580–97.

- 33 Cf. Koselleck, *FP* 58–71; and Koselleck, *Practice of Conceptual History*, 131–47.
- 34 Catherine Gallagher, “The Rise of Fictionality,” in *The Novel*, vol. 1, *History, Geography, and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 336–63.
- 35 Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007); Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, esp. 103–31; Julie Orlemanski, “Who Has Fiction? Modernity, Fictionality, and the Middle Ages,” *New Literary History* 50, no. 2 (2019): 145–70; and Michelle Karnes, “The Possibilities of Medieval Fiction,” *New Literary History* 51, no. 1 (2020): 209–28. Orlemanski, “Who Has Fiction?” and Karnes, “Possibilities of Medieval Fiction” prompted a cluster of responses, to which Orlemanski and Karnes in turn were invited to respond in “Medieval Fictionalities,” *New Literary History* 51, no. 1 (2020): 229–73.
- 36 Orlemanski, “Who Has Fiction?” 146 and 162.
- 37 See, in addition to the studies cited below, David Aers, “A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the ‘History of the Subject,’” in *Culture and History 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. Aers (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 177–202; Lawrence Besserman, ed., *The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives* (New York: Garland, 1996); James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002); Simpson, “Diachronic History and the Shortcomings of Medieval Studies,” in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 17–30; and Simpson, “Trans-Reformation English Literary History,” in *Early Modern Histories of Time: The Periodizations of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Kristen Poole and Owen Williams (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 88–101; Aers and Sarah Beckwith, eds., “Reform and Cultural Revolution: Writing English Literary History, 1350–1547,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35, no. 1 (2005): 3–120; Jennifer Summit and David Wallace, eds., “Medieval/Renaissance: After Periodization,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 3 (2007): 447–620; Brian Cummings and Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010); Andrew Cole and D. Vance Smith, eds., *The Legitimacy of the Middle Ages: On the Unwritten History of Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2010); and Holly A. Crocker, “The Problem of the Premodern,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 146–52.
- 38 Dietrich Gerhard, “Periodization in European History,” *American Historical Review* 61, no. 4 (1956): 900–913; and Gerhard, *Old Europe: A Study in Continuity, 1000–1800* (New York: Academic, 1981). Cf. William A. Green, “Periodization in European and World History,” *Journal of World History* 3, no. 1 (1992): 31–40, 53; and C. Warren Hollister, “The Phases of European History and the Nonexistence of the Middle Ages,” *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 7 (1992): 1–22.
- 39 Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), 7–11 and 18–23; and Le Goff, *Must We Divide History Into Periods?* trans. M. B. DeBevoise (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2015), 79–112.
- 40 Andrew Cole, *The Birth of Theory* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014), on which see Orlemanski, “Modernity within the Middle Ages,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 116, no. 3 (2017): 359–62. Cf. Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, 21; and Le Goff, *Must We Divide History*, 100–101.
- 41 C. S. Lewis, *De descriptione temporum: An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1955).
- 42 See especially Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1970; repr. 1994); and Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977; repr. 1995). For criticism of the former, see Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, 60–95.

- 43 Cf. Green, "Periodization in European and World History," 21–29; and Le Goff, *Must We Divide History*, 13–20.
- 44 Sharon Turner, *The History of the Manners, Landed Property, Government, Laws, Poetry, Literature, Religion, and Language, of the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Longman, 1805); and David Matthews, "From Mediaeval to Mediaevalism: A New Semantic History," *Review of English Studies* 62, no. 257 (2011): 701–703. *The Oxford English Dictionary* Online entry for 'medieval,' A.1a, has since been updated to reflect Matthews's research.
- 45 See Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered*, 81–113.
- 46 Moshe Sluhovsky, "Discernment of Difference, the Introspective Subject, and the Birth of Modernity," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2006): 200, diagnoses the "inherent instability" (169) of early modernity as a period category. Sluhovsky, "Discernment of Difference," 190n2, is mistaken to suppose that Koselleck's *Futures Past* does not "address the distinctions between *modernity* and *early modernity*." See also Heather Dubrow, "The Term *Early Modern*," *PMLA* 109, no. 5 (1994): 1025–26; and Tim Harris, "Periodizing the Early Modern: The Historian's View," in *Early Modern Histories of Time*, ed. Poole and Williams, 21–35.
- 47 Cf. Jameson, *Singular Modernity*, 27 ("for contemporary historiography, striking effects of rewriting can be achieved by pushing the boundaries of 'modernity' ever further back into the former Middle Ages, and affirming some modern break and some new modern beginning . . . at a point deep in formerly medieval territory"); and Orlemanski, "Modernity within the Middle Ages."
- 48 Hans Robert Jauss, "The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature," trans. Timothy Bahti, *New Literary History* 10, no. 2 (1979): 181–229.
- 49 Jauss, "Alterity and Modernity," 198. In terms of a history of historical consciousness, Jauss placed the advent of modernity within Romanticism, like Koselleck and in contrast to the standard model of English literary periodization. See Jauss, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 11–66.
- 50 Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1927), 5.
- 51 The *loci classici* are Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, 2 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, 1878); and Erwin Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," *Kenyon Review* 6, no. 2 (1944): 201–36. For historiography and critique, see Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948); Green, "Periodization in European and World History," 24–29; Margreta de Grazia, "The Modern Divide: From Either Side," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no. 3 (2007): 455–64 (464n4 on Koselleck); de Grazia, "The Finite Renaissance," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14, no. 2 (2014): 88–93; Le Goff, *Must We Divide History*, 31–58; and Mihoko Suzuki, "Did the English Seventeenth Century Really End at 1660? Subaltern Perspectives on the Continuing Impact of the English Civil Wars," in *Early Modern Histories of Time*, 232–34. On chronologizing comparisons across media, with particular reference to *Renaissance*, see Alastair Fowler, "Periodization and Interart Analogies," *New Literary History* 3, no. 3 (1972): 487–509.
- 52 Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," 202, 223, and 228; and Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, 19.
- 53 Weiskott, "English Political Prophecy," 15–19.
- 54 Jordheim, "Against Periodization," 170. To this version of Koselleck cf., referring to art history, George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1962).
- 55 There is an unexpected but close analogy to be drawn to the metaphorical strategies characteristic of Christian theological apophaticism. Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 39–40,

referring mainly to Pseudo-Dionysius, explains: "the proper route to the apophatic is . . . through the dialectics of the cataphatic. We know the deficiency of our metaphors from the constraints we are under to employ the whole range of metaphorical language available and, precisely because our affirmative and negative metaphors *do* stand in relations of 'Aristotelian' contrariety to one another, we know their deficiencies from their mutual incompatibilities: God *cannot* be both darkness and light, both the Word and silence, both a rock and a breeze in any, even metaphorical, sense that we know of. Of no kind of thing at all can these metaphors be collectively expressive. But then that is *how* we know that God 'is not any kind of thing.'" For *the apophatic*, read *deperiodization*; for *the cataphatic*, read *periodization*; for *metaphors*, read *periods*; for *metaphorical*, read *periodized*; for *affirmative and negative* read *conflicting*; for *God*, read *literary history*; for *darkness and light* and the other pairs of opposing metaphors, substitute pairs of chronologically overlapping period categories.