

**RYAN HEALEY**  
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## Appointments

2025– Postdoctoral Researcher, Universität Basel (University of Basel)  
 Digital Humanities Lab

## Education

- 2025 Ph.D. English Literature, New York University  
 Committee: Clifford Siskin (Chair), Lisa Gitelman, Wendy Lee, Leif Weatherby, Peter de Bolla, and Cameron Buckner  
 Examination fields: Eighteenth-Century Literature and Critical Theory
- 2017 M.Phil. English Literature, University of Cambridge  
 Supervisor: Peter de Bolla  
 Advanced German (C1) (CEFR Certification)
- 2012 B.A. English Literature and Philosophy, McGill University  
 First Class Joint Honours  
 Minor in Middle Eastern Languages (Arabic)
- 2015–16 Volkshochschule Neukölln – Berlin, DE  
 Accreditation in German Language (A1–C1) (November 2015–September 2016)

## Publications

### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

- “The Anxiety of Structure: Attention without Aesthetics in Large Language Models,” *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, vol. 35, no. 72 (Fall 2026), special issue, “Quantifying the Sensible.”
- “The Uses of Genre: Is There An ‘Adam Smith Question?’” with Peter de Bolla, Ewan Jones, Paul Nulty, and Gabriel Recchia, *Representations* 149, Winter 2020.

### **Book Chapters**

- “Generative AI” in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and AI*, eds. Sangam MacDuff and Helen Thaventhiran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2027).

### **Reviews and essays**

- Review of Erich Kästner’s “Going to the Dogs.” [Bookforum](#), January 10, 2013.
- Essay on the *quenelle* for [Maisonneuve](#), March 19, 2014.
- Review of Annie Baker’s “Vermont Plays.” [Maisonneuve](#), December 27, 2012.
- Two essays for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. On [Enrique-Vila Matas](#) (August 31, 2012) and [Bernard Comment](#) (December 16, 2012).

- On the Quebec student strike at McGill, [The New Inquiry](#), June 20, 2012.
- “Cruise Control.” [Harper’s](#). November 2011, p.18. Translation from the Arabic.
- Review of Thomas Glynn’s “The Building.” *Tin House*, Fall 2012.
- Review of Amara Lakhous’s “Divorce Islamic Style.” [Bookforum](#), April 26, 2012.

### **Fellowships and Awards**

Swiss National Science Foundation Scientific Exchanges Grant (2026)  
 NYU Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Dean’s Outstanding Dissertation Award, Best Humanities Dissertation (2026)  
 NYU Center for the Humanities Doctoral Fellowship (2024–25)  
 Halsband Fellowship for 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Studies, Department of English, NYU (2024–25)  
 Dean’s Conference Fund, NYU GSAS (2024)  
 Halsband Fellowship for 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Studies, Department of English, NYU (2023–24)  
 Summer Dissertation Writing Fellowship, NYU Berlin (2023)  
 Conference and Travel Grants (x3), Department of English, NYU (2023, 2024)  
 Provost’s Global Research Initiative Fellowship, NYU London (2023)  
 Halsband Fellowship for 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Studies, Department of English, NYU (2022–23)  
 ASECS/Clark Fellowship, Center for 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Studies, UCLA (2022–23)  
 Mainzer Summer Fellowship, NYU GSAS (2020)  
 Polonsky–Brine Digital Humanities Fellowship, NYU GSAS (2019)  
 MacCracken Fellowship, New York University (2018–2024)

### **Teaching      **University of Basel****

Introduction to Digital Studies (Spring 2026)  
 The Digital and the Literary (Fall 2025)

### **New York University**

Lead Instructor, Department of English, New York University  
 The Digital and the Novel (Summer 2024)

Teaching Assistant, Department of English, New York University  
 Text & Ideas: Systems (Fall 2020)  
 Literatures in English II: 1660–1900 (Spring 2021)  
 Text & Ideas: Objectivity (Fall 2021)  
 Literatures in English I: Medieval and Early Modern (Fall 2022)

### **Work      **IBM Research (May–August 2025)****

Yorktown Heights, New York  
 Doctoral Research Scientist Intern, AI

### **David Graeber Institute (March 2022–Present)**

Editorial Director

### **Verso Books (May 2012–Present)**

Brooklyn, New York

Copyeditor

(titles include Walter Benjamin, Fredric Jameson, Rosa Luxemburg, and more across theory, politics, history, and economics)

**Freelance Copyeditor (August 2012–Present)**

Most recent title: David Graeber, *Pirate Enlightenment* (2023, FSG)

**Harper's Magazine (May–August 2011)**

New York, New York

Editorial Intern / Translator (Arabic)

**Conferences and Presentations**

- Title TBD. The State of Knowledge in the Age of AI, the Re:Enlightenment Project. King's College, University of Cambridge, May 29–31, 2026.
- “Allegory at Scale: Language Machines and the Gravity of Value,” Fredric Jameson and the Future of Critical Theory. Duke University, April 10–12, 2026.
- “A Physics of Value?” Historical Materialism 22. SOAS University of London, November 6, 2025.
- “Creativity or Instability in Machine Knowledge.” The Re:Enlightenment Project. Universität Basel. October 7, 2025.
- “The Problem of Monosemantic Moralism.” IBM Research, AI. Yorktown Heights, New York. August 4, 2025.
- “The Collapse of Interpretation: The Grounding Crisis in Language Models,” Center for the Humanities. New York University, April 1, 2025.
- Chair for panel with Lydia Liu, Sarah Pourciau, and Leif Weatherby. Vernacular AI. Remarque Institute, New York University, February 7, 2025.
- “The Value of Error: On Mechanistic Interpretability.” Techne & Humanities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. ICCT Winter Institute, University of Tokyo, January 8, 2025.
- “Noise and Transformation.” Provocations of the Machine: Intellectual History of Human-Machine Relations. Technische Universität Darmstadt, May 24, 2024.
- “Large Lockean Models.” Roundtable on Artificial Intelligence and the Eighteenth Century. ASECS Annual Meeting, Toronto, April 6, 2024.
- “Fictionality and Attention.” Chair for panel “Eighteenth-Century Machine Learning.” ASECS Annual Meeting, Toronto, April 4, 2024.
- “Abstraction and Genre in Deep Neural Networks.” AI+ DH Webinar: Finding Convergence between Literary Theory & the Theory of Data. New York University, March 13, 2024.
- “AI and Culture.” Ripple Effects of Modern AI seminar. AI for Scientific Research and Digital Theory Lab. New York University, March 5, 2024.
- Respondent to Cameron Buckner, book launch for *From Deep Learning to Rational Machines*. Center for Mind, Brain, and Consciousness and Center for Data Science. New York University, January 26, 2024.
- “Self-Attention and Genre.” Large Language Models and The Writer. MLA Annual Convention, Philadelphia, January 4–7, 2024.
- “Backpropagating Locke's Triangles.” Graduate Research Institute. NYU Berlin, July 10, 2023.
- “Literary History after Machine Learning.” Large Language Models and Culture. NYU Prague, June 13–16, 2023.
- “Abstraction from Locke to Large Language Models.” DH Benelux 2023. Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, May 31–June 2, 2023.
- “Civility-Money: Locke, Clipping, and Abstraction in the 1690s Recoinage Crisis in England.” The Uses and Abuses of Civility, 1500–1700. Université de Neuchâtel, Switzerland, May 26–27, 2023.
- “Engineering Abstraction: A Literary History.” Digital Theory Lab. New York University, November 18, 2022
- “Humanities+: Collaborative Research” discussion with Leif Weatherby. NYU Center for the Humanities. New York University, April 20, 2022.
- “Deep Learning, Deeper States: Eighteenth-Century Adversarial Networks.” Technologies of Bureaucracy:

Before and After the Digital Turn. Stanford–Leuphana Winter Academy. Stanford University, Berlin campus, December 13–18, 2021.

“Transformational and Real Abstractions: A Literary History of Data Artefacts.” Digital Theory Lab. New York University, March 23, 2021

Concluding Discussion with Lisa Gitelman. Reading McLuhan Reading. New York University, March 5–6, 2020.

“Genres of Eighteenth-Century Value: Corpus Development and Analysis.” Polonsky/Brine Digital Humanities Showcase. New York University, September 10, 2019.

“Genres of the Moral Economy: A Computational Approach to the Adam Smith Problem.” Digital Theory Summer School. Kings College London, May 28, 2019.

“Bills of Credit: Quantification in Defoe’s *Journal of the Plague Year* after the South Sea Bubble.” Stranger Danger: Literary Explorations of the Nation, Self and Other. University of Cambridge, April 28, 2017.

### Academic Events Organized

September 2026 – “Information at the Edge of Knowledge: Creativity and Counterfactuality in Language Models,” two-day interdisciplinary “error correction seminar” on LLMs and the problem earmarked by “creativity.” University of Basel.
May 2026 – STS-CH Lecture Series. “Toward a Media Technoscientific Study?: STS and Media as Intersecting Lines” (Henning Schmidgen, Sebastian Giessmann, & others). University of Basel. (co-organized with Ranjodh Singh Dhaliwal)
March 2026 – <i>Digital Theory</i> book discussion with Leif Weatherby, Alexander Galloway, Matthew Handelman, and Beatrice M. Fazi. University of Basel. – Workshop with Seb Franklin on value and automation. University of Basel.

### Professional Service

Peer Review: *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*

### Languages

German (fluent), French (B2), Modern Standard Arabic (B2), Modern Greek (B1)

### Skills

*Programming Languages:* Python, JavaScript

*Computational Stylistics and Stylometry:* R, Stylo, Stylometric Analysis, Cluster Analysis, Principal Components Analysis, Classification, Rolling.Classify

*Corpus Analysis and Topic Modeling:* Cambridge Concept Lab’s Shared Lexis Tool (distributional concept analysis), AntConc, Mallet, Voyant, Corpus Development, Optical Character Recognition

### References

Clifford Siskin  
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