temporary arts "mark a thickening of the present to acknowledge its multiple, interwoven temporalities" (16).

Can these nonlinear temporalities be adapted for our methods of doing literary history? In particular, can they break the powerful hold of periodization as a defining methodology? Literary history has conventionally borrowed its methodology from the discipline of history itself—designating periods in the past with bookends of time, seeing them as developments through time often imaged in organic terms (birth, growth, decline), and analyzing them in terms of continuity and change. The Renaissance, the Restoration, classicism, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, realism, naturalism, modernism, postmodernism—these are familiar categories of literary history. As a philosopher of history, Hayden White long ago identified the figural and narrative tropes that underlie these teleological methodologies of historical analysis (e.g., *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Johns Hopkins UP, 1990). More recently, in "Past/Future," Elias notes that the discipline of history "moves not from the past to the present, but from the present to the past. . . . The present becomes foreshadowed, foretold, pre-figured, in the events of the past, as the historical narrative takes the shape of a coherent story. . . . This is the basis, in fact, of the cause-effect logic of periodization" (*Time: A Vocabulary of the Present* 43). In *On Literary Worlds* (Oxford UP, 2012), Eric Hayot produces a manifesto of his own against "the near-total dominance of the concept of periodization in literary studies" (149).

What methods of literary history might we substitute for a periodization based on clear delineations of past, present, and future? Groom emphasizes the usability of Einstein's 1955 observation, "For those of us who believe in physics, the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion" (qtd. in Groom 13). Elias observes, "Yet while presentism often opposes 'past' and 'future' to 'the present,' the dialectical counter to time as diachronic history (past/future) is in truth not another kind of historical time (the synchronic). The opponent is duration—timeless time, homogenous time—whose synchronic partner is the Event" (35). The "event" in this sense is a lived time that contains other times—in whatever discordant, palimpsestic, and multidimensional form.

I suggest that we can devise a new literary history whose methods are attuned to the temporalities of contemporary time studies. I agree that a contrapuntal dialogue between presentism and historicism contains rich possibilities. History writing—including literary history—is in my view always heuristic, narrating the past through the lens of the present and implied or anticipated future, however thoroughly immersed in the archive the historian might be. And presentism is never purely presentist but is always informed—as the present itself is—by the past and future within it. That said, I think nonlinear concepts of time can free up new ways of doing literary history, ways that are attuned to historical contextualization without being limited to ideologically weighted periodizations, that take into account the multiplicity, heterogeneity, and (dis)continuities of lived temporalities in cross-cultural, intercultural, and transcultural worlds.

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Reply:

I thank Susan Stanford Friedman for deepening our discussion of historicism, presentism, and futurism, bringing a meditation on linear and nonlinear time to bear on all three. A departure from linearity would indeed have a profound impact on our discipline, institutionally as well as intellectually. The chronologies of our scholarship, the division of subject matter and the attendant job descriptions, and the knowledge of literature that we try to convey

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to students would all look different if we began with the premise that time is multicentric, multipath, and multidirectional. While scholars like Joel Burges, Amy J. Elias, and Amelia Groom focus on the present as the epicenter for nonlinearity, Friedman's important book *Planetary Modernisms: Provocations on Modernity across Time* (Columbia UP, 2015) shows that an alternative conception of time can also transform the shapes of the past and the future.

In this context I'd especially like to mention the work of Kyle Powys Whyte, a Potawatomi philosopher, author, and activist who has proposed just such a nonlinear approach to the Anthropocene, giving equal weight to the past, the present, and the future. The massive disruptions that we now associate with climate change—ecosystem collapse, species loss, involuntary relocation, and pandemics—have been the fabric of life for Native Americans since the sixteenth century. Newly seen as apocalyptic in the twenty-first, these disruptions seem far less so to those who have long suffered under them and lived through them, emerging with a different relation to the nonhuman world and a time-honed practice of resilience and survival. Climate adaptation has always been key to indigenous communities, Whyte argues, a form of lived time that makes them veterans and pioneers in a "forward-looking framework of justice" shaped by memories of the past, honoring ancestors and descendants both ("Justice Forward: Tribes, Climate Adaptation and Responsibility," *Climate Change*, 3 Apr. 2013, www.nwclimatescience.org/sites/default/files/2013bootcamp/readings/Whyte_2013b.pdf).

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Challenges in Contemporary Lyric Theory

To the Editor:

Powerfully opposing the neglect of the medieval period by many students of lyric, Ricardo Matthews's "Song in Reverse: The Medieval Prosimetrum and Lyric Theory" (vol. 132, no. 2, Mar. 2018, pp. 296–313) enriches lyric studies by both precept and example. Previous critics had classified poetry in the prosimetrum tradition as merely rhetorical convention and hence lacking individuated subjectivity; Matthews, however, argues that by placing a lyric in a narrative situation, this genre moves from a wholly conventional text to one marked by self-expression.

Matthews's assertions about the neglect of the medieval in lyric studies are indisputable. His analyses are also germane to other historical domains in lyric studies and, indeed, to fields beyond it. The implications for global discussions of lyric would require an entire essay of their own, but we can recognize here that even more egregious than sidelining medieval literature is the widespread neglect of classical texts in many contemporary versions of lyric studies. The introduction of narrative specifications in the prosimetrum could be compared to the episodes in Elizabethan prose romances where an apparently anonymous poem, previously encountered on a stone or tree, is subsequently linked to particular authors and situations. And Matthews's posited interplay between lyric and narrative elements extends recent work that has replaced rote statements that lyric temporarily halts narrative with subtle models of their interrelation, which sometimes even extends to hybridity.

Yet despite these and other significant achievements, at some junctures the essay offers problematic contentions, and at others it exemplifies recurrent limitations in lyric studies and in the broader disciplines of literary and cultural studies. For example, Matthews claims that the knowledge that a song may have been performed before does not conflict with its potential to represent and even create the subjectivity of a performer. But does not the awareness that someone else has performed it in the past—and, significantly, may perform it in the future or even join in the current per-

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