

Anglistentag 2023

Section Proposal / Themenvorschlag für eine Sektion

Early Modern Futures

Early modern texts continually express both anxiety about and expectation of the future, thereby reflecting on the period as a time of social, political, and religious transformation and conflict. From the concerns with ephemerality and immortality found in the sonnets of William Shakespeare to the anticipations of a growing number of known seventeenth-century female writers like Hester Pulter, Margaret Cavendish, and Lucy Hutchinson, each writer idiosyncratically spoke to the futures they imagined out of the upheavals of the seventeenth century.

This section proposal for the Anglistentag 2023 seeks to bring to the fore how early modern literature prophesied, speculated on, theorised and projected possible futures. As many of today's conflicts find their analogues and, in some cases, their origins in the religious and socio-political conflicts of the Reformation and the English Civil War, it has become a project of urgent necessity to look to the past in order to devise new perspectives and strategies for the future. We want to explore how early modern responses to the pressures of their time and their conceptualizations of possible futures may challenge us today.

This section would welcome papers for traditional panels as well as shorter 'lightning talks' for a workshop session on forward-looking didactic and methodological approaches to working with early modern texts, contexts, and language. Potential questions and topics include, but are not limited to:

- How are concepts of the future and progress conceived in early modern texts?
- How do genres, modes, and forms of knowledge model, elaborate, or perform futurity?
- How do political, economic, or theological futures interact with literary accounts of what is to come?
- How do later texts (18th to 21st century), through their engagement with early modern texts, create futures of early modern literature and culture?
- What relevance does studying early modern literature, history, or culture have for students today? How can this significance be communicated in the classroom?
- How might one use digital tools to engage students with early modern literature and its socio-political, historical, or linguistic contexts?
- What are the futures of Early Modern Studies in English language, literature, and didactics?

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