

# Introduction: Post-concepts in historical perspective

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## Post-concepts

When the *Oxford English Dictionary* named 'post-truth' its Word of the Year 2016, this was broadly interpreted as evidence of a disturbing change in political mores. The sudden popularity of post-truth – within a single year, use of the term had increased by around 2,000 per cent – was understood as indicative of a new type of political discourse, embraced most unscrupulously by Donald Trump, in which 'objective facts are less influential than appeals to emotion'.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the term revealed uncertainty about the implications of this emotional regime. Unlike, say, 'political emotivism', post-truth did not attempt to identify key characteristics of the Trump era. What the term expressed instead was that a twittering president challenged conventional understandings of political communication, White House strategy planning, and American foreign diplomacy. The post-concept, in other words, conveyed that a familiar world was disappearing in the rear-view mirror and that it remained to be seen into what new reality President Trump was propelling his country.<sup>2</sup>

This does not merely apply to the Word of the Year 2016. Post-truth is one of many post-concepts that commentators use in their attempts to make sense of a changing world. Western societies are routinely described as post-industrial, post-traditional, and post-Christian. Our world order is labelled as post-Cold War, post-American, post-neoliberal, and post-hegemonic. Post-racial and post-ethnic are among the most emotionally charged and politically loaded concepts in the current public debate.<sup>3</sup> In addition, every culturally literate person is familiar with postmodernism (perhaps even with post-postmodernism as popularized by architects and urban planners like Tom Turner).<sup>4</sup> William Britelle and other composers who prefer to draw eclectically on pop, jazz and classical music advertise their music as post-genre.<sup>5</sup> Old-style feminists have been overhauled by postfeminists and post-postfeminists (not to mention post-post-postfeminists, who astonish feminists with fewer posts by preferring full-time parenting over a

professional career).<sup>6</sup> Also, in the humanities and social sciences, it hardly seems possible to read a state-of-the-art survey article without stumbling upon at least a handful of post-concepts. While poststructuralist and post-colonial belong to every student's basic vocabulary, current debates in literary studies, for example, revolve around post-theory and postcriticism.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, philosophers and cultural theorists try to develop posthumanist frameworks for understanding the challenges that intelligent robots, uploaded minds, and other posthuman beings pose to us, humans without post-prefixes.<sup>8</sup>

Surveying this plethora of post-concepts, two social scientists recently sighed that 'one would think only a new titan from the end of the world would come up with another "post" term'.<sup>9</sup> However, one does not have to be a Jürgen Habermas or a Slavoj Žižek to found a Post Carbon Institute, launch a Post-Post-Race album or establish a Post-Imperial menswear brand. Posts are literally everywhere. They continue to pop up in the most unlikely places, from political think tanks and designer studios to news-rooms and graduate students' offices. Given this fact, it seems far safer to predict that the last post has not yet been sounded.

### Post-everything

How new is this habit of adding post-prefixes to proper nouns? Writing in 2007, an influential Peruvian author characterized the twenty-first century as a departure from all that came before it. 'We are at a new beginning,' he declared, 'in an era that is "post-" everything we have ever known: a postmodern, postindustrial, postcapitalist, postcolonial, and post-socialist society.'<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, however, similar observations had already been made in the 1970s. In 1974, for example, sociologist Dennis H. Wrong wrote with thinly veiled disapproval about 'the post boys' in his field – figures like Daniel Bell who defined the Western world as 'post-industrial, or post-bourgeois, or post-capitalist, or post-modern, or post-economic, or post-Christian, or post-Marxist, or post-traditional, or even post-civilized.' In Wrong's perception, 'enough posts abound in contemporary social thought to build a picket fence!'<sup>11</sup> (As we shall see in a moment, this was not an unapt metaphor, given that post-concepts indeed tend to 'draw a fence around a part of reality [and] call that the past'.)<sup>12</sup>

Wrong's survey of post-concepts was indebted to Bell's *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973) – a book that combined advocacy of one specific post-concept with somewhat amused commentary on the sudden popularity of such concepts in the social sciences. Noting that the post-war United States had been characterized as post-bourgeois and

post-collectivist, among other things, Bell concluded: 'It used to be that the great literary modifier was the word *beyond*: beyond tragedy, beyond culture, beyond society. But we seem to have exhausted the beyond, and today the sociological modifier is *post*.'<sup>13</sup> This was confirmed by others who observed that 'Post-Civilization, Post-Modern, Post-Industrial, Post-Historical, Post-Ideological, Post-Electronic, Post-Technological, Post-Christian, Post-Freudian, Post-Affluent' were gaining popularity as labels for the present age.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, already by 1968, sociologist John Porter signalled that post-industrial, post-capitalist and post-bourgeois had 'been in currency for some time' – although Porter's apologies for adding yet another neologism (postmodern) to the list shows that post-concepts had not yet become common parlance.<sup>15</sup>

On the one hand, these observations show that concepts like post-capitalism and post-ideological have histories that stretch at least half a century back. Although post-ideology became a popular term in the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the adjective can be traced back, ironically, to the start of the Cold War, in the 1950s, when sociologists like Edward Shils embraced the term mainly to discredit Marxist modes of social analysis.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, although post-capitalism has enjoyed high visibility since the publication of Paul Mason's book of that title in 2015, the term was actually introduced by Anthony Crosland and Ralf Dahrendorf in the 1950s.<sup>17</sup> While postmodernism entered common parlance in the 1980s and 1990s, American poet-critics such as Randall Jarrell and John Berryman already used the term in the 1940s.<sup>18</sup> Post-industrial, though most popular in the 1960s and 1970s, even reaches back to 1914, when Ananda Coomaraswamy and Arthur J. Penty published an edited collection of *Essays in Post-Industrialism*.<sup>19</sup> And so one could go on: all of these post-concepts have histories – often intertwining histories – that can be traced in rich detail.

On the other hand, the 1970s commentators quoted above did more than notice the emergence of certain new post-concepts. What intrigued them most of all was the popularity of post-prefixes *as such*. Writing in 1964, the journalist Karl E. Meyer still associated this language with a cohort that he called 'the post-generation – post-ideological, post-New Deal, post-Freud, post-Joyce, post-coital and now even post-New York Post'.<sup>20</sup> Ten years later, Wrong's remarks on 'the post boys' in American sociology suggested something similar. As post-concepts had a ring of being novel and provocative, they were not instantly picked up by everyone.<sup>21</sup> However, from the mid 1980s onwards, when the English-language translation of Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition postmoderne* (1979) popularized the term postmodernism,<sup>22</sup> post-concepts became increasingly more common. This only accelerated when, around 1990, the adjectives postcolonial and

poststructuralist established themselves in academic jargon.<sup>23</sup> Judging by a series of critical interventions varying on the title of Kwame Anthony Appiah's 1991 article, 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?', post-language turned out to be infectious.<sup>24</sup> Post-concepts were coined or defined in analogy to each other, thereby creating a network of post-terms, which in turn became an indispensable resource for scholars advocating 'turns' or 'paradigm shifts' in their respective fields of study (think of the post-positivist turn in philosophy, the post-secular turn in religious studies, and the post-racial turn in cultural theory).<sup>25</sup> All this suggests that while individual post-concepts may have histories of their own, the phenomenon of interpreting the world through post-lenses also emerged out of a particular historical background.

### The age of the post

For this reason, this volume presents itself as an intellectual history of 'the age of the post', that is, as a history of how people began to conceive of themselves, their societies or their understanding of the world as moving beyond something that no longer met the demands of the time. Just as the nineteenth century was, among other things, an 'age of questions' – a period when commentators spent much energy debating the 'Eastern question', the 'woman question', the 'tuberculosis question', and the 'social question'<sup>26</sup> – so the second half of the twentieth century was, among other things, a time when post-industrial, post-bourgeois, post-Christian, and postmodern were broadly experienced as capturing the 'spirit of the age'. This volume raises the question: What made these post-prefixes so attractive?

Posing this question does not imply commitment to the thesis that mid-twentieth-century Western societies 'entered a new phase of [their] history, marked by a varied and widespread use of the prefix "post"'.<sup>27</sup> Instead of proposing a periodization scheme ourselves, we would like to inquire why twentieth-century intellectuals felt urged to engage in periodization by distinguishing between stages in the evolution of Western societies or by relegating certain ideas or practices to the past. So instead of treating the emergence of post-terms as indicative of a major shift in Western societies, we are curious to find out what these terms reveal about people's 'relations to the past' or 'regimes of historicity' – their experience of change as well as their sense of continuity and their negotiation of distance and proximity.<sup>28</sup>

Against this background, the volume's leading questions are: When did the 'post-age' start?<sup>29</sup> To what extent did early post-concepts, like post-industrial and post-Christian, define the conceptual parameters within which later ones could operate? Why did post-terms stick? Did they testify

to what Frank Kermode, writing in 1967, called ‘the sense of an ending’ or, in a more activist key, reveal a desire to move beyond the inheritance of a pre-war world?<sup>30</sup> Where did diagnosis end and advocacy or criticism begin? To what extent did post-concepts draw on ‘epochal’ modes of historical thinking? If post-prefixes mark distance or dissociation, then what kind of distances (temporal, ideological, aesthetic) did they allow for? What were the political contexts in which post-ideological and postcolonial could flourish? How did ‘post’ relate to other prefixes, such as ‘anti’ and ‘neo’?<sup>31</sup> And who were ‘the post boys’ behind all this? To what extent are we, current users of post-terms, indebted to figures like Will Herberg, Daniel Bell, Robert Bellah and Ihab Hassan, whose names repeatedly turn up in this volume because they helped popularize multiple post-terms?<sup>32</sup>

### Existing literature

Whoever consults existing scholarship in the hope of finding answers to these questions is likely to make three discoveries. First, there is not exactly a lack of articles on the defining features of individual post-terms. Second, despite this wealth of literature, historical studies on the emergence, spread and uses of post-concepts are virtually non-existent. Third, most existing studies are interventions in theoretical debates instead of retrospectives – which may help explain both why there are so many of them and why historical questions are not most prominent among their concerns.

This does not imply, of course, that studies like Appiah’s aforementioned article have nothing to say about, for instance, the modes of distancing at work in terms like postmodern and postcolonial. Appiah helpfully argues that, in these cases at least, the prefix does not denote a historical transition, but serves as a ‘space-clearing gesture’ that calls into question an ‘exclusivity of insight’ claimed by modernism and colonialism alike.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, the ‘post’ in postcolonial does something different than the ‘post’ in post-industrial. Whereas, for Bell, post-industrial referred to an epochal ‘change in the social structure’ of American society,<sup>34</sup> the ‘post’ in postmodern and postcolonial corresponds to a change in perspective more than to a perceived change in reality. So a first insight that can be drawn from existing literature is that post-prefixes can refer to two kinds of history: the *historia res gestae* (the historical process as interpreted by twentieth-century commentators) and the *historia rerum gestarum* (the stories through which people make sense of their pasts, each with their own limitations and underlying assumptions).

Having said this, the question on which of these two levels post-concepts operate is not always easy to answer, given that discontinuities of the kind

captured in the term post-industrial are, of course, created in the historical imagination and therefore always a matter of interpretation. As such, the 'post' in post-industrial can be a 'space-clearing gesture', or a form of critical dissociation from previously held positions, just as much as shorthand for a transition in historical reality. As Ella Shohat has argued, this ambiguity is characteristic even of postcolonialism. In her reading, this post-concept 'implies both going beyond anti-colonial nationalist theory as well as a movement beyond a specific point in history' – that is, beyond colonial regimes in the so-called Third World and struggles for independence that helped bring about decolonization in the course of the twentieth century. Unlike Appiah, therefore, Shohat maintains that the adjective post-colonial not only marks a distancing from colonial types of discourse, but also signals 'a passage into a new period and a closure of a certain historical event or age, officially stamped with dates'.<sup>35</sup> Apparently, the first thing that understanding a post-concept requires is elucidating what the root term (the noun following the prefix) denotes. What exactly is it that the post-prefix seeks to challenge, criticize or reject?

A second relevant distinction is made by Arif Dirlik, who distinguishes between two kinds of relations between prefix and noun. Apart from post 'as transcending the immediate past', there is post 'as being conditioned in a historical sense by what came earlier'.<sup>36</sup> This is to say that post-prefixes can be markers of change-in-continuity, but also signs of continuity-in-discontinuity. Arnold Toynbee's musings on the post-Christian condition of 1950s Europe are a case in point. On the one hand, Toynbee observed with regret that Christian faith seemed increasingly less relevant, not only to individual citizens, but also to public institutions in Europe. On the other, he warned that democracy, freedom and human rights cannot flourish if severed from the soil that nourished them. For Toynbee, then, the 'post' in post-Christian was simultaneously a marker of discontinuity (rapid secularization) and a marker of continuity (Europeans remaining heirs to their Christian past, whether they liked it or not).<sup>37</sup>

Helpful as these conceptual distinctions may be, historical questions of the sort raised above hardly figure in the existing literature. Indeed, examples like Toynbee's, from the immediate post-war period, are strikingly absent, not only from specialized articles, but also from broadly conceived volumes like *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (1991) and *The Post-Marked World: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (2013).<sup>38</sup> Judging by these studies, most authors examine post-constructions in order to stimulate conceptual theorizing. They examine older post-terms, such as postmodernism or poststructuralism, with an eye to defining or challenging new ones. Much of the relevant literature, in other words, engages with post-constructions from theoretical

or conceptual points of view, without paying more than cursory attention to historical backgrounds. Existing scholarship has little to say about where post-concepts came from, who brought them into circulation, how they spread, and what they meant.<sup>39</sup>

### Aims and methods

This volume, by contrast, seeks to put these historical questions centre stage. It does so by offering intellectual histories of some of the most influential post-terms from the past hundred years: post-capitalist, post-Keynesian, post-Christian, post-ideological, postmodern, post-secular, poststructuralist, postcolonial, postfeminist, and post-traditional. The chapters collected in this volume ground these concepts in varied and shifting historical contexts. They explore their articulation, proliferation, reception and redefinition, pay attention to tensions around alternative meanings, even within single texts, and highlight the range of interpreters, in and outside of Western academia, that mobilized these post-concepts. Although the result is, of course, far from comprehensive, it does show how fruitful it is to complement conceptual reflection with intellectual historical study. As highlighted in the epilogue, historical analysis as offered in this volume can add much-needed depth and nuance to contemporary debates about what it means to ‘live in world of “posts”’.<sup>40</sup>

In order to ensure maximum cohesion and allow for comparison between chapters, the volume has been organized around five interpretive principles.<sup>41</sup>

The first of these is *positioning*: All post-concepts are ‘positioning concepts’ with relational meanings. While they assert a genealogical connection to their root concepts, they also facilitate what Appiah calls a ‘distancing of the ancestors’.<sup>42</sup> Following Mark Salber Phillips, this volume assumes that such positioning is best understood as a multidimensional activity with epistemic, aesthetic, moral and political dimensions.<sup>43</sup> These modes of positioning, moreover, can combine in complex ways: aesthetic distance, for example, can accompany political proximity. Distance and proximity are also relative rather than absolute terms: they mark the ends of a continuum. This implies that the positioning work done by post-terms forces us to consider two questions in every instance: What continuities and discontinuities with the root concept does this particular post-construction imply? What new definitional possibilities emerge with the use of a post-prefix in this context?

*Performativity*: Post-concepts do not simply mark, reflect or interpret a pre-existing demarcation between two periods of time. Rather, they establish and

enact that demarcation. They define a visible fault line – the ‘fence’ alluded to above – between past and present and propose a specific understanding of the difference between them. Indeed, as Barbara Adam notes, post-terms often produce sharp boundaries where none exist by turning ‘ongoing and embedded processes into disembedded, static states’.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, distances between past and present are not simply there, they are always created, for specific purposes, in different manners at different times.<sup>45</sup> So the question is: What prompts such historical ‘otherings’ and what agendas lie behind them?<sup>46</sup> And to what extent do such efforts draw on historicist notions of development, especially in distinguishing ‘eras’ or ‘epochs’?<sup>47</sup>

*Transfer:* Temporal borders are not the only boundaries involved in the use of post-constructions. As virtually every chapter in this volume illustrates, post-terms travelled across disciplinary, linguistic and geographical boundaries. Indeed, many such concepts – think of post-colonialism and postmodernism – became inherently interdisciplinary by resonating throughout the twentieth-century humanities and social sciences. These concepts also traversed geographical and linguistic borders. Yet these travels often involved key shifts in meaning. The authors in this volume therefore raise questions like: Why was ‘French post-structuralism’ largely made in the US and how did it travel (back) to Europe? What were the mechanisms of transfer in such cases?

*Interconnectedness:* Although the volume is organized around individual post-concepts, it reveals unexpected patterns of interaction between post-concepts at two levels. First, there often were significant overlaps in meaning, as in the shared historicist assumptions that shaped both post-Christian and post-ideological discourses. Second, the terms often intersected in the biographies of individuals. In circles around the World Council of Churches, for instance, Hans Hoekendijk helped spread multiple post-concepts, from post-Christian and post-ecclesiastical to post-bourgeois and post-personal. One wonders, did these constructions reinforce one another? Did they draw on shared assumptions?

*Conceptual webs:* The chapters in this volume proceed from the assumption that every concept rests on a wider conceptual web of ideas and associated terms that anchor and deepen its meanings. As Jason Josephson argues, concepts are ‘nodes in a conceptual network and gain their function according to their links to other nodes’.<sup>48</sup> These links, says Josephson, take on different forms, from simple relations of difference or similarity to more complex forms of interaction. Thus, in addition to tracing the genealogy of particular post-concepts, the chapters in this volume also attend to wider webs of concepts that sustain them. They ask not only, ‘How has this post-construction been used over time and across space?’ but also, ‘What wider web of concepts and terms sustains each of its various meanings?’



It is worth highlighting that precisely this contextualizing approach allows the volume to trace post-constructions through a broad range of genres and fields. By comparing how sociologists, economists, historians and religious scholars diagnosed their time or positioned themselves vis-à-vis existing approaches in their fields, it tries to excavate a discipline-transcending history replete with unexpected connections, transfers and parallels between fields that are too often studied in isolation from one other. In doing so, the volume encourages historians of sociology, historians of theology and historians of political thought to transcend their disciplinary boundaries and work together towards a rapprochement between the social sciences and the humanities (including philosophy and theology).<sup>49</sup> Some chapters even show affinity with history of knowledge approaches as advocated by Lorraine Daston and others.<sup>50</sup> They seek to transcend yet another boundary: between academic and non-academic circuits of knowledge production and knowledge circulation. Post-terms lend themselves well to such treatment, as professors never had a monopoly on post-terms. On the contrary, part of what makes ‘the age of the post’ so interesting is that pastors, poets, journalists and politicians sometimes used post-terms just as eagerly as social scientists and humanities scholars.<sup>51</sup>

### Structure of the volume

The essays collected in this volume are clustered in three broadly chronologically organized parts. Tracing the emergence of post-language among mid-twentieth-century intellectuals, Part I shows how prominent religious thinkers were in introducing terms like post-Christian, post-Protestant and post-secular. Also, the chapters on post-Christian and post-ideological show how deeply ‘post boys’ such as Christopher Dawson, Raymond Aron, Edward Shils and Daniel Bell were indebted to historicist modes of thinking. In suggesting that an ‘era’ or ‘age’ had come to an end, these intellectuals all drew on stadial philosophies of history. By contrast, the ‘postcapitalist vision’ as articulated in Europe and the United States alike eschewed such bold demarcations between past and present. In Howard Brick’s analysis, it was ‘characterized by a great deal of ambivalence and uncertainty’ – even though it also favoured developmental modes of thinking.

In the second part of the volume, devoted to the heydays of ‘the age of the post’, such explicit philosophies of history recede into the background. Even if postcolonial started as a periodizer, most of the post-terms that rose to prominence in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s expressed intellectual distance – from New Criticism, in the case of poststructuralist, or from mainstream economics, in the case of post-Keynesian – more than

historical change. At the same time, while some of this distance was clearly intended, post-terms were not only labels of self-identification, they often also served as derogatory terms. As Brian McHale observed in 1982: ‘Most writing about postmodern writing to date has been polemical or apologetic.’<sup>52</sup> By examining these polemic exchanges from a historical point of view – attentive to key players, cultural contexts and mechanisms of transfer – the chapters in Part II relate abstract concepts, sometimes associated with ‘high theory’, to the concrete realities of conference organizers that invited Jacques Derrida to the United States and groundbreaking volumes like Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin’s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989). At the same time, such contextualizing treatments do not imply that the theoretical issues at stake are placed between brackets: Stephen Turner’s chapter deftly shows the difficulties inherent to how Alasdair MacIntyre, Robert Bellah and Anthony Giddens define the post-traditional.

Part III, finally, subjects some more recent post-constructions to critical scrutiny. Chapters on postfeminism and posthumanism illustrate how deeply the post-prefix has become ingrained in the language of cultural theory and cultural criticism. As Adriaan van Veldhuizen argues in his epilogue to the volume, this suggests that what he calls the ‘post-family’ is unlikely not to bring forth more children, nephews and nieces. With post-truth now routinely being invoked as a label for our time, there are few signs that the age of the post is approaching its end.

## Notes

- 1 Alison Flood, ‘“Post-Truth” Named Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries’, *The Guardian* (15 November 2016).
- 2 For more recent connotations of the term, see the epilogue to this volume.
- 3 Helpful titles include David Theo Goldberg, *Are We All Post-Racial Yet?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015) and David A. Hollinger, ‘The Concept of Post-Racial: How Its Easy Dismissal Obscures Important Questions’, *Daedalus*, 140 (2011), 174–82.
- 4 Tom Turner, *City as Landscape: A Post Post-Modern View of Design and Planning* (London: E. & F. N. Spon, 1996).
- 5 David Hajdu, ‘The Genre of Post-Genre’, *The Nation* (13 March 2018).
- 6 Ruth Godden, ‘Joys and Pains of Full-Time Parenting’, *The Times* (3 January 2004).
- 7 Elizabeth S. Anker and Rita Felski (eds), *Critique and Postcritique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).
- 8 See Chapter 11 on posthumanism by Yolande Jansen, Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp and Leire Urricelqui.

- 9 Arpad Szakolczai and Bjørn Thomassen, 'Introduction: Rethinking Social Theory with Anthropology', in Arpad Szakolczai and Bjørn Thomassen (eds), *From Anthropology to Social Theory: Rethinking the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1–19, p. 5.
- 10 Gustavo Gutiérrez, 'Memory and Prophecy', in Daniel G. Groody (ed.), *The Option for the Poor in Christian Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 17–38, p. 32.
- 11 Dennis H. Wrong, 'On Thinking About the Future', *The American Sociologist*, 9 (1974), 26–31, 27. Closely related to the 'post boys', in Wrong's assessment, were the 'thanatologists': authors who caught public attention by boldly proclaiming 'the Death of God, or of Man, or of the Family, or the End of Liberalism, or of Ideology, or of Culture, or of Literature, or, more bathetically, of the Novel'.
- 12 Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 12.
- 13 Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 53. These sentences were almost literally taken from 'Starting from the Post', *Public Interest*, 24 (1971), 108–9 – a short article that listed no less than nineteen post-concepts proposed by theologians and, especially, social scientists. See also 'The Nation: A Parcel of Posts', *Time* (25 October 1971).
- 14 Eleanore Price Mather, *Edward Hicks, Primitive Quaker: His Religion in Relation to His Art* (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill Publications, 1970), p. 33.
- 15 John Porter, 'The Future of Upward Mobility', *American Sociological Review*, 33 (1968), 5–19, 5 n. 1.
- 16 See Adriaan van Veldhuizen's chapter in this volume.
- 17 See Howard Brick's contribution to this volume.
- 18 See Hans Bertens' chapter in this volume.
- 19 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Arthur J. Penty (eds), *Essays in Post-Industrialism: A Symposium of Prophecy Concerning the Future of Society* (London: T. N. Foulis, 1914). Cf. Howard Brick, 'Optimism of the Mind: Imagining Post-Industrial Society in the 1960s and 1970s', *American Quarterly*, 44 (1992), 348–80, 351, 375 n. 12.
- 20 Karl E. Meyer, 'Ironist and Iconoclast', *The New Leader*, 47 (1964), 27–8, 28.
- 21 Post-concepts have not seldom elicited ironic commentary along the lines of Umberto Eco's famous quip: 'God is dead, Marxism is undergoing crisis, and I don't feel so hot myself.' Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p. 126.
- 22 Niels Brügger, 'What about the Postmodern? The Concept of the Postmodern in the Work of Lyotard', *Yale French Studies*, 99 (2001), 77–92.
- 23 See Edward Baring's and Andrew Sartori's contributions to this volume.
- 24 Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?', *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (1991), 336–57. In 'Varieties of Nationalism: Post-Revisionist Irish Studies', *Irish Studies Review*, 4 (1996), 34–7, Willy Maley asked: 'Is the "post" in post-colonialism the same as the "post" in post-nationalism?' (34).

- Five years later, David Chioni Moore added: 'Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique', *PMLA*, 116 (2001), 111–28. More recent variations on Appiah's title include Graham Huggan, 'Is the "Post" in "Postsecular" the "Post" in "Postcolonial"?', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 56 (2010), 751–68 and Shu-mei Shih, 'Is the *Post-* in Postsocialism the *Post-* in Posthumanism?', *Social Text*, 30 (2012), 27–50.
- 25 For the rhetoric of 'turns' in the humanities, see the forum section, 'Historiographic "Turns" in Critical Perspective', *The American Historical Review*, 117:3 (2012).
  - 26 Holly Case, *The Age of Questions: Or, a First Attempt at an Aggregate History of the Eastern, Social, Woman, American, Jewish, Polish, Bullion, Tuberculosis, and Many Other Questions over the Nineteenth Century, and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).
  - 27 Francesco Coniglione, 'Introduction: From the Age of "Posts" to the Knowledge Society', in Coniglione (ed.), *Through the Mirrors of Science: New Challenges for Knowledge-Based Societies* (Heusenstamm: Ontos, 2010), 13–32, 13.
  - 28 Herman Paul, 'Relations to the Past: A Research Agenda for Historical Theorists', *Rethinking History*, 19 (2015), 450–8; François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and the Experience of Time*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).
  - 29 I borrow this term from Gregory L. Ulmer, 'The Post-Age', *Diacritics*, 11 (1981), 39–56.
  - 30 Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).
  - 31 Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Modern, Anti, Post, and Neo: How Social Theories Have Tried to Understand the "New World" of "Our Time"', *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 23 (1994), 165–97.
  - 32 Although there has been some debate on the relevance or irrelevance of hyphens between prefix and noun, the variety of spelling conventions in our source material is too large to allow for any generalizations on this issue.
  - 33 Appiah, 'Post- in Postmodernism', 348, 341–2.
  - 34 Bell, *Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, p. x.
  - 35 Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the "Post-Colonial"', *Social Text*, 31/32 (1992), 99–113, 101. For a critical response see Stuart Hall, 'When Was "the Post-Colonial"?' Thinking at the Limit', in Ian Chambers and Lidia Curti (eds), *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 242–60.
  - 36 Arif Dirlik, '[Interview]', in Shaobo Xie and Fengzhen Wang (eds), *Dialogues on Cultural Studies: Interviews with Contemporary Critics* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002), pp. 9–46, p. 20.
  - 37 See my own chapter in this volume.
  - 38 Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds), *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991); Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, Izabella Penier and Sumit Chakrabarti (eds), *The Post-Marked World: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

- 39 Notable exceptions include Tanya Ann Kennedy, *Historicizing Post-Discourses: Postfeminism and Postracialism in United States Culture* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017); Howard Brick, *Transcending Capitalism: Visions of a New Society in Modern American Thought* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006) and Hans Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* (London: Routledge, 1995).
- 40 Joyce Appleby, 'Introduction: Jefferson and His Complex Legacy', in Peter S. Onuf (ed.), *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 1–16, p. 14.
- 41 I would like to thank K. Healan Gaston and Adriaan van Veldhuizen for their help in formulating these interpretive principles.
- 42 Appiah, 'Post- in Postmodernism', 342.
- 43 Mark Salber Phillips, *On Historical Distance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).
- 44 Barbara Adam, 'The Temporal Landscape of Globalizing Culture and the Paradox of Postmodern Futures', in Barbara Adam and Stuart Allan (eds), *Theorizing Culture: An Interdisciplinary Critique after Postmodernism* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 249–62, p. 258.
- 45 Chris Lorenz and Berber Bevernage (eds), *Breaking Up Time: Negotiating the Borders Between Present, Past, and Future* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).
- 46 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
- 47 I take 'developmental historicism' in Mark Bevir's sense of the word, as shorthand for a mode of historical thinking that highlights 'development' over time while distinguishing sharply between distinct 'periods' or 'epochs', each with their own typical zeitgeist: Mark Bevir, 'Historicism and the Human Sciences in Victorian Britain', in Bevir (ed.), *Historicism and the Human Sciences in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 1–20.
- 48 Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 77.
- 49 As advocated by Wolf Feuerhahn, 'Les sciences humaines et sociales: des disciplines du contexte?', *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines*, 30 (2017), 7–29. See also Rens Bod et al., 'A New Field: History of Humanities', *History of Humanities*, 1 (2016), 1–8.
- 50 Lorraine Daston, 'The History of Science and the History of Knowledge', *KNOW*, 1 (2017), 131–54. See also 'History of Science or History of Knowledge?', special issue of *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 42 (2019), 109–270; Johan Östling et al. (eds), *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018).
- 51 Well before 'history of knowledge' became a common phrase, Lutz Raphael described the often entangled relations between societal practices and social scientific knowledge in terms of a 'scientification of the social'. See Lutz Raphael, 'Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodologische und konzeptuelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts', *Geschichte*

*und Gesellschaft*, 22 (1996), 165–93 and Kerstin Brückweh et al. (eds), *Engineering Society: The Role of the Human and Social Sciences in Modern Societies, 1880–1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

- 52 Brian McHale, 'Writing about Postmodern Writing', *Poetics Today*, 3 (1982), 211–27, 212.