

Time and Temporality in Literature and Media

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University of Geneva, Philosophes Room 211

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"Bartleby, Race, and Time"

With this paper, I will make the case for seeing Melville's Bartleby as a freedom seeker who escapes slavery only to find himself transcribing mortgage agreements on enslaved people. Bartleby's infamous refusal to continue doing so -- "I prefer not to"-- constitutes a refusal to reproduce the system powered by Wall Street's capitalization on and investments in slavery. In keeping with the workshop's theme, I will discuss the ways in which Melville represents capitalism and slavery in relation to future time in "Bartleby, the Scrivener."

Dana Medoro is Professor of American Literature in the Department of English, Theatre, Film & Media at the University of Manitoba on Treaty One Territory. She is the author of *The Bleeding of America: Menstruation as Symbolic Economy in Pynchon, Faulkner, and Morrison* (2002) and, most recently, *Certain Concealments: Poe, Hawthorne, and Early Nineteenth-Century Abortion* (2022). She has published on a wide range of writers, including Benjamin Franklin, Emily Bronte, William Faulkner, Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, and Han Kang. She is currently working on a book-length project on Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," slavery, and capitalism.