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*What difference has the Making Publics Project (MaPs) made to your work, and your life, as a PhD student?*

I am a graduate student in English, currently writing a thesis entitled “Moveable Text: Literary Realism and Representations of Motion in Early Modern Britain.” The Making Publics project is an exciting research opportunity for me because the group of scholars emulates the networks of shared knowledge it actively studies. Researchers at McGill and other universities, encompassing a range of scholarly fields, have assembled to investigate the ways in which early modern individuals created voluntary communities in an age marked by new discoveries and technologies as well as by ancient texts and ideas. Such forms of association are reflected in the variety of approaches employed by the MaPs project: members can meet face-to-face through workshops, colloquia, and annual meetings, which are complemented by sustained electronic communication. In my role as a Graduate Student Associate with the group, I have presented my research at the “Printing and its Publics in Early Modern Italy” workshop in Florence, and participated in the “Making Publics in Interregnum England” summer seminar. In such settings, MaPs provides a strong example of professional collegiality, lively debate, interdisciplinarity, and collaborative research. As part of this community, I have access to a group of scholars from various fields with wide-ranging research projects, who are willing to share their expertise. Rare indeed is the academic context wherein a graduate student would know exactly whom to contact with questions like “How did armillary spheres work and who owned them?” or “What were common emblems in Renaissance portraiture?” MaPs stands as a model of talking across disciplinary boundaries, which I find especially valuable at this stage of my academic career. The proof of the impact of the MaPs project is that it challenges and shapes the questions I ask in my own research, and my dissertation will be stronger because of it.

