

Introduction

On Moving Ground

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In the early morning of December 16, 1811, the first of a major series of earthquakes struck the Mississippi Valley. The earthquakes continued through the following spring, numbering over 1,800 in total. Centered in the Louisiana territory, in a region now shared between southeastern Missouri and northeastern Arkansas, their effects were felt for over a million square miles. They cracked sidewalks in Washington, D.C., damaged buildings in Savannah, Georgia, destroyed huge tracts of forest, and permanently altered the course of rivers; local legend held that during the worst quakes, the Mississippi flowed backward. The river-bank town of New Madrid, for which both the earthquakes and the fault line later designated as their cause would be named, was all but destroyed by months of shaking and flooding.¹

Preoccupied by the War of 1812 and border conflicts with Indian nations, the state responded to the earthquakes rather slowly. When it did, it used them as another occasion to reassert already-familiar national narratives: those of American exceptionalism, found in the

ability to persevere through hardship, and American compassion, seen in the nation's willingness to sympathize with and assist the earthquake's victims. The General Assembly of the Missouri Territory, in an 1814 appeal to the federal government for aid, vividly depicted the displacement of "our unfortunate fellow citizens, [who] are now wandering about without a home to go to, or a roof to shelter them from the pitiless storms," and affirmed its confidence that the "just light in which these calamities are viewed by the enlightened humane government of the United States" would result in the federal provision of material aid. This appeal to sympathy as a defining feature of the American character was shored up by a distinctly nationalist appeal: since the U.S. had, the previous year, sent economic aid to Venezuela after a devastating earthquake there, the Assembly went on to observe, it would surely be no less willing to help "a portion of its own citizens."² The nationalistic appeal of the General Assembly was taken up in Congress, and the following year, the New Madrid Federal Relief Act (1815) translated this account of the event into policy. The act not only ratified what was due to "fellow citizens," but, in effect, who counted as such—though the Native population in the affected zone was higher than the white population, no attempts were made on the part of the nation to compensate Native tribes, even "allied" ones, for the losses they suffered, nor even to track those losses.³

For both regional and national legislators, the New Madrid earthquakes counted as merely a "natural calamity," an unavoidable and causeless tragedy that could be resolved by the application of enlightened national sympathy and the passage of time.⁴ Yet while the state response folded the earthquakes into a narrative of national continuity and coherence, others framed them differently.⁵ Viewing American settlers' social or imperialist behavior as a cause of the quakes, Christian and Native American revivalists demanded a departure from national narrative, reinventing the space and time surrounding them. Christians of varying denominations read the earthquakes as an effect of divine will: some argued that the quakes were obvious retribution for the sinful life generally led in the western territories, while others located them in a grander timeframe, as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. A writer in the *Connecticut Gazette*, cataloguing many of the extraordinary occurrences enumerated above, concluded: "May not the same enquiry be made of us that was made by the hypocrites of old—'Can ye

not discern the signs of the times.”⁶ The multidenominational Christian revival movement that sprung up in the region after December saw a distinctive pattern of responsiveness from area residents: converts flocked to churches whenever the tremors intensified, and attendance fell off again when the land was relatively calm. These on-and-off disciples were aptly known as “earthquake Christians,” their relationship to messianic time shifting in tandem with the ground beneath their feet.

The quakes were also read as “signs of the times” by Native tribes in the region. In this context, they served to amplify extant calls for resistance against the expansionist American state. The Shawnee leader Tecumseh was said to have foreseen, or even to have caused, the quakes as a means of promoting his pan-tribal federation and weakening white settlements.⁷ Tecumseh interpreted the ongoing tremors as signs of encouragement, reportedly telling a band of Osage, at the end of 1811, “The Great Spirit is angry with our enemies; he speaks in thunder, and the earth swallows up villages and drinks up the Mississippi.”⁸ The quakes likewise intensified the religious and cultural practices associated with the pan-Nativist revival. The call for cultural renewal issued by Tecumseh’s brother Tenskwatawa, the “Shawnee Prophet,” resounded even more loudly against their devastation. Fasting and other responsive purification rituals coupled with a vehement embrace of his insistence on a return to traditional Native lifeways. Among the Creeks, some revivalists interpreted his call to abandon settler-style farming to incorporate the destruction of farm tools and killing of livestock. The religious revival fed into intratribal conflicts over the centralization of Creek national administration and privatization of Creek lands (part of the “civilizing” strategy of the U.S. Indian Bureau), giving rise to a series of confrontations that culminated in the Creek War of 1813–14.⁹

Though the extra- and counternational visions of the region and its possible futures that Christian revivalists and Native American resistance movements developed in relation to the quakes were omitted in the state’s response, even that account could not entirely avoid acknowledging prior constructions of New Madrid that also deviated from the singularity of nationalist narrative. The fluctuating forms taken by the state in the period of settlement are indexed in the opening text of the 1814 appeal, which marked by a simple alternation of nouns the fact that the locality which had been, at the time of the earthquakes just two years

earlier, the district of New Madrid in the Louisiana Territory was now the county of New Madrid in the Missouri Territory.¹⁰ These ostensibly minor changes stand as the administrative trace of a longer history of geopolitical flux, of imperial conquest and escapist fantasy, utopianism, and disillusionment, beneath the ostensibly stable sign of “New Madrid.” The settlement was founded in 1789 by Colonel George Morgan, an American Revolutionary War soldier turned disgruntled citizen and would-be expatriate, on land then under Spanish dominion; he had been encouraged in the venture by the Spanish minister Diego de Gardoqui, in line with that empire’s policy of keeping U.S. expansion in check by lining the western bank of the Mississippi with ex-Americans whose loyalty to Spain would be secured by land grants. A former Indian agent, Morgan claimed that the land on which his colony stood was unclaimed by any Native tribe; he set aside hunting grounds for Natives whom he encouraged to move to the area, promising that its white settlers would be forbidden by law from fur hunting. Morgan imagined the colony as a transposition of the American revolutionary project, promising its white recruits U.S.-style democracy (which, significantly, included the right to own and import slaves) as well as freedom of religion. In this, however, he came into conflict with the Spanish governor of the Louisiana Territory, who, seeking to maintain control over the region, demanded that Catholicism become the colony’s official faith and its residents be made to declare allegiance to Spain.¹¹ The vicissitudes of empire on the continent overtook this local conflict soon enough; after the turn of the century, New Madrid existed under three different imperial flags within a few years. Spain ceded the Louisiana territory to France in 1800 in a secret treaty, and France retained the territory for only three years before selling it to the United States in 1803, transferring New Madrid to the very jurisdiction Morgan had tried to escape in its founding.

The consolidation of American control over the ex-American Morgan’s attempt at separation, the erasure of indigenous claims to the region, and the formal recognition of the state of Missouri in 1821, all, from an American nationalist perspective, were logical steps in the unfolding of the nation’s destiny according to spatial and temporal coordinates envisioned as objective, singular, and inevitable: westward and forward, toward modernity and enlightenment. Yet the alternative accounts of place and time crowded onto the same ground are

more than incidental from the perspective opened, in recent years, by critical rethinkings of the politics of time and space in the nineteenth-century United States. On this view, the cacophony of analytic, affective, national, and temporal claims circulating around the site of New Madrid before, during, and after the quakes no longer resolves into a singular, congressionally validated meaning; rather, it enables New Madrid to be viewed as a historiographic as well as geological “fault line,” where competing readings, foreclosed historically, persist in and as critique. The earthquakes themselves, from this perspective, are not the main event: they are at once a pretext for, and a hyperbolic illustration of, the unsettled meanings of this place and time.

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By opening this introduction with an account of an earthquake series, I am not suggesting that the present state of nineteenth-century American literary studies is akin to disaster. Far from it: the field is thriving, experiencing a renewed vitality, in no small degree because each of the terms in the phrase we use to describe it—“nineteenth-century American literary studies”—has become an axis of sustained interrogation and significant change. The portion of that phrase meant to distinguish it from other literary fields, to clearly demarcate its boundaries and contents, no longer does that work as self-evidently as it once did; a surge in critical attention to the historical and social production of space and place has instead begun to denaturalize what constitutes “America” itself, undoing its putative homogeneity as well as its self-evident configuration in (and as) space.¹² Critical attention to other flows and cultural currents—hemispheric, transnational, circum-Atlantic (and more recently, circum-Pacific), globalist, planetary—that expand or transcend national borders is generating a new map of “America,” one which comprehends it, as Paul Giles points out, as both agent and object of globalization.¹³ More recently, a new critical interest in questions of history, temporality, and periodicity has begun to trouble the “when” of the field, complicating the reflexive habits of periodization that organize fields according to distinct and self-evident centuries.¹⁴ Temporally minded critics challenge the long-held assumption that, as Wai Chee Dimock puts it, “there can be a discrete, bounded unit of

time coinciding with a discrete, bounded unit of space: a chronology coinciding with a territory,” demanding closer thematic consideration and conceptual adaptation of alternate flows and rhythms of time.¹⁵ These challenges to national and period demarcations emerged as consequences of—but also remain contemporaneous with—revolutions in content and method that addressed themselves to the coherence and self-evidence of the terms “literary” and “studies,” respectively. These questions drove the ground-shaking critical and literary-historical movements associated with the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, sparked by resistance to inherited canons and hierarchies of literary value, sustained by a vast and diffuse project of literary recovery, and extended by a new arsenal of critical approaches (Marxist, feminist, deconstructionist, postcolonial, antiracist, queer) that complicated the kinds of questions it was possible to ask about this dramatically enlarged collection of objects.¹⁶

It is by now a cliché to simply celebrate the productivity of ongoing uncertainty and dissension in cultural criticism. The project of *Unsettled States* is, rather, to consider how this uncertainty might unsettle and remap our critical relations to the field itself. The contributors to this collection were trained at a point when the earliest of the aforementioned interventions—the rejection of canons restricted to a handful of white, mostly male, authors and to a small number of genres and forms that counted as the “proper” objects for literary analysis—had already radically reshaped the terrain on which it was possible to think, as the range of objects, authors, and approaches engaged in these pages indicates. Yet the conversations generated across that range seek something other than an affirmative demonstration of inclusiveness or variety as the critical “common sense” we inherited from our forebears. Rather, they seek to develop ways of reading an “American literature” in motion, of improvising and identifying nodes of inquiry and invention attuned to the rhythms of a moving field.

Written by scholars working in the “minor” fields of critical race and ethnic studies, feminist and gender studies, labor studies, and queer/sexuality studies, the essays in *Unsettled States* share what we might describe as a diffusely minoritarian orientation. “Minoritarian,” in the sense we are using it, does not name simply a coalition of those who have been minoritized, nor is it automatically continuous with

“minority” subjects or marginal knowledges as such, though these have provided the most fertile ground for its development, in part because of the spatialization of minority existence: as Deleuze and Guattari point out, the “cramped spaces” to which minority subjects have historically been relegated, physically and/or structurally—spaces that are not outside the power of the majority, but are rather oversaturated with its contradictory impulses, overcrowded with multiple accounts of being—paradoxically enable the subjects confined there to develop new possibilities.¹⁷ Minoritarian thought and action, in this sense, are distinguished from those of the majority by the form of their relation thereto. They do not seek representation within the majority, or the production of a coherent identity by virtue of which they might gain inclusion. Nor do they seek to overthrow the majority by means of direct confrontation. Their transformative work takes place through the multiplication of aesthetic, political, and ethical encounters; instead of seeking synthesis, they develop, through “myriad connections, disjunctions, and conjunctions,” other ways of being.¹⁸ As feminist critic Pelagia Goulimari explains, minoritarian movements distinguish themselves by virtue of their “processes of collective constitution”; they form themselves in and through movement, seeking not to settle into established forms, not to claim new ground, but to connect to it otherwise.¹⁹ Pointing to the revolutionary changes accomplished by minoritarian movements in the academy, Goulimari wonders whether they will be able to “tolerate the seeming loss or chaos of intermixing, better able to produce a new kind of thinking that takes place across, between, and together.”²⁰ Our answer is an emphatic yes. We seek in this collection to develop cross-connections between multiple “minor” fields, not to abolish their specificity but to engage and activate their disparities. *Unsettled States* is not trying to carve out a space for something like “minoritarian studies,” nor to engage in a debate with “majoritarian” Americanist criticism—whatever the latter might look like. Minoritarian criticism, in the sense we intend, is always on the move. Improvisational and speculative, it roams the field, seeking opportunities, nodal points around which its thinking might gather and transform itself. We have no interest in opposing or overthrowing a “majority,” nor in legitimating our work against its values: our investments are in discovering what else might take place in a world in flux.

To mark this collection as a minoritarian project also does not mean that its contributors are identified with Deleuzian thought as such; in fact, that critical idiom does not play a central part in any of the essays included here. The goal of this collection, rather, is to demonstrate how minoritarian critique may be actualized without automatic recourse to this (or to *any* singular) critical approach. The critical possibilities of becoming-minor, we might say, are actualized by contrapuntal rather than unified methodology. The essays presented here are drawn together, then, less by the establishment of topical or methodological “common ground” than by a shared sense that *moving* ground offers more compelling possibilities for collective projects drawn together by “myriad connections, disjunctions, and conjunctions”—projects that do not speak with a unified voice but vibrate against and across themselves, maintaining a commitment to criticism as a creative, ethical practice of persisting on other terrain.²¹

Our claim that a multiplicity of critical perspectives is best suited to this sort of project is not quite the same as an embrace of critical “diversity”; diversity exists only within a given boundary or frame, and elements of a “diverse” set have no necessary relation to one another other than their co-presence within that frame. An aspiration to multiplicity over diversity, rather, seeks the kind of proliferative transformation fostered by those “myriad connections, disjunctions, and conjunctions” necessary to the positive activity of minoritarian critique. The kinds of conceptual and critical networks guiding our work are indexed in the geopolitical, historical, affective, and ethical resonances of the term “unsettled” itself, a rough synonym for the flux that animates our work. This critical keyword operates in a number of contexts, including critical multiculturalism, postcolonial and indigenous studies, spectral historiography, narratology, and queer, trauma, and affect theory. We seek here to bring together these divergent and ostensibly unrelated senses of the term, to multiply their points of contact in the service of a minoritarian reimagination of its geopolitical, historical, and ethical possibilities.

The challenge of thinking “unsettlement” was posited from the early 1990s on as a means of shaking off the stasis that was beginning to inhabit and inhibit the project of multicultural education. This usage surfaces in Michael Geyer’s 1993 critique of the politics of general

education. Noting with approval the changes in curricular content accomplished in the preceding decades, Geyer nevertheless pointed out that most forms of multicultural education had not yet lost the conceptual habits of the Eurocentric models they sought to displace. They remained, that is, exercises in “civilizational education . . . focuse[d], if not on empire, at least on regionally bounded, territorially integrated settlements.”²² The civilizational infrastructure of the “cultures” considered in multicultural education myopically overlooked contemporary global conditions, which, marked by migration, diaspora, and cultural and religious syncretism, are moving, as Geyer points out, in an opposing direction. A truly *critical* multiculturalism, accordingly, would eschew the essentially additive configuration of pluralist and diversity-based understandings thereof; rather than simply expanding the number of civilizations it sought to include, he proposed, it would affiliate itself with “regions, times, and peoples of unsettlement,” suspending the conception of culture as a set of achievements in favor of “the ceaseless struggle to think and create orders and to provide meanings” that consideration of unsettlement would necessarily underscore.²³

Postcolonial and indigenous studies have been the most productive arenas for thinking “unsettlement,” in this sense, against the historical dynamics of settler colonialism: the transformation of the colonial drive in locations where the quest to transfer resources back to the metropole extended toward, or was supplanted by, the intention to remain on the land. Critical considerations of settler colonialism highlight the fluctuating relations between the “bounded” and “integrated” models of European nation Geyer indexes, and their dispersion and reaggregation elsewhere. In addition to distributing populations across the globe, colonial settlement dynamically restructures occupied land by means of a dual movement linking the generation of new cartographies and geopolitical imaginaries to the displacement or extermination of indigenous populations.²⁴ Both time and space become “settled” by means of this movement, as new cultural histories and trajectories are developed to secure and perpetuate the settlement’s geographical revisions.²⁵ In the U.S., this work has involved strategies both of continuation, the affirmation of a fundamental connection between English and Anglo-American narratives, and of regeneration, the assertion of the foundational break that sets the U.S. apart from the corruption and misdirection

of the Old World. The performative dimension of national history, as Tavia Nyong'o's contribution to this collection demonstrates, enables these movements to be synthesized strategically, creating a sense of intimacy with overwritten histories that both upholds and disavows their alignment with whiteness.

The national future is likewise "settled" by the micro-political arrangements of sexuality and intimacy that organize themselves in relation to macro-political visions of progress; these at once encourage the population of the colony with more settler bodies, provide mechanisms for disciplining other populations, and link individuals to national and cultural norms through the operation of domestic nurture as well as romantic desire.²⁶ For instance, as Kyla Wazana Tompkins's reworking of food studies in these pages shows, the domestic arrangements organized in the name of love established dietary channels for the further settling of colonial bodies. Yet these also positioned the mouth as a site of unauthorized and potentially unsettling cross-racial encounters, the possible deviance she aligns with "queer alimentarity." Conversely, as Hester Blum's consideration of oceanic consciousness suggests, the fantasy of freedom from the confines of national space, in the polar voyage, remained susceptible to recoding by familiar social hierarchies. *Unsettling* is thus not a definitive space-clearing gesture, but the critical remapping of multiple formations onto the "same" space in order to activate it differently.²⁷

In this sense, unsettling is as much about narrative as spatial organization. Leaving a story "unsettled," in narratological terms, indicates not simply a lack of closure but the amplification of that lack by devices designed to underscore the drive toward or desire for that missing end. In refusing the sense of an ending, that is, the unsettled narrative makes us conscious of the internalized structures that habituate us to particular kinds of "closure" and modes of progress toward it. Speculative post-colonial thought invokes unsettling in precisely this way: not simply as a troubled interval, a period without direction or order, but as an opening to undoing the futures upon which colonial history insists, a means of generating unforeseen arrangements and expectations.²⁸ David Kazanjian's essay in these pages conducts a compelling exploration of early Liberian settlers' letters to the U.S. as one such opening; instead of forcing these letters into continuity with the later historical

record, Kazanjian uncovers in them improvisational forms of life that return to challenge our contemporary understanding of agency. From this perspective, then, unsettling *moves* rather than mourns the state of things, activating both utopian and pragmatic attempts to imagine other ways of being.

Unsettling also signifies historically, in the sense of “unsettling the past”: undoing and contesting received narratives, a move common to a number of critical historiographic practices. “Unsettling,” in this context, indicates the complicating effect of historical recovery, drawing upon the conviction that the very work of collecting overlooked accounts of the past can be as transformative in our time as the work done by those forgotten subjects was in theirs.²⁹ Rodrigo Lazo’s contribution to this collection performs a dual unsettling along these lines; reconsidering the archive for Latino literary studies, a recovered archive intended to challenge white supremacist history, Lazo dwells on the effects of recovering objects that not only don’t “fit” but that counter this intention.

In some deployments, historical unsettling also casts doubt on the sufficiency or terminability of the work of recovery. The “unsettled past” may be not simply recovered but *unburied*, the Gothic inflection working to undermine the belief that *any* account of the past, however expansive, can be complete, can permit it to be laid to rest. Inflected this way, “unsettling” connotes a haunted historiography, one actively undone by the historical erasures and omissions it can neither ignore nor exorcise.³⁰ In postcolonial, critical race and queer studies especially, this usage aligns with the invocation of specters.³¹ This body of work adapts two traditional characteristics of haunting—a hypercathexis of place and a reactivation of time—to the process of confronting historical phenomena such as slavery and genocide that defy reckoning, and that therefore demand an “openness to what exceeds knowledge.”³² As unsettled and unsettling figures, specters diffuse themselves across a number of vital critical tasks: the transformative demand for just recognition; the refusal to countenance looking away even from the most horrifying events, and the concomitant search for some kind of reparative response; a reclamation of other ideas, other ways of thinking or being from the past that may make such a response more thinkable; and a nonlinear understanding of time. Ghosts not only mark unsettled pasts, but by doing so they unsettle time, undermining linear, singular

models of history and causality as they underscore the hybridity of the present and the radical uncertainty of the future.³³ Lloyd Pratt and Elizabeth Freeman's essays here consider two related aspects of unsettled time. Pratt identifies historical fiction, specifically the African American historical romance, as a speculative tool to counter the spectral silences of the fragmentary archive, while Freeman considers Mark Twain's novel of time traveling as a point of entry into the queer effects of "doing history badly": collapsing time, hypercathecting the past.

The overinvestment that marks Freeman's queer historiographer parallels the critical impulse that marks Avery Gordon's influential study *Ghostly Matters*. Unsettling the past by "following the ghosts" becomes, for Gordon, an enlivening process, insofar as it "is about making a contact that changes you and refashions the social relations in which you are located."³⁴ Like Freeman's, Gordon's is an affective historiography, reflecting a desire and a willingness to be touched and moved by other histories, and to carry that movement into one's own world(s). This willingness is linked to the final deployment of "unsettlement" that I will consider here: the condition that trauma theorist Dominick La Capra names "empathic unsettlement."³⁵ For La Capra, empathic unsettlement is a kind of witnessing that affectively registers the collapse of spatio-temporal distinctions that characterizes trauma, though without a subsequent collapse of the witness's identity into that of the survivor. In this sense, its distinctive play of distance and intimacy attempts to avoid the difficulties that attend sympathetic identification. Glenn Hendler's essay in this volume reconsiders those difficulties as it considers a limit case for sympathy, identification with the state, as a means of exploring the operation of the impersonal in sympathy. Empathic unsettlement as La Capra understands it, though, seeks a different arrangement of distance and intimacy in the act of bearing witness, one that troubles the boundaries of the witnessing self without overtaking that of the survivor.

Noteworthy in La Capra's account is the connection he posits between empathic unsettlement and style or form, his assertion that the unsettling afterlife of empathic witnessing takes shape in and as writing. For historians and other "secondary witnesses," he insists, empathic unsettlement "should register in one's very mode of address," should "have stylistic effects in the way one discusses or addresses certain

problems.”³⁶ We can understand this contention in terms of an ethics of unsettlement bringing together affective and aesthetic experience. And whereas La Capra, a historian of the Holocaust, considers unsettlement solely in terms of traumatic experience, we ought also to consider pleasure as effecting a potentially ethical unsettlement. Gordon’s work acknowledges the pleasure that attends even the recognition of sorrow; contact with the spectral or unsettled past, she contends, can “help you imagine what was lost that never even existed . . . [can] encourage a steely sorrow laced with delight for what we lost that we never had.” Those responses, in turn, can lead the critic to the generative work of seeing anew: “that moment in which we recognize . . . that it could have been and can be otherwise.”³⁷

Thinking the *otherwise*, the task to which minoritarian criticism commits itself, is, therefore, dependent on qualities of attention attuned to affective and aesthetic experience. In this light, the recent renewal of interest within nineteenth-century American literary criticism in questions of aesthetics takes on ethical significance. What Shelley Streeby refers to in her response as the “gate-keeping function” of aesthetics, the ability to determine what counted as real literature and what did not, has begun to be transformed, in recent years, by a wave of criticism seeking to develop a more capacious understanding of what “aesthetics” might mean. Guided by the conviction that, as Cindy Weinstein and Christopher Looby insist, “social and political life always has a sensory and aesthetic dimension,”³⁸ this more flexible and politically aware conception of aesthetic experience lends itself to minoritarian uses. From this perspective, the “aesthetic question” may most usefully be rendered not as what aesthetics *is* but what it *can do*—what kinds of connection it can illuminate and intensify, and what other worlds it might make possible.

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The configuration of this collection—divided into three sections, each of which closes with a short response tracing connections among the essays therein—deliberately evokes the format of a conference, though the “conference” that it maps never took place outside these pages.³⁹ We have adopted this form in an effort to replicate the sense of conversation

that such live gatherings generate, to emphasize the connectedness of the work herein to the flows and crosscurrents of thought in the field. We do not intend this collection to offer “representative” selections of contemporary work on these topics: the accuracy and vitality of any such representative project would demand the inclusion of topics and perspectives (for instance, indigenous or Native studies, Pacific Rim studies) not presented in this volume. Nor should our provisional condensation of multiple crosscurrents of thought into the conversations presented here be taken to confirm the separateness of those conversations, since connections flow across the collection’s sections as well: Freeman and Nyong’o, for instance, both consider nonlinear forms of time travel, while Kazanjian and Tompkins both grapple with the politics of settler colonialism. The arrangement of this collection, that is, seeks neither to isolate nor to conclude these conversations, but to underscore their status as such—as ongoing and lively circuits of exchange.

The collection’s conversations are organized into three sections, “Archives Unbound,” “States of Exception,” and “Speculative Sexualities,” reflecting three nodal points in contemporary Americanist thought—time, space, and embodiment—that have been particularly enlivening for minoritarian thought. The first, “Archives Unbound,” unsettles time as it explores the construction of the archive for cultural analysis, considered not as a self-evident repository of history but as the effect of cathecting complex temporal crosscurrents. The second, “States of Exception,” explores ways that unmapped spaces, both transnational and hyperlocal, can operate to interrupt and regenerate states of being. The third, “Speculative Sexualities,” engages affect theory’s preoccupation with bodily capacities as it builds upon Michel Foucault’s crucial, yet often overlooked, reminder that “sex” is not a given but a speculative element in modernity, asking what “sex” might look like when set adrift from the oppositions that stabilize our contemporary understanding thereof. Yet these nodes cannot be isolated from one another. Hence “States of Exception” aligns its unmapped spaces with bodies in precarious situations; “Speculative Sexualities” highlights the pasts and futures that sex organizes and disorders; and “Archives Unbound” illuminates the role of attachment in creating the repositories we associate with history.

Archives Unbound

The essays in our first section draw on contemporary debates about the authority and operation of the archive and the function of historical memory. Even as poststructuralist thought has repositioned the archive as a problem rather than simply a resource, the “hunger for a recorded past,” as Anjali Arondekar points out, sharpens in the face of conservative and fundamentalist appeals to tradition as foundation for their ways of knowing.⁴⁰ Critics in minoritized fields have begun to interrogate the persistence of our need for archives, examining the quasi-religious faith in their ability to produce answers about the past and hence to authorize or stabilize our continued existence. Official archives, as scholars of slavery and indigeneity in the U.S. have shown, are radically incomplete and skewed in ways that frustrate particular knowledge projects. What Jenny Sharpe refers to as the archival “tautology of facts” perpetuates the marginalization of historical subjects whose actions were not considered noteworthy in their own times.⁴¹ The silences, omissions, and distortions of the archive have caused some scholars to turn away from it altogether, while others generate alternate historiographic practices, inventing ways to make those absences speak differently.⁴² Even for those scholars who remain invested in traditional archival research and recovery practices, the archive is understood less as a discrete collection of documents than, as Ann Laura Stoler puts it, “a force field that animates political energies and expertise, that pulls on some ‘social facts’ and coverts them into qualified knowledge, that attends to some ways of knowing while repelling and refusing others.”⁴³ The essays in this section correspond to the depiction of archive not as “fact” but as force field—a moving construction of the archive that unbinds its possibilities as it reorients how, where, and when we encounter it.

Rodrigo Lazo’s essay, “Confederates in the Hispanic Attic: The Archive against Itself,” opens on an encounter with what we might term the awkward historical object: the recent publication of data recording the contributions of Hispanic Confederate soldiers to the war effort, which contradicts the self-image of the Hispanic archive as it has sought, in line with the contemporary aims of U.S. Latina/o studies, to document a history of anti-white-supremacist resistance. By confronting material that is ostensibly undesirable, rather than simply absent,

Lazo's essay puts into relief the ideological mandates that shape how and why archives are perceived and apprehended. Such questions circulate around artifacts such as the Cuban Confederate Colonel Ambrosio José Gonzales's 1853 *Manifesto on Cuban Affairs Addressed to the People of the United States* and the ambiguous sympathies of the Reconstruction-era novelist María Amparo Ruiz de Burton—texts that trouble the desire to “locate a particular outcome,” a reading of Latina/o studies as always oppositional, through archival labor.

In “Historical Totality and the African American Archive,” Lloyd Pratt uses Edward P. Jones's *The Known World*, a twenty-first-century novel concerning slave ownership among African Americans, as a foray into larger questions about the possibilities of historical totality. Pratt questions whether the discernible absences inherent to archival practices around slaveholding in the Americas must constitute a permanent obstacle to the possibility of totality. He locates a resource in the African American historical romance, not only because it imagines a way across the gaps and fragmentation of the historical record, but precisely because its emphasis on human relationships resists the obfuscation of historical truth we know as reification. In this way, the historical romance finds the necessity of speculation about the past not only no obstacle but a positive gain.

Tavia Nyong'o, in “Race, Reenactment, and the ‘Natural Born-Citizen,’” addresses the aggressively “historical” claims of the Tea Party movement as it reinvents and reorients the Revolutionary War archive. The temporal bend that loops the Tea Party to the revolutionary event it cites as carrying the weight of its anti-statism, Nyong'o argues, camouflages its stronger historical investment in the 14th Amendment's post-Civil War reversal of the foundational terms of citizenship. Tracking the “queasiness” of this time-shifting alliance with white racial innocence, Nyong'o sets a contemporary performance of archival reenactment—the collective reading aloud of the U.S. Constitution as the 112th Congress opened in January 2011—against the creative engagement with citizenship conducted in David Walker's 1829 *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* as it affectively undoes the amnesiac innocence of such performances.

Shelley Streeby's response, “Doing Justice to the Archive: Beyond Literature,” engages these essays alongside the case of anarchist activist

Lucy Parsons, whose 1913 arrest for “selling literature without a license” (in the form of a printed collection of anarchist speeches) allies the perennial question of what constitutes literature with the section’s interrogation of what constitutes the archive and the history to which it ostensibly refers. Streeby charges the conversation with the force of critical interdisciplinarity, affirming that the questions opened here demand an active openness to the evocations of a lively past in contexts beyond the traditional terrain of literary studies.

States of Exception

The essays in the second section dwell in and upon particular (dis)locations in space and time. The exceptional cases they consider—situated in extranational or hyperlocal contexts—set the social and affective relations familiar to the U.S. nation-state askew. The “outside” status that marks these situations—polar voyages, the earliest years of black American settlement in Liberia, the New York City draft riots of 1863—not only expose the tenuousness of nationalized modes of belonging; they also force us to confront the precarity of life, in the removal of structures of order and/or comfort. As Jonathan Elmer notes in his response, the exceptional conditions into which the essays inquire differ from the removal of citizenship by the power of law, the reduction from directed and qualified to “bare” life that marks the “state of exception” as Giorgio Agamben has defined it. Rather, they mark the distancing, at once willed and compelled, of norms for the regulation of behavior, expression, attachment, and futurity. Their attention to bodies *in extremis*—frozen into polar ice, living “close to death” in the new Liberia, or exploding into riotousness—carries out the work that Judith Butler identifies as central to a generatively critical humanities: to “return us to the human where we do not expect to find it, in its frailty and at the limits of its capacity to make sense.”⁴⁴ These explorations of precarity align with a minoritarian humanism, a humanism that does not want to restore an unreconstructed “full humanity” but to activate other ways of apprehending its potential.

David Kazanjian’s essay, “Unsettled Life: Early Liberia’s Epistolary Equivocations,” exposes the fault lines of black diaspora theory by examining how black settlers from the U.S. were suspended in a social

subjectivity that resisted being congealed as specifically American or Liberian. Reading Phyllis Wheatley and Ouladah Equiano alongside and against the nineteenth-century archive of letters authored by Liberia's earliest black American settlers, Kazanjian identifies resonances of two conventional positions on settlement: the allure of diaspora's racial romanticism and the imperialistic impulses of an American nationalism. His nuanced consideration of the letters' language, however, settles for neither of them, instead exposing the conditionality and "equivocal agency" of Liberian settler-subjects as they speculated on the meanings and improvised on the practices of freedom.

Hester Blum's "The News at the Ends of the Earth: Polar Periodicals" also dwells on the kinds of writing and forms of imagination that emerge when familiar modes of self-location remain at a distance. Reading newspapers produced by nineteenth-century sailors aboard polar exploration vessels, written to fill some of the endless night hours during winters spent frozen within the polar ice, Blum finds an exhilarated sense of liberation from national constraints and the advocacy of a new perspective on the globe. Yet even as this new perspective was claimed, Blum notes, literary labor also became a means of reinstalling social hierarchies, though the traces of this reinstallation were edited out of reprints of the papers circulated onshore, revealing an attempt to portray shipboard life as more harmonious than it actually was.

Glenn Hendler's essay, "Feeling Like a State: Writing the 1863 New York City Draft Riots," also addresses the reemergence of forms of social ordering from within the exceptional moment. Collating an archive of materials around the 1863 draft riots in New York City (novels by Edward Ruffin and Anna Elizabeth Dickinson, and Herman Melville's poem "The House-Top: A Night Piece"), Hendler outlines these works' attempts to find an adequate form for depicting the riots, which, for Dickinson and Melville, involves an identification with the state itself as the force that must be hailed to contain the violence. Attending to the part played by the impersonal in the process of sympathetic identification, Hendler's essay demands and enacts an expansion of the types of objects generally considered by affect theorists.

Jonathan Elmer's response, "Impersonating the State of Exception," opens by addressing the limitations of a strictly juridico-political understanding of the state of exception in relation to the activation of

alternative political knowledges linked to what we might call “unauthorized” states of exception. Considering three essays in this section against one another and against Melville’s “Bartelby, the Scrivener,” Elmer draws their elaboration of writerly politics toward an interrogation of the extent to which aesthetics can do justice to the question of a humanity that “requires acknowledgment on grounds that can never be provided.”

Speculative Sexualities

The final section, “Speculative Sexualities,” insists that the history of sexuality is not concerned only with what looks to us like “sex”—that is, with recognizable sex acts, homo- or heterosexual. Sex, in these essays, charges unexpected social sites and bodily processes, and the plasticity of the body renders it both a capacious tool of disciplinary power and a field of creative possibilities for remaking relations to history, sociality, and the self. A speculative history of sexuality—one that does not take the location of “sex” as given, but rather, follows attentively to see where it might lead—demands distinctively speculative and literary modes of reading, a willingness to engage in the kind of close reading that Elizabeth Freeman elsewhere describes as “too close for comfort.”⁴⁵ This sustained textual intimacy produces surprising results, identifying the imaginative construction of worlds in which sexual difference, and the (re)productivity that orders that difference, is set aside, enabling sex to center on taste, or acoustic receptiveness, or timeplay. At the same time, the focus on Anglo-American writers in these essays might also remind us of the role of nineteenth-century biopower in aligning whiteness with sexual normativity, calling into consideration the extent to which these alternative sexualities might or might not unsettle the perpetuation of whiteness’s propriety as the nation’s destiny.⁴⁶

Kyla Wazana Tompkins’s and Elizabeth Freeman’s essays both center on the anxieties surrounding the practice of masturbation in the nineteenth century, though they address the topic of alternative sexualities from very different angles.

In “Eat, Sex, Race,” Tompkins, focusing on the role antebellum reformist campaigns played in a bodily (rather than genitally) centered history of sexuality, considers the emergence of dietary correctives to the practice of masturbation in the work of Sylvester Graham,

tracing out the way his endorsement of whole-grained breads as a corrective to sexual excitement remaps both nation and globe by means of the “political life of the mouth,” an orifice that was as much concerned in the sustenance and reproduction of a purified whiteness as were the genitals that could be overexcited by improper eating. What Tompkins terms “dietetic biopower” is, however, always haunted by the specter of improper consumption, a possibility that connects the mouth not only to the genitals—the site, presumably, of the masturbatory habits that improper diet helped to cause—but, queerly, to the anus, that unspeakably breachable boundary whose erotic potential serves as a reminder of “the liberal individual’s ethical responsibility to the other.”

Freeman’s “Connecticut Yankings: Mark Twain and the Masturbating Dude” foregrounds Twain’s humorous take on the anxieties surrounding masturbation, both explicitly, in his 1879 speech to a men’s club concerning the “science of onanism,” and implicitly in his 1889 time-travel novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*. Freeman reads the latter through the lens of a long-standing alignment of “bad” historiography with effeminacy and sexual deviance. If part of the work of being a good American is “getting at history in the right manner,” then the bad historical practices that surface in Twain’s novel not only critique the contemporary American vogue for things past but also, unexpectedly, work to make a future for sexual deviance in the inaccessible materials of that distant and discarded history.

Peter Coviello’s response, “What Came Before,” synchs Tompkins’s and Freeman’s divergent considerations of the autoerotic with a developing critical decentering of binary frameworks for sexual orientation. Their willingness to speculate on how autoeroticism might orient the body otherwise moves away from modern sexuality identity altogether, insofar as it necessarily conceives sex as a property of the self. What the antimasturbation movement used to call “self-abuse” paradoxically *unselves* sex, rendering it unsuitable for modern sexual identity’s understanding of sex as a property of the self. Coviello examines the resonances between their accounts—in which the unselving of sex renders the body a tool for making other kinds of contact—and the elaboration, in Henry David Thoreau’s journals, of an erotics of sound that offers intimations of a more expansive corporeality.

* * *

Thoreau's enraptured experience of sound—the aftermath of a dream in which he and Bronson Alcott “fell to quoting & referring to grand & pleasing couplets & single lines which we had read in times past”—may serve to point us, by way of conclusion, to a consideration of the recent turn toward enchantment as literary-critical method. Affirmations of pleasure, intimacy, and faithfulness to literary and cultural objects are articulated forcefully against the habits of distance, suspicion, and demystification attributed to a previous generation of critics. Enchantment, as Nancy Bentley observes, posits itself as an ethical rethinking of the goals as well as the methods of critique, enabled, in part, by the aforementioned reconsiderations of time and space that permit us to come closer to the past, overcoming the distance and disenchantment advocated by the earlier methods.⁴⁷ The speculative, as well as affective and ethical aspects, of postdisenchanted critique resonate suggestively against our understanding of minoritarian criticism as a means of encountering the world otherwise. We are, however, wary of over-emphasizing the divide between “distanced” and “intimate” critique, as well as over-Oedipalizing the generational divide often used to explicate the emergence of enchantment. Though we agree with Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus when they resist the compulsion to “[have] a political agenda that determines in advance how we interpret texts,” we would not align this resistance, as they do, with the emergence of a new “political realism” about the limited effect of cultural criticism on the contemporary world-historical situation.⁴⁸ Such appeals to “realism” imply that the political possibilities of critique are given in advance—indeed, that politics itself is already a known form, a position minoritarian criticism resists. That is not to say that we cherish the fantasy that our interventions will leap off the page directly into the midst of ongoing geopolitical struggles. The flows that animate minoritarian thought move very much in the reverse direction. The problems with which the essays in *Unsettled States* grapple—the possibility of freedom, definitions of history and identity, the rise of new conservatisms and forms of white supremacy, the ongoing policing of bodies, the reenergizing of the social imaginary—are urgent ones, permissive of no easy resolution. Yet in affirming a continued commitment to what Bentley calls

the “the kind of political desire that is a signature of cultural critique,”⁴⁹ we are committed, as well, to its ongoing transformation, reinvention, and self-interruption—to leaving the very ground of “politics” uncertain, unsettled, the animating principle of a criticism that remains on the move.

NOTES

1. Published accounts of the earthquakes and surrounding events include James Lal Penick, Jr., *The New Madrid Earthquakes* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1981), and Jay Feldman, *When The Mississippi Ran Backwards: Empire, Intrigue, Murder, and the New Madrid Earthquakes* (New York: Free Press, 2005); also Robert Sidney Douglass, *History of Southeast Missouri, a Narrative Account of its Historical Progress, its People and its Principle Interests, volume one*, chapter XIV, “New Madrid Earthquake” (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1912), pp. 212–33.
2. See *Resolution by the General Assembly of the Missouri Territory, for the Relief of the Inhabitants of New Madrid County, who have Suffered by Earthquakes*. Washington, D.C.: A & G. Way, Printers, 1814.
3. See Penick, *The New Madrid Earthquakes*, pp. 120–21. As it turned out, the slow diffusion of the provisions of this act and waves of corruption and fraud prevented many of the affected from receiving due compensation for their losses. Land fraud became so common, in fact, that the term “New Madrid claim” was synonymous with fakery and fraud. See Penick and Feldman.
4. The quoted phrase belongs to a congressional representative from Missouri, Joseph James Russell, who, a century later, read into the congressional record a report of the events, including a dramatic description of the quakes by an eyewitness. Russell’s commemorative recitation of the event, focusing solely upon the perspective of white settlers, upheld the ameliorative federal response it received, in the form of the New Madrid Relief Act, as a logical move toward the binding of the local to the national. Although, as he acknowledged, most of the federal aid sent failed to serve its intended purpose, ending up in the hands of speculators and swindlers, the ability of Congress to act in response to this “great natural calamity” implicitly marks the episode as a confirmation of national progress. Joseph James Russell, “Remarks on the Centennial of the New Madrid Earthquakes.” December 16, 1911. Washington. D.C. Mss. of congressional speech of Congressional representative from New Madrid’s district, held in Huntington Library. 4 pp. typed.
5. I am grateful to Jonathan Hancock for introducing me to the range of responses to the New Madrid quakes in a presentation at the Huntington Library, July 2012, based on his doctoral dissertation in history, “A World Convulsed: Earthquakes, Authority, and the Making of Nations in the War of 1812 Era” (University of North Carolina, 2013). See also his article “Shaken Spirits: Cherokees,

- Moravian Missionaries, and the New Madrid Earthquakes,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 33.4 (Winter 2013): 643–73.
6. Quoted in Penick, *The New Madrid Earthquakes*, p. 1.
 7. One account of his visit to the Creeks in early December 1811, just before the first earthquake struck, holds that when tribal leaders were unmoved by his recruitment speech, he declared, “You do not believe the Great Spirit has sent me. You will know. I leave Tuckhabatchee directly, and shall go straight to Detroit. When I arrive there, I will stamp on the ground with my foot, and will shake down every house in Tuckhabatchee.” Quoted in Penick, *The New Madrid Earthquakes*, p. 124. See also John F. Gall, *Tecumseh’s Earthquake: A Bit of Ohio and Mississippi Valley Folklore* (Chillicothe: Dave Webb, 1954).
 8. Quoted in Penick, *The New Madrid Earthquakes*, p. 125.
 9. For an account of the intertwining of religious, economic and geopolitical struggle in pan-tribal resistance, see Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). On the Creek War, see especially Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogee’s Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
 10. See *Resolution by the General Assembly of the Missouri Territory*. What remained of the Louisiana Territory after Louisiana was admitted to statehood was renamed the Missouri Territory in June 1812 in order to avoid confusion. The southeastern portion of that territory became the state of Missouri in 1821.
 11. Max Savelle, “The Founding of New Madrid, Missouri,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 19.1 (June 1932): 30–56.
 12. On the spatial turn in American literary studies, see Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) and “Planet and America, Set and Subset” in *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature*, ed. Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1–16; Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Hsuan Hsu, *Geography and the Production of Space in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On the transnational turn in American literary studies, see Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 57.1 (2005): 17–57; Kirsten Gruez Silva, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Rachel Lee, *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Paula Moya and Ramón Saldivar, eds. *Fictions of the Trans-American Imaginary*, special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* 49.1 (2003): 1–180; Carolyn Porter, “What We Know That We Don’t Know: Remapping

- American Literary Studies,” *American Literary History* 6.3 (1994): 467–526; Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Claire F. Fox, “Theorizing the Hemisphere: Inter-Americas at the Intersection of American, Canadian, and Latin American Studies,” *Comparative American Studies* 4.1 (2004): 5–38; José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and *Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); and Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman, *Our Americas: Political and Cultural Imaginings*, special issue of *Radical History Review* 89 (2004): 1–250. Other important scholarship on transnationalism incorporating discussions of the Americas includes Pheng Cheah, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Paul Jay, *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Winifred Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe, eds., *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2011). Important recent titles on hemispheric literary studies include Susan Castillo, *Performing America: Colonial Encounters in New World Writing, 1500–1786* (London: Routledge, 2005); J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Earl Fitz, *Rediscovering the New World: Inter-American Literature in a Comparative Context* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991); Claire F. Fox, ed., *Critical Perspectives and Emerging Models of Inter-American Studies*. Special issue of *Comparative American Studies* 3.4 (2005): 387–515; Sean Goudie, *Creole America: The West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine, eds., *Hemispheric American Studies* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007); Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Susan Scott Parrish, “The ‘Hemispheric Turn’ in Colonial American Studies,” *Early American Literature* 40.3 (2005): 545–53; and José David Saldívar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).
13. Paul Giles, “The Deterritorialization of American Literature,” in *Shades of the Planet*, p. 39 [39–61].
 14. Recent work on the temporal turn in American literary studies includes Thomas Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality and Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: NYU Press, 2007); Jeffrey Insko, *The Ever-Present Now: Romantic Presentism and Antebellum American Literature* (forthcoming);

- and Lloyd Pratt, *Archives of American Time: Literature and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
15. Dimock, *Through Other Continents*, p. 28.
 16. No footnote can hope to do justice to this body of work. Useful guides to key issues and critical texts include Paul Lauter, *Reconstructing American Literature* (New York: Feminist Press, 1984) and *Canons and Contexts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), and John Carlos Rowe, *The New American Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).
 17. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). For an influential account of the relations between minority existence and the creativity of minoritarian worldmaking, see José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
 18. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 315.
 19. Pelagia Goulimari, "A Minoritarian Feminism? Things to Do with Deleuze and Guattari," *Hypatia* 14.2 (Spring 1999).
 20. Pelagia Goulimari, "'Myriad Little Connections': Minoritarian Movements in the Postmodernism Debate," *Postmodern Culture* 14.3 (May 2004).
 21. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 315.
 22. Michael Geyer, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of General Education," *Critical Inquiry* 19.3 (Spring 1993): 528 [499–533].
 23. Geyer, "Multiculturalism," p. 533.
 24. See especially *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London: Sage, 1995); Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999) and "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (2006): 387–409; Alyosha Goldstein and Alex Lubin, eds., "Settler Colonialism," special issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107.4 (2008); Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2010) and "Introducing Settler Colonial Studies," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1.1 (2011): 1–12; and Michele Grossman and Ceriwidan Spark, "Unsettled States," special issue of *Postcolonial Studies* 8.3 (2005).
 25. Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," p. 388.
 26. The coimbrication of settlement and sexual normativity highlights the resonance of "queering," another critical term that activates the disturbance of sedimented forms, against "unsettlement"—though it is less useful, I think, to treat the two as synonyms, lest this activation of "queer" become an affirmation of its transcendently resistant capacities, to the detriment of identifying those spaces, times and forms where queerness's "unsettling" effect is notably, and sometimes violently, partial. Scholars working in queer indigenous studies, for instance, note the lack of attention in most queer U.S.-based criticism and political

- practice to the specific power relations that characterize settler colonialism. (Two important recent studies of the politics of sexuality in relation to Native American history and politics are Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, The History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], and Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011]). For this reason, the queer scholarship contained in this collection is less invested in “queering” as a solely a mode of resistant undoing—the kind of queering indexed in Lee Edelman’s assertion that “queer can never describe an identity, it can only ever disturb one”—than in queering as a practice of generating speculative connections, the sense evoked, for instance, in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s reminder that one of the meanings of the term “queer” is “across or athwart.” See Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 17; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Queer and Now,” *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. xii.
27. See, e.g., Mishuana Goeman, “The Tools of a Cartographic Poet: Unmapping Settler Colonialism in Joy Harjo’s Poetry,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 2.2 (2012): 89–112.
 28. Two publications in postcolonial studies that share the main title of this volume might serve to illustrate these inflections. Ian Lustig’s important study *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) examines the sustained and violent border disputes that constitute the wreckage of colonial occupation in these three regions. A more recent special issue of the journal *Postcolonial Studies* evokes unsettlement as at once a sustained articulation and critique of settler colonialism and, crucially, as the energizing of a demand for another future, an as-yet-unknown post-settler one. See Michele Grossman and Ceriwidan Spark, Introduction to “Unsettled States,” *Postcolonial Studies* 8.3 (2005): 235–41.
 29. See, e.g., Jo Ann Levy, *Unsettling the West: Eliza Farnham and Georgiana Bruce Kirby in Frontier California* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2004).
 30. See, e.g., Macarena Gómez-Barris, “Documenting Absence: Ghostly Screens Unsettle the Past,” in *Where Memory Dwells: Culture and State Violence in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), chapter 4.
 31. Some key works include: Renée Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000); Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, new edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ivy G. Wilson, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Politics in the Antebellum U.S.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham: Duke University

- Press, 2005); Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Christopher Peterson, *Kindred Specters: Death, Mourning and American Affinity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
32. Colin Davis, "État Présent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms," *French Studies* 59.3 (2005): 379.
 33. See especially Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 11.
 34. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*.
 35. Dominick La Capra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," *Critical Inquiry* 25.4 (Summer 1999): 696–727. See also Amy Shuman, "On the Verge: Phenomenology and Empathic Unsettling," *Journal of American Folklore* 124.493 (Summer 2011): 147–74.
 36. La Capra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," pp. 699, 723. La Capra goes on to argue that "empathic unsettling also raises in pointed form the problem of how to address traumatic events involving victimization, including the problem of composing narratives that neither confuse one's own voice or position with the victim's nor seek facile uplift, harmonization, or closure but allow the unsettling that they address to affect the narrative's own movement both in terms of acting-out and working-through" (p. 723).
 37. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, p. 57.
 38. Cindy Weinstein and Christopher Looby, "Introduction," *American Literature's Aesthetic Dimensions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 8. See also Christopher Castiglia and Russ Castronovo, "A 'Hive of Subtlety': Aesthetics and the End(s) of Cultural Studies," *American Literature* 76.3 (September 2004): 423–35.
 39. Several of the contributors to this volume (Rodrigo Lazo, David Kazanjian, Hester Blum, Glenn Hendler, Kyla Wazana Tompkins, and myself) first gathered at an invitational symposium organized by Ivy Wilson at the University of Notre Dame in April of 2008, entitled *Unauthorized States: Antinomies of the Nation and Other Subversive Genealogies*; however, with the exception of one portion of Hendler's essay, none of the work in this volume was presented at that conference, nor did its sessions employ the format or critical framework we have adapted here.
 40. Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 2.
 41. Jenny Sharpe, *Ghosts of Slavery: A Literary Archaeology of Black Women's Lives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. xiii.
 42. See, e.g., Sharpe's expansion, in *Ghosts of Slavery*, of the space and time of the U.S. slavery archive, weaving together oral narrative, song, mythology, and contemporary neoslave narratives.
 43. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 22.

44. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004), p. 151.
45. Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. xxi.
46. Roderick Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) outlines some of the ways in which a racialized heteronormativity operated as a precondition of U.S. citizenship, visible, for instance in the Freedmen's Bureau's postbellum administration of marital norms as a corrective to the "nonmonogamous and fluid intimate arrangements elaborated by slaves" (86).
47. Nancy Bentley, Introduction to "Forum: In The Spirit of the Thing: Critique as Enchantment," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1.1 (Spring 2013): 148.
48. Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," *The Way We Read Now*, special issue of *Representations* 108 (Fall 2009): 16.
49. Bentley, "Introduction," p. 150.