

# Reconstruction at 150: Panic and Euphoria

*November's program in August*

Friday, November 3

## **Extinction Discourse Before, During, and (Long) After the Civil War (8:30-10:00)**

*Timothy Sweet, West Virginia University (chair)*

“The Course of Ultimate Extinction”: Slavery, Natural History, and the Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Abraham Lincoln famously asserted, in his 1858 “House Divided” speech, that the nation’s founders had placed slavery “in the course of ultimate extinction.” That claim became one of the principal points of debate between Lincoln and Stephen Douglas later that year. Throughout Lincoln’s life, scientific evidence of species extinction had been rapidly accumulating, and an older view of a static creation was crumbling. But the how and why of extinction remained matters of considerable contestation. Uniformitarian-leaning thinkers thought a species, like an individual, simply had a finite lifespan; catastrophists believed it took some violent intervention to drive a species extinct; and the crucial question of humans’ role was in dispute. (As clear as it seemed to some that human hunting was the decisive factor in the extinction of, say, the dodo or the great auk, others still insisted these birds’ demise had been inevitable. And the newly emerging dinosaurs were another matter altogether.) Whether the extinction Lincoln foresaw for slavery was anthropogenic or not--whether it was to be brought about by legal action or would simply happen in the course of time--was a central political question in his debates with Douglas, who tried to portray Lincoln as an abolitionist in part using Malthusian ideas about population stress. This paper will draw on popular discourses about species extinction--the ways scientific debates were circulating in the press--to suggest how ideas about natural history shaped cultural imaginings of a future after slavery.

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## Extraction as Warfare in the C19 Anthropocene

Herman Melville’s poem “The Apparition” recounts the famous 1864 Civil War Battle of the Crater, in which “a goblin-mountain was upheaved” after Union troops exploded a mineshaft burrowed beneath General Robert E. Lee’s Confederate encampment. This paper reads both Melville’s poem and the battle itself in the context of its rarely remarked upon extractive history. The 48th Pennsylvania regiment responsible for the tunnel scheme was comprised of coal miners from the town of Pottsville, known for its anthracite mines. But the plan, inspired by fossil fuel extraction, backfired tragically, resulting in devastating casualties for the Union and especially Black troops. Both the battle and Melville’s poem, then, might be read as a prefiguration of the self-destruction that is a constitutive feature of extractivism, producing species extinction, including the prospect of human extinction. They highlight, too, the racialized component of extractive capitalism still visible today in modern ecological disasters, such as the recent Colonial Pipeline oil spill, which, ironically, bears the name of the source of human-caused devastation from the violence of war to the violence waged upon vulnerable populations, human and non-human alike.

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## From Vitality to Fertility: Two Nineteenth-Century Extinctions

In 1866, amid the ashes of the “political South,” Edward Pollard called for the preservation of the “social and intellectual South,” by which he meant the principle of white supremacy which underpinned the South’s “distinctive civilization,” including its (ostensibly) “higher sentimentalism, and its superior refinements and manners” (*The Lost Cause*, 752; 46-48). Fifty years later, Pollard’s plea would find a (crucially imperfect) echo in Madison Grant’s pronouncement that the greatest threat facing America is “the gradual dying out among our people of those hereditary traits through which the principles of our religious, political, and social foundations were laid down, and their insidious replacement by traits of less noble character” (*The Passing of the Great Race*, ix). Across these postwar decades, then, a discourse of cultural conservation/extinction (Pollard) gradually ossified into a discourse of biological conservation/extinction, in lockstep with the increasing recognition, among scientists of this era, of the ongoing phenomenon of anthropogenic speciological extinction. My paper will revisit this burgeoning postwar discourse of speciological extinction in order to explore the ways in which its concerns represent a narrowing of an earlier nineteenth-century theory of vitality. I will suggest that whereas turn of the century discourse frames extinction in identitarian terms—as the loss of a particular type of living being—earlier discourse frames extinction in systemic terms—as the loss of ecosystems, or ways of life.

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## **Going Public: The Law, Literature, Journalism, and Activism of Albion W. Tourgée (10:15-11:45)**

*Ian Finseth, University of North Texas (chair)*

“That Juggernaut of American Politics”: States’ Rights v. “The Nation” in Albion Tourgée’s *A Fool’s Errand*

In a climactic chapter near the end of his massively popular Reconstruction novel, *A Fool’s Errand* (1879), Albion Tourgée’s titular fool and representative carpetbagger, Comfort Servosse, identifies an ideology of “States’ rights” as “that Juggernaut of American politics by which so many hecatombs have been crushed and mangled.” Titled “Wisdom and Folly Meet Together,” the chapter reunites Servosse and his former mentor, Dr. Martin Enos, a college president and one of the many representative “wise men” in Washington and elsewhere, for a spirited discussion about Reconstruction in the wake of its “magnificent failure”—Enos’ tentative assessment, to which Servosse agrees with detailed explanation. The chapter, moreover, is the final one in a series that stages a national debate about race and rights between Servosse and various “wise men.” If Servosse is foolhardy through much of the novel primarily because of his quixotic optimism and obliviousness to cultural differences between the North and the South, then an ironic reversal transpires here in which the putative fool speaks with wisdom and social awareness, disabusing men like Enos of the missteps and misconceptions of Congress and Republican party politics during Reconstruction.

With this chapter as an interpretive lens, I examine the apparently irresolvable tension between States’ Rights and national authority that plays out through two of the novel’s formal features: on the one hand, a sequencing of chapters, interspersed throughout, that provide Tourgée with a platform for negotiating this tension and favoring national sovereignty through narrative intrusions; and on the other, a plot structured around escalating racial violence dramatizing the horrors of so-called mob justice and the need for federal intervention into state affairs. Through this process of showing and telling, I argue, Tourgée presents a case for Federalism that both cuts against and supplements the more ambivalent conclusion reached by Comfort Servosse—who ultimately serves as a sacrificial, comforting (as his name implies) figure of unification that counterbalances the more radical, progressive argument espoused through authorial intrusion and a plot structure centered around two lynchings.

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## Race and Republican Peace in the Writings of Albion Tourgée

Typically associated with Immanuel Kant's argument in the landmark essay "Perpetual Peace" (1795), the phrase "republican peace" might equally well be used to describe the social and political philosophy of Albion Winegar Tourgée, a leading white advocate for racial equality after the Civil War, who continued to advance the cause of Black Americans long after the federal government brought Reconstruction to a premature close. For Kant, republican constitutions provided the foundations of an international order that could resolve conflicts through nonviolent means. The phrase resonates differently in the case of Tourgée, who viewed the United States as a republic flawed at its inception and struggling to realize the ambitions of its founding documents, particularly on matters of racial justice.

In his essay "The Twentieth Century Peacemakers" (1899), Tourgée highlighted the role of "Anglo-Saxons," defining this category of person not as a member of a race but as an exponent of a culture and ideology tied to a theory of the democratic state. Beliefs and actions, not descent, characterize Tourgée's peacemaking Anglo-Saxons. Tourgée developed a capacious understanding of the "Anglo-Saxon theory of the state," claiming that "the seventy-odd millions of people who constitute...the American Republic, whether white or black, Celt or Slav" are "purely American" in their "political ideals." Treating "Anglo-Saxonism" as a reference to cultural attributes, not racial ones, Tourgée expands its application in potentially unlimited ways. In this talk I will present the implications of Tourgée's theory of "Anglo-Saxon" peacemaking within the context of his life and career.

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## "The Law Was Color-blinded by the Past": *Bricks without Straw* and the Legal Limits of Incorporating African Americans into the Body Politic

Historian Kate Mazur and literary scholar Nancy Bentley have recently produced conflicting interpretations of Albion Tourgée's *Bricks without Straw* and African Americans' efforts to be incorporated into the body politic. Both agree that Tourgée chronicles the nation's failure to affirm the "rights of freedpeople" after formal declaration of African American citizenship (Bentley). But Mazur praises Tourgée for accurately chronicling the failure to enforce laws guaranteeing equal rights, whereas Bentley describes Tourgée as a "white outsider" whose belief in the "uniformity of citizenship" generates "liberal misrecognition" of the "incommensurability between white law and Black kinship." Bentley goes on to use Tourgée's text to reveal the "tacit rules" of Black kinship that he allegedly fails to recognize. Paradoxically, however, she fails to mention *Bricks'* dramatization of how Black kinship extends across the color-line. Rather than champion "white law," Tourgée, as Mazur argues, exposes its limits. But in *Bricks* his emphasis is not on the need to enforce fair laws. Instead, he highlights how legal attempts to realize the ideal of color-blind citizenship are blind to the freedman's historical situation. "Right he had, in the abstract; in the concrete, none. Justice would not hear his voice. The law was still color-blinded by the past." There are good reasons why African American Anna Cooper lauded Tourgée for "presenting the truth from the colored American's standpoint" better than "any living writer, white or colored."

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## **Bodies Off the Grid: Medical Representations of Anomaly in Print Culture (2:15-3:45)**

*Jane E. Schultz, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (chair)*

### “Stranger than Fiction”: Civil War Soldiers Back from the Dead

James Mann of the 5th New York Cavalry was wounded at the Wilderness and had his right arm amputated above the elbow ten days later at Libby prison. Following a stint in Andersonville, he returned home to find that his wife had moved to Canada after learning of his death. Although they were eventually reunited, Mann was still listed in the New York Adjutant General’s report (published years later) as KIA. If stories published in newspapers and periodicals during the war are to be believed, Mann was not alone in his plight. Soldiers believed dead suddenly appear after their family members have read their name in casualty lists; tearful but happy reunions ensue. Men like Mann survive their wounds but return to their families forever changed. Such stories surely offered (most likely) false hope to the bereaved but also reflected the uncertainty caused by faulty record keeping and mass graves. My paper examines this phenomenon and its rhetorical significance during a time when many loved ones prayed that casualty reports were false, and many men faced the prospect of returning home physically and psychologically altered. Fictions resembling Mann’s experience promise potential reconciliation but also emphasize the suffering an inefficient and inaccurate notification system caused. They also create an interesting category of soldier body that navigates the border between life and death, existing in the space of the stories as simultaneously mangled and whole, ill and recovered.

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### Disabling Care?: The Civil War Hospital Newspaper

Focusing on a set of Union hospital newspapers held at the American Antiquarian Society, this paper explores the links that Civil-War-era medical institutions asserted between the acts of reading and writing and the acts of caretaking and convalescence. Newspapers insisted that they were part of the soldiers’ medical care, with the York, Pennsylvania, paper *The Cartridge Box* stating that “he who can cure by recreation, and make pleasure the vehicle of health, is a doctor in good earnest.” At the same time, hospital papers expressed anxieties about what soldiers were reading and what they were writing, with the Annapolis, Maryland, paper *The Skirmisher* rejecting a poem submitted by a patient after complaining, “We deprecate this spirit of poesy in the Army.” Papers also expressed anxieties about ill and injured soldiers’ possible future dependence on the nation, with another Annapolis paper, *The Crutch*, taking the literal object upon which some of its readers would have depended as a metaphor for a lack of self-reliance: “He who begins with crutches, will end with crutches.” Drawing on the work of bioethicist Jamie Leach Scully, I argue that Civil War hospital newspapers aimed to care for those who had “permitted dependencies,” but are marked by the persistent fear that these dependencies would tip into the “pathological,” thus limiting their potential as outlets of individual expression and community.

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Documenting the War from the Surgeon's (Writing) Table: Burt G. Wilder's Civil War Diary,  
*Practicing Medicine in a Black Regiment*

During the American Civil War, the Union Army Medical Department raised its number of medical staff from 78 at the start of the war to over 12,000 by 1865, including 85 acting staff surgeons and over 5,500 acting assistant surgeons (Flannery, *Civil War Pharmacy*, 17, 20). However, by the time Black regiments began to commission officers in 1863, most qualified medical personnel were dispatched to meet the needs across the country. This resulted in Black regiments receiving lesser-quality care from undertrained medical officers compared to their counterparts in white regiments.

This paper examines the Civil War diary and writings of Burt G. Wilder, assistant surgeon to the 55th Massachusetts Infantry. Wilder, a doctor-in-training from May 1863 until his discharge in September 1865, describes in his daily writings the day-to-day operations of the hospital and his responsibilities, the volunteer regiment's role in the campaigns in coastal South Carolina, and the trials and indignities suffered by Black soldiers due to a dismissive and racist War Department. Through close reading of his civil war writings, I aim to consider how Wilder renders patient care and hospital trauma in daily personal writing as he recalls and records performed medical procedures, news of the hospital and war, and patient death in his personal texts. Further, this paper will examine the ways in which Wilder's daily recordings of hospital life, from the mundane to the exceptional, enrich emerging historiographies of the war, particularly in relation to Black regiments and Black military service.

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Surgeon General William Hammond and the Medical Treatment of Homosexuality

When European sexual science arrived in the US in the 1880s, its catalog of perversions found ready application to existing case studies in American medicine. Nearly every text of early US sexology referenced by historians of homosexuality cites the research of neurologist William A. Hammond. His military experience—in the New Mexico territory during the 1850s' US-Sioux Wars, in Kansas during warfare over slavery's expansion, as Surgeon General for the Union Army from 1862 until his dismissal in 1864—is a central, though underexamined, aspect of the history of US sexology. After the Civil War, Hammond established a private practice in New York City, where he treated male impotence, especially where experienced by veterans, as a psychic problem. His findings helped establish same-sex desire and gender deviance as disorders of the mind. Like his fellow Union officer Anthony Comstock (as Judith Giesberg argues in *Sex and the Civil War*), Hammond contributed to an emerging regime of sexual restriction and control while motivated by a profound concern for the welfare of the young men with whom he served. Hammond's biography, his medical case studies, and his postbellum novels offer an archive for exploring the role of US political and military history, especially the transformations of the Civil War, within the history of sexuality. That history frequently mentions the Civil War but only as a way of periodizing transformations in sexuality. Hammond's work clarifies how the Civil War and its aftermath contributed directly to transformations in sexual science.

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## Race, Slavery, and Freedom across Languages and Media: Translation and Civil War Studies (4:00-5:30)

Benjamin Fagan, Auburn University (chair)

### The Translator's Visibility: *My Bondage and My Freedom* in Germany

After meeting in the mid-1850s, Frederick Douglass and German American writer Otilie Assing became friends and collaborators for three decades. Assing began translating *My Bondage and My Freedom* not long after they met. Her translation was published in Hamburg in 1860.

Many theorists of translation have noted, and at times lamented, the tendency for translators to be rendered “invisible,” their contributions ignored. Otilie Assing’s German translation of Douglass’s second biography, *Sklaverei und Freiheit* [*My Bondage and My Freedom*] presents a contrast to this tendency. Through a series of scholarly errors, Assing’s translation came to overshadow the work itself for a time, making her a rather “visible” translator.

As Heike Paul has noted, the German translation of Douglass’s second narrative was published at a time when Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was at peak popularity in Germany. Assing hoped to present Douglass’s text as an antidote to what she considered an inadequate depiction of the realities of enslavement in Stowe’s novel. Both *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Douglass’s first narrative loomed larger in Germany than Assing’s translation of his second autobiography. Subsequently, a series of repeated scholarly errors lead to the misapprehension of Assing’s translation as a fictional work of her own creation, rather than a translation of Douglass.

Overshadowed in its own time and misunderstood later, Assing’s translation, along with its fascinating and problematic preface, presents a complex and ambiguous example of the contingencies of translation.

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### *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* in Brazil

In April, May, and June of 1883, the first sixteen chapters of *Life and Times of Fredrick Douglass* were serialized on the pages of *Gazeta da Tarde*, a Rio de Janeiro newspaper edited by the abolitionist José do Patrocínio. The source of this Portuguese-language rendition of Douglass’ autobiography was not the English-language original published in 1881, but rather an 1883 translation of *Life and Times* into French, by the Swiss writer Valérie de Gasparin. When this Portuguese translation of a French translation of Douglass’ work appeared on the pages of *Gazeta da Tarde*, it was situated amidst a range of materials—most notably, a recurring column on Brazilian “Scenas da Escravidão,” and a series of articles calling for “Abolição Immediata e sem Indemnisação.”

The translation and framing of Douglass’ autobiography, I argue, help Patrocínio’s paper express a comparative abolitionist outlook, one sensitive to the discrepant timelines of abolition in the Americas. More specifically, in *Gazeta da Tarde*’s rendition of Douglass’ text, and in the articles appearing alongside it, the postwar U.S. is sometimes idealized and sometimes critiqued but consistently made a reference point, as the paper’s writers imagine how Brazilian slavery might end. What emerges on the pages of *Gazeta da Tarde*, amidst this comparative abolitionist reflection, is a commitment not just to ending legal slavery but also to marshalling and building political institutions to create an equitable post-slavery world. The paper thus promotes, I’d suggest, something like what W.E.B. Du Bois termed “abolition democracy,” in a hemispheric key.

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“The Winds May Rise”: Wind, Water, and Homeland in the Poetry of *Les Cenelles* [The Mayhaws]

In 1845 Armand Lanusse published an anthology of poetry by a group of French-speaking free men of color in New Orleans, a volume entitled *Les Cenelles* [*The Mayhaws*]. Due to Louisiana laws that prohibited criticism of Southern racist hierarchies, the poems in this collection could not respond directly to the political situation of the *gens de couleur libre* [free people of color]. Strongly influenced by the waves of revolutionary change sweeping through both France and Haiti, these writers instead use the stances of courtly love and the retreat to an idealized natural world to protest obliquely the tightening net of legal restrictions constraining their lives. In the first half of the volume, poems that figure natural environments as peaceful oases from the tumult of change are outnumbered by poems that figure ocean-going travel and the sea’s turbulence as the only viable means of escape from societal racism. Still other poems figure natural settings as a location where one can grieve familial instability, implicitly decrying the legal developments that are shaping that instability. Focusing on a representative selection of such poems, my paper will argue that these poets use images of wind, water, and natural environments both to argue that free people of color deserve the right to a homeland in Louisiana, the place of their birth, and to lament the dispersion of that community in response to the pressures of US-based white supremacy.

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“Mauritius in America: Slavery and the Cultural Translation of *Paul et Virginie*”

Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's novel *Paul et Virginie* (1788), a tragic romance set in Mauritius, became a multimedia global phenomenon: translated into many languages; adapted into dramas, ballets, and operas; and reproduced in such media as porcelain, wallpaper, and fabric. In this paper, I analyze how this French novel was culturally as well as linguistically translated into nineteenth-century America, focusing on the role of slavery in its translations. Antebellum editions of *Paul and Virginia* implicitly conjoined Mauritius with the U.S. South, highlighting the novel’s subplot of “runaway slave” in their illustrations and rewriting its ending. *Paul and Virginia* intersected in numerous ways with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, including their linked marketing, Stowe’s own commentary about Bernardin, and shared themes in the novels, especially their use of pathos to highlight white female virtue. By contrast, at the end of the century, Mark Twain satirized *Paul et Virginie* and the political hierarchies on which its pathos depended. These and other works suggest the importance of *Paul et Virginie* to nineteenth-century U.S. culture, and the protean forms – political as well as aesthetic – its translations could assume.

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Joshua McCarter Simpson’s Verses

Reading Joshua McCarter Simpson’s mid-century poems, I use translation as a metaphor for considering the movement of his lyrics between print and oral/aural forms. Though circulating textually in McCarter Simpson’s

own collected volumes of poetry and elsewhere in the Black press, song transfers these lyrics across space in different ways. While both the printed and the sung verse are in English, taking their translation across form into account allows us to contemplate the breadth of their audience, which wasn't dependent upon English literacy alone. Moreover, when sung these lyrics carry additional meaning, some of which is lost in the translation from song to print. I consider McCarter Simpson's lyrics simultaneously in written and sung form, translations that can only together convey these lyrics' resonance.

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Saturday, November 4

### **Unexpected Periodicals of the 1850s (8:30-10:00)**

*Kathleen Diffley, University of Iowa (chair)*

“Decidedly behind the times”: *The Fort Wayne Standard* and Abolitionism in Indiana

As proclaimed by its publisher, New England transplant and Baptist minister Daniel. W. Burroughs, *The Fort Wayne Standard* (1854-1855) was the only newspaper “in Northern Indiana advocating the principles of EQUAL LIBERTY.” It was, unsurprisingly, a fledgling venture. Produced with materials from a failed literary magazine, the *Laurel Wreath*, the *Standard* pursued a wide-ranging reform agenda from universal education to temperance to abolition. Propelled by its “anti-Nebraska” stance, Burroughs “intended to make the Standard a Free Paper,” one “not . . . under the control of any party, class, or sect.” Yet this attempt at catering to a wide audience was not mere expedience. Indeed, Burroughs had “no fears of agitation,” an outlook that led his office in downtown Fort Wayne, Indiana, to be egged; ultimately, he opted like Huck Finn for “retirement” to the “far west” in 1856. This newspaper, I will suggest, invites us to consider “abolition” in fits and starts. How did a newspaper aim not just to extend the “imagined community” of abolition but to dare northern Hoosiers to act in a commensurate way. “The undertaking is a novel—possibly a premature and hazard one—for this meridian,” Burroughs wrote in 1854. He was right. But through its coverage of Underground Railroad conductors, critiques of Congress and its laws, and reports on federal cases regarding enslavement, *The Standard* thus reveals how a “local” paper in a putatively free state took indiscriminate and ultimately ruinous risks in the service of social change.

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Paper Unconfined: Peter Clark's *Herald of Freedom*

This presentation examines the Cincinnati-based newspaper, *Herald of Freedom*, to understand how a Black weekly served as a platform to speak for a lesser-known maverick among the national African American community in the mid-19th century. A young educator, Peter H. Clark, launched the newspaper with the motto “To Caste, or Sect, or Color; Unconfined” in June 1855, when the fate of a Black newspaper's short life seemed inevitable. In fact, a Black newspaper became a tool for promulgating a minority voice because the dearth of Black news outlets enabled these pages to spread quickly and to be read widely. It was assumed that copies of the *Herald* did not survive until two years ago, when the curator of the American Antiquarian Society, Vincent Golden, found two issues in the library's stacks. This discovery reveals the diversity within mid-nineteenth-century Black newspapers: while Frederick Douglass and other leaders believed that the newspaper should be a

vehicle to unify African Americans' voices to empower them at a national level, Clark used his paper to challenge main-stream opinions by taking "unconfined" or less popular stances. Without the national Black community's support and sustainable resources, the failure of Clark's *Herald* was obvious from the beginning, as it lasted only for five months. Nevertheless, the editor attempted to authorize his relatively minoritized position—for example, his opposition to establishing an industrial school for Black youth—by publishing the incendiary newspaper. The *Herald* ultimately helped him gain national attention as a capable editor and emerging leader, and the weekly also paved the way for him to become a representative figure of Black journalists when he presided over the first National Convention of Colored Newspaper Men in 1875.

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“The S[o]n Shines for All”: Frederick Douglass’s Children Make an Antebellum Newspaper”

This paper focuses on *The Weekly Sun*, a newspaper edited and published by Frederick Douglass’s children. This newspaper has, to my knowledge, been entirely overlooked by scholars. The single extant issue of the *Sun* appeared in the spring of 1856, when Douglass’s five children ranged in age from six to seventeen. The newspaper, published out of the same office as *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, runs four pages and contains reprints from a variety of newspapers as well as a good deal of original material. From the tone and content of the original material, I suspect that Douglass’s sons Charles (12) and Frederick, Jr. (14) were largely responsible for editing the *Sun*. Lewis (16) had recently taken over as the head printer for his father’s newspaper, and may very well have also been involved, as may have Rosetta (17), who assisted her father with editorials for his newspaper. My paper will explore the content and production of the *Sun* within the context of amateur newspapers of the day, as well as that of the senior Douglass’s goal of making the offices of his newspaper a training ground for a new generation of Black leaders.

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**Civil Disturbances** (10:15-11:45)  
*Faith Barrett, Duquesne University (chair)*

“To Generations Yet Unborn”: The Queer Future of the Confederacy in Augusta Jane Evans’s *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice*

Augusta Jane Evans’ *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice* (1864) is credited with being one of the Confederacy’s best-selling novels and, though the Civil War itself occupies only the novel’s final chapters, Evans’ depiction of the conflict and her emphasis on “womanly usefulness” outside of marriage has garnered significant scholarly attention. However, bearing in mind that national reproduction relies on the family as the site for the managed biological production of the population, in rejecting marriage, Evans’ protagonists, Irene and Electra, both defy a logic in which the kinship systems of Confederate citizens must reflect and also uphold the system of existing social relations. This paper will thus engage with the novel’s thwarted marriage plot beyond the framework of “womanly usefulness” and explore what is at stake in Evans’ depiction of Southern kinship and her text’s rejection of marriage and reproduction. Most importantly, though *Macaria* is dedicated to “generations yet unborn,” the novel’s depiction of Southern kinship and white women’s performance within those structures provides a queer future of possibilities, of new emerging relationalities on both a personal and national scale. With a particular focus on the intersections between kinship, reproduction, and nationalism in the Civil War

moment, this paper will draw out the implications of these new relationalities to provide a new reading of the novel that will contribute to current scholarship on the South's gendered responses to the Civil War.

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### Emerson and Reconstruction

By the end of the Civil War, Emerson had entered a period of cognitive decline and a waning of energy for public activism. For that reason, he was not active during the period of Reconstruction, and scholarship does not often treat his work after the end of the war. This paper, however, takes up the richness of Emerson's ideas for thinkers who were public advocates for racial justice after 1865. I examine a set of lectures Emerson gave during 1862 and 1863 and during which he projected the possibilities for a multi-ethnic post-war American democracy: "Perpetual Forces" (1862), "American Civilization" (1862), and "Fortune of the Republic" (1863). During the last of these, Emerson imaged that "We are in these days settling for ourselves and our descendants questions, which, as they shall be determined in one way or another, will make the peace and prosperity, or the calamity of the next ages." Imagining that "a new era of equal rights [might] dawn on the universe," Emerson envisions that with the end of the war, legislators might "write laws for the benefit of men" (LL 335). This presentation will treat such projections, to which Emerson gave voice only as his active, independent career was coming to an end, as a keynote that would find resonance among the coming generation of civil rights advocates in the Reconstruction-era United States.

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### Bodies and Blood: Whitman and the Firstborn from the Dead

Writing during a time of religious ferment, Walt Whitman dismissed traditional Christian notions of clerical and scriptural authority. Yet his adamantly iconoclastic poetry also referenced central Christian narratives and beliefs, particularly those related to the body of Christ. Though evident in every edition of *Leaves of Grass*, these connections became peculiarly acute in Whitman's Civil War writings, where beliefs associated with Christ's resurrected body helped Whitman poetically address the soldiers lost to the horrors of war and those who survived. This paper will trace the theme of Christic resurrection within the 1867 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the first in which Whitman's war poetry appeared. Drawing connections between his newer war collections and fresh revisions to his previous corpus reveals how Whitman redefined soldiers' bodies, whether in the ground or on the march, as vessels of divinely material transcendence.

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### Timeless New England: Whittier and White Racial Intimacy

John Greenleaf Whittier's "Tents on the Beach," the 1867 follow up to the acclaimed and commercially successful "Snowbound" (1866), established Whittier's reputation as a nationally beloved regional writer. From the time these poems were published, reviewers and critics have noted Whittier's definitive break from political poetry. Centering the natural beauty and lore of New England, Whittier structured both poems as sites of

bonding at which family and friends gather to share retellings of the New England legends and lore to which Whittier's early poetry was devoted. As a response in part to critics who emphasize the differences between antebellum and postwar Whittier, I read his later work as consistent in its regionalist poetics, which run through his abolitionist poetry. I argue that talking and singing spaces in Whittier's poems invite the white racial pleasures of Anglo-Puritan tradition. As a prewar point of comparison, I consider "The Panorama" and other campaign poems written in the run up to the 1856 national election.

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### **Postbellum Developments (2:15-3:45)**

*Samuel Graber, Valparaiso University (chair)*

"I will read Shakespeare for Uncle Sam!": Shakespeare's Affordances in the Civil War Era

Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, wartime Americans engaged Shakespeare in myriad ways and for many reasons. By taking these interactions seriously we can learn something about the intellectual and emotional lives of the war's participants. Allusions were not simply rhetorical flourishes. Nor were they, as one historian has suggested, merely a way to show off. They were instead a means for various wartime communities to articulate and justify what they thought and felt about the Civil War. In short, Shakespeare afforded the warring generation a language and a way of thinking about war and its attendant consequences.

This paper centers on Shakespeare's affordances in military camps. It turns our attention away from the well-known instances of Shakespeare's presence—Ulysses S. Grant playing Desdemona in a camp production of *Othello* during the U.S. War with Mexico, for example, or Abraham Lincoln discussing Constance's lament in *King John* with his aide at Fortress Monroe—and looks instead at the mundane, the unexpected, the unintended, the improbable, and the seemingly impossible. The context from which a passage was plucked often did not matter. The user's needs did, however. If we think about design theory, a chair invites us to sit. That is why the chair was built. But it also affords us the opportunity to stand on the chair. How else would we get a book off the top shelf? My paper is about standing on chairs.

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Envisioning Citizenship in the Hampton Institute's *Talks and Thoughts*

Although the 14th Amendment formally defined United States citizenship for the first time in 1868, the concept's interpretations varied through actively negotiated inclusions and exclusions. This was particularly true for Indigenous people who were denied birthright citizenship by the clause "excluding Indians not taxed." As the courts defined and redefined citizenship, fiction and other extralegal texts also shaped emergent conceptions, sometimes by using speculative or counterfactual writing. This paper considers the way nineteenth century Indigenous student writers used the emerging print culture of boarding school newspapers to resist cultural erasure and enact citizenship while asserting their sovereignty. The folktales, historical counternarratives, and opinion pieces in the Hampton Institute's newspaper, *Talks and Thoughts* (1886-1907), reveal the contested nature of Indigenous citizenship and sovereignty in the late nineteenth century.

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### The Photographic Archives of Paul Laurence Dunbar's "When Dey 'Listed Colored Soldiers"

I aim to trace how a single dialect poem, Paul Laurence Dunbar's "When Dey 'Listed Colored Soldiers," entwines itself through photography and print culture with the poet and his project of commemorating the war's Black soldiers. The poem appears notably in the 1901 gift book *Candle-Lightin' Time*, which collects Dunbar's poems into a plantation fantasy illustrated notoriously with photographs of Black subjects in nostalgic costume taken primarily by white faculty members of the Hampton Institute. But the poem's previous pictorial life is easily missed if we consider, as is commonly done, the Hampton Institute volume in isolation.

The poem was born two years earlier in Boston's *New England Magazine* alongside Dunbar's story "The Ingrate" (a fictionalized account of his father's escape from slavery and enlistment in the all-Black 55th Massachusetts Infantry) and a photograph of Dunbar, who emerges proudly as a Black author writing in the legacy of his soldier-father. Although the poem gives the perspective of an enslaved Black woman, the fallen Federal husband she mourns now carries with him the history of Dunbar's father and his Black comrades, until he reappears in the racially typed landscape of *Candle-Lightin' Time*, recontextualized and stamped with a photograph of an unmarked grave. As much as the white historical gaze of the book aims to expunge both Dunbar and Black subjectivity from the record, its photographs allude tacitly to the poem's visual history, leaving space for Dunbar's racialized war archives to haunt and resist the book's vision of an antebellum plantation.

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### "Facing It and Forgetting It: Veteran Descendants in Memorial"

The problem this paper considers is how descendants of Civil War veterans are both an audience and an afterthought in memorial. Indeed, descendants of Civil War veterans are largely unremembered. That might seem insignificant at first glance; logically, war memorials should only memorialize those who experienced war. Yet Revolutionary war memory such as Daniel Webster at Bunker Hill often addressed future generations of "children" to inherit the war's bounty of freedom. Lincoln likewise emphasized "us the living" to carry on the lessons from the dead at Gettysburg. The title of the paper alludes to Vietnam veteran Yusef Komunyakaa's poem "Facing It" about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in which the speaker's reckoning at the Wall with his own war experience is interrupted in the final lines by an anonymous child who can look at the engraved names but still fail to connect. Why? In part because, as Viet Thanh Nguyen notes, the memorial lacks a space to remember the full humanity of the Vietnamese and the enormity of other invisible and erased casualties of the war that extend into Laos, Cambodia, and other geographies and cultures. For Nguyen, the rigid boundaries of American war memory conspire to cause a "forgetting [that] is not accidental but deliberate, strategic, even malicious—in other words, disremembering." This paper extends that argument into examples of Civil War memorial that actually do represent veteran descendants, often in spaces that are peripheral to national memory.

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**New & Noteworthy: Through an Unusual Lens (4:00-5:30)**

*Elizabeth Young, Mount Holyoke College (chair)*

Sarah E. Chinn, author of *Disability, the Body, and Radical Intellectuals in the Literature of the Civil War and Reconstruction*

Kathleen Diffley, author of *The Fateful Lightning: Civil War Stories and the Magazine Marketplace, 1861-1876*