

The Civil War at 150: Surrender?

Friday, November 13

No Longer a White Man's Republic (8:30-9:45)

Sam Graber (chair)

Mountains, Ruins, and Black Revolution in Leonora Sansay's *Zelica, the Creole*

In 1808 Leonora Sansay authored a compact epistolary novel entitled *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo*. In 1820 she revised this earlier work into *Zelica, The Creole*, a three-volume romance. Both novels focus on the period of the Haitian Revolution (1801-1803), when Napoleon's troops attempted to reconquer and re-enslave the island's black inhabitants. But whereas the 1808 text tells the story of a group of women island-hopping from San Domingue to Cuba to Jamaica, and thus locates the revolution in an archipelagic geography, the 1820 revision sets the tale in the immediate surroundings of Cap Français, and especially "the mountain" that looms over the city. In this paper, I explore the implications of the figure of the mountain as a spatial and, especially, temporal marker of black revolution. In *Zelica*, the mountain is a place filled with ruins, where happenings that skirt the line between fantasy and reality become a regular occurrence. It is a place better suited to a fairy tale than an account of a slave uprising, as "bandits" roam the woods and a "sorceress" is held captive in a crumbling castle. The mountain, I argue, casts the Haitian Revolution as ruinous, but also something that occurred in an almost mystical past. Mountain time thus works against readings of the Haitian Revolution as one manifestation of an ongoing fight for black liberation (a view taken up by some black abolitionists in the US), while also paradoxically (and problematically) presenting 1820 Haiti as a nation poised to move beyond its revolutionary past and become a modern nation-state. By looking closely at the timespace of the mountain in *Zelica*, and its implications for theories of black revolution in the early Americas, my paper explores the temporal side of the spatial turn in American Studies.

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Melville, Slavery, and the Economy of Extinction

Herman Melville's critical interest in the intertwined emergence of US empire and global industrial capitalism is well known, but less notice has been given to the way his attention to the emerging discourse of extinction intersects with and intensifies his socioeconomic critique. Melville's work catalogs in visceral detail the human and nonhuman casualties of an economy characterized largely by "violence against nature and humanity"—an economy, as Zygmunt Bauman has suggested, that looks more like a "war" (Bercovitch 291; Bauman 23). And while his work has long been read as contributing to an apocalyptic vision that aligns with the "American School of Catastrophe," we must understand the catastrophe Melville describes as not only geopolitical, presaging the coming fall of an American empire presently on the rise, but potentially geological in its scale and its nature. This paper will attend to Melville's interest in ruins and fossils in relation to slavery. Here I will build on my argument (which I have articulated primarily with respect to African American texts) about the relation between the

economy of slavery and the ruins of empires, linking it to Melville's deeper time thinking about extinction. Through this I draw out Melville's sense of slavery and capitalism as not merely apocalyptic within the timeframe of human history—and thus “ruins producing”—but as an extinction producing economy that inscribes itself on the geological record.

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William Faulkner's Civil War in the Civil Rights Era

William Faulkner's public statements regarding desegregation during the civil rights era were frequently contradictory and often framed in a historical continuum with the Civil War. They ranged from open denunciations of civil rights abuses and assessments of segregation as immoral and unsustainable to more conservative pleas to “go slow” while the South handled its own problems and even a notorious reactionary threat to take up arms in defense of his state. This essay examines Faulkner's contradictory commentaries on desegregation as an extension of his engagement with the Civil War, white identity, and racial guilt in *Intruder in the Dust* (1948) and *Requiem for a Nun* (1951). These works include didactic expositions on southern identity as grounded simultaneously in individual and local autonomy as well as regional (white) homogeneity. Faulkner, however, juxtaposes the apparent defenses of southern white identity with critical appraisals of the implications for southern African Americans in the segregation era. I argue that Faulkner's simultaneous and contradictory defenses and criticisms of the South are not only analogous to his subsequent public statements, but that they are also similarly rooted in Faulkner's inability to de-romanticize the Civil War as the locus of southern white identity.

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The Affective Civil War: I (10:00-11:15)

Elizabeth Renker (chair)

Abolitionist Infidels

From *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to appeals to Higher Law to John Brown's martyrdom, abolitionism has been most commonly associated with an evangelical Protestantism that urged immediate emancipation in response to the nation's great sin. Yet, the ready conflation of evangelical Protestant views with the abolitionist movement tends to overlook the radical challenge abolitionist writing and protest posed to mainstream Protestant beliefs, out of which arose the charge commonly lodged against abolitionists by both southern defenders of slavery and moderate northerners—namely, that abolitionists were irreligious and even atheistic. I account for this strange dialectic of characterization—according to which abolitionists were religious fanatics *and* unbelieving infidels—by placing antislavery debates into the history of disestablishment. Far from ending a debate about the role of religion in politics, the separation of established churches from state support—a process that ended in 1833, with Massachusetts's

disestablishment of Congregationalism—inaugurated a new mode of religiosity in which religion became more private and more insistent on its moral clarity, its position as above politics and therefore a clearer and purer guide for politics. Showing how private religion (and the process of disestablishment) provided a structure to the debates over slavery by concentrating on the works of antislavery writers with a complicated relation to evangelical Protestantism (such as William Lloyd Garrison, Lydia Maria Child, Frederick Douglass, and Henry David Thoreau), I demonstrate how the slavery debates shaped our conceptions of privacy and religious freedom.

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Abolitionist Zombies

Antebellum American was overrun with the walking dead. In Whitman's "A Boston Ballad," soldiers from the American Revolution rise from their graves and wander the streets of Boston, their bare gums chattering. In his inaugural editorial for *The Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison insisted that "the apathy of the people" with regard to slavery was enough to "hasten the resurrection of the dead." Emerson in "The American Scholar" described his fellow citizens as "so many walking monsters," little more than ambulatory body parts. But the period's largest collection of zombies were antislavery moderates—colonizationists, unionists, gradualists—whom more radical abolitionists accused of being unaffected by the exigencies of the moment, incognizant of the period's moral and political urgencies, or, as Garrison described them phrase "insensible to the present." This paper explores how immediatist abolitionists situated antislavery in the realm of affective historical experience, of emotion and bodily sensation, rather of knowledge, understanding, or one's political position. For immediatists like Garrison, to be "insensible" was to be numb, without feeling, unconscious and oblivious—dead. To be alive to the living present, by contrast, was to feel the force of, to experience the dire intensity of, to act in and within the happenings of the moment.

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Abolitionist Intimates

This paper will take up the issue of Ralph Waldo Emerson's coldness—his self-proclaimed deficits of feeling, his difficulty with interpersonal expression—first examining the crisis this quality of Emerson's produced in his relationship with Margaret Fuller in 1841. Accusing Emerson of an emotional remoteness, a refusal or inability to embrace the "full communion" she and Caroline Sturgis offered him in the form of their more vivacious styles of friendship, Fuller provoked in Emerson a defense of cool distance in the form of his essay "Friendship," included in the 1841 first series of *Essays*. But after Fuller's shocking death off the coast of Fire Island in 1850, and as he became absorbed in the process of reconsidering his relationship with her as he contributed to *The Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli* (1852), Emerson began to appreciate what he described as Fuller's "genius" for emotional commitment,

for closing distance, for melting ice through affective fire. I argue that this timely re-assessment of his relationship with Fuller—occurring as it did just as Emerson was also taking in the devastating news of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law—prompted Emerson toward a crucial transformation in his style as an abolitionist. Whereas Emerson’s prior enshrinement of cool-headed rationality helped to shape his moderate approach to anti-slavery advocacy—for example, in his 1844 oration on emancipation in the West Indies—his work as an abolitionist after Fuller’s death is marked by a more decidedly heated rhetoric and stage presence. Though she was never an active participant in U.S. abolitionist circles, Fuller thus exerted a crucial influence upon Emerson’s role in the movement.

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Abolitionist Animals

In the wake of the *Christiana* “riot” of 1851, Frederick Douglass lambasted the federal government’s attempt to indict fugitive slaves for treason. “A horse kicks out the brains of his master. Do you try the horse for treason?” he writes, concluding: “The only law which the alleged slave has a right to know anything about, is the law of nature.”

In comparing rebellious slaves to violent animals, Douglass knew he was playing with fire. Although the legal histories of abolition and animal protection intertwine, they were also at loggerheads. As Christopher Peterson observes, “both racist and antiracist discourses are predicated on a shared repudiation of animality”: to many abolitionists, defeating not just slavery but racism meant reasserting the exceptionalism of the human and repudiating the “bestialization” of black humanity. Antiracism thus aligned itself against a politics of sympathy which proposed to extend rights to “nonhuman” others (eg. slaves, horses).

By contrast, though he is emphatic that “the Negro is a man,” Douglass’ animals are never simply bestial foils to humanity. Instead, as the example above suggests, his animals are ideologically complex—citizens of the natural law on which his abolitionism is founded, and defiant challenges to the apartheid of human exceptionalism on which antiracism often depends. This paper surveys the animals in Douglass’ writings of the 1850s. It argues that, through these uniquely fraught figures, Douglass worked a rearguard action against the humanism of antiracist argumentation and the politics of sympathy, limning an alternative, though not unproblematic, posthumanist antislavery imaginary.

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The Affective Civil War: II (11:30-12:45)
Julia Stern (chair)

William Gilmore Simms is Indignant: Confederate Public Feeling c. 1865

By February 1865, with the fall of the Confederacy all but assured, Simms and his family had been chased from their Low Country, South Carolina plantation home, The Woodlands, which burned to the ground in the wake of Sherman's Army. Taking refuge in a small home in Columbia, South Carolina, Simms would bear witness to what he dubbed the "Capture, Sack and Destruction" of his beloved state's capital city. That spring he gave voice to his indignation in a series of ten historically minded—and histrionic—dispatches for the upstart newspaper the *Columbia Phœnix*. Although Simms scholars have long recognized the resulting essays as cornerstones of Lost Cause ideology, nineteenth-century literary studies has had very little to say about these extraordinarily rhetorical documents. This talk rereads Simms's essays not in terms of historical accuracy but as evidence of Confederate public feeling c. 1865. Simms's red-hot descriptions of the "Capture, Sack and Destruction of Columbia, S.C.," I argue, have a great deal to teach us about the uses of "ugly feelings" in the final hours of a failed national experiment and an exceedingly bloody war.

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Lydia Watkins is Lonesome: Letter-Writing from Farm to Front

As sources for the study of affect, the letters of Civil War soldiers and their families can seem at once heavenly and bedeviling. Unpublished and uncensored, they are windows on intimate relationships and private feelings. Then again, they are often dry, stilted, formulaic, and poorly spelled—smudged windows at best, and offering a better view of epistolary culture's timeworn conventions than of anyone's emotional life. Part of the problem is not letters themselves but the evidentiary uses to which they generally have been put. Most people only encounter personal letters from the Civil War in editions of those by a single soldier ("Dear Daisy: The Civil War Letters of Pvt. James Gatz") or in the form of numerous short quotations—culled by the likes of Bell Irvin Wiley, James McPherson, and Chandra Manning, from thousands of archival documents—woven together to portray the armies' aggregate experience or ideology. But what somebody says in one sentence on one day, however quotable and emphatic, may register only a passing feeling; and the emotional life displayed in a long run of letters can be obscure when half the conversation is missing. This paper offers a case study in a methodological alternative by reading the complete correspondence of a mother and her son—Lydia Watkins, at home on the farm in Kent County, Michigan, and Benton Lewis, a corporal in the 8th Michigan Cavalry—and exploring the evolution of their relationship across two years and 65 letters.

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Oliver Wendell Holmes Is Disgusted (Yet Curiously Compelled): Narrative Strategies of the Souvenir Gatherer

Not a week after the guns ceased firing at Antietam, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr became one of the Civil War's vast convergence of souvenir gatherers, a member of the peculiar congregation whose presence

upon the numerous battlefields of the imperiled Union was fast becoming conspicuous. As the title of his subsequent meditation on his excursion – “My Hunt After the Captain” (December 1862) – made clear, it had ostensibly been under anxiety’s influence, rather than the battlefield tourist’s insatiable curiosity, that Holmes found himself bound for Maryland. But the exhausted remnants of battle distracted him from the task at hand, leaving him variously disgusted, compelled, and wondering what relation such objects could bear to the momentous phenomenon of battle itself.

Focusing on Holmes’s *Atlantic Monthly* essay, and drawing on his encounters with the souvenir-driven marketplaces that emerged during the war, this paper will consider the murky affective and ethical territory of the wartime souvenir gatherer, and the narrative challenges faced by the writer attempting to make the stuff of the battlefield his own. As Holmes’s essay recognizes, the problem posed by the souvenir is one of representation, of the negotiation between subject and object, and at the same time as Holmes draws provocative parallels between acts of writing and of souvenir gathering, he also comes up against the unsettling fact that one’s own possessions could themselves become somebody else’s mementos of war. Via his uncanny and distinctly unsentimental ontology of self as souvenir, I will suggest, Holmes works to make sense of the rubble from which remembrance was to materialize.

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Carl Schurz is Confident: Racial Variable in the Free Labor Experiment, 1865

As a place to begin charting the affective life of the “free labor experiment,” one could do worse than Carl Schurz’s *Report on Conditions in the South*, submitted to Congress on 19 December, 1865. Schurz travelled at the behest of Republican leaders, part of the broader Congressional project of verifying and calculating Southern feeling as a political economic variable. *Report on Conditions in the South*, in fact, provided a template for the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, which would undertake a massive investigation, culminating in the *Report of the Joint Committee of Reconstruction* in the spring of 1866. I argue that at this moment of extreme distrust among elites, investigative reports like these tendered a contract of white privilege. The loyalty oaths and labor contracts pressed by Freedmen’s Bureau officers and unimpeachable “Union men” in the South were an imposition of federal will, to be sure, but also a relatively straightforward articulation of new, free-labor terms of racial sovereignty. This paper thus makes legible conventional gestures of invitation amidst the stern rebuke of Southern disloyalty and begins to frame an analysis of *free labor confidence*, not as an individual disposition, but rather, as a discursively available point of racial differentiation and appropriation within the biopolitical apparatus of federal print. My reading of Schurz is emphatically a surface reading, intended not as a demystification of liberal racial narratives but as an amplification of the production and exchange of white confidence as a constitutive affect of modern racial statecraft. As 1865 turns 150, Schurz’s report encourages identifications along affective trajectories across a century and a half of white liberal confidence, which helps us, as he says, to “feel our age” within the post-emancipation moment.

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“Civil War” Poems (2:30-3:45)

Elizabeth Duquette (chair)

The Penfield Extra: Editing War Poems in an Amateur Print Newspaper

This talk will analyze the Civil War-focused poems included in *Little Nellie's Little Paper* also known as the *Penfield Extra*, an amateur print newspaper published by a young girl living near Rochester from 1861 to 1866. Following the death of her mother and sister and her brother's enlistment in the Union Army, Nellie Williams began editing and typesetting a newspaper at age twelve in order to help support her family. While the masthead declares the paper to be “neutral in politics,” Nellie's commitments echo those of her father, who was a Northern Democrat. My talk will consider the cultural work that poetry performs both for Nellie Williams as editor and for the community of young writers and readers she draws to the paper. Nellie's “Poet's Corner” includes both reprints from other publications and exclusives written for the *Penfield Extra*. Published a week after Gettysburg, a poem called “Peace Will Come Again” implicitly laments the bloodshed of the war. An extraordinary alphabet poem written by Williams herself articulates the complexities of her perspective on Union Army leadership, Jefferson Davis, and slavery--all under the guise of helping young readers learn to spell. Using *Little Nellie's Little Paper* as a lens through which to examine local poetry culture, my talk will examine the argumentative arc of the war-focused poems included in the paper across its print run. In considering this archive, I will suggest that young writers find in outwardly conventional poetic forms a surprisingly capacious means of articulating political commitments.

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“Reconstruction Poetry”

Recent scholarship has vigorously addressed the Civil War archive as a rich repository of neglected or unknown poems. Scholarly innovation by Faith Barrett, Paula Bernat Bennett, Eliza Richards, and others has made this archive legible and has also revolutionized our understanding of canonical poets we once thought we knew, such as Emily Dickinson. Formerly standard conceptions of the war and its relation to poetries of the nineteenth century have been toppled. This paper considers a category that has *not* become a field standard: I call it “Reconstruction Poetry.” Cody Marrs and Christopher Hager have challenged the way the field routinely construes the Civil War as a “break,” in anthologies as well as in conceptual formations about “ante” and “post”-bellum phenomena like romance and realism. And new works on Reconstruction and its literatures, such as those by Sharon D. Kennedy-Nolle and Mark Wahlgren Summers, have addressed blanks and distortions in the national and literary memory about Reconstruction itself. Nevertheless, Reconstruction scholarship typically focuses on prose. This talk will enter this conversation by way of the methods of historical poetics to argue for the cogency of “Reconstruction poetry” as a formulation or field marker still mostly absent from anthologies and from U.S. poetry scholarship. I will discuss poems addressing Reconstruction as an archive that has largely gone unremarked, framing my talk in the larger arena of our relation to the poetry archive as such and the field's current challenges to its historical narratives.

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Constance Fenimore Woolson's Civil War Poetry and Literary Regionalism

This paper explores the ways in which the question of post-Civil War reconciliation put pressure on the formal tension between national and regional speech, using the example of Constance Fenimore Woolson's regionalist poetic renderings of Civil War memory published in *Appletons' Journal* from 1873 through 1877. Studies of American literary regionalism have neglected poetry, perhaps because nineteenth-century poetry seldom treated regional or dialect speech as fiction did—that is, by framing difference within a textual baseline of well-educated, standard language. Rather, poetry typically maintained linguistic differentiation at the boundary of the text. Woolson's character-driven poetic monologues engage this formal tension by marking both a local "I" and a national "we," inviting readers to attempt to occupy both positions and thus to consider how public speech ought to sound. Integrating a thematic concern for the relation of the regional to the national with a formal concern for poetry's capacity to shape speech, Woolson's Civil War poems thus seem to gesture toward modernist resolutions such as Robert Frost's *North of Boston*. However, given persisting regional divisions and Woolson's project of mapping postwar reconciliation, the poems show how regional and national languages kept their distance, measuring each other while eyeing a convergence.

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Not Being There: Ambrose Bierce's Civil War Dream Poems

Though Bierce's war fictions are iconic in studies of Civil War literature, his poems have received almost no critical attention. The poems are dramatically different from the fiction in their approach to the Civil War, and making sense of them in relation to received notions of Bierce's writings forces a reorientation of perspective. Critics stress the importance of Bierce's experiences to the emotional power of even his most "unrealistic" fiction, persistently raising the issue of literary realism. Unlike the Civil War geographies of his stories, which encourage attempts to locate Bierce's life experiences in relation to his fictional narrative, the images of war in his poems float free from material landscapes; instead they are located in dreamscapes that defy attempts to link them to a specific time, place, or personal experience. This presentation will explore Bierce's ideas about the relationship between poetry and dreaming through a focus on the images of warfare that permeate his dream poems. The dreamer sees images of war, but he is not immersed in any particular conflict; and yet, he is not totally present in another place or time either. Exploring this impression of "not being there," being neither here nor there, neither in the past nor the present, will open, I hope, productive ways of reading Bierce's poetry as well as new ways of looking at the poetic legacies of the Civil War at the end of the century.

Eliza Richards

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New and Noteworthy: After 1865? (4:00-5:15)

Kathleen Diffley (chair)

Cody Marrs, author of *Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Long Civil War*

Sharon D. Kennedy-Nolle, author of *Writing Reconstruction: Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the Postwar South*

Justine S. Murison, author of *The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*

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Saturday, November 14

Journalism and the Transnational Civil War (8:30-9:45)

Benjamin Fagan (chair)

I told you so: Karl Marx in the *New-York Tribune*

If there is a villain in Karl Marx's *New-York Tribune* articles, it is Louis Napoleon. In this opinion Marx was joined by the newspaper's editorial staff. At the core of their shared concerns is the seeming ease with which Louis Napoleon had converted a presidency into an empire, an act of political usurpation that offered a troubling potential analog to American politics across the 1850s. Warning its readers about the dangers presented by *both* Napoleons, who shared the ambition of "mak[ing] the face of the earth one slave plantation" (18 February 1856, 5), the *Tribune* consistently suggested that French politics prefigured U.S. destiny if the slave power were not contained. And when Napoleon III capitalized on the distractions offered by the Civil War, invading Mexico in 1862, the dangers presented by France shifted from potential to actual.

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"Founder of American Poetry": Transatlantic War News and *Poems by Walt Whitman*

Interpretations of Walt Whitman as a national bard have tended to revolve around his relationship to the American reader, whereas his image as a poet of the world has been confirmed by his well-documented international influence. This paper will argue, however, that international newsreaders shaped Whitman's nationalist vision of the Civil War and of himself as the war's poetic herald and chief memorialist. In particular, I will show how William Michael Rossetti's reading of American War news (and his reading of other British newsreaders) set the stage for his championing of Whitman in his famous 1867 review and in his British selection, *Poems by Walt Whitman*.

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Drawing Conclusions: The Civil War Viewed through Matt Morgan's Cartoons in *Fun*

It is now generally held that British public opinion on the Civil War was not as deeply divided, particularly along class lines, as was once thought. It largely supported the government's official policy of neutrality, a policy widely interpreted in the North according to the rule "if you aren't with us, you must be against us." While British opinion was more nuanced than that, it is probably true that majority opinion became increasingly unsympathetic towards the Northern policy of compelling the South to remain in the Union on the North's terms by sheer military force. The unparalleled violence and enormous casualties of the war appalled a British opinion that followed it very closely. A valuable index is the serio-comic cartoon that was coming into prominence as a journalistic genre at precisely this time. In Britain virtually

all the Civil War-related cartoons were the work of two men—John Tenniel’s drawings in *Punch*, and Matt Morgan’s in *Fun*, *Comic News*, and *The Arrow*.

This paper is about Morgan, who remains largely unknown even though he produced considerably more war-related cartoons than the celebrated Tenniel—49 full-page cartoons for *Fun* plus 10 for *Comic News* and *The Arrow*. Examining Morgan’s strategies for reducing complex issues to a single striking image offers an interesting avenue into British perceptions of a war that created dramatic popular resonances and carried enormous implications for their own country’s future. As I will show, Morgan’s theatrical background as a scenic artist was of particular significance to his pictorial strategies.

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“A Yankee” in the Court of Public Opinion: Richard Grant White and *The Spectator*

Profoundly shaken by the Union army’s loss at Chancellorsville, critic and scholar Richard Grant White (1822-1885) wrote to a friend that he felt “helpless, powerless” and unable to raise his voice or use his pen. Just two months later, White found renewed energy writing in service of the Union. He composed the wildly popular anti-Copperhead pamphlet *The New Gospel of Peace* and began working as a correspondent for *The Spectator*.

From 1863 to 1869, White wrote over 100 columns for London’s *Spectator* under the pen name “A Yankee.” During the Civil War, White used this platform to rally support for the Union cause and to correct British impressions of America. These columns and his correspondence with editor Richard Holt Hutton reveal White’s rejection of a broad, national American identity in favor of a more limited “Yankee” one. White used this restricted Yankee identity to his advantage in appeals to British readers, emphasizing, among other things, a common past and mutual disdain for the Irish masses. White also invoked a shared Anglo-Saxon identity to preempt British criticism of American treatment of African Americans. Throughout his columns, White wielded Yankee superiority and attendant racist and xenophobic beliefs as rallying points for British support.

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Medical Humanities and the Civil War (10:00-11:15)

Christopher Hanlon (chair)

Attending the Flesh: Civil War Surgeons and the Loss of Intimacy

Providing care to sick and wounded soldiers, whether in the field or in urban general hospitals, required enormous fortitude on the part of caregivers. Despite military restrictions governing the time they might spend on individual cases, noncombatant hospital workers were able to establish emotional bonds with patients who were desperate for their help and whose physical vulnerability appealed to their nurturing,

sometimes maternal, instincts. Indeed an unwritten part of the work of care-giving was to offer balm to the downcast and dying, who were far from home and had no direct link to their friends and kinfolk unless provided by their civilian attendants in the form of letter-writing. Soldiers' letters, when they were able to write them, express gratitude for this work of intimacy that medical attendants, primarily women, offered. By contrast, Civil War surgeons had few opportunities to establish such bonds with their patients. At the top of a medical hierarchy that demanded intense focus on the physical aspects of suffering, on their organizational acumen, and their bureaucratic literacy, surgeons—even those at the regimental level who were likely to know their patients personally—were tracked to avoid the intimacy enjoyed by lower-level workers. My paper suggests that this training, this professional ethos, created a loss of intimacy, which disadvantaged the highest-level medical workers as they labored to stem the tide of the body pileup. Whether they worked daily through the roster of soldiers on sick call or probed and amputated around the clock in the wake of battles, their charge was to process as many bodies as possible as quickly as possible. There were psychic costs to this loss of intimacy, born out in surgeons' personal correspondence and diaries, and sometimes even in their exchanges with the Union Surgeon General.

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Behind the Narratives: Hospital Registers in Washington, D.C.

The study of Civil War medicine abounds with analyses of accounts of suffering, hope and death. Patients' diaries and letters, and surgeons' diaries, letters and case notes, offer us a wealth of entry points into individuals' pain and the efforts of doctors to alleviate it. In this paper, I explore Civil War hospital registers as yet another way into understanding the experiences of the sick and wounded.

Hospital registers are essentially tables spread across two facing pages that allowed one line for each entering soldier. They are, in effect, 19th century databases. From this perspective, they present us with all of the challenges that theorists now raise about databases as a particular genre of representation. They are rigid, but non-hierarchical. Those entering the data left evidence of frustration with the small boxes provided for pre-defined fields, sometimes breaking out of them in ways that current users of pre-defined digital databases cannot unless there is a field made for unruly, undefined comments. Analysis of the table's structure offers us insight into what mattered to the central authorities—the staff of the Surgeon General's office—at the various times the blank registers were designed and printed for mass distribution. Registers defined each sick or wounded (or both) soldier as patients.

Assessing the registers beyond their formal structures calls for constructing narratives of collective rather than individual experiences. I suggest various ways we might do that and, in so doing, re-appreciate hospitals as dynamic centers of meaning during the Civil War.

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“The Mute Look That Rolls and Moves”: Whitman, Levinas, and the Face of the Other

Whitman deploys a diverse range of ethical responses to the suffering of the Civil War: the Good Death tradition of the bed-side vigil; Christian traditions of redemptive suffering; transcendental traditions of pastoral healing, among others. But most of all, Whitman develops an ethics of intimate attention. Much is made of the totalizing tendency in Whitman’s war writings, his use of universals and long shots to absorb particularizing difference. I explore a moral response that is nearly the opposite of that: a way of seeing that notices and cherishes individual faces and needs. This response to suffering turns Whitman’s wound dresser out of himself. It interrupts an ego-centered subject secure in his own skin or steady in his own stance and inscribes an ethics of uncertain balance and precarious turning, what the French philosopher and Holocaust survivor Emmanuel Levinas calls the “moral summons” of the face (*Totality and Infinity*). This is the basic grammar of poetry and metaphor of course, *trope* means turn. But this is also the basic grammar of moral attention for Whitman, the sign of a person inflected by the impinging needs of other people and turning toward them in sympathetic response. Living this way felt deeply religious to Whitman but religion without church or creed, a moral philosophy for beginners, where what matters is not fixed faith or unswerving belief but a capacity for small acts of sacred attention: bending down to the face of the other, turning out toward his rolling eye.

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Historical Evidence and the Case of Lincoln’s Chair: Material and Civil War Memory

In contemplating his Civil War-era notebooks, Walt Whitman writes, “Vivid as life, they recall and identify the long Hospital Wards.” As powerful as these mementos are for him, however, the poet laments his inability to “convey the associations” of these material reminders to his readers. Whitman’s observation touches on the power and the limits of historical artifacts; they may hold powerful personal connotations, but they are also mute, subject to re-appropriation, misinterpretation, and possibly oblivion. Through a discussion of the strange provenance of the rocking chair in which Abraham Lincoln sat when he was shot in Ford’s Theatre, this paper examines the fraught nature of artifacts when dealing with collective memory. Currently housed in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearfield, the chair was first seized as evidence for the criminal investigation of the assassination, but it quickly became a piece of public evidence, as well, through Matthew Brady photographs and stereopticon images. The treatment of the chair in the years that followed, including arguments over ownership and display, highlights questions regarding the role of material objects in preserving and shaping Civil War memory.

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The Civil War and American Visual Culture (11:30-12:45)

Christopher Hager (chair)

“To Follow with Eye and Pencil”: Interactive Maps and the Space-Time of War

My paper analyzes commercially produced Civil War-era maps in order to understand the war's effect on the experience of time and place, particularly for those who followed the war from afar. I focus on two particular sets of maps--*Frank Leslie's War Maps* (1862) and Prang's "War Telegram Marking Map" (1862)--that encouraged their buyers to interact with them, following troop movements with every telegram and tracing out rival forces in different colored pencils. These maps reveal several important ways in which the temporality and space of the Civil War was experienced. Because of telegraphic technology, the Civil War occurred in a different temporal register than other wars before it: despite the far-flung outposts where the war's battles occurred, newspapers and magazines allowed those at home to track movements and battles almost in real time. Further, in terms of place, these maps present a new cartography of America, one that mingles scales, ignores major cities, and re-centers the livelihood of the nation onto its margins and forgotten interiors.

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Winslow Homer, Meditating Beside a Grave

This paper takes Winslow Homer's *Trooper Meditating Beside a Grave* (1865) as a subtle allegory for the problem of attention in representations of the Civil War in American visual art. In this painting, the mourning soldier's contemplative inwardness models the viewer's own capacity for reflective ethical engagement yet also figures the limitations of the visual as a mode of understanding. More broadly, in an era when the visual image was increasingly powerful in shaping political and social relations, and in conditioning both knowledge and experience itself, depictions of Civil War mortality (in photography, periodical illustrations, and stand-alone prints or paintings) participated in a complex, paradoxical, and only occasionally deliberate undertaking of both directing viewers' attention to the dead and displacing or distorting that attention. Reading several images within this context, I argue that what they illuminate, when taken together, is the struggle not simply between different political conceptions of the Civil War but between different forms of cultural power in relation to the visual representation of war. That this struggle arose from the first war in which visual technologies played an important role suggests that it forms an important part of the prehistory of our modern ocular relationship to mortal violence.

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“Harmonies of Form and Color”: Racializing the Prosthetic Body in Civil War and Postbellum America

This paper puts Civil War-era political cartoons in conversation with newspaper articles and artificial limb manuals to chart the ways in which black subjectivity was both produced and negated through the figure of the prosthesis. The mid-1860s witnessed an outpouring of illustrations in popular Northern publications that posited the African American Civil War veteran's war-acquired injury as proof of his fitness for

citizenship. If these visual depictions offered disability as a category that could cross the color line, however, the material history of prostheses tells a different story. The Civil War spawned not only rapid advances in prosthetic limb technology and a booming prosthetics industry, but significant aesthetic advances, as well. As prostheses that were made of rubber or covered with an enamel that approximated skin-tone replaced older limbs made of wood and steel, Civil War-era prosthetic technology offered a means by which to further refine racial distinctions. Following up on this tension in the archives of visual and material culture, I ask how the racialization of the prosthetic body in the Civil War-era allowed for mass media narratives of inclusion in the body politic to coincide with the subtle reproduction of visible racial difference, arguably mediating anxieties about U.S. national identity in the process.

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Postbellum Ventures (2:30-3:45)

Jane E. Schultz (chair)

Eric Meckley, “And our dreams grew wild”: Confederate Memory and the Origins of Lost Cause Ideology in the Poetry of Daniel Bedinger Lucas

Kathleen Diffley, The Land of Lincoln: Illinois, the *Lakeside Monthly*, and the Underground Railroad

When Johnny Came Marching Home: Literary Responses to Returning Civil War Veterans

Published in 1863, the rousing lyrics to "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" foresaw a homecoming Civil War soldier greeted with cheering men, shouting boys, village ladies who had all turned out, and lasses who (along with the boys) strew the way with rose petals, all in anticipation of placement of a laurel wreath on the hero's "loyal brow." While there was certainly joy at the return of soldiers, the literary response to homecomings was far more subdued and varied than the song predicted. While one might, for example, expect an increase in such depictions in the wake of soldiers returning at war's end in 1865, this was not generally the case. This presentation examines fictional and poetic accounts of homecoming veterans' receptions, particularly in the final years of the war and in its immediate aftermath. What did appear and why it appeared when it did is the focus of the analysis, which argues that this narrowly defined category of Civil War literature anticipates what were to become common phenomena in American war literature in general.

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Eric Meckley
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“And Our Dreams Grew Wild”: Daniel Bedinger Lucas’s Lost Cause Poetry

This paper will explore the poetry of Confederate soldier-poet Daniel Bedinger Lucas and its relation to the mythology of the Southern Lost Cause. Focusing primarily on his poem “In the Land Where We Were Dreaming,” I situate Lucas’s work within the main stream of Confederate poetry and consider the ramifications of a mythical poetics that seeks to justify the founding of the Confederacy while acknowledging its defeat—and prophesying its resurgence. When viewed alongside Lucas’s later memorial and occasional poetry, his work reveals the importance of studying Confederate poetry and its relation to distinctive, and often damning, American mythologies and ideologies that continue to resonate today. Research conducted for this paper in the Virginia Tech Special Collections Library was generously supported by a grant from the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies.

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Kathleen Diffley, *The Land of Lincoln: Illinois, the Lakeside Monthly, and the Underground Railroad*

In the *Lakeside Monthly* (1869-74), a postbellum magazine committed to the Union and liberty, the tug of abolition was altogether robust, but so too was a tendency to linger amid Southern social priorities. And no wonder, since Chicago’s first literary venture was founded in a postwar state still given to sharp political dissension. During its raw antebellum years, Illinois’s first governor owned slaves even in a “free” state, one that was nonetheless first in 1865 to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery. Similarly, Lincoln was called “the Slave-Hound of Illinois” for his mid-century defense of the Fugitive Slave Act, as Eric Foner has recently recalled in *Gateway to Freedom*; but a free black man named John Jones was also instrumental in repealing longstanding Black Laws and thereby encouraging black immigration to Illinois. The shear of these crosswinds fueled the *Lakeside Monthly*, which would reach thousands of postwar subscribers with essays on the “sable singers,” Chinese labor, the free library movement, Civil Service reform, the Indian Territory, and moving the national capital west. The 12 Civil War stories this paper examines were also noticeably western, quirky, and likely to carry a heavy narrative freight in flashbacks from peculiar places and multiple perspectives. Their oddly assembled casts, which sometimes included the “black members of the household,” thereby make wayside places shimmer, with both national promise and underground disquiet.

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Celluloid Slavery: A Roundtable (4:00-5:15)

Timothy Sweet (chair)

Ryan Friedman, *The Not-Killable* in *The Book of Negroes*

Melissa Daniels, *Speaking the Body’s Pain: Trauma, Voice, and Personhood* in *12 Years a Slave*

Gregory Laski, *Zig, Zag, Plunge, Fall: or, Ralph Ellison, Spike Lee, and the “Futuristic Drama of American Democracy”*

Julia Stern, *Slave Time* in *Jezebel*

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