

FEELING HISTORICISMS

Libidinal History in Twain and Hopkins

The *four untimely essays* are altogether warlike. They demonstrate that I was no 'Jack 'o' Dreams,' that I derive pleasure from drawing the sword—also, perhaps, that I have a dangerously supple wrist.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, *Ecce Homo*

Cast out of humanity by European Americans, enslaved African Americans were also cast out of what counted as history. As discussed in the previous chapter, some nineteenth-century slaves and freed people used their bodies to stage a direct encounter with death in a rhythmic play not so much with specific *historical* events and eras, as with a *structural* position as the deathly, inhuman, unchanging void for which the Middle Passage and the social death of slavery are paradigmatic, and against which humanism shaped its ideals and history was understood to unfold. But this intervention has the effect of deemphasizing change over time, paradoxically reiterating the ahistoricity of blackness. The Afropessimistic account with which I framed the sense-method of playing dead is less concerned than is black performance studies with what Dana Luciano (2003, 152; emphasis mine) calls “a stylized and *historically informed* blackness,” or Daphne Brooks (2006, 290; emphasis mine)

calls “*historically thick* black identity formation.” In other words, the structuralist logic of Afropessimism can sometimes downplay the way that African American subjects have lived and performed not only a temporal position outside of linear progress but also a historical position of becoming and changing outside of the dominant record.

One way that nineteenth-century black historians countered dominant accounts of the past was simply to write their own collective histories, beginning with William Cooper Nell’s *Services of Colored Americans in the Wars of 1776 and 1812* (1851) and *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (1855), and culminating with George Washington Williams’s two-volume *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880* (1883), a history of African Americans that accorded with the professional historical standards of the era (see Bruce 1984a, 1984b). Like their white counterparts, postbellum black historians aimed for “scientific” historiographical conventions, along the lines of Ranke and Humboldt, which purported to rigorously separate fact from fiction, narrated events “objectively” in the third person to distinguish the writing of history from genres such as poetry and travel writing, and focused on the interpretation of primary documentary sources (see Lorenz 2009; B. G. Smith 1998, 70–156). Another mode of writing history was fiction. Though the historical romances from which professional historians attempted to distance themselves freely borrowed dramatic, poetic, and novelistic conventions and time schemes, like documentary history they also invoked prior events and aimed to give a sense of earlier times, sometimes even incorporating historical allusions and documentary sources.

But within disciplinary history and the historical romance alike—the two nineteenth-century forms of narrative most distinctly engaged with collectively experienced events of the past—there was, for most of the century, no analogue for the bodily breaching of life and death that we see in the thanatomimetic theme I’ve traced in folk tales, ex-slave narratives, and Sutton E. Griggs’s *Imperium in Imperio*—even in the work of Charles Chesnutt, this kind of movement was relegated to dreams, hallucinations, superstition, and magic. Nor in white fiction did the theme of direct contact with a historically specific era (as opposed to with death or with a personal past) appear in the form of a novel until William Morris’s *A Dream of John Ball* (1888), though the latter was preceded by the anonymously published short story “Missing One’s Coach: An Anachro-

nism” (1838)—and these texts, too, figured time travel as a hallucination or dream. In American fiction, the historiographical equivalent of thanatomimesis, or corporeal context not with death but with a particular past, would initially appear with Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889), considered the first time travel novel in the English language (Collins 1986, 102).¹ And in African American fiction, the literal encounter between a contemporary person and bygone times emerged with Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins’s extraordinary *Of One Blood, Or, The Hidden Self*, published serially in *The Colored American Magazine* between 1902 and 1903. Taken together, these two novels posit a mode of writing and enacting history in which, as with dance and thanatomimesis in the previous chapters, the sensate body is itself a method of knowledge and transformation.

Twain’s and Hopkins’s novels, in fact, might be read as literary versions of historical reenactment, a popular practice of amateur historiography that began in the eighteenth century with *tableaux vivants* (see Holmström 1967) and the mock battles that were part of military drills (see During 2010, 192–93). These novels precede the invention of Civil War reenactment in 1913 (Schneider 2011, 8), but they partake in reenactment’s fantasy that bodies can repeat events from the past, and in repeating them transform them. Reenactment wagers that participants can feel themselves into other eras rather than becoming surrogates for or descendants of specific historical characters; it generally traffics in the fantasy of ordinary people becoming historical as they dissolve into an event, a persona, and/or an environment, in what performance theorist Rebecca Schneider’s contemporary Civil War–reenacting informants call a “wargasm” (35). But rather than staging bodies seamlessly reentering historical events, *Connecticut Yankee* and *Of One Blood* depict present-tense bodies encountering past environments. And these novels depend on the shock of misalignment between contemporary sensibilities and past ones, late nineteenth-century ways of having and feeling a body and prior ones.

Elsewhere, I have described the imagination and performance of enfolded encounters with the past as “erotohistoriography”: a carnal and pleasurable encounter with history (Freeman 2010). What this term implies, which I will develop more fully in this chapter, is that the writing of history, the feeling of oneself and one’s community as “historical” or embedded in collective endeavors with meaning for the future, and the

encounter with relics from the past all have a libidinal logic, one that mixes political desire with sensory encounter. Though historicizing projects and processes cannot be understood as universal and biological drives, as Freud understood the libido, they are matters of desire; they also engage the body. They are shaped by the kind of body that undertakes them and in turn they engage and shape those bodies. “Erotohistoriography,” in my earlier work, privileged sexual, often genital, pleasure because queer criticism and theory had so insistently turned toward melancholia, shame, and loss, and toward the psyche rather than toward sex practice. But here, I also wish to claim, as part of erotohistoriography, sensory experiences are not always recognizable as sex, and not always pleasurable. I will begin, then, with the more obviously erotohistoriographical novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, moving toward a broader account of libidinal historiography as a sense-method in *Of One Blood*.

Historical Hankerings: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*

Versed in the academic historical works that were canonical in his time, as well as engaged with the question of how to write a historical novel that did not repeat the romanticizing offenses of Sir Walter Scott, Mark Twain set many of his novels in previous periods.² These included fifteenth-century France in *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896) and the same Austrian era in *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger* (1902–8). Twain also wrote of sixteenth-century England in *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881) and of the early eighteenth century in *The Chronicle of Young Satan* (1897–1900). He explored the antebellum United States with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and *Pudd’nhead Wilson* (1894). But it is *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889), set in sixth-century Camelot, that most self-consciously and metacritically takes on the problem of how to make history—both how to make a distant past immediate to readers and how to influence the course of events in time.

In this novel, Twain uses the body of his protagonist, Hank Morgan, as a wrench in the works of stadial, evolutionary history. In 1879, Hank’s malcontent factory hand Hercules clonks him over the head with an iron bar and sends him back to the year 528. There, Hank decides to fast-

forward the modernization of England by 1300 years, but his underlings rise against him, and he kills them en masse. This counterfactual, tongue-in-cheek history asks, as science fiction writers such as Castello Holford, H. G. Wells, and Robert Heinlein would do after Twain, whether bygone events might have happened otherwise—though Twain stops short of imagining the resulting, transformed present or future. Instead, following nineteenth-century, female, amateur historians' emphasis on everyday life and the immediate experience of people of the past, Twain depicts Hank as a sensory receptacle for the medieval period (see B. G. Smith 1998, 159). Hank variously sweats, itches, lusts, and starves his way through Arthurian England: his corporeal discomforts hint at the dangers of acutely sensing the past. *A Connecticut Yankee* also revels in the trope of a contemporary man modernizing the premodern, and reminds us that this is generally the figure that imperialist and colonialist ventures used to justify themselves. It suggests that these ventures acted directly on both the bodies of the colonized, whose indigenous gender and sexual norms were overwritten and reshaped by their oppressors, and the bodies of the colonizers, whose gender and sexual norms were made relative and often influenced by the people over whom they ruled.³ Hank Morgan's sensory immersion in history, then, is inextricable from his erotic designs on the inhabitants of another time and place and, as I'll elaborate below, on himself.

If Hank's eventual destruction of Camelot figures the idea of forcing one's body too insistently into the course of human events, it may also stand in for Clemens's single moment of putting his own body on the line in the service of official national history, and his only military exercise. One intertext for *A Connecticut Yankee* may be Twain's humorous essay "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed," published in *Century Magazine* in December 1885, in which Twain reveals that he is, technically, a deserter of the Confederate army. In 1861, Clemens's home state of Missouri was attacked by Northern forces, and the governor called for a militia of fifty thousand to defend the state. Young Clemens and several friends in Marion County got together and formed a military company, the Marion Rangers, of which Clemens was made second lieutenant. The essay foreshadows *Connecticut Yankee's* contempt for medieval knight-errantry and for the French (about both of which more below), for Twain relates that the boy who proposes the name Marion Rangers for the group is "full of romance, and given to reading chivalric novels"

(Twain 1885, 194). The young man's name is Dunlap, but Twain claims he changes it to "D'Un Lap," or "of a stone," or "Peterson" (194) and later refers to him as "the ass with the French name" (195). But Peterson is not the only Ranger given to theatricality, for the hapless group finds out that war is predominantly boring and uncomfortable. After bumbling about the countryside, falling down a hill, being attacked by farmers' dogs, and variously responding to and sleeping through false alarms, Clemens's company sees a man on horseback outside of their barn. In an overzealous display of firepower akin to *Connecticut Yankee's* famous final Battle of the Sandbelt, the young men shoot the stranger five times only to find that his corpse is in civilian clothes and unarmed. Dismayed, Clemens vows to leave the war effort; Twain writes, "It seemed to me that I was not rightly equipped for this awful business; that war was intended for men, and I for a child's nurse. I resolved to retire from this avocation of sham soldiership while I could save some remnant of my self-respect" (203). And there, feminized by Twain in the figure of a child's nurse, young Samuel Clemens exits the masculine-historical stage.

Connecticut Yankee, likewise, tells the history of a masculine-imperial campaign that fails. Attempting to modernize sixth-century England according to the technological and ideological developments of the nineteenth century, Hank Morgan crowns himself "Sir Boss," arrogating military and managerial powers. When his subjects eventually rebel, he builds an electric fence, deserts by escaping from the battle into a cave, and from there watches the fence electrocute the whole of the Camelot army. The wizard Merlin casts a spell on him that lasts thirteen hundred years, until he awakens, grizzled and old, and hangs around Warwick Castle telling his tale to strangers, one of whom is the narrator in the novel's frame tale. The Twain of "The Private History" ends his narrative by ruefully noting, "I could have become a soldier myself, if I had waited. I had got part of it learned; I knew more about retreating than the man that invented retreating" (Twain 1885, 204). Hank Morgan, likewise, ends his life in complete retreat, mumbling and fading away in a bedroom in the castle, with no trace of his heroic adventures left except a bullet hole in a suit of armor (which the castle's docent suggests was introduced in Cromwell's era) and the manuscript he has handed over to the narrator, which makes up the bulk of the tale. And of course Hank's entire journey backward to the sixth century can be read as a retreat from the complexities of the

nineteenth, specifically from the failure of the Reconstruction, after 1877, to liberate African Americans from de facto, if not de jure, slavery. In both of Twain's texts, then, the protagonist's attempt to make his body into an instrument of radical historical change—of secession in "The Private History" and of revolutionary modernization in *A Connecticut Yankee*—results in depletion: effeminization in the first, enfeeblement in the second.

Connecticut Yankee's literal deflation of the historically agentive body points to another piece of Twain ephemera that could serve as one of the novel's intertexts: Twain's satirical speech against masturbation for a gathering of the Stomach Club in 1879, "Some Thoughts on the Science of Onanism" (Twain [1879] 1976). In this speech, Twain admonishes his listeners, "When you feel a revolutionary uprising in your system, get your Vendôme Column down some other way—don't jerk it down" (25). Here, he directly associates masturbation with political activity, analogizing onanism not to the priapic monument honoring Napoleon Bonaparte but to the Paris Commune that "jerked" it down in 1871. Twain compares masturbation to the sort of historical action that aimed to upset the supposedly smooth movement of monarchical and electoral succession and the invisible hand of the market, and to the radical working class—indeed, it is notable that 1879 marks the year of both his speech to the Stomach Club and the fictional Hercules's uprising against the factory boss Hank Morgan. It would be too literal to say that Hank masturbates his way into Camelot, but as we shall see, the novel does go on to correlate his political overreaching with the kind of failed masculinity that masturbation indexed in the nineteenth century. In other words, "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed," "Some Thoughts on the Science of Onanism," and *Connecticut Yankee* align gender and sexual aberrance with flawed interventions into history.

Hank Morgan is certainly a figure for capitalism as the motor of history. Aligned with American robber barons, he is named after the nineteenth-century capitalist J. Pierpont Morgan and was drawn by illustrator Dan Beard in the first edition of the novel with the head of American financier Jay Gould. But Hank is not just a metaphorical American robber baron. He becomes a slave across several chapters, when he and the king are wandering Camelot to get a feel for the plight of the common man and are captured by a slave driver. Parallels between

Hank and French revolutionaries of various eras also appear in his opposition to the Catholic Church, and in the destruction of his own Vendôme Column in the form of Merlin's tower, which he blows up. Finally, Hank is a kind of closeted Napoleon. Critics have traced the very worst of Camelot's debauchery in *Connecticut Yankee* to descriptions of the revolutionary masses in Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (see, e.g., Fulton 2000). It is thus tempting to read the fictional events of 1879 in *Connecticut Yankee* as Twain's commentary on the events of 1789 and after, as if he slyly reversed some digits and the whole novel makes a mockery of the French Revolution. This makes some sense of Twain's invented device of traveling backward in history, since one of the notable accomplishments of the revolutionaries was a form of time travel—a new calendar instantiated on October 5, 1793, but beginning analeptically on September 22, 1793 (and, it might be noted, picked up again by the Paris Commune of 1871). The year Hank gets brained by his factory hand, 1879, also marks the year Twain traveled to France and received a lukewarm welcome from the French people, as well as finding himself “appalled by French sexual standards” (Britton 1992, 197). Like his mockery of “D’Un Lap” in “The Private History,” both his joke about the Vendôme Column in the Stomach Club speech and *Connecticut Yankee* draw on his reputed hatred of all things French, especially French sexual mores. Most important, in Twain's complex scrambling of French revolutionary moments, historical actors of both 1789 and 1871 seemed to possess the capacity both to deform sex and to turn back time, the latter only the most literal of their many deformations of stadiial, developmental history.

But in *Connecticut Yankee*, the Camelot peasants' uprising against the freedom that Hank supposedly offers them is not, like the French revolutions, a rational response to his increasingly autocratic rule or to their economic subservience to him as Sir Boss; rather, it is an outgrowth of their bawdy, infantile worldview, congruent with their civilizationally underdeveloped status. Indeed, Twain portrays the peasants in ways typical of nineteenth-century representations of not only medieval folk, black people, and the colonized but also the white and multiethnic working class: like Hercules, the brawny Greek factory hand who attacks Hank with a phallic tool, the people of Camelot are sexually excessive, physically strong, and given to childish pursuits. Thus *Connecticut Yankee*

is haunted by a sexual specter less visible and perhaps more powerful than simple working-class unrest.

The Arthurian peasants seem, on the face of it, to be foils to the ostensibly democratic, modern, masculine Hank Morgan. But throughout his visit to Camelot, Hank himself acts something of the reactionary fop, nostalgic for the homosociality inherent in chivalry, overly invested in nudity and little children, uninterested in the ramblings of the medieval wife he takes, and too fond of theatrical “effects” to pass as completely heteromale. Finally, he fails most prominently at a sexual self-mastery for which his limitations as a historical actor and a historian are symptomatic—and this correlation of deviant history making and improper sex acts suggests the pleasures and dangers of amateur historiography as a sense-method, especially for the white man.

Bonnie G. Smith (1998), Mike Goode (2009), and Carolyn Dinshaw (2012) have each demonstrated that the amateur historian, of whom Hank is a stereotype, was a sexually charged figure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as disciplinary history took shape. Bonnie G. Smith (1998, 18) claims Germaine de Staël as an early amateur historian for whom opium use was a relay to historical genius, a corporeal knowledge practice that Smith calls “narcohistory.” De Staël, Smith argues, inspired a whole line of female amateur historians for whom excitement, eroticism, and trauma formed the basis of historical knowledge (67), in contradistinction to the growing scientism of documentary, seminar-based, professional history (103–7). Thus amateur historiography has been coded as feminine. Goode demonstrates that as disciplinary history took shape in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, antiquarianism in particular was correlated with aberrant masculinity, reproductive sterility, and perverse sexual practices such as fondling statues. Dinshaw links the amateur historian, especially the contemporary reenactor of medieval times, to queer sexuality through the trope of temporality: in her analysis, the amateur refuses progressive and reproductive time for an immersive, tactile relationship to the past. In all of these accounts, amateur historians are feminized, linked to suspect bodily states and practices, and queered.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, *Connecticut Yankee*, a novel written by the amateur historian Twain, framed by the amateur historian who reads Hank’s manuscript, and taking up the aberrant historical practice of time travel, is rife with perversions. As “Sir Boss,” Hank may aspire to capitalist

manhood, but he continually lapses into the voyeurism, homophilia, pedophilia, and flamboyance that marked the poor, people of color, and the revolutionary French in Twain's and other nineteenth-century European and American stereotypes of them. These sexual aberrations also characterized the late nineteenth-century sexual "deviant" of the white leisure classes. They are most clearly condensed in Hank's relationship with his medieval sidekick, Amyas "Clarence" Le Poulet, who appears to him at first sight as "an airy slim boy in shrimp-colored tights that make him look like a forked carrot" (Twain [1889] 1982, 15), and whom illustrator Beard drew with the head of the French actress Sarah Bernhardt. Shortly after, both doubling Clarence and for the first time exposing his own nakedness, Hank finds himself stripped of his supposedly enchanted clothes by the king's men, and thus "naked as a pair of tongs!" (26). Part of Hank's failure as a historian is that he mistakes historically specific difference for infancy, hewing to a linear model in which earlier times stand for the childhood of the human race. His relationship with Clarence brings out the erotic aspect of this misapprehension: at a banquet, responding to tall tales of Sir Kay the Seneschal's military prowess, Clarence whispers to Hank, "Oh, call me pet names, dearest, call me a marine!" (20), and then "nestle[s] upon [Hank's] shoulder and pretend[s] to go to sleep" (23). Clarence's real name, "Amyas le Poulet," is perhaps an anachronistic pun on the Puritan Sir Amyas Poulet but most definitely translatable, too, as "love the chicken."⁴ That Twain was aware of the sexual innuendo is confirmed by Hank's later reference to the deadly and beautiful Morgan le Fay as "fresh and young as a Vassar pullet" (99). In other words, Hank Morgan likes a twink.

But of all the perversions coded into *A Connecticut Yankee*, the most suspicious one is Hank's status as a masturbator. At the end of the novel, he expires in a suspiciously onanistic pose: at the closing of the novel's nineteenth-century frame, he dies in bed, glassy-eyed, pale, and delirious, "mutter[ing] and ejaculat[ing]" endlessly while "pick[ing] busily at the coverlet," the very picture of the solitary vice (Twain [1889] 1982, 258). This is a fitting end for him. Over the years, as Hank conquers the Arthurians with nineteenth-century technology disguised as magic, Clarence becomes Hank's "head executive [and] right hand . . . a darling" (52), recalling again Twain's speech to the Stomach Club, in which he prefaces his admonition about the Vendôme Column with the winking warning,

“If you must gamble with your sexuality, don’t play a Lone Hand too much” (Twain [1879] 1976, 25). In fact, it is Hank and not right-handman Clarence who becomes the ultimate Lone Hand, playing the part of a “lone” ranch “hand” with a lasso in a jousting competition.

As well, Hank’s last name “Morgan” may suggest his capitalist agenda, and his full name, Henry Morgan, after the famous seventeenth-century Welsh pirate, may imply that his program is another form of robbery—but his nicknames add an erotic fillip or two. In calling Hank a “Yankee of the Yankees,” Twain ostensibly suggests that Hank was a solidly white New Englander, as per the most popular etymological explanation for the term “Yankee,” a North American Indian approximation of the word “English” (*yengee*).⁵ More recently, though, Henry Abelove (2008) has also traced the word “yankee” to the slang term “yankum,” or masturbatory act, rereading the song “Yankee Doodle Dandy” as a bawdy commentary on masturbation. As Abelove suggests, “doodle” was eighteenth-century slang for “penis,” and “dandy” carried its current meaning of a fashionable fop; so, in Abelove’s words, “a yankee doodle dandy is a primping penis puller” (Abelove 2008, 14). The figure of a “Yankee of the Yankees,” then, conjures up two things: first, it evokes the kind of extreme whiteness associated with both racial purity and the pallor incurred by self-abuse, and second, it figures a yanker yanking other yankers in an endless circle jerk. Indeed, the novel’s most literally shocking event, the mass electrocution of the knights of Camelot, is, precisely, a yanking Yankees’ circuit of bodies electric. During the final battle between medieval peasants and modernization, twenty-five thousand English knights in armor die as they hit a high-voltage fence that Hank has built. In a grotesque parody of democratic fraternity and spiritual magnetic attraction alike, the current is passed, man to man, until Hank and his army of fifty-two men are surrounded by an enclosure of corpses.

Even Hank’s all-American nickname is not safe from ribald punning: an obsolete meaning for “hank” is “a propensity; an evil habit,” from which it’s possible we get the verb “to hanker.” But it is also “a . . . curbing hold; a power of check or restraint,” the psychological equivalent of reins or a noose.⁶ A hank embodies both dissolution and restraint, the very dynamic that organized the meanings of both white middle-class selfhood in US industrial capitalism, and masturbation in transatlantic medical and popular literature (Castronovo 2000, 198). It was not an accident

that the American literature against masturbation was directed toward white people, even toward Yankees: as Kyla Tompkins (2014, 253) argues, anti-onanistic discourse was part of a “project of national embodiment . . . linked to the consolidation of whiteness as the dominant racial position.” Hank the Yank(er) exemplifies what could go terribly wrong with that project.

In sum, then, *Connecticut Yankee* and its Twainian intertexts make several suggestions about nineteenth-century historical sense-methods. The first is that the seemingly incommensurable domains of historical consciousness and eroticism might have to do with one another, as Schneider’s (2011, 35) informants’ phrase “wargasm” reminds us. Twain also suggests that to be out of tune with one’s own historical moment—a less directly political feeling than, say, radical opposition to a particular regime or system of oppression, but one on a continuum with it—might be a somatic feeling. In *A Connecticut Yankee*, being out of time is visceral, akin to being clonked with an iron bar and waking up temporally elsewhere. And while the sense of being out of step might inspire public, extravagant physical action such as blowing things up, *Connecticut Yankee*, read with its intertexts, suggests that historical unbelonging might also inspire something banal and seemingly private, such as masturbation. Conversely, this cluster of Twainian texts reminds us that directly political behavior or sentiment might be, as Castronovo (2000, 194) argues, discursively “recast . . . as nonsystemic and private, as a failing in individual hygiene.” In other words, as Castronovo demonstrates, nineteenth-century American social conflicts were often displaced onto psychic or libidinal conflicts within the individual.

Castronovo’s analysis of analogies between masturbation and slavery also clarifies that Hank’s stint in Camelot under a slave driver is not just a Prince-and-the-Pauper-like exchange of the aristocratic body for the bondsman’s intended to bring to light the injustice of US slavery, which had in any case been abolished by the time of both Twain’s writing and Hank’s 1879. Nor, though *Connecticut Yankee* can certainly be read as an indictment of the post-Reconstruction era as a return to slavery, does Hank’s time as a slave frontally index racial injustice. Instead, the enslavement of Hank, a white man—as with the metaphor of the slave that eventually attached to Shakers—is a sign of his essential hankiness, his inability to master his desires. This is, itself, symptomatic of

his own nineteenth-century moment's construction of whiteness, even as Hank projects his desires onto the denizens of Camelot. For Castronovo (2000, 196) correlates the flowering of antimasturbation literature in the American 1830s and 1840s with "agendas of self-culture that encouraged young [white] men to discard allegiances to dead institutions and live according to the rhythms of natural law," individualist agendas most clearly distilled in the Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance. Castronovo also sees the antebellum era's obsessive interest in white male self-governance as a mode of containing anxieties about the presence of chattel slavery in a supposed democracy.

Within these terms, Twain's satirical attention to masturbation in 1879, and Hank's status as a wanker in an 1889 novel, seem somewhat anachronistic. But *Connecticut Yankee* is deeply concerned with individualism, if not precisely with the doctrine of self-reliance: the novel's biggest questions are whether and how men may be trained, and whether or not there is a core to them that resists training. Hank's contempt for the knights of Camelot is in part based on the fact that even before he defeats them and makes them into literal objects, they are merely material: "They did not exist as individuals, but merely as homogeneous protoplasm, with alloys of iron and buttons" (Twain [1889] 1982, 249). *Connecticut Yankee* famously compares the men of Camelot to "white Indians" whose stoicism, Hank declares, is "not an outcome of mental training, intellectual fortitude, reasoning" but is "mere animal training" (19). Yet as Walter Benn Michaels (1987) has noted, Twain's "Indians" are also those who *resist* training and thus, paradoxically, embody a salutary, individualist antipathy to groupthink and tyranny. Despite their fey Frenchness, they also emblemize the Teutonic "essence" that Anglo-American disciplinary historians sought to establish as having been passed down to the English and their descendants in the United States (Tolliver 2015, 29).

The fact that Twain calls the schools where he retrains young Arthurians who show this kind of gumption "Man-Factories" clarifies this paradox: "men" are those whose resistance to ideology qualifies them for Hank's project of turning them into more sophisticated automata. Hank purports to want to lead his men away from the superstitions of the Catholic Church and their blind allegiance to an unelected king and toward freedom, but of course he is simply transforming them into factory workers of the sort whom he "bossed" in the nineteenth century.

The fact that the product they make is themselves, of course, links Hank's man-factories with just the sort of self-governance promoted by antimasturbation literature in the antebellum years. At the same time, Hank's factories manufacture another product, soap: in short, they are purveyors of the kind of cleanliness celebrated by antebellum reformers and the social hygienists of Twain's Progressive Era alike. And finally, Hank's factories make one more product, soap "missionaries" who wander the countryside wearing placards that read, "Persimmon's Soap: All the Prime-Donna Use It" (Twain [1889] 1982, 78). Hank's factories are purveyors, then, of consumer desire, the very thing that threatens to undermine individual autonomy even as it seems to provide a relay to a new kind of individuality founded on freedom of choice and self-expression.

And this is where Twain provides an updated, if also old-fashioned, picture of the problem of masturbation as a response to and figure for his own historical moment. It is updated because Twain wrote *Connecticut Yankee* after his coauthored novel *The Gilded Age* (1873) but still during that era in which speculation and finance capitalism indexed and inflamed all kinds of desires. It is old-fashioned because Thomas Laqueur (2004, 13) has connected the emergence of the antimasturbation panic, which sprang full-blown in medical discourse "in or around 1712," when, with no precedent in legal or religious doctrine, the pamphlet *Onania* appeared and was distributed. Laqueur connects the emergence of antimasturbation discourse in the eighteenth century with the emergence of two new forms of imaginative work: novels and credit. Like reading novels, he argues, masturbation was a solitary bedroom activity. Like credit, masturbation trafficked in imaginings of limitless satisfaction, of ever-escalating desires met by instantaneous gratification.

Twain's late nineteenth century is more like Laqueur's emerging eighteenth century than it is like Castronovo's early republic or, of course, like Camelot: Hank looks like a masturbator simply because he is a financier, and joins the long history of representation in which sexual deviance and the fluctuations endemic to the market stand in for one another. For example, Hank declares that

knight-errantry is a most chuckle-headed trade, and it is tedious hard work, too, but I begin to see that there *is* money in it, after all, if you have luck. Not that I would ever engage in it as a business, for

I wouldn't. No sound and legitimate business can be established on a basis of speculation. A successful whirl in the knight-errantry line . . . it's just a corner in pork, that's all, and you can't make anything else of it. . . . And moreover, when you come right down to the bed-rock, knight-errantry is *worse* than pork; for whatever happens, the pork's left, and so somebody's benefited, anyway; but when the market breaks, in a knight-errantry whirl, and every knight in the pool passes in his checks, what have you got for assets? Just a rubbish-pile of battered corpses and a barrel or two of busted hardware. (Twain [1889] 1982, 98)

Hank equates financial investing in what we would now call “futures” with a form of courtship he loathes: heterosexual knight errantry. The problem, as he sees it, is that knights go lumbering quixotically around, fighting imagined demons on behalf of unattainable women, returning only with fantastic stories, the equivalent of kited paper checks.

Yet despite Hank's protests, Twain's invented history of “what might have been” also follows the logic of “gambling away your life sexually” that he seems to condemn in his speech to the Stomach Club—a logic in which investments tend toward a future not yet realized, in which high risk may yield high profits, and in which the virtual supplants the material just the way paper money supplanted the gold standard. Hank rebuilds Camelot in the image of nineteenth-century America while acknowledging that his project must remain incomplete. He averts his own execution in what he calls a “saving trump” (Twain [1889] 1982, 30) by predicting an eclipse and claiming he has the power to blot out the sun: “In a business way,” he claims, “[the eclipse] would be the making of me” (31). He names the new currency of Camelot the “mill,” and claims that “our new money was not only handsomely circulating, but its language was already glibly in use” (175), suggesting a collapse between linguistic and financial signs that undermines any pretense to a gold standard; indeed, part of what makes Hank an unreliable narrator is not only his own rambling, “glib” narration but also the way his actions fail to back up his words.

In all of these ways, then, Hank is an exemplary capitalist, a status that threatens to make him an exemplary masturbator. And this intersection is part of his relationship to time. Peter Coviello (2013, 33) writes that we might think of a nonreproductive, dissident, or culturally aberrant

sexuality as a way of “inhabiting a unique temporality, one that renders the body at once out of step with modernity’s sped-up market-time and exquisitely responsive to the call of an intuited but inarticulate future.” In *Connecticut Yankee*, Hank’s onanistic sexuality is in a kind of two-step with market time, emblematic of it in Laqueur’s terms, but also continually getting in the way of it insofar as his reveries thrust him into a time before capitalism. What Hank hears, though, is not the call of the inarticulate future. Instead Hank’s body is tuned to an inarticulate *past* of erotic possibility, a fantasy of what Carolyn Dinshaw (1999) has named “getting medieval.” In fact, Laqueur (2004, 22) has also written of masturbation that “no form of sexuality is more profligate with time,” and among the many physical and mental ills with which it was associated by the nineteenth century, a striking one is memory loss. Samuel Tissot’s *Onanism* ([1758] 1832, 14), for example, describes masturbation causing impairment of “all the faculties of the mind, particularly the memory”; memory loss is also mentioned in Benjamin Rush’s *Medical Inquiries and Observations, upon Diseases of the Mind* (1812) and Homer Bostwick’s *A Treatise on the Nature and Treatment of Seminal Diseases* (1860). With this symptom, masturbation becomes a figure not only for the time of capitalism but also for history, or historiography, gone awry. Indeed, Hank suffers from memory troubles at the novel’s end, when he babbles about times gone by but does not seem to remember his nineteenth-century self. More generally, both Hank and the novel suffer from a kind of cultural amnesia about the complexities of the medieval era. Hank’s most damaging quality is that he is completely ahistorical: a living anachronism, he actually supposes that he can introduce new technologies and modes of production to the Middle Ages, and force a revolution against feudalism before the contradictions of this system have come to a head on their own.

Eve Sedgwick (1991, 820) has cited masturbation’s “affinity with amnesia, repetition or the repetition-compulsion, and ahistorical or history-rupturing rhetorics of sublimity,” which is an accurate description of *Connecticut Yankee* as well: Hank goes back in time to repeat the medieval with a modern difference. And the novel resolves its own historical contradictions—predominantly the one that Hank’s interference in medieval culture would also have resulted in a very different *nineteenth* century—by blowing everything up in a last blast of the technological

sublime. In other words, *Connecticut Yankee* is less a novel about time travel per se, than about doing history badly. *Connecticut Yankee* casts the somatization of history in comic terms and is skeptical that the outcome of a corporeal sense-method will be salutary in world-historical terms.

By interlacing the themes of sexual deviance and faulty historicism, *Connecticut Yankee* points to a longer history of the problem of history. This problem is that doing history badly, as the case of amateur historians shows, frequently appears as a kind of perversion. Not only a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century phenomenon, the specter of the sexually deviant “bad” historian runs through the Frankfurt school condemnation of pleasurable sensation as always already antithetical to proper historical consciousness, to contemporary Marxist dismissals of queer theory as ludic and ahistorical.⁷ Marx and Engels’s ([1845–46] 1970, 103) famous statement “Philosophy and the study of the actual world have the same relation to one another as masturbation and sexual love” puts the issue succinctly: masturbation is as much a part of the sexuality of history as it is part of the history of sexuality.⁸ *Connecticut Yankee*, then, is best read as an inquiry into the erotic logic of nineteenth-century habits of historicizing, and perhaps even our own contemporary ones—and an excursus into possibilities for rethinking these habits.

Twain is not the first author to displace the threat of sexual-historical deviance onto the bad timing of the French, either. As Marx famously writes in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, citing Hegel, events in world history “occur, as it were, twice. [Hegel] forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce” (Marx [1869] 1963, 15). Marx is speaking specifically of the younger Bonaparte’s coup of December 2, 1851, that restored the French empire after the revolutions of 1848, repeating his uncle Napoleon’s coup in November 1799 that overthrew the revolutionary government. This latter, original coup was called the “Eighteenth Brumaire” because it occurred on the eighteenth day of “Brumaire” in the year 8 on the French revolutionary calendar: Marx is, then, ironically applying a calendar that ended in 1805 to a mid-nineteenth-century imperial act that seemed to turn the clock back by half a century. And French history’s temporal drag (see Freeman 2010)—the insistent, distorting pull of its past failed glories on its imperial present—appears, in Marx, as camp performance: he describes the Protestant revolution as “Luther don[ning] the mask of the Apostle Paul,”

the revolution of 1789 “drap[ing] itself alternately as the Roman republic and the Roman empire” (Marx [1869] 1963, 15), the revolution of 1848 as a parody of 1789, and the coup of 1851 as the resurrection of Napoleon I. For the Marx of the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, there is no turning back to the past that is not rearguard, and looking backward is an act of what Hank Morgan might have called “dudery,” or dress-up.⁹

Connecticut Yankee has in common with *The Eighteenth Brumaire* the use of stigmatized sexual activity as a metaphor for a faulty relationship to history: just as costume drama stands in for a failure to apprehend the present in Marx, in *Connecticut Yankee* drag, masturbation, and an unseemly interest in boys stand in for the failure of particular kinds of pseudohistoricist consciousness. At first, Hank seemingly returns to the period *before* the Norman Conquest, the Anglo-Saxon era celebrated by commentators from Blackstone onward as prior to feudalism and hence possessed of an originary freedom (Horsman 1981, 14). Hank’s use of parodic Germanic “abracadabras” such as “Transvaaltruppentropen-transporttrampelthiertreibertrauungsthraentrageodie!” (Twain [1889] 1982, 125) to accompany his feats of technological violence skewers an invented political etiology in which the period of Germanic rule counted as the apex of national sovereignty (and invoking “Transvaal” also slyly alludes to the South African Republic’s defeat of the British in the first Boer War, foreshadowing Hank’s demise). Yet the denizens of Camelot also, like D’Un Lap of the Missouri Rangers, bear suspiciously Franco-phone names such as Le Fay, Le Desirous, and Le Poulet.

The anachronistic Frenchness of Camelot is doubtless influenced by the nineteenth-century vogue for the Arthurian romances pioneered by Chrétien de Troyes in the twelfth century, but it also allows Twain to poke fun at the aristocracy by way of an effeminacy coded as French, though it is a gendered drag less immediately weighed down by the past than that condemned by Marx. Hank Morgan’s same-sex infatuations and dubious masculinity are signs not just of his scrambling Norman and Saxon history but also of his investment in coding medieval times as a restorative tonic for American dissipation, and as the prototype for British and US manhood, in a way typical of many of the writers who retooled the medieval era in the image of the nineteenth century—most egregiously, in Twain’s eyes, Sir Walter Scott. Both Twain and Marx, then, suggest that to lack historical consciousness is

to be addicted to costume play and/or, we might say, to be a bit of a wanker.

Yet *Connecticut Yankee* risks the poetry of the past, and this pastness is both temporal and historical: Hank himself is portrayed as sexually regressive through references to his onanistic tendencies and interest in Clarence, and historically regressive through the figure of time travel. *Connecticut Yankee's* narrative mode is also regressive: it allegorically tells a story of nineteenth-century America's failures through a return to medieval texts such as *Le Morte d'Arthur*. But it is less what Michael Colacurcio (1984, 425) calls "an allegory within history," which stops historical time, than it is an insistence on the historicity within allegory. Critics have produced historicist interpretations of the novel almost as constantly as Hank's "Man-Factory" churns out men ready for nineteenth-century life within the novel. According to the scholarship, *Connecticut Yankee* allegorizes the modernization of China (Hsu 2015). Or it critiques US imperialism (Rowe 1995). Or it accedes to the logic of nineteenth-century industrialization, in which people are machines (Weinstein 1995). Or it transcodes Twain's experiences with the Paige typesetting machine (Collins 1986; Gelder 1989). Or it is about the crisis of realist representation during the Gilded Age (Michaels 1987). Or it condemns feudalism in Hawaii (Lorch 1958). And so on, as we move backward in time through literary criticism. In this way, *Connecticut Yankee* is as much about an excess of historical meaning making, or about historical meaning making as inherently allegorical—and thus inseparable from fiction—as it is about anything else. By making a mockery of all our attempts to historicize it, by generating a surfeit of historicist readings that all boil down to more allegoresis, *Connecticut Yankee* suggests something that the *Eighteenth Brumaire* entirely renounces: that the making of history is a process in which events and texts are invested and reinvested with meaning, prepared for future use in a process that is, as Pauline Hopkins's *Of One Blood* clarifies, ultimately libidinal.

"Over the Surface of History": *Of One Blood*

A generation after Twain, African American writer and historian Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins would also take up the project of historical reenactment through literature. Cedric Tolliver (2015, 26) describes her novel

Of One Blood, serialized in the *Colored American Magazine* in 1902–3, as the Africanist counterpart to exactly what *Connecticut Yankee* mocks: late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century academic historians' concern with the Anglo-Saxon past as the blueprint for a more perfect future. Tolliver cites George Bancroft, William Prescott, John Motley, E. A. Freeman, and Francis Parkman as the era's preeminent "Teutonic-Whig" historians, whose project was to track an unchanged spirit of liberty in those descended from the Anglo-Saxons (Tolliver 2015, 28). As with Twain, Hopkins's work suggests familiarity with these dominant historiographical texts of her period, and also with Afrocentric historiography such as the aforementioned *History of the Negro Race in America* (G. W. Williams 1883), which used the writings of Herodotus to argue that Egyptian civilization derived from Ethiopia (Bruce 1984a), with Volney's work on Egypt, and with the abolitionist writings that drew from Volney to argue for the greatness and priority of ancient African civilization (Bruce 1984a, 691). Hopkins's interest in ancient Ethiopia as a setting was not mere antiquarianism or even entirely tuned to the project of locating precedents for the black freed person's value and potential to contribute to American civilization. As Dana Luciano (2003, 150) has clarified, Hopkins was also part of a project, according to the *Colored American Magazine's* stated aims, of "reviving black history," which involved not only, or even primarily, recovering the forgotten or repressed events and texts from the African American past but also galvanizing the African American future: "perpetuating" history, as the magazine put it, or, I would add, animating its body.

This project, in *Of One Blood*, is not just a matter of print culture but also a matter of sex. What makes the novel unique among its contemporaries in fiction and among Africanist historiographical writings of the period is the fact that it combines the heterosexual romance infused with racial questions that was common to the nineteenth-century African American domestic novel, with the fabulations of time and space developing in the emergent genre of American science fiction, but with an eye toward reconstructing the past rather than just the future.¹⁰ In short, *Of One Blood* is a romance of alternate history.¹¹ Its closest analogue in fin de siècle African American fiction may be Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* ([1899] 2003), discussed in the previous chapter, whose plot turns on the existence of a secret African American secessionist empire within the

post-Reconstruction United States—except that Griggs’s empire fails to integrate women or heterosexual marriage, and thus is not motored by sex in quite the way that Hopkins’s revival of ancient Africa turns out to be. And rather than wrinkling national space as Griggs does, Hopkins wrinkles transatlantic space *and* time. Her love story crosses from one possible historical moment to another, for while its protagonist falls in love in the postbellum United States, that love is eventually fulfilled by his marriage to the queen of Telassar, the sole surviving city of the ancient Ethiopian kingdom of Kush, located on the present-day map by the ruins in the capital city of Meroë, now in Sudan. Telassar, which Hopkins named after the biblical home of the people of Eden, marks a challenge to European American historiography: what if African civilizations were understood as the crucible of modernity? *Of One Blood* even challenges the course of history itself: what would human society look like if Kush, among other ancient African empires, had not been conquered?

Hopkins’s novel bridges the two sense-methods that the previous chapter and this one thus far have discussed, thanatomimesis (playing dead) and erotohistoriography. For in *Of One Blood*, episodes of feigned or near-death mark the blurring of boundaries between distinct eras: as Luciano (2003) demonstrates, reviving dead or seemingly dead bodies in this novel also reanimates encrypted and foreclosed histories. These revivals are also erotic, for they are galvanized by a melancholic sexual desire: the protagonist’s longing to be united with a woman who appears first as a phantom, then as a dead body, and finally as a queen in ancient Telassar. Importantly, erotics is the relay to the kind of historical reconstruction and realignments that can, in Hopkins’s view, potentially move African Americans out of the structural position of social death and into the dialectic of history. In Hopkins, visceral encounters with the past work in the service of creating a mode of black being that is not so much structurally alive and human in liberal terms as incipient and charged in historical-materialist ones: *Of One Blood*, among its other accomplishments, provides a response to contemporary Afropessimism that does not cede to liberal humanism.

Of One Blood also understands historicism as a sense-method, one that expands beyond the genitility of masturbation and the whiteness of *Connecticut Yankee*, to encompass voice and skin. Like Twain’s novel, Hopkins’s is both authored by an amateur historian—from 1900 through

1902, Hopkins published essays about famous African Americans throughout history—and about one, for the main character is an African American doctor who explores ancient African civilizations as part of a team of archaeologists. And, as with *Connecticut Yankee*, its action begins with an erotic charge between an avatar of the past and a denizen of the fin de siècle present. In the opening chapters of the novel, protagonist Reuel Briggs sees the phantom of a beautiful woman in the woods. That evening, he goes to hear the Fisk Jubilee Singers and falls instantly in love with one of their members, Dianthe Lusk, whose performance almost literally enchants him, as he recognizes the face of the singer as that of the phantom he saw earlier.

Dianthe's status as a phantom is not her only connection to pastness. As Daphne Brooks (2006) has demonstrated, her singing is already, itself, a historiographic sense-method, before the more properly historicist aspect of the novel unfolds. For the Jubilee singers were "perceived by many as the physical and aural manifestation of slavery's traumas" (Brooks 2006, 298), and the scene of Dianthe's concert suggests that the theater is a place where historical meaning and desire are "improvised and renegotiated" (Brooks 2006, 302). Dianthe's rendition of "Go Down, Moses," Brooks writes, is encrypted with historical references; these catalyze not only Briggs's sexual desire but also his desire for a collective past, for his love for Dianthe eventually leads him to join an expedition to Africa in the hopes of making himself wealthy and worthy enough for her. While in *Connecticut Yankee* the figures of white male dudery, dress-up, and drag index a promisingly faulty historical methodology, in *Of One Blood*, as Brooks demonstrates, the figure of the black female diva does a similar, more expansive kind of work.

After the concert, Briggs sees Dianthe again in the woods on Halloween, where she tells him, "You can help me, but not now. . . . The time is not yet" (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 461–62). Dianthe's forestalling of the present time foreshadows her entanglement with multiple temporalities, the first being, in an echo of the theme of playing dead, the time of life and the time of death—for the next morning, Briggs is summoned to the hospital, where Dianthe is seemingly lifeless after a train wreck. In this episode of reversible death, the novel's first, Briggs diagnoses Dianthe with "suspended animation," claiming that "this woman has been long and persistently subjected to mesmeric influences" and that the train ac-

cident has induced a “cataleptic sleep” (465). Mesmerism here is not yet a direct conduit to other times, as it will become later in the novel, but rather indexes the long history of the sexual violation of black women, for it was, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglophone literature, a figure for rape.¹²

Yet Briggs is not innocent of sexual intent himself. He senses a “mysterious mesmeric affinity” between himself and the catatonic singer (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 466), and revives Dianthe in front of a group of fellow physicians with a secret technique he calls “volatile magnetism” (468). Though Briggs explains volatile magnetism in technical terms, as a compound made up of salt, ammonia, and a magnetic agent found in the human body, he also tells his colleagues, “I supply this magnetism” (468), hinting that his own body, and specifically his erotic longings, precipitates both Dianthe’s return from the dead and her enmeshment in what we will later learn are complex relations with dead ancestors and previous historical eras. In other words, Dianthe’s state of suspension between life and death is not simply corporeal but also sexual; not simply masturbatory, as in Twain, but also other-relational; and not simply structural, as in narratives of playing dead, but, as the novel will reveal, world-historical as well.

In *Of One Blood*, thanatomimesis becomes sociopolitical because it invokes an alternate, Afrocentric global history. Once Dianthe is revived, *Of One Blood* begins to shuttle between the past and the present, both in the structure of its plot and historically. Dianthe has no memory of her past or her racial identity, and so Briggs—who has been passing for white—and his white friend Aubrey Livingston conceal her true identity, renaming her Felice Adams and bringing her into the fold of their white friends, who include a college chum named Charlie Vance and his sister Molly, Livingston’s fiancée. Here, Dianthe is no longer suspended between life and death but between white and black, and then between virginity and marriage, for though Briggs marries her, they do not consummate their nuptials. Instead, seeking to be wealthy enough to support Dianthe and goaded by Livingston, who has also fallen in love with her, Briggs goes to Africa with Vance for two years to research the history of ancient Ethiopia, the two men accompanying a scholar who hopes to prove that all of mankind is descended from that first major human civilization. In Ethiopia, Briggs dreams of Dianthe calling to him for help, and then learns that she, Livingston, and Molly are all dead; Dianthe’s

telecommunication marks yet another moment when the boundary between living and dead seems to be violated by a romantic attachment.

Despairing, Briggs wanders alone into a pyramid at night, falls unconscious, and wakes up in a secret Ethiopian city, Telassar, where the original high civilization has continued undisturbed for six thousand years: indeed, Telassar is an entire city that has “played dead” for millennia. Briggs’s African heritage, which the novel has only implied earlier, is made explicit as he learns that he is the heir to the Telassarian throne and, thinking he is a widower, marries their queen, Candace—a woman with a distinct likeness to Dianthe. The novel then flashes back to reveal that Livingston has preyed on Dianthe’s suggestible mind, recapitulating the association of mesmerism and sexual assault. As Dianthe’s memory returns and she realizes that she is African American, Livingston convinces her to marry him in secret so that she will not be destitute when Briggs—whom Dianthe thinks is white—finds out her black ancestry and abandons her. After Dianthe protests that Livingston is betraying Molly, he takes the two women on a boating trip, drowns Molly, and makes it look as if he and Dianthe are dead too, and then he and Dianthe marry in secret.

The Telassar section of the novel also inaugurates a more directly Twainian form of time travel, though it is anything but comedic in *Of One Blood*. Notably, Telassar is coeval with the nineteenth-century United States, but off its timeline, and appears to Briggs as if it were still an ancient civilization whose technological and artistic wonders were fully equal or superior to those of his own time but differently developed. Among their accomplishments, the people of Telassar have learned how to transcend death, and so the ancestors mingle with the living. As well, both the living and the dead can prophesy the future, which explains Briggs’s psychic powers and links his mesmeric abilities to time travel. Finally, Telassar’s own timeline is scrambled according to European American standards. On a huge sphinx in the middle of Telassar’s central plaza is an engraving from Ecclesiastes 3:15, “That which hath been, is now; and that which is to be, has already been; and God requireth that which is past” (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 552). The last lines, “that which is to be, has already been; and God requireth that which is past,” refer to the fulfilling of an ancient prophesy in the form of Briggs’s return and the restoration of Ethiopia to its former world dominance. But the first line, “That which has been, is now,” suggests that in Telassar, “now” is no

simple presence of the present. It echoes Dianthe's first words to Briggs, "not now . . . the time is not yet," and suggests that the American nineteenth century contains the residuum of a past it does not acknowledge. Thus, though the subtitle of *Of One Blood*, "*Or, The Hidden Self*," seems at first to have only psychological implications—indeed, the novel's very first scene shows Briggs pondering an essay by M. Binet that he has just read, "The Unclassified Residuum," described as a work of psychology—Telassar reveals that the "hidden self" of African Americans is, in fact, historical. As Binet's essay puts it, "All the while, however, [supernatural] phenomena are there, broadcast over the surface of history" (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 442).

The engraving on the sphinx, then, links the Binet essay to a deep collective past rather than just to the recesses of the psyche—even "The Unclassified Residuum" itself, written in a time supposedly after the construction of the sphinx, has "already been" in ancient Ethiopia, where time flows two ways. The psychological texts' words, in turn, suggest that the past has a "surface," a kind of skin or membrane that Briggs is now touching in Telassar. The epidermalization of black people, that is, their reduction to skin color as described by Frantz Fanon ([1952] 1994), here becomes an epidermalization of history, or its expansion into something permeable and elastic. The Twainian trope of faulty or bad historiography as masturbatory has also expanded to a more somatically diffuse, sensory but not genitalized encounter with the past. Likewise, the African American literary trope of play with the boundary between life and death now encompasses play with the tissue seeming to separate now and then, the nineteenth century and ancient Ethiopia. *Of One Blood* confirms history's skinlike permeability and reversibility with the figure of a lotus birthmark, which the sages of Telassar see on Briggs's breast and recognize as the sign of their royal family. The lotus, in turn, signals a crossing of temporal boundaries, for its meaning in Egyptian mythology as a sign of reincarnation and creation comes from the way that it closes its petals at night and opens back up in the morning. In sum, alternate history has and is a skin: it is a literalization of Raymond Williams's "structures of feeling" (1977), a way of sensing, on the body's surface as well as in the psyche, residual and incipient events and social formations.

This crossing of temporal boundaries also indexes a tangling of the lines of kinship, in ways similar to the works I discussed in the previous

chapter, for Dianthe, Livingston, and Briggs are bound by more than a romantic triangle. In a technological demonstration of their ability to confound past and present, the Telassarians show Briggs a special reflecting glass, which inaugurates the flashback that confirms Livingston's activities during the previous several months and reveals that Dianthe is still alive, and so Briggs leaves Telassar to find Dianthe. His companions on the expedition try to find him but accidentally release a nest of snakes that attack their servant, Jim, just as Briggs returns. Before dying, Jim reveals to Briggs that Aubrey Livingston is Briggs's half-brother through their father, the elder Mr. Livingston, and that Dianthe is Briggs's full sister through the elder Mr. Livingston and their mother Mira, Livingston Sr.'s enslaved mistress who was sold away along with Briggs but without Dianthe. This blood relation again confirms the sexual content of mesmerism, now fully retroped as a mixing of past and present—for Livingston Sr. had not only literally raped Mira to produce Dianthe and Briggs but also, as Briggs and readers have already learned at a party after Dianthe's revival, ongoingly mesmerized Mira, forcing her to do parlor tricks while in a trance. One of these tricks, Aubrey Livingston reveals when he tells a story earlier in the novel, was foretelling the future: Mira predicted Livingston Sr.'s ruin in the Civil War, for which he angrily sold her off.

Before Mira is revealed as the mother of Dianthe and Briggs, she has floated through the novel unhinged from time and space, appearing to Briggs as a ghost twice on his expedition and to Dianthe during the time Briggs is away, and allowing each to divine something about what is happening to the other. Mira is "mired" in time, unable to step out of her enslaved past and into the present, yet also never present in the pantheon of ancestors and descendants who are eventually united in Telassar. Given her name, Mira (meaning "look!" and an echo of "mirror"), she also seems to be the living embodiment of the Telassarian time-bending and space-overcoming reflective glass—except that her capacity to travel across temporal boundaries is entangled with, and perhaps even a result of, sexual violation. In the figures of Dianthe and to an even greater extent Mira, mesmerism and the physical encounters between past and present that it makes possible are sense-methods that do not reduce to pure pleasure as they do in Twain's onanistic historiography. They are genital insofar as they index rape, but as rape itself cannot be reduced to genital

contact, they are not only that; insofar as mesmerism registers the violation of the psyche as well as the body, it also figures the kind of porosity that Binet's phrase "the surface of history" suggests. And unlike playing dead, mesmerism represents and furthers contact with not only historically specific but also sexually specific forms of violence.

Mira's time bending, like Briggs's travel to and from ancient Ethiopia, is also figured and elaborated through the distorted kin relations of which she is a part. Through one of Mira's visitations after Dianthe is married to Livingston, Dianthe finds out about his deception and despairingly wanders the woods, where she meets an old woman, Hannah, reputed to be a witch. Hannah reveals herself to be a former sexual victim of the eldest Livingston master, Aubrey's grandfather, with whom Hannah conceived Mira, who in turn was serially raped by Aubrey's father, Livingston Sr. (in the novel's first incestuous twist, then, Aubrey's father is already his mother Mira's half-brother). Mira then conceived Reuel Briggs and Dianthe, who were raised separately. Thus Hannah is Dianthe's grandmother. Hannah also tells Dianthe that Mira is her mother and that Aubrey Livingston, as well as Reuel Briggs, are her full brothers rather than half-brothers, because Hannah had switched Mira's newborn baby boy (Aubrey) with Mrs. Livingston's stillborn one. The third generation of Livingstons, then, are full siblings. They all have not only the same white grandfather in the eldest Mr. Livingston, and the same white father in Livingston Sr., but also the same black grandmother in Hannah and the same black mother in Mira. Dianthe is now revealed as a bigamist with both brothers and a committer of physical incest with one, Aubrey—sexual "deviancies" made possible, as American literature of the South so often reveals, by the denial that black and white are kin: Hannah's baby swap, echoed by her palindromic name, recalls the famous switching of white and black babies in Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894). Both exchanges highlight the irony that under slavery a "black" and a "white" baby might be indistinguishable, but only one would be claimed by its white family.

This is the tangle of American kinship, the "American grammar book" (Spillers 1987) where white supremacy by its very logic produces endogamy/incest, where because white fathers did not acknowledge their enslaved children the latter could end up in sexual connections with their black or white siblings, and where the system of chattel slavery, by making

both black-white and slave marriage illegal, promoted quasibigamy in the form of white owners legitimately marrying white wives and keeping slaves as concubines, and of slaves coupling without dissolving previous unions if spouses were sold away from one another. But as later speculative fiction would elaborate in such figures as Toni Morrison's ghosts (*Beloved*, 1987), Octavia Butler's *ooloi* (*Lilith's Brood*, 2000), and Jewelle Gomez's black lesbian vampires (*The Gilda Stories*, 1991), Dianthe's sexual aberrations are part of the production and repression of alternate *histories* rather than just bodies or kin networks. *Of One Blood* clarifies how Anglo-European repression of the Ethiopian past, which is clearly also an allegory for the American repression of its own past of slavery and of African American history in general, produces "perversions" in the social field as well as the historical record. Hopkins suggests that a white-supremacist history bent on repressing the contributions of people of African descent has ramifications for the horizons of African Americans as a people and for humankind in general: it is not that the condition of not knowing one's collective history makes one a practitioner of incest or a bigamist in the literal way that not knowing one's personal history might; rather, not knowing one's collective history threatens to limit or distort the social tout court, for which family is here only a figure. For the phrase "of one blood" indexes not only the African blood that links ancient Ethiopia, nineteenth-century African Americans, and the three dispersed Livingston siblings, but also the entire human species, which cannot acknowledge that all are related.

Having produced a crisis in historical knowledge as a crisis in socio-sexual arrangement, *Of One Blood* resolves it through a final series of episodes of thanatomimesis and eroticized time travel. In the novel's last few chapters, Aubrey Livingston finds himself immobilized by an invisible power, a mesmeric spell that Hannah has helped Dianthe cast, and one that hints at a retaliatory sexual assault. Though paralyzed, he sees his wife glide into his room and substitute a new glass of water for his customary nightly one. But Dianthe's spell breaks too early, and he overpowers her and forces her to drink the concoction, a slow-acting lethal poison. Knowing she is dying, Dianthe feigns sleep and refuses medical help, using what is left of her energy to wait for Briggs. As the life force drains from her body, a musical outpouring swells over the town—"the welcome of ancient Ethiopia to her dying daughter of the royal line"

(Hopkins [1903] 1988, 615). This burst of music, the first since Dianthe's singing scenes, suggests that song has now transcended its association with the sexual violence of mesmerism and become, directly, an agent of the reunification of past and present. Here, the historicizing function of the diva has also become collective and diffuse. Hearing the music, Dianthe calls out the names of her Ethiopian ancestors whom we assume she will be joining. One of them is "Candace," the name of the queen whom Briggs has married in Telassar. As both ancestor and double, Candace links Telassar with the underworld of death, and further cinches the novel's binding of past and present, death and life.

By the end of *Of One Blood*, making history right again makes sex right again, in ways that are somewhat less expansive than the novel's earlier figure of history and skin as mutually receptive surfaces. Briggs arrives, and Dianthe dies in his arms. From the woods, Aubrey Livingston sees Dianthe and his fiancée, Molly, gliding along together, presumably on their way to the afterlife. He is eventually charged with their two murders but acquitted. Though freed by the earthly, American justice system, Livingston has an "interview" with an impromptu court composed of two representatives from Telassar, as well as the witch Hannah, who has been revealed as a descendent of the noble court, and Reuel Briggs. There, the prime minister of Ethiopia casts a spell on Livingston, releases his soul, and whispers the prophesy to him that those in direct line of the throne—which Livingston is by virtue of his descent from Hannah and Mira—must, if guilty of the crime of murder, die by their own hand. Accordingly, and possibly also because he now knows he is legally black in the United States, Livingston drowns himself, recapitulating the opening of the novel in which Briggs contemplates suicide and asks himself if it is wrong. Briggs returns to Telassar with Hannah, whose palindromic name now reaches back and forth through time to reunite her and her nineteenth-century family and, by the end of the novel, her present-day descendants with their ancient relatives. Briggs's union with Candace, in the secret city where past and present intermingle like the blood of black and white Americans, now not only fulfills the prophesy that Telassar will be reunited with the present but also consummates his initial magnetic and otherworldly attraction to Dianthe.

The novel's solution, though, is emphatically heterosexual. Though its historiography is radical both in method and in content, *Of One Blood*

finishes on a somewhat conservative sexual note, marrying Briggs out of his feigned whiteness and back into his racially pure ancestral blackness, and also out of his incestuous relation with his sister Dianthe and back into proper exogamy. In fact, Dianthe's departure with Molly actually does not make sense in the novel's economy of ancestral copresence with the living, for she too is Telassarian royalty and should end up in the secret city—but the novel must dispose of her by substituting Candace for her, in order to correlate the restoration of history with proper dynastic succession. Despite this ending, though, through its discussions of the "surface" of history and its motif of the lotus birthmark, the novel has hinted that history can be felt and made otherwise than through romantic, intraracial heterosexual love. It has suggested that the sense-method of alternate, amateur historiographies, derided and ignored by the emerging nineteenth-century profession of scientific history, is both productive of and emerges out of less sanctioned libidinal and corporeal encounters: the trauma of rape, the corporeal transfer of energy in animal magnetism, and the shape-shifting and doubling of ancestors. In short, the novel has offered up speculative history as a sense-method, and the body's sensorium as a way of transmitting and receiving history.

On Libidinal Historiography in Twain and Hopkins

But to cast things this way—to say that the body is a transmitter of history and that history has a sensible, permeable surface—is to leave out the psychic question of desire on which speculative fiction, and speculative history in particular, are based. These are genres whose plots are motored not only by corporeal contact but also by longings for and imaginations of the better presents and/or futures that could be animated by a changed past. As if to fend off this possibility, Twain's Hank Morgan seems to dismiss speculation precisely because it is based on desire, opining, "No sound and legitimate business can be established on a basis of speculation" (Twain [1889] 1982, 98) and, as discussed earlier, linking the romantic pursuits of knight-errantry to gambling. Hank's economic metaphor also gestures toward the question of what made history sound and legitimate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Initially, then, we might read historiography in Twain and Hopkins as a cure for what ails the libidinalized marketplace that Hank condemns. After

all, historiography, as nonfiction, purports to settle the meaning of the past (something that Twain satirizes and Hopkins seems earnestly invested in), offering a hermeneutic gold standard. And time travel would seem on the face of it to offer the *least* speculative, most accurate account of the past in that it ensures perfect correspondence between witness and event. This is, in a sense, the conceit of *Of One Blood*, in which African American competency for citizenship and future making is certified through Reuel Briggs's direct witness of Ethiopian technological accomplishment and the narrator assures readers that they may ascertain "the correctness of the historical records" (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 538) about Ethiopia from Briggs's descriptions of the ruins of the actual Meroë and, by extension, of the fictional Telassar.

Yet despite Hank's contempt for speculation, Twain himself establishes *Connecticut Yankee* as conjectural from the very beginning, writing in the preface, "It is not pretended that these laws and customs existed in England in the sixth century; no, it is only pretended that inasmuch as they existed in the English and other civilizations of far later times, it is safe to consider that it is no libel upon the sixth century to suppose them to have been in practice in that day also. One is quite justified in inferring that whatever one of these laws or customs was lacking in that remote time, its place was competently filled by a worse one" (Twain [1889] 1982, 4). The language of "pretending," "considering," "supposing," and "inferring" immediately establishes the novel as a self-consciously imaginary—a speculative—account of the past. Twain's historiography, then, has more in common with contemporary speculative fiction than with the disciplinary history proper to his time, or even with nineteenth-century popular histories aimed at mass audiences in which a gripping plot without any metacommentary took precedence over factual accuracy (see Pfitzer 2008). In short, Twain gleefully *admits* to speculation, showing up Hank's spurious investments in hard money and hard facts.¹³ Similarly, despite its gesture toward the historical records, *Of One Blood* encodes the idea of speculation in Mira's looking-glass name, for "speculate" originates in the Latin *speculare*, "to observe."

As Hank implies when he dismisses Camelot's knights-errant as a pool of gamblers, speculation has a nonheteronormative erotic charge, for it eschews the "bed-rock" of reproduction for imaginative flights of fancy about unattainable women. It also has this charge in *Of One Blood*,

in which Reuel Briggs connects speculation with dissipation in his remark to the leader of his expedition, “Don’t touch upon the origin of the Negro; you will find yourself in a labyrinth, Professor. . . . Speculation has exhausted itself, yet the mystery appears to remain unsolved” (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 521). Here, notably, speculation is so self-referential as to exhaust not only its practitioners but also itself. As Briggs’s metaphor of self-exhaustion implies, the idea of imaginative risk cleaves tightly to masturbation, the more so when the risk is financial—as, indeed, we must remember that it is, not only for Hank but for Briggs, who “never before builded [*sic*] golden castles, but now . . . speculated upon the possibility of unearthing gems and gold from the mines of ancient Meroe and the pyramids of Ethiopia” (496). The problem with investment, it seems, is precisely its capacity to inflame the imagination, as, indeed, anti-masturbation literature recognized in its correlation of onanism with not only checks and credit but also reading too much of another kind of paper, fiction. The idea that speculative writing, whether of IOUs or of novels, is inherently libidinal, had been around for almost two centuries prior to the nineteenth.

The literary mode that would correspond to history’s hermeneutic gold standard would, on the face of it, seem to be allegory. Just as history purports to fix the meaning of the past, allegory purports to fix literary meaning by anchoring one text firmly to another. And both Twain’s and Hopkins’s novels can be read as allegory—*Connecticut Yankee* in all the ways critics have read it as a retelling of American imperialism, industrialization, economics, et cetera, and *Of One Blood* as an allegory for the repression of slavery in dominant American historiography and as a series of scriptural allusions and rewritings that culminate in Acts 17:26, “[God] hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.” Yet as Fredric Jameson (1982, 30) reminds us, allegory can also unfix meaning, serving to prepare a text “for further ideological investment,” that is, for new ways of figuring the relationship between an individual and “transpersonal realities such as the social structure or the collective logic of History.” In other words, allegory is a way of critiquing the present, perhaps even of dreaming the future, of making history in the sense of assuming historical agency by setting up the past as a transactional site—one that primes the desire to

understand one's position within larger coordinates in the present and presumably, through such understandings, to change those coordinates.

On this model, Hank Morgan's faulty historicism, represented variously as masturbatory vicariousness and prurience, as the failed narrative drive of his tale, as his attempt to short-circuit the stadial movement of History-with-a-capital-H from feudalism to capitalism, and even signaled by Twain's incitement of the critical desire to anchor his tale in events of the nineteenth century, looks like something queer historians might want to claim. While Twain's contemporaries prepared the Middle Ages for a rearguard ideological investment in Anglo-Saxonism, he himself seems to have prepared them for something else. We might also claim several aspects of *Of One Blood*: Reuel Brigg's amateur historical inquiry, represented as both a suspect sexual violation of Dianthe and a more promising open and porous body; the black female characters' use of haunting, voice, and prophesy as historical methods; and the amateur historiography signaled by Hopkins's own traffic in speculation, reworkings of secondary histories by her contemporaries, and the biblical model of prophesy and recapitulation. While Hopkins's Afrocentrist contemporaries prepared ancient Africa for ideological investments that, as Saidiya Hartman clarifies in *Lose Your Mother* (2008), can produce an African continent innocent of participation in the slave trade, Hopkins, like Twain, prepares her readers for something else. In other words, these "bad," literary, corporeal, allegorical histories may prime their readers to make history otherwise.

The world-historical investments made possible by allegory, in turn, are matters of race, gender, and sexuality. Allegory can be understood not only as a form of historiography, a narrative mode that, by pointing to an anterior time, can suggest violence, ruination, and change, and thus future making, but also, since Walter Benjamin ([1963] 2009), as a form of drag: a way of dressing up the future in the garb of the past. But what is Twain "getting up" in the persona of Hank, or of medieval culture in general? Countering his historicist critics, I would suggest that Twain is less interested in retelling a particular aspect of nineteenth-century culture through the medieval conceit than he is in revealing and exploiting the libidinal logic of historiography itself. *Connecticut Yankee* suggests that our habit of historicizing—our hank for it—is fundamentally erotic, perhaps even autoerotic, and that this might not be such a bad thing. Twain's looking

backward is neither triumphantly nostalgic nor properly political in the Marxist sense of what it means to do history: it simply marks a refusal, like Hank's final one, to accede to contemporary norms of gendered and sexualized identity, even as it fully accedes to the norms of whiteness.

Likewise, the erotics of *Of One Blood* become both clearer and queerer when read through this lens. By going back to and rewriting Western history in terms of a forgotten biblical city and the Bible as a whole—a text that the ghostly Mira literally writes her name in, as well as underlining a prophetic passage, when she appears to Dianthe—Hopkins participates in the logic of allegorical recapitulation that animates that very Bible, a logic that supersedes the heteronormative alliances that *Of One Blood* seems to champion at its end. For in Hopkins's novel, mesmerism, reanimation, reincarnation, and the transmission of both melancholic affect and historical understanding across generations take the place of pregnancy and childbirth; parent-child relations are so distorted by slavery as to make biological reproduction an untenable blueprint for the future. Sexual longings, in this novel, do get resolved into the privatized and personal figure of exogamous marriage, but they do not get resolved into pregnancy and parenthood. Instead, they retain a historical and collective charge insofar as they revive and reinvest a dormant past for future use. *Of One Blood* looks backward to an invented history on another continent, furnishing ancient Ethiopia with technologies reminiscent of the nineteenth century to repudiate the racist present of a nineteenth-century United States in which black people counted as primitive and uncivilized, imbuing that refusal with a libidinal logic in which people connect through time via bodily affinities rather than descent. *Of One Blood* thus might be called, with a nod to Claudia Tate (1992), an *antidomestic* allegory of political desire.

All of this brings me, at long last, to the epigraph with which this chapter begins, Nietzsche's remark about his *Untimely Meditations* ([1873–76] 1997): “The four *untimely essays* are altogether warlike. They demonstrate that I was no ‘Jack o’ Dreams,’ that I derive pleasure from drawing the sword—also, perhaps, that I have a dangerously supple wrist” (Nietzsche [1908] 1992, 54). Here, Nietzsche paradoxically suggests that his articles, which include “On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life,” are military in their temporal *imprecision*, foiling the idea that collective political action requires the temporal simultaneity of the drill or the pro-

gressive directionalities of nation and empire. Counterposing fantasy, or “dreaming,” with historiography’s “drawing [of] the sword,” Nietzsche stakes a claim for the “unhistorical” in the battle against the status quo, echoing his assertion in “On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life” that forgetting is necessary to action. But this insistent ahistoricism brings with it a dangerous supplement (see Derrida 1998). Drawing the analytic blade of the untimely is not so distinct from the other manual exercises associated with dreaming; indeed, the creative abuse of history that Nietzsche champions implies, with that supple wrist, a bit of self-abuse.

By the early twentieth century, the (a)historical allegory—in which the past will neither retreat altogether, as in biblical allegory’s fusion of past and present into recurrence and eternity, nor provide a triumphant origin story for the present, as in Anglo-American nationalist allegory, but hovers as a site of potential critical investment, as in *Connecticut Yankee* and *Of One Blood*—would become the refuge of those inheritors of the masturbator and the nonprocreator, the newly specified “homosexuals” whose erotic interests were “wrongly” invested. Fixating on a past in which they could not have lived, even fixing their own protagonists within an invented but historically specific past, inverts and others whose sexual practices did not fit into the heterosexual-reproductive matrix could practice a kind of dialectical nostalgia: the past might be embarrassing, but it could also signal the validity of a different lifeworld, including its norms of gender and eroticism (Nealon 2001). And, crucially, by featuring an archaic historical period that could not be dissolved into a moment on a personal timeline, or even be situated in a coherent, quasinationalist political progress narrative, sexual dissidents could signal the absolute inaccessibility of these alternate lifeworlds, these temporal and sexual *imperiums in imperio*, to so-called normals.¹⁴

This logic might explain the peculiarly regressive moves of explicitly lesbian and gay literature later on, such as the ending of Radclyffe Hall’s “Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself” (1934), in which the main character, a classic version of what Esther Newton has called the mythic mannish lesbian, slips into a dream sequence and finds herself a caveman courting a cave-woman, never returning to consciousness or the present moment (see Newton 1984). And it may help explain the queer, pseudohistoricist oddities, often classed as decadent works, that were contemporaneous with *A*

Connecticut Yankee and spanned the decades in which sexology rose and fell, from Flaubert's *Salammbô* (1862, another African historical fantasia) through Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928, in which the main character changes from male to female while in Turkey). For these texts, each in their own way, embrace bad historicism as an erotics. They toy with allegory's shuttling movement to prior texts, but no overarching interpretive point guides their time travels. They delight in the sheer alterity of other sex/gender systems, but use these as material for fantasy, courtship, and erotic worldmaking rather than for analytic distance.

These other literary works are also doggedly and determinedly colonialist, in a way that Twain mocks in the figure of the blustering Hank Morgan, and that Hopkins reflects on in the final chapter of *Of One Blood*—which may be explained by the fact that they are white-authored. In *Of One Blood*, Briggs “views . . . with serious apprehension, the advance of mighty nations penetrating the dark, mysterious forces of his native land” (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 621). Having assumed the role of “native” despite his status as a (re)settler, Briggs seems faintly to recognize that his own incursions into Telassar have not only reunited the royal family but also represent an early form of what we might now recognize as heritage tourism, the very activity of which Saidiya Hartman (2008) is so skeptical in *Lose Your Mother*. Works such as “Miss Ogilvy Finds Herself,” *Salammbô*, and *Orlando*, similarly, engage in what Joseph Allen Boone (2014) calls “the homoerotics of Orientalism,” in which spatial alterity offers sexual adventure; these texts temporalize that alterity. Through them we can see, on the one hand, that the fantasy of feeling history with, on, and even as the body is a powerful alternative to disciplinary histories that, in denying the libidinal investments of historiography, understand themselves as innocent of imperialist violence. Libidinal historiography offers constituencies whose bodies are understood as the basis of their inferiority a way to mobilize that stigma into a world-historical imagination. But on the other hand, it also risks preparing the past for a future that, as Briggs recognizes, might further rather than reduce “caste prejudice, race pride, [and] boundless wealth” (Hopkins [1903] 1988, 621).

Finally, the limits of libidinal historiography are, ironically, corporeal. For they depend on the fiction of able-bodiedness that attends all travel literature: the conceit that feeling historical, as a sense-method, is a matter of action, of making the body literally go places. I have thus far treated

populations whose physical movements could be understood as political ones: Shaker rhythms as a critique of heteronormative gender roles and of whiteness; playing dead as a confrontation with social death; amateur historiography, literalized in time travel, as a form of queer and queer-of-color worldmaking. But during the early nineteenth century, which celebrated a masculine-capitalist body in control of its energetic capacities, and the Progressive era, which celebrated a masculine-imperial body moving through a temporalized space and eventually a spatialized time, the sense-methods of those who could not “go” so completely were very different. As the following chapter will show, the inability or unwillingness to move, or to be moved, is a sense of another kind, with a politics of its own.