

INTRODUCTION

Elizabeth Freeman

When Shakespeare's Hamlet says "the time is out of joint," he describes time as if its heterogeneity can be felt in the bones, as a kind of skeletal dislocation. In this metaphor, time has, indeed *is*, a body. The essays collected here suggest that this sensation of asynchrony can be viewed as a queer phenomenon—something felt on, with, or as a body, something experienced as a mode of erotic difference or even as a means to express or enact ways of being and connecting that have not yet arrived or never will. Through rubrics as diverse as martyrdom, coincidence, melodrama, post-Newtonian physics, criminal motive, poetic immortality, and gesture, these works of scholarship connect the marginalized time schemes they explore to subjugated or disavowed erotic experiences, including male homoeroticism, same-sex marriage, interracial coupling, heterosexual feminine desire, mourning, incest, and pedophilia. These essays follow the lead of scholars who have broadened queer studies with theories and histories of affect, sentiment, embodiment, and sensation.

It is precisely this wide-ranging sense of what Audre Lorde calls the uses of the erotic that allows queer and temporality to touch one another across what otherwise might seem a vast conceptual gulf.¹ If we reimagine "queer" as a set of possibilities produced out of temporal and historical difference, or see the manipulation of time as a way to produce both bodies and relationalities (or even nonrelationality), we encounter a more productively porous queer studies, one shaped by and reshaping not only various disciplines but also the studies of race, nation, migration, and postcolony. Indeed, this queer studies meets critical race theory and postcolonial studies in its understanding that what has not entered the historical records, and what is not yet culturally legible, is often encountered in embodied, nonrational forms: as ghosts, scars, gods.² In this sense we are also (re)turned to a queer studies among whose definitional moves has been a turn to the "premodern," not only to moments in time before the consolidation of homo-

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DOI 10.1215/10642684-2006-029

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sexual identity in the West but also to how the gaps and fissures in the “modern” get displaced backward into a hypersexualized or desexualized “premodern.” These essays, then, showcase the possibilities of a permeability and recursivity that is built into the field of queer studies at its best. By way of introduction, I want to provide some ways to contextualize the link between queer and temporality, the erotic and time, that guides this volume. To begin with a demonstration, I rethink one of queer theory’s key concepts, performativity, in temporal terms. Then I provide a brief history of the temporal regimes embedded in sexuality as a field of knowledge. Finally, I review the critical influences and key debates in queer studies of temporality, before turning to the essays themselves.

How, beyond somatic changes like puberty, aging, or illness, has time come to seem so natural that we can feel it as a charge in the body, even as it is measured with external instruments? How is time part of the larger histories of sexuality and sensibility that have shaped LGBTQ studies? First, temporality is a mode of implantation through which institutional forces come to seem like somatic facts. Schedules, calendars, time zones, and even wristwatches are ways to inculcate what the sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel calls “hidden rhythms,” forms of temporal experience that seem natural to those whom they privilege.³ Manipulations of time also convert historically specific regimes of asymmetrical power into seemingly ordinary bodily tempos and routines. Consider, for example, how nineteenth-century workers in the United States and Europe claimed the eight-hour workday as part of a triad that included eight hours of sleep and eight hours of leisure. Yet we now understand the need for eight hours of sleep as a demand coming from our body rather than as a form of resistance to wage work. Or, in a more overtly sexual example, think of the abject phrase *premature ejaculation*, a twentieth-century locution that owes its existence to both the mainstream-medical norming of heterosexual intercourse and the feminist movement’s insistence that women who sleep with men have a right to orgasms, too. Time, then, is not only of the essence; it actually produces “essences”—well-rested bodies, controlled orgasms, and so on.

In Pierre Bourdieu’s discussion of *habitus*—a social group’s cultivated bodily dispositions—we can see most clearly how time makes bodies and subjects. “The durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” that structure the norms of a culture is formed, Bourdieu argues, within the rhythms of gift exchange.⁴ Thus cultural competence is a matter of timing, of coming to inhabit a culture’s expectations about the temporal lapses between getting and giving, and learning to manipulate them to seize power. In this sense, temporality is crucial to both affect and embodiment. We achieve comfort, power, even physi-

cal legibility to the extent that we internalize the given cultural tempos and time lines, not only for gift exchange but for any number of encounters. Correspondingly, when we are away from our cultural context, we often experience our social failures as a sign that we are immature or prematurely aged, that we are too late to the party or, worse, too early. As Judith Halberstam puts it in the roundtable, queers engage “in activities that probably seem pointless to people stranded in hetero temporalities.”

Queer theory has implicitly built on the concept of *habitus* with Judith Butler’s model of gender performativity, to which we owe the understanding that supposedly natural attributes of masculinity and femininity are the result of repetitions sedimenting over time.⁵ To rehearse this by-now canonical argument, the series of potentially changeable instants that seem to consolidate gender also retroactively construct an “origin” that makes masculinity and femininity look unchangeable. But though performativity theory reveals these interesting temporal torques in the construction of masculinity and femininity, it has yet to explore how delay and surprise, so crucial to Bourdieu’s description of *habitus*, affect the perceived naturalness of gender. Drag kings and queens, in contrast, tend to intuit this aspect of their performance, for what makes a drag show ironic and draglike (rather than an earnest attempt to pass) is the performer’s play with anachronism, ungainly or exaggerated gesture, off-beat timing, and peek-a-boo suspense. “Timing,” as Bourdieu calls it, can be a way to lay bare the rules of gendered performance or a source for new experiences and understandings of gender. It can be a way, too, of catching the audience off guard, enticing or shaming or coaxing unexpected gendered or sexualized responses. Thinking of drag in terms of time, that is, might allow for a more dynamic sense of performance and performativity that encompasses reception as well as address, and might capture the gestural, sensory call-and-response by which gender is built or dismantled within a given space or across time. It might answer the question of why and how drag has forged such resilient subcultures as well as dismantled the naturalness of gender.

The body politics and power relations made possible by manipulating time, then, are the first link between temporality and sexuality. But sexuality itself—by which I mean the contemporary field of knowledge/power about the body and psyche—also has a specifically temporal politics. The early sexologists, for instance, followed race scientists in describing “inverts” as evolutionary throwbacks, physical remnants of earlier eras.⁶ Later, Freud introduced key temporal concepts to explain the power of the drives, the structure of the unconscious, and the progress to normative heterosexuality. *Nachträglichkeit*, condensation and displacement, repression, the phases of sexual development and their possible

detours and obstacles are all, among other things, Freudian temporal concepts predicated on two contradictory ideas. One is Freud's insistence that sexuality develops in a linear fashion toward heterosexual reproduction. But the other guiding principle of psychoanalysis is that the past is unlikely to remain in the past or to serve as an immediately recognizable blueprint for the future. Freud reconciled these linear and recursive time frames by viewing any departure from the heterosexual reproductive imperative as a sign of being stuck in a developmental phase or as an endless return to the past in a kind of psychic atavism.

Thus one of the most obvious ways that sex meets temporality is in the persistent description of queers as temporally backward, though paradoxically dislocated from any specific historical moment.⁷ As the dominant cultural rhetoric of the AIDS epidemic so starkly revealed, since sexual identity emerged as a concept, gays and lesbians have been figured as having no past: no childhood, no origin or precedent in nature, no family traditions or legends, and, crucially, no history as a distinct people. This erasure has compelled what Carolyn Dinshaw, in both her book *Getting Medieval* and her remarks for this volume's roundtable, calls "a queer desire for history."⁸ This desire has manifested in valuable archival work. Starting in the 1970s, lesbian and gay historians have created new accounts of what has been, in the phrase of a seminal volume, "hidden from history."⁹ But in addition to discovering what has been effaced along the way to various hetero-supremacist cultures, sexual dissidents have had to understand what is prior to our own lives with whatever heuristic is at hand: conjecture, fantasy, overreading, revision, a seemingly myopic focus on ephemera. Christopher Nealon's *Foundlings* remains one of the most powerful histories of this desire for history itself, and in the roundtable, he reminds us that queer denizens of the past "dream[ed] of collectivities, and forms of participation in History-with-a-capital-H, that they might never, themselves, experience."¹⁰ The new queer historians — many of whom write from other disciplines — have reclaimed some of the improvisatory methods for which "dreaming" is a placeholder, turning them into queered protocols for historical research, and even into queer historiographies.¹¹ Many of these scholars have championed eclectic, idiosyncratic, and transient archives including performances, gossip, found objects, and methods (or antimethods) that rely on counter-intuitive juxtapositions of events or materials.

Queer historians and historiographers have also explored what the Marxist historian Raymond Williams calls "structures of feeling."¹² Structures of feeling that correlate with the residual are, for Williams, the lingering remnants of outmoded production processes. Queer critics tend to identify the residual as specters, ghosts, or copies and to think of "production" in terms of culture rather than

merely economics: for instance, in the roundtable Annamarie Jagose identifies the project of her book *Inconsequence* as an exploration of “the productive possibilities of lesbian derivation.”¹³ These kinds of intellectual forays are histories not just of emotion but of sensations that do not even count as emotions in a particular historical moment, such as the feelings of uncanniness, untimeliness, belatedness, delay, and failure that suffuse so many queer performances. Another structure of feeling correlates with the emergent, which Williams defines as the semi-intelligible signs of a production process that has not yet come to dominate. Queer scholars tarry with the emergent in their description of radically anticipatory stances or gestures that have not yet congealed into dominant cultural forms like identity, community, or market niche. José Esteban Muñoz’s work on queering utopia has offered the most sustained history of these beckonings as they glimmer out from the supposedly minor works of an already marginalized archive of materials from the 1950s Greenwich Village scene.¹⁴

Powerful as these figurations of residual and emergent structures of feeling are, they do not fully depart from a sequential vision of time: derivation, belatedness, dreaming, anticipation are all ways of stretching, bending, but not breaking linear time. Hence many queer historiographers also take their cue from Walter Benjamin, as Rod Ferguson makes explicit in his roundtable comments and Carla Freccero echoes in her roundtable description of being “blown backward” like “that angel.” Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History” powerfully critiques the notion of time as a flat plane on which events march forward in sequence. It suggests a potentially queer vision of how time wrinkles and folds as some minor feature of our own sexually impoverished present suddenly meets up with a richer past, or as the materials of a failed and forgotten project of the past find their uses now, in a future unimaginable in their time. Queer historiographers have also been influenced by a deconstructionist postcolonial theory that is itself indebted to Benjamin, especially Homi Bhabha’s insights in *The Location of Culture* about how the discourse of modernity continually figures “the teleology of progress tipping over into the ‘timeless’ discourse of irrationality.”¹⁵ Ferguson describes his book *Aberrations in Black*, for example, as an attempt to track how blacks have served U.S. sociological scholarship and the government policies that draw from it as “figures outside the rational time of capital, nation, and family.”¹⁶ Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* has been yet another seminal text for work on queer temporalities, and Freccero’s *Queer/Early/Modern* is particularly indebted to this work.¹⁷ In the roundtable, Freccero explains that her book “proposes queer spectrality as a phantasmic relation to historicity that could account for the affective force of the past in the present, of a desire issuing from another time and plac-

ing a demand on the present,” a desire and an imperative, of course, embodied in the ghost of Hamlet’s father, who is the central figure in Derrida’s *Specters*.

But, interestingly, Benjamin, Bhabha, and Derrida all have an oblique relationship to the body erotic. Despite the queer possibilities latent in some of his other work, Benjamin’s “Theses” sometimes traffics in sexual metaphors that privilege heterosexual reproduction, troping old-fashioned historicism as a “bordello” and the historical materialist as “man enough to blast open the continuum of history.”¹⁸ Bhabha addresses neither gender nor sexuality and naturalizes kinship, writing that “the nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin, and turns that loss into the language of metaphor,” as if kinship were disconnected from state formation and nationness did not, in fact, depend on the structural transformation of aristocratic family lineage into a pseudofamilial and covertly erotic sense of racial affiliation among strangers.¹⁹ Derrida does not fully take on the fact that Hamlet’s father was murdered in a bid not only for state power but also for sexual dominion, and his return is therefore the return of specific carnal *desires* as well as of the vanquished body. We are still in the process of creating, it seems to me, a historiographic method that would admit the flesh, that would avow that history is written on and felt with the body, and that would let eroticism into the notion of historical thought itself.²⁰ This we might call a queer desire for history itself to desire, or perhaps an agenda for an *écriture historique* along the lines of *écriture féminine*.

What might this look like? Such work would constitute a history-without-a-capital-H, something like Dipesh Chakrabarty’s *History 2*. Chakrabarty gives this name to “affective narratives of human belonging where life forms, although porous to one another, do not seem exchangeable through a third term of equivalence such as abstract labor.” Queer theory might rewrite or supplement this as “erotically affective narratives or performances of human belonging where life forms, although porous to one another even across time, do not seem exchangeable through a third term of equivalence such as sexual identity.”²¹ Turning back again to drag, we might think of it as a nonnarrative history written with the body, in which the performer channels another body, literalizing the permeability to which Chakrabarty refers and making this body available to a context unforeseen in its bearer’s lived historical moment. Here, belonging is a matter of pleasurable cathexis across historical time as well as across the space between stage and audience. What takes place between the performer and the object of her performance, or between an audience member and the performer/her alter ego, can be some mixture of identification, disidentification, arousal, contempt, longing—but cannot be reduced to common belonging under the sign of “gay.” Drag is only one

possible example of what I mean here. Another might be Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, where Beloved returns to Sethe from the past, staking her claims on history and on her mother's body through a kind of physical possession shot through with sexual energy, yet unassimilable to the contemporary Anglo-American understanding of lesbianism or, indeed, collective racial destiny.

But the opportunities afforded by the supposed lack of pastness in queer life are not the only ones that recent work in queer theory seizes. Some important scholarship and criticism have also figured sexual minorities as possessed of no future. In at least some popular imaginations, we supposedly have no children, no succeeding generations, no meaningful way to contribute to society, no hope, no plans, and nothing to offer most political tomorrows. For at least the past two decades, queer activists have certainly worked to secure a better future: to shield queer youth from violence and abandonment, to protect our ability to care for our sick and pass our property on to our loved ones, to ensure that we may have children via reproductive technology or adoption. Queer cultural workers have also invested in our collective future, creating museum exhibits, library archives, and oral histories that will ensure our intellectual and cultural successors access to pasts we assume they will identify with somehow, even if they do not recognize these pasts as their own. To a certain extent, many of these projects fit sexual dissidents into a normative set of temporal constructs, including biological or social reproduction, and monetary or cultural inheritance. Pragmatically valuable as they are, they can partake in a mainstream American tendency to privilege family, property, and heritage. Nguyen Tan Hoang remarks in the roundtable that "there is also a homonormative time line. We pity those who come out late in life, do not find a long-term partner before they lose their looks, or continue to hit the bars when they are the bartender's father's age." This homonormative time line governs our understanding of both individual lives and the collective progress of the LGBT population toward equality.

Within queer theory, then, the question of the queer future tense has been fraught. In the roundtable, Jagose asks "how queer scholarship might best imagine modes of being lesbian that refuse the consequential promise of 'history'" — that is, that cannot be figured as the origins of a better yet-to-come. And while origin stories have been critiqued for quite some time, fewer critics have questioned the *progressivist doctrine of the improved tomorrow*. In very different ways and with very different primary sources and theoretical apparatuses, Judith Halberstam and Lee Edelman have both critiqued *liberationist pieties about the future*. In her book *In a Queer Time and Place*, Halberstam opts for a kind of utopia-under-erasure.²² She reminds us in the roundtable that many contemporary sexual subcultures

“cast sexual liberation as the other of time-bound sexual practices” and comes down firmly on the side of the unevolved. Yet in Halberstam’s view, subcultures are also sites in which, paradoxically, regression is not only a mode of dissent from normative temporal regimes such as wage time and family time but also a scene of possibility for other anticipations, even other modes of anticipating. Her book explores performances such as the double billing of the folksinger Ferron and Kaia Wilson of the postpunk dyke band The Butchies that enact a syncopated intergenerationality, one in which what is passed on is not a cultural tradition but the feeling of untimeliness itself. Here we see a powerful example of what Nguyen describes in the roundtable: “How queer experience gets transmitted from one generation to the next, a process that exceeds, in innovative ways, the heterosexual kinship/reproductive model.” Freccero’s roundtable remarks call this “an intergenerational quasi-relationality . . . whose goal is a certain communicative abstraction in the interests of achieving a different world.”

Edelman would likely argue that this model of subcultural, cross-generational excess and innovation relies on what he calls in the roundtable “the dollop of sweetness afforded by messianic hope.” His *No Future* declares that queers should, to paraphrase, just say no to the future. This is because even the idea of a queerly intergenerational relationality is based on what he calls repro-futurity: ultimately, it stakes its hopes on those not yet born or grown up. Repro-futurity is a political orientation that depends on the sacrifice of adult needs, the desexualization of children, and the disavowal of the negating potential of queerness itself. Edelman writes that queer politics and theory must refuse the expectation or promise of a better society, even one formulated in the negative or abstract. In his view, queers must embrace the death drive, exploit their status as avatars of the antifutural, “fuck . . . the Child.”²³ In this manifesto, he reclaims for contemporary queers the Marquis de Sade’s stance not only against familial dynasty and the patronymic but also against duration itself, even against history. Critiquing the questions that I used to launch the roundtable, Edelman asks, “What if time’s collapse into history is symptomatic, not historical?” Here Edelman tacitly invokes a Sadean vision of sex as a motor against any metaphysical attempts to stretch bodies and pleasures out into time so that they become part of a cause-effect, historical structure.²⁴ The utopian paradigm is interested in how erotic matter(s) might radiate across time, however discontinuously; for the Sadean/antirelational paradigm, there is only the matter of flesh meeting in sex itself.

But do all futurities entail heteronormative forms of continuity or extension? If I were committed to describing where queer theory is now, I might use this question as the X to mark the spot of our collective critical endeavor. Cer-

tainly, Edelman's elegant, contentious argument has been questioned by scholars committed to what Eve Sedgwick has called "reparative reading," work that idiosyncratically re-creates the self and its future possibilities by remixing often painful pasts and forging new relations among dissonant elements. In the roundtable, Nealon invokes this reparative process in his figure of a "two-part sense of queer sodality—fluid in the present, expectant in the past." Other scholars, such as Kathryn Bond Stockton in this special issue and elsewhere, have noted that real children, unlike the fetishized Child, are sexually and temporally complex, and this work has illuminated how children's activities suggest new lateral modes of relationship quite in keeping with Edelman's distrust of futurism.²⁵ Still others have asked, as lesbians and/or feminists and/or people of color, whether radical antifuturity and its corollary, the antisocial thesis, are the new postmodernity, that is, the conceptual privilege of white middle-class male subjects who are always already guaranteed a future and so can afford to jettison the idea of one.²⁶ Queer of color critique has been especially trenchant, because, as Muñoz declares in his essay for this special issue, the imperative toward "no future" aligns too neatly with social policies that cause actual children of color to die. Muñoz reminds us that the antifutural doctrine is complicit in "the active disavowal of a crisis in afrofuturism," that is, in the cultural inability to imagine people of color, queer and otherwise, having or contributing to a collective fate.

But to say that this debate is where queer theory is now would be to privilege a particular trajectory and even the making of linear temporal trajectories. It is worth asking if, in this debate, both the reparative and the negative can become forms of the normativity that Ferguson describes in the roundtable: "Normativity," he comments, achieves its aims "by making minoritized practices like French feminism or black queer artistic and activist practices into historic quests for legitimacy." Here, he speaks of how, when these practices enter the history books or the canon of critical theory, the very sexual heterogeneity and dissidence that inspired and guided them are effaced or trivialized. But his comments also suggest how scholarly avant-gardism, itself normative at least in the U.S. academy, can flatten out the complexity of what precedes it by accusing earlier work of being complicit with the status quo. Both the antifuturists and the radical reparatives are, as Ferguson puts it, "trying to join the question of critical intellectual production to projects articulating new sexual horizons," even when horizons are articulated in the negative. Neither group can be reduced to a form of mainstream legacy making or generationality, because—as scholars always do—both traffic in the wayward temporalities of the written word, which may reach a destination or not, but does not usually reach the one expected.

Musing on different ways of connecting across time, Freccero declares parenthetically in the roundtable, “I am talking about writing here.” One question that remains unanswered in the queer scholarly debate about futurity, then, is why write? This is a temporal question and even a sexual one, if not obviously so. One answer might be that writing refigures both spatial and temporal relations in ways that feel queer. As Gertrude Stein put it, “I write for myself and for strangers,” suggesting a kind of anonymous, promiscuous textuality; Walt Whitman’s “whoever you are now holding me in hand” extends this depersonalized textual erotics across time as well as space.²⁷ As Whitman implies, these strangers or “whoevers,” one’s best readers whom one usually never meets, often appear asynchronously, in unforeseen futural moments, as new modes and registers of reception (“holding”) appear.²⁸ Ultimately, the most powerful dialectic between sex and temporality may be that as new readerly responses become possible, new modes of writing emerge and older modes become suddenly, dazzlingly accessible to us. Readerly responses, erotic in the broadest sense of the term, depend on the sensations possible, thinkable, and tangible in a particular historical period. And writerly strategies are ways to throw something out into a formless future, disseminating the self in the hopes that someone, someday, might reassemble the pieces in ways that in turn reconfigure his or her own present, or rearrange our sense of the past. Thus I think it is no coincidence that quite a few of the pieces in this special issue are especially lyrical, especially attuned to the reverberations of language across space and time. By drawing from, extending, and intervening on the texts that inspired this special issue in the first place—among which are the works of the roundtable participants—these essays also affirm in their very existence that writing is a toss of the dice not only into the future but also for the future.²⁹

The same could be said of the writerly relation to the past: writing is a way to speak with the dead, reanimate the past, gamble that there was one at all. Several essays honor that wager by exploring forgotten, minor, or completely dismissed texts: Muñoz excavates a work eventually repudiated by its author, Amiri Baraka’s/LeRoi Jones’s play *The Toilet*; Kate Thomas theorizes the temporal imaginings of poetry by the incestuous lesbian lovers who published under the name Michael Field; Kathleen Biddick dwells on Ridley Scott’s panned film *Kingdom of Heaven*. Some of the essays compiled here also intervene on several self-congratulatory “nows”: Dana Luciano takes on contemporary bourgeois domesticity; Stockton and Jon Davies confront the American cult of the child; Geeta Patel calibrates the sexual politics of the global war economy in Sri Lanka; Biddick writes against the abjecting of Muslim martyrs; Tom Boellstorff interrogates the queer stance against gay marriage. The works in this special issue draw from

fields as diverse as anthropology, film and literary criticism, history, law, physics, postcolonial and U.S. ethnic studies, religious studies, and women's studies.³⁰ But they offer up any number of queer ways of timing that exceed the protocols of any one field: the pause, the dilated melodramatic moment, the calendrical coincidence, the frozen gesture, the scene of martyrdom, the criminal motive, the "textures, tempos, solidities, relativities of space-times."³¹

It seemed fitting to me to honor these heterogeneous possibilities for queer timing by launching this special issue with the roundtable, precisely because it was a temporally complex, syncopated discussion that took place in virtual time. I organized this roundtable via e-mail, circulating questions to three scholars at a time, collating their remarks, and sending them on to the next three, in a process that ended up being quite recursive—yet I had to edit it for "continuity," which meant inserting transitions, the markers of linear temporality, and shifting remarks to earlier and later places in the discussion. My hope is that I did not violate the spirit of the dialogue in so doing. In any case, during a lively, sometimes contentious set of exchanges, even the most vehement debaters halted momentarily to admire Freccero's notion of herself as a "future dead person," a gesture that seems to fold the afterlife into this life. Nealon also invokes religious thought in his remark about finding "one contemporary variant of that transtemporal touch . . . in Lee's turn, not so much to 'time' but to the language of radicality and—in the Badiou he cites—piety: piety in the sense of 'keeping faith with' a radical event." And Edelman finishes the roundtable by dismissing "messianic hope." These comments, taken together, suggest that queer temporalities do seem to involve some kind of faith, however unrecognizable a form it might take, even if that involves faith only in the power of death or the negative. It is curious that the discussion circles around, if never quite mentioning, the domain of religion. Thus I chose to begin the sequence of essays with that domain; religion seems antithetical to radical queer thought, yet it is so insistently engaged with the relation between bodies and time that it also seems ripe for queer exploration.

Thus the first essay, Biddick's "Unbinding the Flesh in the Time That Remains: Crusader Martyrdom Then and Now," extends the roundtable's momentary gesture toward the temporal complexities of religious thought and experience. Biddick looks for the "now" of that most extreme and corporeal enactment of faith, martyrdom, in an era when liberal and conservative demagoguery about terrorism inflect our understanding of that practice. By attending to the erotic pasts of that act (Christians in the Crusades, the Ashkenazi and Rhineland Jews, and Muslims practicing jihad), Biddick unravels the logic that figures the carnal sacrifice of Jewish flesh, under the law of circumcision, against the transcendentally suffering

body of the baptized Christian. Her essay “turns to the cries and whispers of martyrs past for what they might reveal about queer moments in which carnal flesh unbinds from the Christian supersession of the spiritual body, thus transfiguring the temporal relations of pleasure to pain.” Illuminating eroticized moments in narratives of Jewish and Muslim martyrdom, especially moments that disrupt the binary between body and spirit, Biddick theorizes a queer potentiality—one that captures a messianic time without a messiah.

Boellstorff takes on Judeo-Christian teleologies as well. His essay, “When Marriage Falls: Queer Coincidences in Straight Time,” reminds us that both conservative-straight and radical-queer critiques of gay marriage inhabit the linear time of apocalypse, in which events add up to inevitable futures. “Queer time,” Boellstorff writes, “can unask the question of what time must pass before the progressive end-time where oppression no longer exists.” As a means of “unasking,” he champions the time of coincidence, in which straight and queer marriage might be simultaneous, each contaminating the other. Here, there is no revolutionary time, no total break from the present: just cycles of historically specific meaning whose gears, in touching one another momentarily, set off sparks in new futural directions.

If Judeo-Christian temporal schemes dominate contemporary political rhetoric on both the left and the right, so does the issue of seemingly timeless “family values.” Thus Boellstorff’s piece also launches a series of essays on the role of temporality in creating the heterocentric norms of family—the place where *habitus* begins and where children learn the culturally specific rhythms of sleeping, eating, and bodily functions. Boellstorff’s argument that queer social life might coincide with and thereby transform the institution of marriage resonates with Dana Luciano’s analysis of the chronopolitics of the middle-class household. In “‘Coming Around Again’: The Queer Momentum of *Far from Heaven*,” Luciano tracks Todd Haynes’s queer exposure of domestic biopolitical time: its enforced synchronization between the space of the home and a smoothly running schedule, and more broadly between desire and reproduction. Reminding us of the queerness of hyperfeminized, even *wifely* sexual desires that cannot be routed toward child rearing, Luciano’s exploration of “hetero-disphasure” surprises even the formulations of queer temporality put forth by many of the other essays here. Attending to this rupture, as she puts it, “render[s] queer temporality not as an actualized truth but as the possible effect of an exploratory process of displacement.” “Coming Around Again” is also unique among these pieces in its insistence on queering the feminine and bringing femininity to bear on queer theories of temporality.

Luciano’s “hetero-disphasure” names the systematic interruption of repro-

culture's manufactured continuities. Among the latter is what Patel calls "proprietary heterosexuality," the form of opposite-gender relationship fostered and supported by policy, property law, and cultural and monetary capital. Patel's essay "Time to Tell: How to Tell the Proper Time? Cinema and Finance" describes the role of neoliberal nationalisms in proprietary heterosexuality. In the film she explores, *Purahanda Kaluwara* (1997), by the Sri Lankan independent filmmaker Prasanna Vithanage, marriage achieves this form insofar as it relies literally on the war machine (dead soldiers' pensions and insurance payouts that enable family members to set up new households). *Purahanda Kaluwara*, she argues, undoes the temporality of melancholic incorporation — stable households founded on buried bodies — that is embedded in this merger of military capitalism and kinship. Centered on a stubbornly empty coffin, the film in Patel's analysis engenders a post-Newtonian/Galilean space-time that resists the logic of incorporation and the time of capital: "Coagulations, stretching, thinning, the lengthening of the feeling of time . . . the thickening and heaviness around the porous and sticky gravitational pulls of lament." These "stretchings," part of the film's formal as well as theoretical work, bespeak other histories, other modes of political, religious, and familial belonging.

Stockton is similarly interested in stretching time, in this case laterally, toward new forms of belonging. In her essay, filmic and novelistic manipulations of time disaggregate the figure of the homicidal, protogay child. Her essay, "Feeling Like Killing? Queer Temporalities of Murderous Motives among Queer Children," argues that motive and childhood tend to count as explanations or causes, for a crime and a sexual identity, respectively. But in Peter Jackson's *Heavenly Creatures* and Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, "motive" becomes extremely complex, becomes something like desire: "A living, growing, cubist form of dramatically mismatched feelings and movements from different temporalities and from multi-layered sideways inclinations . . . [a] form of feelings, desires, and needs (many starkly physical) feeding off each other at differential rates and involving temporal oddities and backbends." The texts she explores register this form of desire as a spatialized *motion* — children or childlike adults driving, hunting for treasure, running, laughing, singing — that swerves almost accidentally into acts and identity-forms that have nothing to do with what precedes them.

The frenzied motion of the child's body makes nonlinear time visible. But as Jon Davies's Moving Image Review reminds us, nonlinear time is not in and of itself always attached to progressive agendas for children or, for that matter, for queer adults. Taking up the scene of the intergenerational sexual encounter, Davies clarifies how the discourse of child abuse conflates present inquiry and

past violations. Its rhetoric “collapses representations of the act into the act itself: simply to look at child pornography is to cause harm and to invite diagnosis as a sex offender.” Thus the films that Davies reviews all aim to represent intergenerational sex in ways that neither efface the sexual encounter altogether nor accede to the salacious aspects of child pornography. Reversing figure and ground, cause and effect, the most successful of these films turn the viewer’s attention to the ordinary ways that American culture eroticizes children, in part by freezing them outside time.

What this group of essays reveals, in very different ways, is that heterocentric ideals of family demand a weird combination of timelessness and proper sequence. Home life must seem to stand still; dead kin may return only as household capital; the sexual desires of children inevitably lead to either literal murder or representational mayhem. But the most arresting figure for familial time out of joint is, of course, cross-generational incest. In “‘What Time We Kiss’: Michael Field’s Queer Temporalities,” Kate Thomas lucidly and wittily explores an incestuous aunt and niece who wrote together under the name Michael Field. These Victorian poets, she argues, forged an erotic life out of any number of temporal disorderings, including the poetic caesura, writings that promoted themselves as before their time and yet immortal, and letters that figure incest as a way to exceed their own temporal boundaries. “Michael Field,” Thomas writes, “theorized a queer futurity: they lived their afterlives as simultaneous to their lives, they saw themselves as coming after themselves.” In her view, the women’s erotic lives, their poems, and their attempts to manage their own critical reception offer a model of “thinking time” as itself a form of dissident sexuality, temporal asynchrony as a mode of passion at least as powerful as genital sex.

Michael Field enacted what Graham Hammill calls “a sexed poesis,” a way for the body erotic to lean outward toward a temporal elsewhere its bearer cannot see and may not ever occupy.³² This is an apt description, too, of the dramatic scenes from Amiri Baraka’s play *The Toilet* that Muñoz lovingly unfolds in “Cruising the Toilet: LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Radical Black Traditions, and Queer Futurity.” Muñoz argues for an embrace of queer futurity as it flickers forth in the play’s last gesture, an embrace that in its very stillness interrupts “the normative flow of time and movement.” Rather than a redemptive and sentimental hug, *The Toilet* ends with an adolescent boy cradling the head of a clandestine lover whom he has allowed to be savagely beaten, a moment of interracial tenderness that Muñoz calls an “anticipatory illumination.” Far from being a figure for an upbeat future in which even gay and lesbian youth might prosper, *The Toilet*’s

embrace is the index of Baraka's repudiated interracial, queer past as, itself, a not-yet-here. As Muñoz argues, only within a utopian stance that sees in the past a refusal to settle the form of the future and yet a commitment to one anyway, might we genuinely address the violence of a culture in which so many queer youths of color literally never grow up.

The phrase "anticipatory illumination" aptly describes Peter Coviello's experience of three books on queer temporality in the review essay that ends this special issue, "World Enough: Sex and Time in Recent Queer Theory." Coviello finishes on a somewhat skeptical note, claiming that inquiries into time and history have not transformed queer scholarship as "a matter . . . of record." But to exceed the legacy making suggested by "records" is part of the point. The works of scholarship written for and reviewed in this special issue, and the ways these scholars use the materials they analyze and cite, are more like phonograph records, their contents reverberating against one another in unexpected places and moments. The "complex pleasure of expectancy" that Coviello feels after reading these books suggests an erotics of future making, one in which the time of the not-yet is felt not only in the joints but also in any number of erogenous zones. My hope is that, encountering the roundtable and these essays, the reader will be similarly stimulated: that this special issue will not settle the grand question of whether the subjects of temporality and queer inquiry have been mutually transformative but will instead recalibrate the pleasures of asking.

Notes

In editing this special issue, I am indebted to a stellar array of scholars: the authors and roundtable participants, of course, but also the anonymous readers of the essays; my friend and colleague Molly McGarry for helping me figure out what an introduction might do and reading a draft of this one; and my graduate research assistant J. Samaine Lockwood for copyediting the roundtable. I want especially to thank my graduate research assistant Kara Thompson for editorial help, copyediting, and a critical read of this introduction. Throughout our work on this volume, her insights have been invaluable and her work ethic unparalleled.

1. Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: Crossing, 1984), 53–59.
2. See especially Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3. Eviatar Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
4. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 78.
5. This idea suffuses Butler's work, but is worked out most thoroughly in "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13–31.
6. See Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).
7. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
8. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Post-modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).
9. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Penguin, 1990).
10. Christopher Nealon, *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion before Stonewall* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
11. See, for instance, Scott Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past: History, Culture, and Difference* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*.
12. Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling," in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
13. Annamarie Jagose, *Inconsequence: Lesbian Representation and the Logic of Sexual Sequence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
14. José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia* (New York: New York University Press, forthcoming).
15. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 142–143.
16. Roderick A. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer Theory of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).
17. Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
18. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 262.
19. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 139. On the structural imbrication of kinship and the modern state, see Jacqueline Stevens, *Reproducing the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). On the erotics and familial politics of white Americanness in the nineteenth century, see Peter Coviello, *Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
20. In my own work, I have called this "erotohistoriography." See Elizabeth Freeman, "Time Binds, or, Erotohistoriography," in "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now," ed. David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, special issue, *Social Text*, nos. 84–85 (2005): 57–68. Mike Goode has provided a splendid history of affective and eroticized historiography in his two published articles, "The Man of

Feeling History: The Erotics of Historicism in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*,” *ELH* (2007); and “Dryasdust Antiquarianism and Sappy Masculinity: The Waverley Novels and the Gender of History,” *Representations* 82 (2003): 52–86, as well as in his forthcoming book, “The Feeling of History: The Historical Novel, the Discipline of History, and the Politics of Manly Sentiment,” which I had the privilege of reading in dissertation form.

21. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 71. Here I do not mean to evacuate History 2’s function as the critique of a universal history of capital, one encoded into the forms of praxis and memory that interrupt or do not serve that history. Instead, I mean to try to think, queerly, the centrality of “the politics of human belonging” (70) to History 2. Geeta Patel’s essay in this special issue, in particular, does something of the work I am imagining.
22. Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).
23. Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 29.
24. Frances Ferguson, “Sade and the Pornographic Legacy,” *Representations* 36 (1991): 11, 9.
25. Kathryn Bond Stockton, “Growing Sideways,” in *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*, ed. Steven Bruhm and Natasha Hurley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 277–319.
26. See José Esteban Muñoz, “Thinking beyond Antirelationality and Antiutopianism in Queer Critique,” *PMLA* 121 (2006): 825–26.
27. On Whitman, see Michael Moon, *Disseminating Whitman: Revision and Corporeality in “Leaves of Grass”* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).
28. “Registers of reception” is Wai-Chee Dimock’s phrase, in “A Theory of Resonance,” *PMLA* 10 (1997): 1061.
29. These works by Dinshaw, Edelman, Ferguson, Freccero, Halberstam, Jagose, and Nealon, as well as a curated show of short films on queer temporality by Nguyen, are cited in full in the roundtable. Other important works on queer-feminist temporality published around and since the turn of the millennium that have influenced my own thinking and that of the scholars represented here include essays in Bruhm and Hurley, *Curiouser*; Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed, “‘Ah, Yes, I Remember It Well’: Memory and Queer Culture in *Will and Grace*,” *Cultural Critique* 56 (2004): 158–88; Ross Chambers, *Loiterature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); essays in *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, ed. David Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Rita Felski, *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Margaret Ferguson, ed., special issue on time and feminism, *Modern Language Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2004); L. O. Aranye

Fradenburg, *Sacrifice Your Love: Psychoanalysis, Historicism, Chaucer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Angus Gordon, "Turning Back: Adolescence, Narrative, and Queer Theory," *GLQ* 5 (1999): 1–24; Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Sharon Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Heather Love, "Spoiled Identity: Stephen Gordon's Loneliness and the Difficulties of Queer History," *GLQ* 7 (2001): 487–519; Geeta Patel, "Ghostly Appearances: Time Tales Tallied Up," *Social Text*, no. 64 (2000): 47–66; John Ricco, *The Logic of the Lure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Staging of Time in *Heremakhonon*," *Cultural Studies* 17 (2003): 85–97; Robyn Weigman, "Feminism's Apocalyptic Futures," *New Literary History* 31 (2000): 805–25; Weigman, "On Being in Time with Feminism," *Modern Language Quarterly* 65 (2004): 161–77; and Kath Weston, *Gender in Real Time: Power and Transience in a Visual Age* (New York: Routledge, 2002). I have also had the privilege of reading in manuscript form or hearing as conference papers parts of some important books on the subject that were forthcoming at the time of this writing, including Tom Boellstorff, *A Coincidence of Desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Jane Elliott, "Feminism as American Allegory: Popular Feminist Fiction and the Crisis in National Time" (unpublished book manuscript); Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming); Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Geeta Patel, "Gendering the Global Nation: South Asian Interventions" (unpublished book manuscript); and Kathryn Bond Stockton, "The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century" (unpublished book manuscript).

30. It is worth noting, though, that even if this special issue was not conceived as a volume on the moving image, four out of the eight essays articulate new theories of queer temporality through the time-based art of film, which offers so much metacommentary on time and, indeed, makes temporality visually apprehensible. The most extensive history of the linkage between film as a technology and the recalibration of time as an experience is Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
31. The phrases set off by commas or quotation marks come from, respectively, the essays in this volume by Thomas, Luciano, Boellstorff, Muñoz, Biddick, Stockton, and Patel.
32. Graham Hammill, *Sexuality and Form: Caravaggio, Marlowe, and Bacon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 21.