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A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies

*Edited by George E. Haggerty and
Molly McGarry*

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Queer Spectrality

Haunting the Past

Carla Freccero

In *Premodern Sexualities*, Louise Fradenburg and I raised questions concerning the fantasmatic relationship that we, as scholars of the past and scholars working “queerly” in the history of sexuality, might affirm in relation to the past, “ours” or that of others, in the name of pleasure.¹ It was an effort, in part, to honor the complex pleasure-positivity of queer theory in its resistance to the heteronormatively disciplining discourses that came to the fore when AIDS in the US became associated with “homosexuals” and “promiscuity.” It was also a way of examining how desires and identifications – queer theory’s psychoanalytically inflected terminological legacies – are at work in historical scholars’ investments in the differences and similarities between the past and the present. Finally, it was a way of noting historiography’s (self-) disciplining force, its “repudiations of pleasure and fantasy” in spite – or because – of its queer wishes.² Thus we argued for a queer historiography that would devote itself to a critical re-valorization of the places and possibilities of pleasure within the serious and ascetic work of history.

Insofar as queer historicism registers the affective investments of the present in the past, however, it harbors within itself not only pleasure, but also pain, a traumatic pain whose ethical insistence is to “live to tell” through complex and circuitous processes of working through. Thus we concluded the introduction with an ethically impelled wish:

The past may not be the present, but it is sometimes in the present, haunting, even if only through our uncertain knowledges of it, our hopes of surviving and living well. The questions we are raising about the practice of history may help us understand better the living and dying of twentieth-century bodies and pleasures. And we hope that consideration of the ways in which historicisms are currently questioning sexuality, and sex studies questioning historicism, will work to affirm the pleasures of mortal creatures.³

The past is in the present in the form of a haunting. This is what, among other things, we imagined for queer history, since it involves openness to the possibility of being haunted, even inhabited, by ghosts. What is transmitted in the co-habitation of ghostly past and present is related to survival, to “living well,” and to the “pleasures of mortal creatures,” survivals and pleasures that have little to do with normative understandings of biological reproduction.

Jonathan Goldberg explores the implications of queering history in his essay in the same volume.⁴ A scene in Eduardo Galeano’s *Memory of Fire* describes a moment in the European invasion of the Americas where the Spaniards are surrounded and victory for the Indians is imminent. Goldberg analyzes the exchange between the Araucanian chief and Bernal, where the chief predicts the extinction of the Spaniards on New World territory, whereas the Spaniard declares that reproduction will occur and that the resulting *mestizaje* will complete the task of conquest for the Spaniards against their indigenous parents and relatives. This is a moment when, Goldberg argues, the question of the future is at stake and the “history that will be” is suspended, opened up for multiple possibilities. For although from a position of retrospection one might argue for the prescience of the Spaniard’s assertion, nevertheless the question of the “outcome” of the history that produces a *mestizo* Latin America is still open to an indeterminate futurity:

To see that in this moment the history that will be is an open question, not the one foreclosed by the Spaniard and by those who have written as if he spoke with the voice of history, is to become engaged in a scene of revisionary reading made possible not simply by Galeano’s text, but by its full imbrication in the multiples of history that enabled him to write in the first place. Any number of voices, now, could find themselves in the open space of implicit rejoinder.⁵

Goldberg combines a desire to un-write the retrospection of historical accounts of the conquest with a deconstruction of the implicit heteronormativity of historical continuity, the way historical succession is tied – in Galeano’s fictional encounter as in second-order historical narratives – to heterosexual reproduction. In its radical disruption of normative temporal continuities, both for what happens and for how we tell what happens, this kind of historical practice that is also a queering of the notion of “succession” aims to open up sites of possibility effaced, if not foreclosed, by (hetero)normative historicisms.

Like Goldberg, I wish to explore the ways a queering of history and of historiography itself reworks teleological narratives of reproductive futurity that locate in a culminating endpoint the “truth” of the past and the present and thus may open up spaces of foreclosed possibility. At the same time, I want to think about the question of haunting – a mode of “precarious life” – as an alternative model for how queer history might proceed.⁶ I thus want to explore the possibilities of spectrality for queer historiography, why it might describe a more ethical relation to the past than our current historicisms permit, and how it might counter the symptomatic fantasy of reproductive futurity (so scathingly interrogated by Lee Edelman in *No Future*) without necessarily adopting its binaristic representation of “death” as the only (compulsory) alternative.⁷ Spectrality counters the teleological drive of heteroreproductive futurity on the level of form, a phenomenon of narration scrutinized by Madhavi Menon and Jonathan Goldberg, among others, and proposes an alternative mode of non-linear temporality that queries the melancholic attachments of some counternarratives of queer, on the one hand, and the illusion of a choice between “life” and “death,” on the other.⁸

Jacques Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* and its application in Avery Gordon’s *Ghostly Matters* and Wendy Brown’s *Politics out of History* propose a theory of spectrality –

and haunting – as a kind of model for a historical attentiveness that the living might have to what is not present but somehow appears as a figure, a voice, or a (spectral) kind of materialization, as a being that is no longer or not yet “present.”⁹ How might the Derridean concept of spectrality reconfigure familial, nucleated, heteronormative temporalities even as it articulates alternatives to a historicism that respects sequential chronologies? Spectrality invokes collectivity, a collectivity of unknown or known, “uncanny” (both familiar and yet not) strangers who arrive to frequent us. To speak of ghosts is to speak of the social.¹⁰ Spectrality also acknowledges fantasy’s constitutive relation to experience. It suggests that fantasy is the mode of our experiential existence, that it mediates how we live our desire in the world. Further, haunting, ghostly apparition, reminds us that the past and the present are neither discrete nor sequential. The borderline between then and now wavers, wobbles, and does not hold still.

Ghosts demand. Although (as Fradenburg and Freccero argue) historicisms also respond to a demand, this is rarely acknowledged or theorized as an explicit motive for the historicist enterprise. To assume the perspective of the ghost – or to include haunting in a conceptualization of history’s effects – foregrounds the imperative issuing from the other in the labor of the historian. Popular representations, testifying to widely distributed persistent populist acceptance of the ghostly as a domain of legitimacy, tell us that the ghost comes back because there is something unfinished:

The ghost is . . . pregnant with unfulfilled possibility, with the something to be done that the wavering present is demanding. This something to be done is not a return to the past but a reckoning with its repression in the present, a reckoning with that which we have lost, but never had.¹¹

The ghost’s demand engenders a certain responsibility. Spectrality is, thus, also a way of thinking ethics in relation to the project of historiography.¹²

Ghosts permit us to mourn; they are, indeed, a sign of trauma and its mourning. This is, argues Derrida, not the mourning that opposes itself to organizing in a kind of passive despair. Rather, it is “a mourning in fact and by right interminable, without possible normality, without reliable limit, in its reality or in its concept, between introjection and incorporation.”¹³ The goal of spectral thinking is thus not to immure, but to allow to return, to be visited by a demand, a demand to mourn and a demand to organize. Mourning is, in an important way, the work of history.¹⁴

We might spend a few moments thinking about two other models of history by way of contrast. One is the idea of burial: we bury the dead, giving them monumental tombs. Michel de Certeau has commented on this aspect of historiography, arguing that the historian posits him/herself as the subject whose writing replaces, covers over, or displaces the other about whom his/her discourse is being elaborated. He writes:

“The sole historical quest for ‘meaning’ remains indeed a quest for the Other,” but, however contradictory it may be, this project aims at “understanding” and, through “meaning,” at hiding the alterity of this foreigner; or, in what amounts to the same thing, it aims at calming the dead who still haunt the present, and at offering them scriptural tombs.¹⁵

Thus de Certeau points to the mastery involved in the project of historiography and to the concomitant entombment that accompanies the gesture. In *Heterologies*, he includes a warning that opens the way for the question of spectrality: “These voices – whose disappearance every historian posits, but which he replaces with his writing – ‘re-bite’ [*re-mordent*] the space from which they were excluded; they continue to speak in the text/tomb that erudition erects in their place.”¹⁶ De Certeau suggests that the historian’s gesture is a melancholic one, an attempt to entomb within writing the lost other of the past. And, as he also suggests, those who are buried – perhaps buried alive – will return to haunt us. This melancholic model is also a response to trauma – the trauma of historicity¹⁷ – yet it is a response that will not acknowledge the loss and seeks instead to hush the voices or to “understand” or master them with meaning and discourse.

Another model, which is a kind of corollary to this one, is more directly colonial, and involves outright mastery or appropriation. This is a model de Certeau links to Western practices of knowledge production:

A structure belonging to modern Western culture can doubtless be seen in this historiography: intelligibility is established through a relation with the other; it moves (or “progresses”) by changing what it makes of its “other” – the Indian, the past, the people, the mad, the child, the Third World. Through these variants that are all heteronomous – ethnology, history, psychiatry, pedagogy, etc. – unfolds a problematic form basing its mastery of expression upon what the other keeps silent, and guarantees the interpretive work of a science (a “human” science) . . .¹⁸

These models have come under scrutiny within US queer political and historical practices relative to an emergent category of being within queer movement politics, the trans-sexual/gendered person, and the rape and murder of “Brandon Teena,” which became an emblem and rallying cry for trans-politics.¹⁹ The traumatic event that goes by the proper name of Brandon Teena – itself marked by a kind of belatedness²⁰ – repeats the violent effacement of difference, usually racial, that constitutes a primary trauma in the US national imaginary and in the auto-constitution of queer movement.²¹ Although all movements doubtless take up the dead and carry them into battle like a banner, the danger of so doing involves an ethical dimension that queer historians might want to honor. In “Brandon”’s case, there is the problematic appropriation of identity that consigned him variously to the annals of lesbian history or the fledgling library of the transsexual movement. In either case, precisely the problem of identity with which he was involved – and which turned out to be lethal – is a problem “solved” by activists and historians’ taking up his life in the name of a given – and thus also meaningfully defined – category.²² And while the queer appropriation of “Brandon Teena” was certainly melancholic – an attempt to deal with trauma by in a sense refusing it, turning it instead into knowledge, into productive organizing – it was also colonizing. Both gestures – the melancholic and the colonizing – have worked to foreclose how he, as ghost, recurs in ways that are not so clear, and demands of us not a definition, but the creation of spaces where categorical definitions so dependent on gender and desire might prove affirmingly impossible. Using spectrality as our hypothesis, then, we might wonder what we would see and hear were we to resist identitarian foreclosures and remain open to ghostly returns.

And so too with the more distant past. Like Goldberg, scholars of New World conquest or encounter studies have tried numerous strategies to confront ethically the “event” of the conquest and to do justice to the historical traumaticity of the event, both “for” then and for now.²³ Some, such as Beatriz Pastor, invoke Hayden White’s study of the rhetorical modalities of historiography to note the inter-contamination of historical and fictional discourses and thus to read the documents of the conquest/encounter for the way they narrate not only “events,” but also desire.²⁴ Pastor writes:

In the case of Latin America, to rewrite the history of its conquest . . . implies retracing the lost steps, listening to other voices that could have related the history of a discovery rooted in dreams and lies, of a New World that, through the very process of its conquest, was lost forever.²⁵

Here, writing the history of those without one is a fantasmatic activity that describes an impossible wish; it involves following traces that are lost, listening to voices that “could have” spoken (but, it is implied, did not), all toward the goal of describing a New World that was – and thus is – lost forever. This impossible task of retracing and listening, of locating desire in the (not quite total) silences of texts, articulates a complex interplay of desire and identification that is also Pastor’s own:

Where are the eyes that could show us the women’s side of the world of war and conquest, about which so many famous historians have written so much? And where are the words that could break the silence that covers the voices of all those women who, like Malintzin, struggled in a world created and controlled by men, without even leaving a tiny scratch on the yellowing pages of so many historical documents: words that could show us what they were like as people, as women, as voices, as eyes, as tongues?²⁶

Echoing the slogan of anti-Columbian demonstrations, “Where are the Arawaks?” Pastor invokes Doña Marina as the exemplary and overdetermined sign of a silence. The multilingual indigenous interpreter about whom so much has been written and whose body parts and signature are continually re-appropriated in documents of the conquest (she is Cortés’ tongue and he in turn is often referred to by her name) is precisely one whose voice may be said to have determined history without, as Pastor notes, leaving “even a tiny scratch on the yellowing pages of so many historical documents.”²⁷ Like Echo’s voice to Narcissus’ embodiment, Malintzin is the ventriloquized word of the conqueror, unable to show us the difference of her “women’s side of the world.” And yet, something about this passage strains to hear, even from within the mournful lament of a loss. Pastor enacts a kind of automatic writing then, a practice of scratching the page as an act of listening to lost voices. She is, we might say, inhabited by a ghost, the ghost of Malintzin and “the voices of all those women who, like Malintzin, struggled in a world created and controlled by men.”

Tzvetan Todorov, who also experiences an ethical imperative in narrating the conquest, likewise suggests that what presses upon his project – as upon the Europeans who will emerge victorious from their encounter with the Aztecs and Mayans – is a silence from the past. Todorov’s work has been criticized – most notably by Stephen Greenblatt – for an overemphasis on the already civilizationally overdetermined opposition between “speech” and “writing,” and between “traditional” or “ritual” and “improvisa-

tional,” the Europeans representing the latter example in each binary.²⁸ But for Todorov, these oppositions are radically unstable to the extent that his attempt to describe differing worldviews in the domain of communication does not serve the purpose of historical explanation. His is a cautionary tale, motivated by moral rather than historical exigencies aimed at the present rather than the past:

The Spaniards win the war. They are incontestably superior to the Indians in the realm of interhuman communication. But their victory is problematic, for there is not just one form of communication, one dimension of symbolic activity . . . this victory from which we all derive, Europeans and Americans both, delivers as well a terrible blow to our capacity to feel in harmony with the world, to belong to a preestablished order; its effect is to repress man’s communication with the world, to produce the illusion that all communication is interhuman communication; the silence of the gods weighs upon the camp of the Europeans as much as on that of the Indians.²⁹

Here, the “silence” of (divine) voices weighs upon not only the Europeans of the past, but those of the present as well. Voices that once spoke – in the past – withhold their speaking in the present. But what is repressed (*refoulé*) threatens to return; this withholding continues to haunt.³⁰

For Goldberg, the queering of the English encounters that will come to be called the conquest produces a scene in which the failed conquerors at Roanoke reproduce themselves in the future through the “invisible bullets” of disease; he argues that “in this auto-erotic scene of conjuring up the desired future, is the body of the Indian, a strange specular double for these English shooters.”³¹ Goldberg’s is a scene of homoerotic encounters between the present of the English invaders and their spectral descendants performed across the body of the Indian (man); for Pastor, the spectral body is the missing (Indian) woman in a homosocial scene of transaction; for Todorov, finally, it is the gods, or the Indian woman consumed by Spanish dogs to whom he dedicates his book. All three invoke ghosts in scenes where Indian, woman, and god mark the trace of a non-speaking yet persistent and insistent otherness caught in, effaced or consumed by, these queer colonial encounters. The recurrence of “indigenous” haunting articulated in their writing also signals the repetition of a prior haunting, a haunting that was both a memorial and a messianic invocation, the “ghost dance” of the North American Plains Indians during their radical displacement and destruction.³² As Gayatri Spivak imagines it, this dance that conjured ancestors for a future to come was “an attempt to establish the ethical relation with history as such, with ancestors real or imagined.”³³ What does it mean, then, for a certain narration of conquest to invoke the figure of a ghost, a ghost who clearly continues to haunt the moment of reading and writing in the present?

In “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” Derrida remarks that “a spectral messianicity is at work in the concept of the archive.”³⁴ Further, in a passage that makes the notion of the archive constitutively spectral and links that spectrality to the “being” of a ghost, he writes: “the structure of the archive is spectral. It is spectral a priori: neither present nor absent ‘in the flesh,’ neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met . . .”³⁵ Thus for these writers engaged in an ethical relation to a traumatic past event, the trace that is also a calling, a demand, a messianic wish or hope, takes the troubled form of a ghost – neither altogether

present nor quite absent – conjured by the moment of writing. And it is no coincidence that the figures invoked in these archival memorials are racially and sexually marked, for just as ghostliness designates an ambiguous state of being, both present and not, past and not, so too in these accounts racial mixture and sexual – including sexuality – difference stand in for, even as they mark the material place of, a critique of originary purity, simplicity, and unmixedness.³⁶

If figures of ghostliness – one way to think spectrality – appear as a way to relate to the past, this past is not, nevertheless, an origin, however much these discourses about conquest and traumatic genocidal encounters might seem to suggest this. Brown writes:

The specter begins by coming back, by repeating itself, by recurring in the present. It is not traceable to an origin nor to a founding event, it does not have an objective or “comprehensive” history, yet it operates as a force . . . We inherit not “what really happened” to the dead but what lives on from that happening, what is conjured from it, how past generations and events occupy the force fields of the present, how they claim us, and how they haunt, plague, and inspire our imaginations and visions for the future.³⁷

That force, what I have been calling in the work of conquest or encounter studies writers an ethical imperative, is a social force and as such places a demand upon the present. It is thus also collective, another way of thinking spectrality’s specificity as “historical.”

Haunting engages alterity; “what comes back to haunt,” writes Nicolas Abraham “are the tombs of others,” ancestors or affines, our own or those of others.³⁸ There is no “propriety,” no “proprietaryness” in ghostliness; the ghost does not, in other words, necessarily belong to those who are haunted by it. Rather, “ghosts figure the impossibility of mastering, through either knowledge or action, the past or the present.” Instead “they figure the necessity of grasping certain implications of the past for the present only as traces or effects.”³⁹ In the writings I have been discussing, the past in question can in some sense be said to be, in spite of Goldberg’s salutary resistance in particular, definitively past, and the longing or loss that marks these discourses with a certain solemnity testifies to this impression. And yet, each project – feminist, multicultural, and queer – also allows itself to be haunted in the context of an articulation of political aspirations in the present.

In commenting on the place from which a ghost emerges in the “cryptography” of Abraham and Torok’s theories of melancholia, Derrida remarks, “the crypt is the vault of a desire.”⁴⁰ Abraham, referring to the refused and unknown secret that is the encrypted phantom inhabitation, says, “this other . . . is a love object.”⁴¹ Pastor, Todorov, and Goldberg all show, in different ways, how secret mobilizations of desire and identification inspire both the ghosts in their texts and their own spectral endeavors. If desire for – and of – the other is part of what is hidden in the crypt, part of what arrives or comes back as insistent and persistent phantom, then a spectral approach can make room for, or leave itself open to, the materialization and voicing of that desire so that it might thereby appear and speak.

Thus far I have been attending to the ways ghosts, ghostliness, and haunting appear as tropes or figures (of loss, of mourning, and also of a “something to be done”) in discourses about a particular (and partially imagined) traumatic past, and how those figures articulate a “hauntology,” a spectral approach to an ethico-historical situation.

What might it mean to take such an approach – “historiography as hauntology”⁴² – at a moment when the ghost – which in some ways resembles the ghosts conjured by Pastor, Todorov, and Goldberg – seems, from our perspective, to appear proleptically in the conjurings of a “colonial” European subject such as Jean de Léry?⁴³ What pasts return to haunt this subject in its present and what historico-ethical demands follow from that haunting? And further – as I hope to highlight in pausing on the moments when *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil* allows itself to be inhabited by returning others – how does this haunting suggest a specifically queer spectrality, queer both in its uncanniness and in its engagement with desire?⁴⁴

Jean de Léry, a Protestant minister who, in 1556 at the age of 22, went to the French colony commanded by Villegagnon near the Bay of Rio to preach Calvinist doctrine, found himself exiled by Villegagnon from the fortress and “at the mercy of” the Tupinamba Indians, with whom he stayed as a guest for almost a year. Upon his return to France in 1558, he began his ministry. Later Léry directly suffered the bloodiest decades of the French religious wars, including the 1572 massacre of St Barthélemy. He survived by escaping to Sancerre and, in 1574, published an account of the siege and famine of that town, a Protestant stronghold where he ministered.⁴⁵ In 1578, more than 20 years later, he published the first edition of his *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, claiming that it had been written in 1563 then lost, found, lost again and found again.⁴⁶ The gap between Léry’s first encounter with Brazilian land and people and his retrospective account of it is thus marked, both by loss (the inability to hang on to or preserve the recorded traces of the event) and by a shattering national event, the Saint-Barthélemy, that to this day haunts the French nation as perhaps the first modern moment when internal religious division precipitated mass murder.

Léry’s text describes a haunting that differs both from triumphant conquest narratives such as that of Cortés and from the fearful accounts of indigenous cannibalism that threatened and titillated European travelers and observers in the New World. Indeed, cannibalism is in some sense haunting’s double, its evil twin. A literalization of melancholic incorporation through the ingestion of the other, cannibalism is the flipside of the excorporation that a ghost might be said to be.⁴⁷ But cannibalism participates in the fundamental “impossibility” of mourning, in that the desire to incorporate the other within the self fundamentally destroys its alterity and consequently negates the other. Cannibalism is an act of erotic aggression, however ambivalent, that effaces alterity; haunting is passive, not in the sense of a lack of activity, but rather in the sense of opening oneself up to inhabitation by the other, and it is thus attentive to alterity. In his account of Sancerre, Léry mentions cannibalism – exclusively in order to condemn it – in a gruesome story about starving parents who devour their daughter.⁴⁸ However evoked by Léry’s New World memories, cannibalism is not a practice specifically tied to those places. On the contrary, when the question arises it is in the context of a comic account of miscommunication on the one hand and, on the other, a diatribe against the cannibalism exemplified by combatants in the wars of religion in France.⁴⁹ For Léry, the cannibalism that occasions horror is not Tupi, it is European and French. Cannibalism, as a crisis of identification and desire, becomes, for him, the double emblem of a barbarous Catholicism and a civil war.⁵⁰ Léry thus turns away from cannibalism as the distinctive mark of indigenous othering and allows himself to be haunted instead, to live with ghosts and to dream

of another order, condemning the cannibalistic order of political revenge. And what haunts Léry is the other's ethical imperative, his demand.

Being haunted is also a profoundly erotic experience, one that ranges from an acute visual pleasure to ecstatic transcendence. Léry's description of Tupi warfare (chapter 14) lingers on their physical dexterity and bodily superiority to Europeans; it also privileges the efficaciousness and beauty of pre-industrial warfare, praising the archery skills of the Tupinamba over and against the use of horses on the one hand and artillery on the other.⁵¹ Both in relation to warfare and with respect to the religious ceremony described two chapters later, Léry and the other Frenchmen are positioned with the women as distinct and separate from the men, thus effecting a racialized gendering apart from the economy "men, women, and children" that is the repeated refrain of the ethnographer's observations.⁵² This positioning "elsewhere" seems to allow Léry to articulate an erotics in relation to the Tupi men that successfully distances itself from that notorious "New World" practice, sodomy, and that also cannot quite be described as "homo"-erotic, since sameness and difference here do not line up neatly into gender binaristic columns.⁵³

The chapter, "What one might call religion among the savage [sic; wild] Americans," represents, in some respects, the heart of Léry's book, for it deals with the most vexed of early modern questions in relation to the indigenous Americans, whether or not they were possessed of religion; it is also the subject closest to Léry's own field of expertise as a Calvinist minister. At the beginning of the chapter, he declares in the strongest terms that the Tupinamba are utterly devoid of religion⁵⁴; nevertheless, the chanting ceremony he witnesses – like a voyeur happening upon a sacred scene – has all the characteristics of a profound mystical experience and indeed haunts Léry in the present of writing, some 20 years after the event:

At the beginning of this witches' sabbath, when I was in the women's house, I had been somewhat afraid; now I received in recompense such joy, hearing the measured harmonies of such a multitude, and especially in the cadence and refrain of this song, when at every verse all of them would let their voices trail, saying Heu, heuaure, heura, heuraure, heura, heura, oueh – I stood there transported with delight. Whenever I remember it, my heart trembles, and it seems their voices are still in my ears.⁵⁵

The voices of the men, much like the (soundless) women's voices that haunt Pastor, still seem to inhabit Léry; they live in his ears, ravishing him and causing his heart to tremble, unlike the withdrawn gods of Todorov's Europeans, who haunt precisely through their (ominous) silence. While Pastor and Todorov, modern scholars of the conquest, struggle and strain to listen to silenced voices from the past – and are haunted precisely through this struggle to attend – Léry is so thoroughly penetrated by these voices that they remain with him in the present. These lines echo in an aural register an earlier passage that also uncannily describes a ghostly mode of appearance: "During that year or so when I lived in that country, I took such care in observing all of them, great and small, that even now it seems to me that I have them before my eyes, and I will forever have the idea and image of them in my mind."⁵⁶ The spectral images of the indigenous Americans seem to be superimposed upon the French people who Léry does, in fact, have before his eyes; they are with him in a quasi-material way, phenomenal but not fully present.

This haunting – and its relation to the present of Léry's French situation – culminates when, at the moment of departure, Léry describes his longing to remain in Brazil:

So that saying goodbye here to America, I confess for myself that although I have always loved my country and do even now, still, seeing the little – next to none at all – of fidelity that is left here, and, what is worse, the disloyalties of people toward each other . . . I often regret that I am not among the savages, in whom (as I have amply shown in this narrative) I have known more frankness than in many over here, who, for their condemnation, bear the title of "Christian."⁵⁷

What might otherwise be understood as a simple and exoticizing expression of nostalgia takes on added meaning when the term "Christian" is invoked, for Léry's original mission involved his calling as a minister, and his account, at least on the descriptive level, declares the Tupinamba to be without religion. Here, then, at the purported end of his voyage, the intervening years have relativized the once absolute difference between "heathen" and Christian to the shame, on the one hand, Léry implies, of the nation (he uses the political term *patrie* in the sentence describing his love for France), and the honor, on the other, of America and the Americans. Although in one respect the discourse deploys the topos of comparison in order to shame the addressees into virtuous action, in another, it refuses altogether the possibility of a better future "over here" and remains steadfast in its past and persistently present desire to return. In the choice between "them" and "us," he suggests that he would have chosen – and still chooses – them.

Léry's political and religious experience at the hands of his countrymen – a traumatic event to which he returns even after the account of Sancerre has been written and published – thus finds a haunting reminder in the displaced figure of the Tupi cannibal. But that haunting – the one performed by the Tupinamba on the person of Léry – enjoins Léry not to condemn the New World inhabitants who have become legendary in the imaginations of European travel narrative readers, but to urge upon the present a halt to the genocidal practices of warfare that decimate the homeland and – we might understand by implication – the New World as well. Thus we might discern in Léry's "complaint" the formulation of an ethical imperative that articulates itself in excess of – and in uncomfortable contrast to – his providential Calvinist polemics.

Although Léry's discourse also participates in the colonizing will to know that de Certeau describes and the exoticizing movement that makes of the indigenous American a pleasurable remainder in the discourse of scientific knowledge, he is not subject to the "displaced abjection" Goldberg analyzes in relation to the conqueror's project in the New World.⁵⁸ He does not only wish to penetrate a (perceptually) violated body; instead, he also gives himself over to penetration, enacting the becoming-object that Roland Greene describes as occurring elsewhere in his text.⁵⁹ Indeed, in the chapter where Léry recounts his participation in the ritual of the *caraiibes* (chapter 16), a curious reciprocity of penetration occurs.⁶⁰ At the beginning of the shaman ceremony, Léry and the other Frenchmen find themselves waiting in the women's house while the men chant in a nearby building; Léry is at first terrified by the inhuman sounds issuing from the men. Suddenly the chanting shifts, and Léry is

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instead drawn to the marvelous harmonies; the women and his interpreters hold him back, warning him of possible danger.⁶¹ Nevertheless, he takes the risk:

I drew near the place where I heard the chanting; the houses of the savages are very long and of a roundish shape . . . Since they are covered with grasses right down to the ground, in order to see as well as I might wish, I made with my hands a little opening in the covering . . . we all three entered the house. Seeing that our entering did not disturb the savages as the interpreter thought it would, but rather, maintaining admirably their ranks and order, they continued their chants, we quietly withdrew to a corner to drink in the scene . . . I had been somewhat afraid; now I received in recompense such joy, hearing the measured harmonies of such a multitude, and especially in the cadence and refrain of the song . . . I stood there transported with delight. Whenever I remember it, my heart trembles, and it seems their voices are still in my ears.⁶²

Léry makes a small opening in the wall of the men's roundhouse and, beckoning his companions to follow, enters. What begins as a voyeuristic scene of conquest becomes instead the receptive witnessing of a marvelous spectacle, one that at first inspires fear but then produces ravishment. Like the primal scene Freud describes as the traumatic origin of sexuality, the event both terrifies and excites, precipitating a kind of crisis of identification and desire whereby the witness is both penetrator and penetrated.⁶³ Léry imagines penetrating the men's secret round space, only to find himself in turn penetrated through the ears by the sound of their voices.

This image of penetrative reciprocity thus delineates a different subjectivity from the one informing Goldberg's conquerors, and it suggests the "self-shattering" impulse or *jouissance* Leo Bersani describes as distinctive and resistive in male "homosexual" subjectivity.⁶⁴ Bersani, indeed, muses that "same"-sex desire might be what permits the possibility of a reciprocity that resists the annihilative effacement of the other. "Can a masochistic surrender," he asks, "operate as effective (even powerful) resistance to coercive designs?"⁶⁵ If identification with the indigenous other man is experienced by conquerors as threatening, in need of radical and thus violent obliteration for difference to be produced – and if this is, in the context of the European–New World encounter, a "normative response" – then we might say that Léry's text enacts instead a "sodomitical subjectivity," a perverse, "masochistic" identification with that other he has come – even in the eyes of the French commander Villegagnon – to resemble.⁶⁶

In *The Melancholy of Race*, Anne Cheng argues that national identity in the US is characterized by racial melancholia. The dominant white citizen-subject is melancholic for having "ghosted," by consuming, the racial others of the nation; the incorporated object – racialized subjects – also internalizes an impossible (white) ideal.⁶⁷ Her work argues for a different relationship to a traumatic history of loss, one that does not simply get over it (which, in any case, fortifies the attachment to loss through the encrypting or consumption of the lost object in the self, thereby denying loss). What alternative approaches to melancholic subjectivity and its unarticulated grief, she asks, might better serve the goal of achieving social justice and allow a "working through" that addresses the interimplications of the psychic or subjective and the social?

Cheng begins with the question, "What is the subjectivity of the melancholic

object? Is it also melancholic, and what will we uncover when we resuscitate it?"⁶⁸ The attribution of melancholic subjectivity to the racialized other is a familiar strategy of the victors to legitimize their future and also characterizes a certain melancholic discourse of modernity in the West that shores up and retains the centrality of that Western subject of modernity.⁶⁹ Yet Cheng's question takes seriously the status of the incorporated other as object in the dominant melancholic subject and proposes a far more unsettling situation:

It is as if, for Freud, the "object" has, for all practical purposes, disappeared into the melancholic's psychical interiority. In short, one is led to ask, what happens if the object were to return – would the melancholic stop being melancholic? That scenario would seem to make sense except that, since Freud has posited melancholia as a constitutive element of the ego, the return of the object demanding to be a person of its own would surely now be devastating.⁷⁰

"The return of the object demanding to be a person of its own" is one way to think about haunting, the object's return and its demand being what might be said to emerge when one is willing to be haunted, to be inhabited by ghosts. Further, the mutual recognition, entanglement, and disentanglement entailed by this event suggest a more complex relationship between difference and resemblance, alterity and identity (or "sameness"), than (heteronormative) discourses of identity normally allow. For, in order to enable the melancholic object-other to emerge and to demand from "within" the self, there must be identification, if not identity, between the subject and object. And yet, at the same time, for that object to demand, to become (a ghost), somehow to materialize, it must have a subjectivity of its own; it must, therefore, be other/different.⁷¹

This fantastic model of an otherness struggling to emerge within and sometimes against the self delineates an intrasubjectivity that is nevertheless not incompatible with or absolutely different from intersubjectivity. Thus it can be said that the ghost arrives both from within and from without as a part of the self that is also – and foremost – a part of the world. The ghost's return is, in other words, not quite material yet phenomenal nevertheless and, much like its primary modality, affect or feeling, its appearance is the "material and immaterial evidence" of grief.⁷²

To demonstrate this, Judith Butler adapts Freud's melancholic model of subjectivity from *The Ego and the Id* – the same model from which Cheng derives her theory of racial melancholia – and describes how "the social" or "the world" enters into the subject and becomes a constitutive element of its being.⁷³ She argues that melancholia is precisely what establishes the distinction between the social and the psychic⁷⁴ and renders "fictional" or fantastic the workings of the world within the self.⁷⁵ Like Pastor and Todorov, Butler reminds us that "what remains unspeakably absent inhabits the psychic voice of the one who remains,"⁷⁶ while Cheng concludes with an ethical injunction to listen that also invokes the metaphor of the ghostly voices of the absent, speaking through the living:

If we are willing to listen, the history of disarticulated grief is still speaking through the living, and the future of social transformation depends on how open we are to facing the intricacies and paradoxes of that grief and the passions it bequeaths.⁷⁷

These cautionary or injunctive insistences point to the persistence, in the present, of a melancholia that is perhaps not finally capable of allowing the other to return. Yet Léry's queer subjectivity, characterized by a penetrative reciprocity, a becoming-object for an other subject and a resultant joy or ecstasy, suggests an alternate path to the Western melancholic's incorporation of the lost other and its permanent, if uneasy, entombment within the crypt of history.

Cheng and Butler's theories of a melancholic condition that constitutes the subject through racial and sexual norms explore the "disarticulated grief" and the foreclosures occasioned by violent repudiations. Léry's non-foreclosure of either resemblance/identification or difference permits, potentially, a non-melancholic relation to the other (and the world) such that "he" – the other – could indeed become "a person demanding a subjectivity of his own." We might, on the one hand, read the success of Léry's openness to being haunted in the work he does to denounce and put an end to civil war, the way that haunting turns him toward a reparative future. His disaffiliation from and "disidentification" with the nation – a result, in part, of his status as an already "minoritarian subject"⁷⁸ – position him elsewhere than as imperial avatar in the New World. At the same time, he does not "go native" (though there were certainly many such examples among the *truchements de Normandie*, some of whom served as Léry's interpreters), but rather returns as "other," with voices in his head and ghosts before his eyes. His text is thus not "salvage" ethnography, the one-way inscription and recording of a "disappearing object," but an enactment of its own difference from itself, a textualization of France through Brazil as much as of Brazil through France.⁷⁹

We might also read the persistence of the ghostly demand to be heard and recognized in a story that surfaces a century later in France, when a French Tupi descendant of the sixteenth-century French–Brazilian encounters is sued for back taxes owed to the state.⁸⁰ Captain Binot Paulmier de Gonneville returned from his voyage to Brazil in 1505 with Essomeric, the son of "Lord Arosca," in tow, the *seigneur* having expressed a desire for his son to "go to Christendom."⁸¹ Although Essomeric – subsequently baptized as Binot (Gonneville's baptismal name) – was to have returned after two years, Gonneville was unable to provide him with passage. Instead, he made him an heir and married him to one of Gonneville's relations. These are the descendants who are brought to court 150 years later:

It came to pass, in 1658, that a proceeding was brought against the family issuing from the savage Essomeric for payment of certain *aubaine* obligations . . . the defendants rejected this claim, objecting that Essomeric, their ancestor, had never been an *aubain* [a non-naturalized foreigner] who had established himself voluntarily in France, but rather had been forced to remain in violation of commitments that had been made, which should exempt his descendants from the taxes that were being demanded.⁸²

One of the descendants, Paulmier, who pleaded the case, had also spent time trying to set up a Catholic mission among the Tupinamba in Brazil. Yet here he is unequivocal and wins the day: his ancestor was kept in France by force, in violation of Gonneville's promise to provide for his return, and thus the descendants ought to be exempted from taxation by the state. This is not reparation or restitution, at least not in any positive sense. It is a "voice" that "speaks" before the law with a demand for recognition. Nor is it the melancholic logic Brown discerns in the impulse to resolve historical

trauma through the "discursive structure of wrong, debt, and payment."⁸³ It is rather a "politico-logic of trauma" that responds to a different – we might say haunting – demand. It does not, in other words, appeal to the law; rather it refuses the law and stages its case "beyond right or law."⁸⁴

This anecdote, the new historicist gesture *par excellence*, illustrates neither subversion nor containment, pointing, as it does, only to the persistence of a demand that, like Léry's queer subjectivity, suspends the difference between difference and resemblance, even as it insists on both. Léry thus did have the Tupinamba before his eyes in France, though he probably did not see them.⁸⁵ The story also returns us to Goldberg's admonitions concerning "the history that will be" as a moment of suspension that resists the retrospectivity of *either* triumphant *or* melancholic modern narratives of the conquest, of a choice, that is, between the future and death. For the process of ethnic cleansing (through systematic miscegenating rape) that the conqueror of Goldberg's tale invokes produces a far less determinate future than the conqueror imagines. Essomeric/Binot Paulmier's family "talks back" in a voice neither wholly French nor wholly "cleansed," and their rejoinders (to the law, to France) continue through to the present. What we might perceive from this moment, then, is a France *métissée*, a country not of late twentieth-century diasporic arrivals, but one whose history of forced migrations has never ceased to speak and to demand a certain responsibility.

If this spectral approach to history and historiography is queer, it might also be objected that it counsels a kind of passivity, both in Bersani's sense of self-shattering and also potentially in the more mundane sense of the opposite of the political injunction to act. In this respect it is also queer, as only a passive politics could be said to be. And yet, the passivity – which is also a form of patience and passion – is not quite the same thing as quietism. Rather, it is a suspension, a waiting, an attending to the world's arrivals (through, in part, its returns), not as guarantee or security for action in the present, but as the very force from the past that moves us, perhaps not into the future, but somewhere else.

Can we (a "we" not given in advance) live on – survive – beyond categorical imperatives in such a state of dynamic suspension, and is there a certain responsibility – in the name of "queer" – to do so? And, with our rage and sadness, Derrida urges us to perform an exorcism, "not in order to chase away the ghosts, but this time to grant them the right, if it means making them come back alive, as *revenants* who would no longer be *revenants*, but as other *arrivants* to whom a hospitable memory or promise must offer welcome – without certainty, ever, that they present themselves as such. Not in order to grant them the right in this sense but out of a concern for *justice*."⁸⁶ In the concern for justice, spectrality may allow an opening up – or a remaining open – to the uncanny and the unknown but somehow strangely familiar, not to determine what is what – to know – but to be demanded of and to respond.

Notes

- 1 Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero, eds., *Premodern Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1996): vii–xxiv. This essay represents a more condensed and revised version of chapter 5 of my *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

- 2 Ibid., xvii.
- 3 Ibid., xxi.
- 4 Jonathan Goldberg, "The History that Will Be," in Fradenburg and Freccero, *Premodern Sexualities*, 3–21.
- 5 Ibid., 4.
- 6 See Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004).
- 7 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 8 See Madhavi Menon, "Spurning Teleology in *Venus and Adonis*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11:4 (Fall 2005): 491–519, for a critique of heteronormative teleologies through a reading of a text that articulates an alternative to the normative telos of reproductive futurity. See also Jonathan Goldberg and Madhavi Menon, "Queering History," *PMLA* 120:5 (2005): 1608–17. José Esteban Muñoz, among others, adopts the notion of melancholia as de-pathologized "structure of feeling" in part to counter the positivity of futurity's heteronormative injunctions; see *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999): esp. p. 74. Slavoj Žižek has written a diagnostic critique of the recent critical privileging of melancholia over mourning in Freud's theory of loss as an error of political correctness. He asserts that "The melancholic link to the lost ethnic Object allows us to claim that we remain faithful to our ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game"; see "Melancholy and the Act," *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Summer 2000): 657–81, at p. 659.
- 9 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994); Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- 10 For an extended discussion of the ways spectrality differs from liberal individualist notions of "private" haunting, including those who would read Hamlet as a narrative of social disruption in favor of individual "alienation" from the social, see my extended readings of Brown, Derrida, and Gordon in *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), chapter 5.
- 11 Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 183.
- 12 "No justice . . . seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations" (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xix).
- 13 Ibid., 97.
- 14 In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud extends the melancholic model he developed in "Mourning and Melancholia" to suggest that the ego itself is formed as the "precipitate" of all the attachments to objects loved and then lost, and to suggest that the ego sublimates its attachment to – and contains the history of – lost others, who are taken up as identifications (ego ideals, for example). He thus invokes the historicity of loss in his theory of melancholic attachments and scripts melancholic sublimation as an alternative to the melancholia/mourning binary. See Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, trans. Joan Riviere, ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1960, reprinted 1989). Loss occupies an important place in recent theorizations of historicity and activism, as this essay suggests. See also David Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2003).
- 15 Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): 2.
- 16 Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986): 8.
- 17 For the "trauma of historicity," see Judith Butler, "Burning Acts: Injurious Speech," in *Deconstruction Is/In America: A New Sense of the Political*, ed. Anselm Haverkamp (New York and London: New York University Press, 1995): 149–80.
- 18 De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 3.
- 19 For debates regarding the distinction between transgender and transsexual, see Jay Prosser, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), especially chapter 1. For an overview of some of the issues and problems in trans-discussions, see Judith Halberstam, "Transgender Butch: Butch/F/TM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum," in Susan Stryker, ed., *The Transgender Issue*, special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4:2 (1998): 287–310. Brandon Teena is in scare quotes because part of what is at stake in the story is the way the proper name is linked to gender; the person in question used several proper names, see C. Jacob Hale, "Consuming the Living, Dis(re)membering the Dead in the Butch/F/TM Borderlands," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4:2 (1998): 311–49.
- 20 Brandon Teena's rape and murder occurred in December 1993; the films and much of the commentary did not occur until 1998, the same year that James Byrd and Matthew Shepard were killed.
- 21 My use of the term, "queer movement" follows bell hooks' argument for using the expression "feminist movement" without the definite article that defines it as one/a thing. See bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1984).
- 22 Halberstam, "Telling Tales: Brandon Teena, Billy Tipton, and Transgender Biography," *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 15:1 (2000): 62–81. See also Hale, "Consuming the Living."
- 23 Tzvetan Todorov, for example, in *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1985, reprinted 1992), makes his project an explicitly ethical one: "my main interest is less a historian's than a moralist's" (4).
- 24 Beatriz Pastor, "Silence and Writing: The History of the Conquest," in *1492–1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing*, eds. René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini, *Hispanic Issues* 4 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, reprinted 1991): 121–63. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); "Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in R. H. Canary, ed., *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978): 41–62. For the narration of desire, see Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984): 103–57.
- 25 Ibid., 147.
- 26 Ibid., 149.
- 27 Pastor cites Cortés' comment about "la lengua que yo tengo, que es una india de esta tierra" ("the tongue that I have, who is an Indian woman from this land" – my translation) (148); see also Hernán Cortés, *Cartas de relación* (Mexico: Porrúa, 1975): 44. Todorov cites Bernal Díaz as reporting that the nickname given to Cortés was that of Malinche; *The Conquest of America*, 101.
- 28 Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 11–12.
- 29 Ibid., 97.
- 30 Todorov, like Pastor, also invokes another figure of loss that is gendered: "A Mayan woman

- died, devoured by dogs . . . I am writing this book to prevent this story and a thousand others like it from being forgotten" (246–7).
- 31 "The History That Will Be," 17. Goldberg is commenting on Greenblatt's "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*," in *Political Shakespeare*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985): 18–47.
- 32 For various accounts of the ghost dance, see, among others, Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Pocket Books, 1970, reprinted 1981); Angie Debo, *A History of the Indians of the United States* (Norman, OH: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970, reprinted 1988); and James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Gloria: Rio Grande, 1973). See also Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 202–11. Roach, however, considers the ghost dance a "rite of memory" (208), and it is unclear therefore whether he sees the dance as commemorative or performative. He also views it as an act of self-possession – and thus potentially identitarian in its aspirations – whereas in my argument and in Spivak's, the ghost dance would be rather an opening onto inhabitation by others.
- 33 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Ghostwriting," *diacritics* 25:2 (Summer 1995): 65–84, at p. 70.
- 34 Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," *diacritics* 25:2 (Summer 1995): 9–63, at p. 27. See also the expanded version, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- 35 Derrida, "Archive Fever," 54.
- 36 In "Marx's Purloined Letter" (in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinker [London and New York: Verso, 1998]: 26–67), Fredric Jameson relates kinds of hybridity to the philosophical project of Derridean spectrality (44).
- 37 Brown, *Politics out of History*, 149–50.
- 38 Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Nicholas Rand (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 172. In "Fors," the preface to Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), Derrida makes a distinction between the "foreigner incorporated in the crypt of the Self," as the psychic phenomenon that Abraham and Torok analyze in relation to mourning and melancholia, and the sense of haunting as a collective and historical effect (119, n. 21).
- 39 Brown, *Politics out of History*, 146.
- 40 Derrida, "Fors," xvii.
- 41 *The Shell and the Kernel*, 188.
- 42 "Historiography as hauntology is thus more than a new mode of figuring the presence of the past, the ineffable and unconquerable force of the past; it also opens the stage for battling with the past over possibilities for the future" (Brown, *Politics out of History*, 151).
- 43 I put the word "colonial" in quotation marks to signal the complex and ambiguous role Jean de Léry and France itself could be said to have played in relation to early modern colonialism in the New World. France did not have "colonies," strictly speaking, in Brazil, and Léry's religious mission did not explicitly include indigenous conversion.
- 44 Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, ed. and trans. Janet Whatley (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).
- 45 Géraude Nakam, ed., *Au Lendemain de la Saint-Barthélemy, guerre civile et famine. "Histoire mémorable du siège de Sancerre" de Jean de Léry* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1975).
- 46 For the French editions, see Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage en terre de Brésil*, ed. Jean-Claude Morisot (Geneva: Droz, 1975), facsimile edition; also Jean de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage en terre de Brésil* (1578), ed. Frank Lestringant (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1994).
- 47 Freccero, "Cannibalism, Homophobia, Women: Montaigne's 'Des Cannibales' and 'De L'Amitié,'" in *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (New York: Routledge, 1994): 73–83; also "Early Modern Psychoanalytics: Montaigne and the Melancholic Subject of Humanism," *Qui Parle* 11.2 (Winter 1999): 89–114.
- 48 Léry also discusses Sancerre in a chapter significantly enlarged in the 1599 edition of the *Histoire*, appended as chapter 15 *bis* in the Lestringant edition. The culmination of the diatribe targets France as most ferocious and extravagant in its cannibalistic excesses (571–95).
- 49 See chapter 18 for Léry's account of the first night he spends in a Tupi village where, during a drunken celebration, he is offered "a foot" to eat by one of the villagers. Not understanding the language, Léry fears that he will be eaten next; in the morning he learns his error through his interpreter and concludes the account thus: "When he recounted the whole business to the savages – who, rejoicing at my coming, and thinking to show me affection, had not budged from my side all night – they said that they had sensed that I had been somewhat frightened of them, for which they were very sorry. My one consolation was the hoot of laughter they sent up – for they are great jesters – at having [without meaning to] given me such a scare" (163–4).
- 50 For a discussion of Montaigne's use of the metaphor of cannibalism to describe the French wars of religion, see David Quint, "A Reconsideration of Montaigne's 'Des Cannibales,'" *Modern Language Quarterly* 51:4 (1990): 459–89. Many sixteenth-century Protestants also made the comparison between New World cannibalism and Catholicism; see Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492–1797* (London and NY: Routledge, 1986, reprinted 1992); Maggie Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: An Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, eds., *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 51 Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, 120.
- 52 Jonathan Goldberg, in *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), observes a similar phenomenon of the destabilization of both racial and gender identity in relation to Cabeza de Vaca (213–14).
- 53 See also Freccero, "Heteroerotic Homoeroticism: Jean de Léry and the 'New World' Man," in *The Rhetoric of the Other: Lesbian and Gay Strategies of Resistance in French and Francophone Contexts*, eds. Martine Antle and Dominique Fisher (New Orleans, LA: University Press of the South, 2002): 101–14.
- 54 Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, 134.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 144.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 67.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 197–8.
- 58 In *Sodometries*, Goldberg analyzes the "preposterous logic" of the conquerors that impels their attack on the indigenous Americans through accusations of sodomy. He suggests that what marks the indigenous man as sodomitical is in part the spectacle of a pierced and porous male body. "As the Spaniards see them," he writes, "these violated bodies register a resistance to Spanish violation" (196), and thus offer to some extent "an uncanny mirror of Spanish desires, above all, the desire to violate" (197). Goldberg pauses on a moment of disavowed identification that might be said to precede the absolute opposition between "them" and "us" and argues that the annihilative energy aimed at the sodomitical male body tries to efface this identification. It is, thus, this threatening moment of identification

- that triggers both the extravagant accusation and the savage acts that are justified by and follow upon it. The term “displaced abjection” is Jonathan Dollimore’s; see *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, reprinted 1992).
- 59 Roland Greene, *Unrequited Conquests: Love and Empire in the Colonial Americas* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- 60 Greenblatt writes about this episode at length in *Marvelous Possessions*, 14–19. See also de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 209–43.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 141.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 141–4.
- 63 Sigmund Freud, “Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes” (1925), in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Macmillan, 1963; reprinted Collier, 1993): 173–83. See also Freud’s discussion of the case of the Wolf Man, “From the History of An Infantile Neurosis” (1918), in *Three Case Histories*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Macmillan, 1963, reprinted Collier, 1993): 161–280.
- 64 Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995): “I call *jouissance* ‘self-shattering’ in that it disrupts the ego’s coherence and dissolves its boundaries . . . self-shattering is intrinsic to the homo-ness in homosexuality. Homo-ness is an anti-identitarian identity” (101). In an argument that spans several essays and books, Bersani outlines his theory of the willingness to relinquish control for the sake of pleasure that he regards as one of the potentially distinctive features of male homoerotic subjectivity. See “Is the Rectum a Grave?” *October* 43 (1987): 197–222; *Homos*; and “Sociality and Sexuality,” *Critical Inquiry* 26:4 (Summer 2000): 641–56. In *Homos*, Bersani also re-interprets the Wolf Man’s dream to demonstrate Freud’s investment in castration anxiety at the expense of what Bersani reads as “one genealogy of gay love” (112).
- 65 Bersani, *Homos*, 99.
- 66 Kaja Silverman, in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), defines the conjunction of masculine–masculine identification and desire in the primal scene as “sodomitical identification” (173).
- 67 Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001): xi.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 69 *Ibid.*; see also Trevor Hope, “Melancholic Modernity: The Hom(m)osexual Symptom and the Homosocial Corpse,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6:2–3 (1994): 174–98.
- 70 Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race*, 200, n. 22.
- 71 Psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity argue that subjectivity – the experience of thinking feeling embodiment – is, first and foremost, intersubjectivity, a relation to an other. In “Mourning and Melancholia,” the essay that most vividly evokes the figure of “the other inside,” Freud describes melancholia – the continued and ambivalent attachment to an object perceived to be lost – as a kind of incorporation, the taking in of the lost object so that it persists within the self and is preserved. See “Mourning and Melancholia (1917),” in *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, trans. Joan Riviere, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991, reprinted 1997): 164–79. Later, in *The Ego and the Id*, Freud extends the melancholic model to suggest that the ego itself is the “precipitate” of all the attachments to objects loved and then lost, and that it sublimates its attachment to – and contains the history of – lost others, who are then taken up as identifications. Further, for Freud the ego is always a bodily ego; there is a relay of sensation, felt to emanate both from without and from within. This relay maps a kind of psychic body that usually corresponds to the surface of the skin. See *The Ego and the Id*, esp. p. 20.
- 72 Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race*, 29.
- 73 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997): esp. p. 181.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 171.
- 75 The use of the word “fictional” here derives from Lacan; see *ibid.*, 196.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 196.
- 77 Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race*, 29.
- 78 Muñoz, in *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, discusses the complexities of identification for minoritarian subjects.
- 79 The expression, “salvage ethnography,” is from James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Allegory,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986): 98–121, at p. 112.
- 80 Jody Greene, “New Historicism and Its New World Discoveries,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 4:2 (1991): 163–98, at p. 193, n. 32. For the account of this court proceeding, see M. D’Avezac, ed., *Campagne du navire l’Espoir de Honfleur, 1503–1505: Relation authentique du voyage du Capitaine de Gonneville ès nouvelles terres des Indes* (Paris: Challamel, 1869): 12–13. D’Avezac tells the story to explain how Gonneville’s travel narrative came to be discovered and subsequently published. It was submitted as evidence in the court case by the descendants of Gonneville and Essomeric, the Tupi boy who traveled from Brazil to France with Gonneville.
- 81 Greene, “New Historicism and Its New World Discoveries,” 176; D’Avezac, *Campagne du navire l’Espoir de Honfleur*, 101–2.
- 82 D’Avezac, ed., *Campagne du navire l’Espoir de Honfleur*, 12 (my translation).
- 83 Brown, *Politics out of History*, 140.
- 84 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 97.
- 85 I am not suggesting that Léry was anywhere near where Essomeric and his family were to be found, but rather that his musing that he seems to have them before his eyes “even now” (20 years after the fact, and in France) does not describe a far-fetched impossibility.
- 86 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 175.