THE BIOPOLITICS OF FEELING

Race, Sex, and Science in the Nineteenth Century

KYLA SCHULLER

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ANIMA

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Vivre, c'est sentir

—PIERRE-JEAN-GEORGES CABANIS

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INTRODUCTION

Sentimental Biopower

> [Mothers] have the charge of immortal beings, whose physical, mental, and moral temperament, are for a long period, exclusively in their hands. Nothing save the finger of God has written on the tablet, when it is committed to them. It is important that they secure time to form deep and lasting impressions.
>
> LYDIA HOWARD SIGOURNEY, *Letters to Mothers* (1838)

> The task before us [at Carlisle Indian Industrial School] was not only that of accepting new ideas and adopting new manners, but actual physical changes and discomfort had to be borne uncomplainingly until the body adjusted itself to new tastes and habits.
>
> LUTHER STANDING BEAR, *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933)

In the long, hot month of August 2015, a meme circulated on social media affirming that, contrary to recent events, "Black lives > white feelings." Police shot and killed sixty-one African Americans that summer with impunity. These murders were sometimes captured in videos that themselves became viral, merging violence and spectacle in a manner uncomfortably reminiscent of the popularity of lynching postcards a century prior. Meanwhile, the Black Lives Matter movement began directly challenging 2016 presidential hopefuls in the midst of public speeches to elucidate their commitment to racial justice. The media widely accused movement participants of incivility and jeopardizing democracy. Activists responded in part by further theorizing whiteness studies scholar Robin DiAngelo's notion of white fragility, an affective state that can result from lifelong protection from race-based stress: when such protection momentarily recedes from those who have enjoyed it, they can erupt in highly defensive behavior and outbursts of anger and rage.[1] The "Black

lives > white feelings" meme captures the interdependence of two seemingly disparate dynamics driving racial formation that the summer of 2015 brought into cruel relief: white emotional well-being is produced in part by the ritualized entertainments of the security state, which hinge on the regularized death of black people.

What analytics is needed to understand a form of power that brokers black lives, in the national imaginary, as an acceptable price to pay for white affective security and national norms of political civility? "Black lives > white feelings" provides a good start: it identifies and reverses the sentimental affective economy long at the heart of U.S. power. Sentimentalism posits that the needs of the individuated subject can be reconciled to those of other individuated subjects through the guiding moral philosophy of sympathetic feeling. The Black Lives Matter meme rejects a basic premise of the domain of the political: the sentimental state, which identifies the feelings of the civilized individual—and only the civilized individual—as the kernel of liberal democracy.[2] Literary and cultural scholars have long parsed the asymmetry of sentimental sympathy, particularly as it functioned in its nineteenth-century heyday.[3] Sentimentalism stimulates the moral virtuosity and emotional release of the sympathizer and her affective attachment to the nation-state at the expense of the needs of the chosen targets of her sympathy, typically those barred from the status of the individuated Human: often the impoverished, the racialized, the conquered, the orphaned, and/or the animalized. Yet the meme crystallizes a dynamic at the core of sentimental power that has barely been addressed, let alone theorized.[4] White feelings, in the context of the United States, are the fertile products of racialized vulnerability, disposability, and death. Sentimentalism, in the midst of its feminized ethic of emotional identification, operates as a fundamental mechanism of biopower.

The Biopolitics of Feeling historicizes and theorizes this perhaps unexpected phenomenon: sentimentalism's role as a foundational technology of biopower.[5] In biopower regimes, the general trend of liberal democracy in the West since the late eighteenth century, biological existence forms the key domain of the political. State and nonstate actors govern by fostering the health and vitality of some members of the nation, while designating others for dispossession and death. At first glance, the administration of physiological "life itself," which currently includes the engineering, marketizing, and redistribution of the subcellular capacities of living bodies, lies seemingly far afield from the aesthetics and ethics of sympathy and the stock sentimental figures of the dying child and suffering slave.[6] Yet by 1978, in her study that launched sentimentalism as an academic market in its own right, Ann Douglas had already identified the recurrent biological themes running throughout nineteenth-century

mass literature and their authors' floral pseudonyms.[7] However, she positioned this engagement with the living world as key evidence of her argument that sentimental culture entails a flight from the political. What Douglas acknowledges only to dismiss is that sentimentalism's interest in nonhuman life and "organic markers" like birth, illness, and death, rather than the traditional machinations of sovereign power, was part of a larger intellectual and political upheaval in the nineteenth century in which the biological emerged as the key subject and agent of history.[8] Scholars have long since reassessed Douglas's thesis, analyzing the effects of sentimental power. "In all its narrative manifestations, sentimentality is more than an exchange of ideas and emotions," Glenn Hendler writes. "It is a form of embodiment, a 'bodily bond' that links character and reader to each other and the social body."[9] Yet very few have taken up the project of assessing the integral involvement of sentimentalism—a discourse of emotional *and* physiological feeling, temporality *and* materiality—in the politics of life.[10] Given the flourishing scholarly interest in ontology in the contemporary moment, the time is ripe to reconsider sentimentalism's function as a biological discourse.

Sentimentalism's organic nature offers a bountiful yield, transforming how we think of biopower and its key agents, tactics, realms, knowledges, and social effects. In this book, I uncover how biopower materialized through the deployment of a vast and varied discourse that determined the vitality or unresponsiveness of a living body, and therefore its political claims to life, on the basis of its relative impressibility, or the energetic accumulation of sensory impressions and its capacity to regulate its engagement with the world outside the self. Sentimental discourse elaborated finely wrought rankings of the disparate corporeal capacity to receive, incorporate, and transmit sensory impressions, and for the mind to direct appropriately nonimpulsive, emotional responses to sensations—named "sentiments"—that would benefit the individual, race, and species.[11] Excavating sentimental biopower disrupts some of our most cherished scholarly and popular narratives, including binary oppositions between: social and organic processes; sentimental and scientific accounts of ontology and reason; biological and cultural interpretations of racial status; hegemonic and feminist versions of sex difference; and determinist and vitalist accounts of the capacities of matter. The biopolitical work of feeling continues into the present, and the Black Lives Matter meme directly confronts its ongoing ramifications.

The notion of the nervous system as a differentially pliable and agential entity in continuous interplay with its environment lies at the heart of nineteenth-century U.S. culture and politics. Delineating and managing the varied impressibility of the national population functioned as a key strategy of biopower, a

mode I call the *sentimental politics of life*. Sentimentalism, in its function as an aesthetic mode, epistemology, and ontology, was deployed to intercede in the impressibility of the civilized body by cultivating the ability to respond to sensory stimulations on the basis of emotional reflection, rather than instinctive reflex.[12] Together, impressibility and sentimentalism distinguished civilized bodies as receptive to their milieu and able to discipline their sensory susceptibility and as such in possession of life and vitality that required protection from the threat posed by primitive bodies deemed to be impulsive and insensate, incapable of evolutionary change, whose existence was very close to running out of time. The tension between bodily vulnerability and pliability, a microcosm of the larger antinomy between the individual and the collective enshrined in liberalism, was stabilized by sentimentalism. Sentimentalism served to explain how an originally separate individual could be affectively and politically reconciled to its material coexistence with the external environment it depended on for self-constitution.[13]

Sentimental biopower emerges as the answer to the fundamental question guiding my research: How did bodies come to be understood as capable of binding together into the biopolitical phenomenon of population, an entity conceived at the biological level of species-being, in which the actions of one person, animal, or object affect the potential of the rest, even at a spatial and temporal distance? I further ask: What other technologies of power unfolded along with the new idea that sensory stimulations and heritable tendencies constitute the individual and species body? How does this overlooked history of vital matter impact our understanding of race and sex difference, particularly the paradigm that sees race in the nineteenth century as a framework of determinist and immutable divergence? These questions reexamining discourses of the body's interaction with its environment from the era prior to genetics have particular purchase given that we are currently in an era *after* the "century of the gene," in which the idea of the gene "is in considerable disarray."[14] Today, models of human and nonhuman materiality that emphasize the impact of experience on hereditary material are once again accepted by the scientific mainstream, and a range of critical theories have reopened the idea of lively matter. How does recognizing the legacy of impressibility discourse impact contemporary feminist theories that claim that plasticity, porosity, and vitality are "new" notions of matter that can overthrow liberal humanism's lingering rationalist paradigms?

The sentimental politics of life played out across scientific, medical, literary, and reform spheres in the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century, and I follow its lead across this range of sources. I uncover how scientists, reformers, and writers alike saw themselves as working in concert with a neurobiological

substrate that they conceived of, in its ideal form, as in dynamic exchange with the surrounding bodies, objects, and forces that press on it, especially during the tender years of youth. I bring together accounts of the divergent dynamism of the body and the stabilizing effects of sentimentalism from a variety of genres and contexts, including: Lamarckian and Darwinian evolutionary science, abolitionist poetry, black feminist notions of sexuality, the gynecological work of the earliest women physicians, large-scale efforts to remove Irish and Native American children from their families and communities, popular and now-canonical novels and short stories, black uplift novels, and early sociology.[15] Matter responsive to all its stimulations is matter in continually erotic and fertile relations with its milieu. This book is accordingly a story of plant orgasms, internal penises, thrilling touch, race-building caresses, fragile anuses, enfolded vaginas, the "husband inheritance," hermaphrodites, masturbating children, Sapphic geese, and child prostitutes, among other phenomena.

Throughout, I examine the intertwined movements of the two most prominent discourses that consolidated political power at the site of the feeling body: science and sentimentalism.[16] This multidisciplinary approach emphasizing the politics of plasticity, rather than determinism, in nineteenth-century culture displaces many of the best-known figures in the politics of race, sex, and the human sciences in the period, and brings a more diverse cast to the fore. Lamarck, rather than Darwin, emerges as the most prominent evolutionary theorist in the American scene; the scientific cohort of the American School of Evolution, instead of the American School of Ethnology, takes center stage; Elizabeth Blackwell and Mary Walker overshadow J. Marion Sims as a major innovator in gynecology; and black feminist intellectual-activists such as Frances Harper, rather than researchers such as Richard Dugdale, figure as significant theorists of heredity and its familial legacies. With this shift, both relational ontologies and the foundational contributions of African American and white female theorists become salient to the modern concepts of racial and sexual difference.

Overall, I argue that nineteenth-century biopower consolidated in a sentimental mode that regulated the circulation of feeling throughout the population and delineated differential relational capacities of matter, and therefore the potential for evolutionary progress, as the modern concepts of race, sex, and species. Racial and sexual difference were not assigned the role of immutable, static qualities of the individual body in the nineteenth century, as has been frequently claimed. Rather, race and sex functioned as biopolitical capacities of impressibility and relationality that rendered the body the gradual product of its habit and environment, differentially positioning the claims of individuals

and races for belonging in the nation-state. The notion of impressibility developed in the nineteenth century in conjunction with the emergent framework of the population, an entity governed by the processes of contagion, probability, and risk. Within the consolidating framework of biopower, bodies signify not singularly, but within a collective in which the health and vitality of the individual functions as an element of the prospects of the population, linked as it were across space and over time through the network of sympathetic nerves. Race, sex, and species difference, I assert, defined a body's relative claims to life on the basis of the perceived proportional vitality and inertia of the sensory and emotional faculties. The long, unrecognized history of sentimental biopower is necessary to our current efforts to assess and negotiate the political work done by hierarchies of bodily and emotional difference as well as to tease out the political implications of the contemporary theoretical turn toward vital materiality.

IMPRESSIBILITY AND POPULATION

I unpack the hierarchies of feeling at the heart of sentimental biopower through theorizing two new keywords that have been hiding in plain sight: *impression* and *impressibility*. Despite the central role of the "impression" in the discourse of reason from Plato to Immanuel Kant, the term is infrequently examined in its own right. It typically does not appear as an entry in philosophy or critical theory reference books, or as an indexed word in monographs that nonetheless depend on the notion, such as scholarship on John Locke, histories of neuroscience, or the philosophy of mind. As one of the strongest books in affect theory puts it, amid a careful introduction rigorously defining a range of related concepts: *impression* needs no definition, for it is simply "a word that means what it says."[17] Taking this term and the related concept of impressibility for granted, however, leaves us unable to fully reckon with the key role of the sensory body in Western epistemology and political practice.

Related to sensation, sentiment, and affect, yet not a subset of them, the *impression* characterizes how a living body is acted on by the animate and inanimate objects of its environment. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes an impression as "the pressure of one thing upon or into the surface of another."[18] The act of touching a surface and the resulting indentation are thoroughly confounded in the noun *impression*; the act of objects coming into contact with one another necessarily leaves a "mark, trace, or indication."[19] As used by Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke and David Hume, an impression describes the movement in which an object presses on a sensory organ, creating sensation, as well as the resulting copy of the feeling registered by

the brain in the form of an idea. Impressions thereby refer both to a causal action and its effects, particularly "a change produced in some *passive* subject by the operation of an external cause."[20] Objects have tangible influence on the subject by the mere act of contact, yet the independent status of each remains undisturbed. Throughout Western philosophy, sensory impressions are the means through which the individual acquires knowledge, develops ideas, and retains memory. Impressions denote the trace an object or idea leaves on the passive nervous system at the precise locations of their juncture, a marking that reinforces the ontological distinctness of each. The individual's self-transparency depends on the material world that nevertheless remains fundamentally external.

By contrast, *impressibility* denotes the capacity of a substance to receive impressions from external objects that thereby change its characteristics. Impressibility signals the capacity of matter to be alive to movements made on it, to retain and incorporate changes rendered in its material over time. Impressibility thus has a distinctly different register from the more familiar term *impressionability*, although the two registers do overlap. Sensory impressions were understood to be the trace left by contact with another, and impressionability accordingly signals suggestibility and susceptibility in the immediate time of the present, the often-racialized quality of being easily moved. However, impressibility indexed the agential responsiveness of the nervous system to external stimuli, the results of which over time would metonymically transform the body as a whole. Impressibility was understood to be an acquired quality of the refined nervous system that accrues over evolutionary time through the habits of civilization that transform animal substrate into the cultural grounds of self-constitution.[21] One of impressibility's chief theorists, psychometrist and eclectic physician Joseph Rodes Buchanan, put it bluntly: "Impressibility in its general sense, or the power of being affected by external agents[,] is proportional to the development of life."[22] The impressible nervous system rendered the civilized body the gradual outcome of its habit and surroundings, accumulating over the life span of individuals and the evolutionary time of the race.[23]

While sensibility refers to the capacity of the mind to register a sensory impression made on a nerve ending, impressibility connotes the agency of the sensorium, including its capacity to create its own attachments independent of the cerebrospinal axis. Buchanan explained in 1850: "It is nervous impressibility that binds man to the universe and establishes active relations between every element of his constitution and every element of the surrounding world."[24] The more layers the cultural practices of civilization had impressed

on the familial substrate over time, the more the individual possessed impressibility and the potential for further change—or rapid degeneration. It thereby characterizes matter possessing simultaneous vitality and vulnerability. Multiethnic reformers, scientists, and writers debated the degree to which the allegedly uncivilized races maintained a degree of impressibility that would spur further development. They also discussed the possibility that the uncivilized had maxed out their evolutionary potential long ago and been left to fester in bodies that were insensate and impermeable, incapable of the phenomenon of being affected and moving through time, thereby remaining imprisoned in the present-tense mode of impulsive reaction. Impressibility came to prominence as a key measure for racially and sexually differentiating the refined, sensitive, and civilized subject who was embedded in time and capable of progress, and in need of protection, from the coarse, rigid, and savage elements of the population suspended in the eternal state of flesh and lingering on as unwanted remnants of prehistory.[25]

The notion of impressibility fills a crucial gap in theories of biopower: how bodies were understood to bind together into the organic phenomenon of population. Foucault elaborated the spatial concept of the milieu, marking the environment in which a population forms. He built on the notion of milieu proposed by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, founder of evolutionary theory, who proposed that individual and species growth depends on environmental context. For Lamarck, a milieu denotes the "circumstances" through which an organism develops.[26] Foucault explained that the concept provides "what is needed to account for action at a distance of one body on another. It is therefore the medium of an action and the element in which it circulates."[27] Yet the ontological concept, the corporeal framework in which a body is understood as capable of being acted on by its environment as an individual or as an element of a biological phenomenon, has not yet been fully addressed. Biopower, in this molar and pregenetic era, requires a somatic interface at the level of the organ or bodily system through which the individual body links to a larger species-being that materializes over time.[28] How does the milieu act on the soma? The answer, I show, is found in Lamarck's work itself. His *Zoological Philosophy* (1809) translates the theory of sensory impressions into the groundbreaking idea that not only the mind, but the entire nervous system, acquires its structure from the sensations an organism habitually pursues and that the organism retains these adaptations throughout its life and transmits them to offspring. In extrapolating the impression into an account of species change, Lamarck built on T. R. Malthus's earlier political theory of population in which witnessing the suffering of the starving impresses the well-off with the experiences necessary to cultivate their capacity of benevolent sym-

pathy, therefore refining civilization as a whole.[29] Impressibility discourse was born, transforming the individuals who comprise a nation into the biological phenomenon of population forged through the impressions bodies leave on one another.

Scientists, reformers, religious leaders, writers, and domestic ideologues elaborated sentimental discourse into an account of the broad circulation of feeling throughout a milieu.[30] Connecticut theologian Horace Bushnell represents a key element of a tradition consolidating in the nineteenth century, in the wake of Malthus and Lamarck: the impressibility theory of population, in which the flow of unconscious influences forges individuals, in Bushnell's words, "into a general mass."[31] Bushnell's 1852 tract *Unconscious Influence* represents a pivotal flashpoint in the sentimental ontology of population. The impressible body is an "open door," Bushnell explained to his readers, and "on this open side you all adhere together as parts of a larger nature, in which there is a common circulation of want, impulse, and law" (*UI*, 17). For Bushnell, human bodies have "two inlets of impression," one in the sensory organs that receive sensations and communicate them to the mind through the powers of reason, and another rooted in the nervous system's "sympathetic powers" (*UI*, 14), which receive nonverbal communication via a series of "inlets, open on all sides" to the "common reservoir of influence" (*UI*, 13) and which thus circumvent the cerebral-spinal axis. Influences continually "flow" throughout the population; when they enter the receptacle of the impressible body, they initiate nonsensory impressions (*UI*, 13). Yet impressibility is not merely the capacity to passively receive; even in the child it denotes the active capacity of the body to "dra[w] from [adults] impressions and moulds of habit" that never cease to shape its growth (*UI*, 20). Following Bushnell, impressibility signifies a body endowed with "the capacity to receive impressions," of incorporating them into the body, and finally of "diffusing" these elements throughout the body of the host and "among the thoughts as long as we live" (*UI*, 15). Bodies not only flow into each other via their inlets; impressibility also adheres each body to the population, such that common influences forge common desires and instincts. "While you are a man," Bushnell explained, "you are also a fractional element of a larger and more comprehensive being, called society—be it the family, the church, the state," and society shapes individual feeling in the likeness of the collective (*UI*, 15). The impressible body—and the sentimental body—is a biopolitical effect, constituted by its affective linkages to the other bodies within its milieu. Sentimentalism, as we shall see, is a broad regulatory technology in which neurological and emotional tendencies play important roles in reconciling the impressible body to its role in a biological population, rather than a narrower aesthetics and politics of the moral aptness of emotional identification.

For Bushnell, the expressions of one body circulate throughout society and become impressions on others, affecting all in its wake. In one sense, Bushnell articulates the familiar ideal of sympathetic identification as explored in the robust scholarly literature on sentiment, which entails both the imaginative work of deliberate emotional investment in another and the affective shuttling of sentiments directly between bodies themselves, circumventing the mind. Yet Bushnell's rhapsodizing reveals that sympathy functions not only as the sharing of conscious and unconscious emotions, but also as the neurological linking of individual bodies together, as he puts it, into "one mass, one consolidated social body, animated by one life" (*UI*, 17). Impressibility functioned as the nineteenth-century precursor of the notion of affect, or the circulation of energy throughout a milieu in a manner that binds bodies together through common stimulation. The physiological dimension of sympathy has been overlooked. This has precluded understanding how affect has a genealogy rooted in the historical formation of the biopolitical entity of population and how sentimentalism was elaborated in the nineteenth century as a central biopolitical technology to regulate the vulnerability of the civilized body.

THE MATERIALITY OF RACE

Over the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century, an epoch bounded by the emergence of heredity as a biological concept in the 1830s and the debut of genetics after 1900, impressions and impressibility did complex and highly influential work as the mechanisms of sensory activity, cognitive function, emotional feeling, vital capacity, affective connection, erotic contact, individual growth, hereditary transmission, species change, racial development, sexual difference, and population formation. Impressibility discourse built on the imperial discourse of sensibility outlined in the sciences and literary cultures of the eighteenth century, which predicated civilization on refined capacities of emotional and physiological feeling.[32] Its progenitors also include the eighteenth-century Anglo-American logic of environmentalism in which race marked an exterior effect of climate that shifted in accordance with the body's geographic location.[33] Yet impressibility brought these older ideas of bodily mutability into concert with the new geological and evolutionary theories of time and the new concept that reproduction involves the transfer of heredity, an innate but not immutable biological substance.[34] For example, early medical practitioner Harriot Hunt argued in the 1850s that the body took shape as the gradual accumulation of "hereditary qualities, tendencies, and impressibilities" that must be "cultivated."[35] The nineteenth century was a period of transition between the "transformable race" of the eighteenth century and

the rigid, interior genetic logics of the twentieth, and biopower consolidated amid this shifting terrain, turning humans into a species and making biology their history.[36]

Pliability, rather than rigidity, has recently come to characterize the materiality of the body as it was understood in the nineteenth century.[37] The nature of race in the nineteenth century is of particular import, as scholarly consensus has long agreed that the modern notion of race as a biological concept determining a body's relative value was an invention of this period.[38] Current scholarship seeks to overturn the extremely influential argument that the nineteenth century was an epoch committed to biological determinism, the notion that the body's biological material is a discrete, immutable, and dissimilar substance, meted out by capricious nature in wildly unequal fashion, that locks the individual into a predetermined set of aptitudes and behaviors. In the words of Tavia Nyong'o, "Race was mobilized in this period as itself a mutable and even volatile category."[39] Yet despite this newer account of the dynamic ontology of race, a variety of texts and fields nonetheless remain quite attached to the social constructionist–era interpretation that the body, and the idea of race more generally, in the period was understood as innate, fixed, and "brute" biology that stands guard against any encroachments of culture. Racism, in this dominant view, equals biological determinism, and vice versa.

Taking recourse in the logic of binary opposition, social constructionist accounts of race generally conceive of social frameworks of flexibility, mutability, relationality, and dynamism to counteract what they see as the determinist, individualizing political effects of liberal humanism and its social and scientific practices of corporeal differentiation. This approach can involve the telling move of privileging the mobility of the body as resistance to racism, even in the midst of important disability critique.[40] Yet accounts claiming that the liberatory potential of mobility and plasticity can redress what they see as the fixed taxonomies of nineteenth-century racial personhood misrecognize one of biopolitics' most pervasive effects. Biopower works by situating individuals in dynamic relation and calculating and regulating how their bodies affect one another within a milieu. It governs through a pervasive animacy hierarchy that unevenly apportions the capacities of plasticity and determinism among a population.[41] Contemporary frameworks that seek to contest biological determinisms with flexible materiality do not escape the political legacies of liberal humanism—rather, they unwittingly recapitulate the conceptual apparatus of the biopolitics of feeling.

The ongoing purchase of the biological determinist paradigm in American studies is partly due to the lack of an existing theoretical frame that explains

how the uneven distribution of somatic dynamism was central to the materialization of modern ideas of racial and sexual difference. In chapter 1, I propose that sentimental biopower provides this missing framework. The prison of biology can seem self-evident given that black bodies *were* overwhelmingly dismissed as animalistic savages, Asian bodies as "enervated" and "stagnant" remnants of the past, and Native bodies as animated fossils destined to go the way of the dinosaurs—all of which, at best, fitted a body to labor on behalf of the capital accumulation of the civilized and disqualified the person from political rights.[42] Yet white bodies, and the wealthier classes of African Americans, Latinx, and Native Americans in resistant discourse, were ascribed with material agency and forward-moving temporality that had evolved the arts of civilization.[43] Race did not name a fixed, interior quality of individualized matter and did not function primarily to limit the perceived potential of some bodies. Rather, it helped produce hierarchies of somatic capacity, the biological phenomenon of the population, and the corresponding central goal of power to measure and manage the uneven distribution of vital potential throughout national territory, including overseas colonies.

I propose a palimpsestic model of race before genetics, in which racial status indexes the impressions that accumulate over the life span of individuals and the evolutionary time of races. Developed by colonial anthropology and other life sciences, race demarcated the accumulated physical effect of a group's relative achievement of the seven cultural traits defined as determinant of civilization: sexual differentiation, monogamous marriage, Christian faith, arts and literacy, domestic architecture, capitalist accumulation, and democratic government.[44] According to its Lamarckian model, the habits of civilization were thought to impress on physicality and transmit across time as physical inheritance. The embodiment of the civilized races gradually materializes through the accumulation of layers of impressions over the individual time of the body and the phylogenetic temporality of generations. The civilized body figures as a repository of cultural value, an outcome of racial capital. Civilization emerged after layers and layers of beneficial impressions that propelled impressible bodies forward through time, yet their animal and savage substrate ever threatened to reemerge. Sigmund Freud investigated the somnambulant return of the repressed "permanent memory-trace" of one's own animal nature impressed on the bottom layer of the mind's wax-like "mystic writing-pad": such repressed memories erupted, most famously, in the canine dreams of his aristocratic patient "Wolf Man."[45] In the hands of black feminist intellectuals such as Frances Harper, Pauline Hopkins, and Anna Julia Cooper, on the other hand—the subject of chapter 2—the palimpsestic accumulation of impressions enabled a notion of embodiment in which the history of white men's sexual abuse of

black women always seeps through, shaping present circumstance. Above all, civilization "extend[ed] out to the capacity for capacity" that Jasbir Puar locates at the heart of the biopolitical "ascendancy of whiteness": "the capacity to give life, sustain life, and promote life" within "forward-looking, regenerative bodies."[46] The nineteenth century circumscribed this state of enduring potentiality within the material condition of impressibility.

Impressibility discourse unveils a genealogy of affect that reveals that affect's common formulation as the "capacity to affect and be affected," as well as "felt-aliveness," functions itself as an animacy hierarchy.[47] The contemporary notion of affect is chimerical, suturing two distinct capacities—that of emitting impressions and that of absorbing impressions—into one apparently seamless whole. Yet impressibility reveals that affect has a forgotten twin that has been swallowed up within its definitional reach: the state of affecting, but being unable to be affected in turn. Affect, in other words, depends on the notion of impaired relationality as its constitutive outside. Affective capacity depends on its definitional opposite, debility, for theoretical solidity, a reliance that suggests that affect materializes across the multitemporal reach of populations, rather than individual bodies.[48] Within biopower, racialization and sex difference do the work of unevenly assigning affective capacity throughout a population.[49] In effect, the common use of the affect concept, which conflates the capacities of affecting and being affected into one phenomenon, reifies, rather than interrogates, the historical ontology of whiteness.

The racialized were assigned the condition of unimpressibility, or the impaired state of throwing off affects but being incapable of being affected by impressions themselves. Leading evolutionary scientist E. D. Cope contrasted the "susceptibility" of youthful tissue—a category that includes the most recently evolved group, the civilized race—with the primitive condition of "unimpressibility," or "resistance on the part of tissue to the usual stimuli."[50] At best, unimpressible bodies merely react to sensory impressions, rather than absorbing them, reflecting on them, and incorporating their effects. The uncivilized races were consigned to the immediacy of childlike sensation and instinctive response, captive to whatever stimulations crossed their paths.[51] Positioned as the worn-out antecedents of the civilized, people of color were accused of torpidity, sluggishness, impulsiveness, and mimicry, evaluations of nerve force that denounced the racialized body as unable to move forward through time. To be unimpressible was to be assigned the unsexed state of "flesh," Hortense Spillers's term for the ontology of antiblackness in which the black body is suspended outside the movements of time, lingering in a raw organic state useful only for resource extraction.[52] The racialized body was a disabled body (and vice versa), deemed unfit for social life due to its reduced cognitive

and corporeal capacities, which rendered it incapable of self-constitution. The unimpressible are figured themselves *as* history, rather than its subjects, *as* energy that can be set in motion to produce for others but remains incapable of accumulating anything in return.

To possess a nervous system characterized as responsive only to external motion and incapable of internal response was to be frequently accused of being benumbed to both progress and pain. The advantages of such a presumption for settler capital accumulation are clear, as the racialized could be recruited from across the Americas, Africa, and Asia for multiple forms of unfree and free labor, forced reproduction, and/or coerced experimentation on the grounds that they lacked the nervous capacity to feel any harm. The most widely read turn-of-the-century account of China, Arthur Smith's *Chinese Characteristics* (1894), echoed a common refrain when it assured readers that the "absence of nerves" and "a capacity to wait without complaint and to bear with calm endurance" rendered the coolie an ideal laborer.[53] For literary critic Eric Hayot, "the coolie's biologically impossible body was the displaced ground for an awareness of the transformation of the laboring body into a machine" within modernity, such that the body of the coolie became a site of projection for the anxieties of capitalism.[54] Indeed, Cope likens unimpressibility to "automatism," signaling the suitedness of the racialized body more generally for the highly orchestrated and repetitive movements of industrializing labor.[55] Unimpressibility connotes much of the meaning cultural theorist Sianne Ngai captures in the fitting concept of "animatedness," a racialized affect in popular culture in which the body of an Asian or African American character is portrayed as incapable of independent action, only made to move by the will of others.[56] As Ngai emphasizes, this perceived lack of agential vitality renders figures not inert but "mechanical," overly malleable, and emotionally explosive.[57] This fantasy of the racialized body, she illuminates, suits an industrial economy in which bodies of color are set into motion like the commodities they produce, and their individual feeling serves only as unmarketizable excess.

Biopower functions as an umbrella term combining two different yet overlapping instruments of postsovereign power deployed within the regime of civilization: the discipline of the individual body, which worked to "integrate the body into a system of economic productivity"; and the "regulatory controls" of biopolitics, which "aim to adjust population to economic processes."[58] The sentimental politics of life illuminates how biopower consolidated around the impressible body/unimpressible flesh dynamic in both dimensions throughout the nineteenth century. Biopower functioned through the diagnosis, surveillance, and subjectivization of the docile body and the transformation of

a multiplicity of individuals from a congregation of persons into a biological phenomenon existing in evolutionary time that could be measured, administered, and regulated over generations through the same processes governing the natural world.[59] Biopolitics does not seek to directly control the population, for population is a "natural" corpus that preexists the social. Rather, the regulatory functions of security power seek to allow the population to maintain homeostasis over time through the processes inherent to it.[60] In order for the national population to maintain its equilibrium, biopolitics fosters the life of the population as a whole by identifying those groups whose continued existence would threaten its economic and biological stability and who thus must be allowed to die. I follow Puar and Neel Ahuja in conceiving of the interlocking function of the necropolitical "subjugation of life to the power of death" and the biopolitical governance of life, and see the concept of civilization as the early stages of the security regime that distribute death for the economic stability of the imperial center.[61] As Achille Mbembe writes in his seminal account of necropolitics: "What one witnesses in World War II is the extension to the 'civilized' peoples of Europe of the methods previously reserved for the savages.' "[62] The uneven distribution of death, in other words, is a key function of biopower's efforts to maintain life.

Biopower works by delineating differential capacities of organic matter based on the division of flesh and culture. The biopolitical imagination posits binary oppositions between dynamism and determinism, vitality and mechanics, affecting and being affected, and culture and biology that produce distinct claims to life. Contemporary analytic frames that echo these oppositions, whether social constructionist notions of race that privilege notions of malleable embodiment over fixed biologies or affect theories that fail to interrogate how representations of affective capacity function as a key vector of racialization, therefore remain within the biopolitical imaginary.

SEXUAL DIFFERENTIATION

The subject is constructed in Western philosophy as a highly vulnerable entity, for it is wholly dependent on sensory impressions from the environment for its own self-development and acquisition of knowledge. Scientists, writers, reformers, and others located the pliability, vitality, and penetrability of the subject in the capacity of the impressible nervous system. Impressibility connotes qualities of both dynamic vitalism and susceptibility that render the body in need of careful guardianship. Impressibility discourse crystallizes what theorist Denise Ferreira da Silva posits as the internal "threat posed by universal reason, that it necessarily produces modern subjects as coexisting and relational beings."[63] Recurring descriptors capturing the nervousness of

the civilized, especially during the more malleable stage of youth, include elasticity, springiness, responsiveness, sensibility, impressionability, and sentimentality. The latter two terms hint at a problem: one could certainly be *overly* sensitive, too easily moved by external objects, as well as overly guided by emotional identification rather than abstract justice. Indeed, impressibility was deemed to be heightened among the feminine: ladies, children, artists, and homosexuals, among others.[64] The impressible body and the regulatory faculty of sentiment, which were cause and effect of civilization, required a ballast.

The new concept of sex difference was deployed to stabilize the precarity of the impressible body. The discourse of thorough divergence in the character, physiology, mentality, and emotion of men and women emerged in both conservative and feminist discourse of the nineteenth century and served to diagnose a specialized trait that allegedly only the civilized had developed.[65] A flurry of new and long-lasting tactics of sex difference emerged in this period, including policed dress; sex- and race-segregated bathrooms; restrictions on abortion and contraception; sex- and race-based admissions policies to newly established educational and professional institutions; the gradual consolidation of modern sexuality; and feminist claims for women's political rights.[66] Across this varied terrain, a common paradigm emerges: race stabilizes the economic and biological health of the population, which enables the development of civilization, while sex difference stabilizes civilization. Sex served to balance the somatic vulnerability of the impressible races by dividing the civilized body into two halves: the sentimental woman, who possessed both a heightened faculty of feeling and a more transparent animal nature, and the less susceptible and more rational man, thereby relieved from the burdens of embodiment. The two halves of male and female reunited through the organ delineating and containing the threat of penetrability: the vagina. The vagina served as a biopolitical instrument, as chapter 3 reveals through readings of the work of early women physicians who positioned the vagina of the white woman as the apex of nervous impressibility and therefore the basis of her claim to political rights. In dominant discourse, however, the permeability of woman secures the disembodiment of rational man. That is, the achievement of rationality—a key component of civilization—is made possible only through the sex difference allegedly lacking in the racialized.[67] Binary sex is both cause and effect of reason.

A short story published anonymously in 1857 evokes the pain of being caught in the interstices of the newly solidifying biological and hereditarian logic of sex. "The Man Who Thought Himself a Woman" details a protago-

nist raised as male who begins designing and sewing clothing "with all the ardor of a young mother shaping a dress for her first-born" to self-birth as a woman.[68] The first time she wears her clothing, both sewn and borrowed, in front of her family, she is dead: the startlingly modern-sounding suicide note explains, "As I have passed so long, falsely, for a man, I am ashamed to show myself in my true colors."[69] The note leaves the exact cause of shame ambiguous: for passing in the past, or for revealing herself now. The tale situates her "oddities" in relation to a hereditary predilection for "singularities, queerities, quips, quirks, and oddities" common to all her immediate male ancestors.[70] In this story, newly consolidating biological ideas of self ultimately defeat the white subject's act of self-formation that counters the seeming naturalness of the biological paradigm. Heredity can be seen to structure an emergent, but not yet fully solidified, biological account of differential sex, giving rise to new binaristic accounts of body morphology, identity, and relationality that make some lives impossible, even in the midst of their own self-constitution. In other words, sex difference was elaborated as a biopolitical security strategy in which power maintains the homeostasis of the population through material givens inherent to its biological existence, a process that sacrifices the existence of the aberrant for the cohesion of the whole.

I stress that binary sex does not exist in a parallel or intersecting dimension with race. Rather, the rhetoric of distinct sexes of male and female consolidated as a *function* of race. Yet my formulation does not relegate sex difference to the role of secondary or analogical effect of racial formation.[71] Rather, I name sex, sexuality, and, in the post–World War II era, gender as key ways that race fragments the domain of the biological.[72] The sentimental politics of life framework draws on and extends the tremendous insight of Roderick Ferguson's queer of color critique that "racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations."[73] Finding sympathy between queer of color theory and Michel Foucault's account of race as the primary means by which biopower differentiates those who will live from those who will die, I suggest that nineteenth-century biopower provides the backstory that illuminates how binary sex has come to accomplish the work of racial differentiation.[74] In other words, not only gender but also the physiological category of sex are variegations of race and effects of racial biopower. Accordingly, as I explore throughout the first three chapters, this throws open the category of woman—not only the now-dismissed concept of Victorian "true womanhood"—as an instrument of racial thought.[75] This has profound consequences for women of color and for feminism. As the struggle for the rights of woman coincident with

the category's new ontological status, feminism derives its political purchase from and within the larger framework of biopolitics. If woman is the product of racial thought, nineteenth-century feminism itself becomes a civilizational and biopolitical strategy, and not only in its explicitly imperial variants.

THE SENTIMENTAL POLITICS OF LIFE

The impressible body is a volatile body, subject to the objects, people, and forces pressing on it for its own self-constitution. In order to avoid bodily disaggregation and racial degeneration, the impressible body required a corollary: a corresponding capacity for regulating sensory experience, at the individual and populational level.[76] Dana Luciano illuminates that sentimentalism was figured in the nineteenth century as a temporal capacity that freed the civilized from the impulses dictated by immediate sensation, enabling them to reflect on their stimulations and to orient themselves within the forward movements of time.[77] Throughout this book, I argue that sentimentalism took shape as a technology to circulate and regulate feeling throughout a milieu, a political praxis that consolidated the modern hierarchies of race, sex, and species. Sentimentalism became a broad technology of power, the mechanism through which impressible bodies could be cultivated and populations secured, despite the unequal vital capacities of which the latter were composed. I offer the term *sensorial discipline* to capture the imperative placed on the civilized races, especially its female members and those aspiring to civilization and citizenship, to learn to master their sensory impulses and thus direct the development of themselves and their descendants. The "experiences" that "make their proper impression," Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell cautioned, are those that enable the civilized "to understand and direct our daily life, instead of being carried away by it."[78] Such discipline was transmitted via a flurry of new mechanisms: the gradual deployment of sexuality; the aesthetic discourse of taste, understood as "a faculty dependent on permeability to impressions and the habit of reflecting upon them"; sex-segregated factory labor; public health campaigns; household manuals, including advice on the training of domestic labor; architecture and interior design; women's moral reform societies; institutions for free black southerners, especially after the Civil War; vice squads; public and parochial educational facilities; the mass domestic novel, which not only narrated in a didactic mode but also was understood to actively make new impressions on its readers as it elicited sensory and emotional response; the ideal of the bourgeois woman who could mute the very presence of her body; new social movements and print cultures to regulate the gustatory appetites of the population, including temperance and dietetic reform and the new genre

of cookbooks; and religious revivals and imperial missionary efforts, among many other reform efforts, cultural traditions, and political tactics.[79] Sentiment was the special provenance of woman, but common to civilized man.

Sensorial discipline regulates the accumulation of the civilized self and of the phylogenetic palimpsest, forging a racial common sense over time. The sentimental orchestration of the habits of perception and interaction worked, along the Lamarckian model, to racially differentiate the civilized and uncivilized in terms of shared cultural traditions, nervous capacity, and physicality. Residents of San Francisco's Chinatown in the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, were castigated as posing threats of "infection, domestic chaos, [and] moral danger" that would contaminate the rest of the booming city. The housing of the bachelor-dominant neighborhood was accused of lacking the "intimacy, gender roles, or rights of privacy" afforded by the reproductive, rather than productive, bourgeois household allegedly removed from the public sphere.[80] Historian Nayan Shah explains that "respectable domesticity enabled the proper moral and biological cultivation of citizen-subjects necessary for American public life to flourish," while the lifeways of Chinese laborers were understood as contagions that threatened civilization.[81] Indeed, nineteenth-century biopolitical strategies precede the twentieth-century division between culture and biology. Mechanisms such as the domestic home were understood to work at the level of the organic body, cultivating a common sensorial repertoire and moral life over the time of individuals and of generations. Common sense, for film theorist Kara Keeling, marks "a shared set of memory-images and a set of commonly habituated sensory-movements . . . in which shared conceptions of the world are inseparable from motor functions."[82] A century earlier, social scientists understood sensory-motor repertoires and the memories they imprint to be the mechanism of cultural life as well as the substrate of hereditary material. The habits of civilization—a framework which its key theorists, such as Adam Smith and Lewis Henry Morgan, outline as the transmission of cultural effects and embodied memory over time—were understood to forge a racial common sense.[83]

The sentimental politics of life helps illuminate how biopower is so effective at creating atmospheres in which people come to identify with the needs of the state and capitalism as their own best interests. Biopower works not only at the level of regulating reason and desire, but also in choreographing a repertoire of sensory stimulations that exceeds the ways that modern sexuality, in Foucault's words, came to gradually subsume "the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures, and the nature of impressions, however tenuous

or imperceptible these may be" into the apparatus of sexual identification.[84] Lauren Berlant argues that the general organization of politics in the United States over the last 150 years increasingly depends on sentimental structures of attachment and identification, in which a "world of private thoughts, leanings, and gestures [is] projected out as an intimate public of private individuals inhabiting their own affective changes."[85] Sentimentalism worked to position the body's differential capacity of feeling as the object and method of state power and capitalist development, a project that works not only through the rehearsal of emotional experience and consumer gratification, but also through the stimulation and regulation of the body's vital capacities. The discourse of sentimentalism stabilizes the inherent susceptibility of the "advanced" body, orchestrates affective relations with the larger species and object worlds in which it is enmeshed, and helps produce some bodies as vulnerable and others as projects to be saved or persons to be expelled.

The rubric of sentimentalism illuminates how biopower, affect, and privatization go hand in hand, and not only in the neoliberal era. Recent work on biopower, necropower, and the plantation, in particular, encourages us to refuse the public/private, metropole/colony divide that liberalism enshrines.[86] The "family" currently has an important place in studies of biopower as the site of psychosocial discipline, but less so the components of the institution itself: women, children, domesticated pets, and the home.[87] Yet the domestic deserves broad recognition as a technology of biopower, functioning as the site of the deployment of sexuality in particular, as well as women's paid and unpaid labor, the discipline of children, the geographic interface between the individual and the population, and the grounds of proscription from entering the space of the nation, as in the case of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.[88] Thus key institutions of nineteenth-century U.S. biopower include not only the state-run entities of concentration camps, schools, hospitals, military facilities, colonial outposts, and prisons, but also private sector sites such as the plantation, slave ship, church, orphanage, domestic home, domestic novel, factory, women's auxiliary societies, reform movements, and extranational settlements, in the expanding settler state and its colonial sites in the Caribbean and Pacific.[89] Ann Laura Stoler has been at the forefront of uncovering the biopolitical functions of domesticity and analyzing sentiment and affect as sites of imperial control.[90] In the words of Stoler, one of sentimentalism's key victories was that children "became the subjects of legislative attention and were at the center of social policy as they had never been before" during the mid- to late nineteenth century in North America and Europe.[91] This included both the children removed from their homelands and those raised in homes imagined to serve as the microcosm of the nation.

Foucault named the process of population management that produces citizens who constitute themselves according to the needs of the state *governmentality*.[92] Governmentality did not yet fully transpire in the nineteenth-century United States, however. In this period, nonstate actors such as churches, domestic homes, private reform societies, slave auctions, health movements, synagogues, and club societies inaugurated sentimental technologies of biopower that combined atomizing measures of disciplinary castigation and/or redemption and populational tactics of managing risk and economic productivity. In other words, the tasks of the biopolitical state evolved out of the private institutions of sentiment.

The sentimental politics of life frequently deployed the new domestic instrument of "biophilanthropy," or the middle-class project of uplifting uncivilized youth by placing them in the Christian institutions of school and home that would press new sensations into their somewhat pliable forms. In this mode of incremental life, racialized youth were gradually made to live and enter the capitalist economy. The alleged constitutional rigidity of the uncivilized did not solidify until adulthood. Youthfulness, Cope explained, was a stage of heightened impressibility, "the period of growth . . . much more susceptible to modifying influences and . . . likely to exhibit structural change in consequence."[93] A number of reform movements accordingly argued that the nervous systems of uncivilized youth could be impressed with beneficial sensations, and sought to mutate their bodies and their heritable material into assets, rather than threats, to capital and land accumulation. According to this schema, a childhood spent barefoot in a Plains tipi impressed savage propensities on the body and mind that the child would never unlearn and would transmit to offspring, whereas the customs of leather shoes, wool and cotton clothing, and a stick-frame house served as both the cause and effect of civilization. Off-reservation boarding schools, which removed Native youth hundreds of miles from their families and subjected them to severe discipline, are among the most drastic implementations of this belief that regulating the sensory experience of primitive children would transform the racial body. Chapter 4 explores a less widely known example of the deliberate attempt to evolve a people by orphaning their children—the Children's Aid Society's emigration of one hundred thousand European immigrant youth from New York City from the 1850s through the 1920s to farm families across the nation. Biophilanthropy suggests that eugenics comes in many forms, including the deliberate molding of hereditary material that was deemed susceptible and malleable.

Reformers eagerly extrapolated the theory of impressibility into a theory and practice of eugenic breeding. For some readers, this claim will immediately

generate suspicion. Eugenics is best known as the early twentieth-century movement to encourage "fit" women to increase their birthrate and to rob "unfit" women of the capacity to conceive, an agenda that reached its nadir in Nazi Germany. In literary, cultural, and ethnic studies scholarship, eugenics is often taken to be synonymous with biological determinism. Yet in these characterizations, the almighty power of the twentieth-century gene has cast its shadow backward, gathering radically different, non-Mendelian notions of heredity and environment under its pall. According to this dominant logic, the notion of mutable heredity is precisely the inverse of eugenics programs—and racist thinking as well. However, eugenic sciences and policies are rooted in the application of the sciences of heredity to improve racial groups, not in determinist versions of genetics specifically.[94] As feminist science studies scholar Banu Subramaniam clarifies, eugenics denotes a broad-based and multispecies discourse and practice of evaluating the fitness of biological variation and assessing the relative influence of heredity versus environment, a practice that encompasses a wide range of scientific, social, and agricultural agendas.[95]

The notion of impressible heredity that prevailed in the nineteenth-century United States looks markedly different from classical geneticists' view that life unfolds according to the predetermined plan of the internal genetic code, and eugenic efforts differed accordingly. Francis Galton coined the term *eugenics* by adapting the Greek words for "well" and "born," giving a name, twenty-five years before the "gene," to the already-popular belief that social progress required manipulating hereditary material. Galton defined eugenics as "the cultivation of the race" and "the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which . . . takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had."[96] Eugenics as a term is agnostic, however, about which approach to heredity must prevail in service of race building through the regulation of "influences."[97] Granted, early twentieth-century eugenicists *did* frequently identify sentimental reformers, who believed that hereditary material could be transformed through experience, as their principal opponents, as I explore in chapter 5. Yet in important ways, the sentimental politics of life represented less a radical threat to eugenicists' goals than an antecedent. Far from an emotional logic of political remediation, sentiment functioned as a technology to regulate the hereditary quality of the population and thereby enacted one of biopower's chief tactics. More broadly, projects to "improve" the hereditary material of the individual and the population are a constitutive element of biopower, not only its twentieth-century flowering.

To date, most work on biopower emphasizes either nineteenth-century Europe or the contemporary period in Europe and the United States. Yet the era of U.S. national consolidation and imperial expansion across the nineteenth century witnessed a number of key developments that expand and nuance our theories of biopower. This book reconsiders biopower in light of political phenomena key to the nineteenth-century United States: slavery; race science; Jim Crow; European immigration; and settler colonialism and expansionism. Chief among the resultant insights is that contrary to the claims of many theorists, the notion of optimizing and marketizing the biological substrate is fundamental to the practice of biopower and is not unique to the contemporary molecular era. Recently proposed terms to periodize the contemporary era of biopolitics, such as *control*, *the politics of life itself*, and *pharmacopornopower*, tend to exaggerate scalar differences in the operation of power, overstating the novelty of networked lives that operate within economies that modulate the global flow of physiological material and bodily capacities.[98]

In a highly influential analysis, Nikolas Rose argues that in contrast to an earlier period largely focused on eliminating contagions from the population, contemporary power "is concerned with our growing capacities to control, manage, engineer, reshape, and modulate the very vital capacities of human beings as living creatures," particularly through intervention at the molecular level.[99] Rose is careful to stress that what he names an emergent "politics of life itself," marked by an ethos of organic optimization in which the management and improvement of health becomes a citizen's key responsibility and form of subjectivity, builds on and extends earlier forms of "vital politics," rather than represents an epochal shift.[100] Nonetheless, he identifies the rise of technologies of "susceptibility" and "enhancement," such as prenatal tests to identify genetic mutations and pharmaceuticals that act directly on sexual capacity or sexed attributes, as specific to the molecular era. His criteria is that they work not to eliminate disease from the organism, but to alter biological function. He contrasts the contemporary belief in biological plasticity and the ability to act directly on somatic potential with the belief in "inherited predispositions" of the latter half of the nineteenth century, which, while attuned to the assessment of risk in the population, lacked the present ethos of "bring[ing] potential futures into the present and tr[ying] to make them the subject of calculation and the object of remedial intervention."[101] For Rose, mechanisms such as cloning and medical treatments available subsequent to the sequencing of the human genome establish new "technologies of optimization" that form natural-cultural assemblages.[102] The health of the individual is now produced

as the site of the imperative for biological maximization in a way that sharply differs from the often "coercive" national eugenic regimes of the first half of the twentieth century, which conflated "population, quality, territory, nation, and race" in pursuit of racial fitness at the scale of population.[103] Yet the conception of organic material as dynamic, flexible, and augmentable is by no means particular to life in the genetic era. Biotechnology has indeed shrunk the key vector of the body from its sensory acuity to its molecular and atomic components while simultaneously magnifying by many times the market share of biological manipulation, changing the nature of capitalism in the process.[104] But from the beginning, biopower has functioned through technologies of biological optimization that rely on ideas of corporeal mutability and plasticity as the interface between the individual and the population that predate genetic-era divisions between the political and natural world. In fact, one of biopower's key innovations is the very determinist/plasticity binary itself.

In a similar but less nuanced grain, Paul B. Preciado writes that "whereas the disciplinary system of the nineteenth century considered sex to be natural, definitive, unchangeable, and transcendental, pharmacopornographic gender seems to be synthetic, malleable, variable, open to transformation, and imitable, as well as produced and reproduced technically."[105] While the phenomenon of molecular gender may indeed be specific to the hormonal and sexological sciences of the chemical revolution era, the sexed body of the nineteenth century was far from a "transcendental" phenomenon. On the contrary, sex was understood as the accumulative result of matter made "malleable" over generations by the technologies of civilization, and as open to "transformation" and technological production as any other capacity of whiteness. The overwhelming critical emphasis on the influence of Darwin and Galton has come at the expense of attending to Lamarck's outsized impact in the nineteenth century and reflects a historical positivism that privileges the "winners" of competing scientific paradigms and ignores those who lose. The lack of theoretical attention to the nineteenth-century Americas, where the myths of the vitalizing potential of contact with the primitive on the frontier and the blank, ready-to-be-written history invoked by settler colonialist ideology made Lamarckian-based programs of plasticity, enhancement, and optimization particularly appealing to elites, exacerbates the problem. A resulting chronobiopolitics of matter emerges in the literature in which the nineteenth century becomes defined by a belief in the determinism of the organism, and the present by a commitment to a disaggregated body newly open to fine-grained manipulation and decomposition. But the Lamarckian world developed a range of mechanisms

to ameliorate and recirculate hereditary particles, particularly through the varied institutions of sex difference, labor, and sentiment.

Contemporary biotechnology, like affective labor, builds on long-standing frameworks of imperial biopower in which vital potential can be cultivated, accumulated, marketed, and redistributed.[106] Comparative ethnic studies scholar Kalindi Vora analyzes the extraction and transfer of "vital energy," or "the substance of activity that produces life" from the Global South to the North through the colonial and postcolonial labor market, a continuum she sees as stretching from nineteenth-century industrial production to the affective labor of call centers in South Asia.[107] Reframing labor power in terms of the transfer of vital force, Vora shows how the exploitation of the vital capacities of the body is not a new phenomenon. The extrication and transfer of vital force, such as in dominant nineteenth-century frameworks in which the racialized and proletarian body was unimpressible, capable of being automated for the movements of labor yet incapable of self-directing its own energies, structure capitalist economies. The very distinction between molar and granular, vital and inert matter is not a recent historical development. Rather, the plasticity/determinism dualism reflects the productive work of the colonial paradigm of civilization reverberating throughout our contemporary paradigms.

Impressibility haunts highly influential theoretical models of vital materiality. Feminist "new" materialisms generally insist that they are overturning long-standing Cartesian dualisms that contrasted active mind with inert matter, a framework in which materiality registers as passive, nonconsequential substance that lacks any capacity of relationality or action. In many new materialist arguments, social construction theory represents the most recent flowering of the romance of matter as mere surface on which the human world acts; nature has meaning only to the extent in which it is "imprinted by cultural beliefs."[108] Yet the cultural scripts of social construction theory are not the only critical tradition that has kept the frameworks of the imprint and impressibility alive in feminist thought.

New materialist thinkers such as Jane Bennett and Diana Coole seek to challenge the enduring triumph of reason through drawing on a range of contemporary physical and life sciences and twentieth-century philosophy to conceive of innovative ontological frameworks that can newly capture the porosity, malleability, and vitality of matter. However, science studies scholar Angela Willey cautions that "new materialist storytelling seems to celebrate as a feature of scientific progress the 'discovery' of the principles of agency and plasticity."[109] Taking scientific paradigms to be self-evident, such "storytelling" ignores decades of feminist and postcolonial science studies that situate

epistemologies of science within their larger social arena, including the history of science itself.[110] In fact, the teleological view of scientific discovery Willey observes, which positions inertia as an outdated conceptual trapping of reason and liveliness as the insight of a posthuman future, echoes the temporal logic of race.

New materialisms generally animate racial thought in three ways. First, they often carve a trajectory of critical thought that takes shape as an animacy teleology moving from ideas of inert matter (the past) to vital materiality (the future) that mirrors, rather than contests, civilizationist ontologies of the nineteenth century. Second, their sweeping historical narrative regularly fails to recognize the structuring role of the intertwined ideas of vital matter and inert material in the deployment of biopower over the last two centuries. As Victoria Pitts-Taylor observes, "Since its earliest modern elaboration, in fact, plasticity has been envisioned and enacted through the modification and preemptive governance of individuals and groups."[111] For Pitts-Taylor, the recognition of the dynamic capacities of matter is not in and of itself counterhegemonic; rather, its political implications depend on how plasticity is deployed within scientific discourse and the work of its interpreters.[112] Contemporary thinkers have not been the first to break through the Cartesian wall and portray matter as plastic and agential. Rather, notions of dynamic matter were alive and well in the nineteenth century and served as the ontological basis of race. This recent history in which agential matter was figured as the sedimentary effects of cultural difference needs to be a key site of new materialist engagement—rather than celebration—so as not to unwittingly reproduce racial hierarchies.[113] For example, in sketching out the idea that an object is not merely the passive site of human action, but rather that an object "leaves its impression" on the bodies that use it and orients their habitual tendencies, Sara Ahmed turns to the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century interior design theories of leading white feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman.[114] For Ahmed, Gilman "speaks of the shaping of women's bodies through the way they inhabit domestic interiors," such that furnishings "create certain bodily positions."[115] Yet Gilman is no easily recruited ally for contemporary feminist theory. Gilman's notion of the impressions the material world carves into the bodies with which it engages was a fundamental component of her civilizationist feminism. For Gilman, white bodies and white bodies alone were impressible. It was their duty to train their aesthetic sensibilities for the sake of national progress as well as to remain vigilant against the degenerating effects of the coarse trappings of barbarism, such as ornate decoration and brightly colored clothing.[116] The racial logic of impressibility lies within the concepts of vitalism, material agency, and intersubjectiv-

ity with the external world which current theories, in the absence of critical interrogation of the concepts they inherit, risk reanimating.

Finally and most problematically, new materialisms often unwittingly reproduce the colonial logics of impressibility, or the idea of self-constituted matter, in their account of the agency and force of the material world. For example, Diana Coole queries: "Is it not possible to imagine matter quite differently [than inert] . . . as perhaps a lively materiality that is self-transformative and already saturated with the agentic capacities and existential significance that are typically located in a separate, ideal, and subjectivist, realm?"[117] Coole's framework is in fact all too easy to imagine, for it is reminiscent of the very idea of impressible corporeality: matter that accumulates agency over time, becoming "already saturated with the agentic capacities"; matter possessing potential for action and the transformational work of self-constitution; matter that enables interior transparency and self-determination.[118] Coole's account echoes the biopolitical logic of whiteness, implanting it as the key measure of all matter.

Theorists of lively matter may seek to depart from the land of reason, but they nonetheless carry its epistemic baggage. The "realm" of subjectivity did not emerge as a foreign landscape from the realm of matter.[119] Rather, reason—as the logic in which the individual is constituted by its own impressions—itself depends on the racially determined capacity of self-affecting matter, qualities it reserved for civilization.[120] Analyzing the ubiquity of ideas of plasticity to new materialisms, Willey continues: "Rather than challenging our sense of nature as predictably law-governed, agency—or plasticity—runs the risk of becoming another natural law."[121] Seemingly outside the rational worldview, new materialisms nonetheless conceive of a natural world governed by something like reason, if we follow Denise da Silva's insight that one of reason's greatest achievements was the conception that the natural world is governed by law and that nature itself is identifiable as the law of how things affect each other.[122] In fact, agential matter is a central achievement of biopower's racializing effects. Porosity and vitality are biopolitical tactics of racialization and demand interrogation as such, rather than masquerading as neutral qualities of life itself that are discovered by science and exist before the political. The idea of porous, plastic, vital matter is not in itself an alternative to liberal humanism; it is one of the unnamed effects of the biopolitical ontology in which humanism was enlisted. Biopower itself lies at the foundation of agential/mechanical and culture/matter binaries. What we need is theories that account for the coconstitution of material and cultural processes over time.

So how do we periodize the internal shifts and modulations of biopower since its late seventeenth-century debut? From the perspective of the sentimental politics of life, what is distinct about the post–World War II era is the very idea that organic and social life are delineable and divergent processes; one shapes the biological body, and the other forms the interior space of identity. In this new agenda Francis Galton once more serves as a towering and precocious figure: in the late nineteenth century he coined the phrase *nature versus nurture*.[123] However, biopower analyses often reproduce, rather than interrogate, Galton's dichotomous division between nature and culture. Key among these approaches reigns Giorgio Agamben's extremely influential notion of "bare life," or the biological substrate of the body to which an individual is reducible by state power in order to disqualify the subject from political recognition.[124] The common refrain that biopower addresses "life itself" similarly reifies the delineation between the organic and political worlds.[125] Yet this split between the organic and the social, in which the efforts of the latter have no impact on the former except in the case of contemporary biotechnologies and related nano-interventions and in which liberation politics is equivalent to opposing biological determinisms, came about in the 1930s and 1940s. In the most common account, the horrors of Nazi concentration camps caused governments and nongovernmental organizations to flee from the terrain of biology into the more egalitarian arms of culture. But there is a larger frame here, in which state cleansing played a gruesome part: that biopower regimes mutate in response to shifts in the notion of heredity. Heredity has been pressed into service as the biological mechanism that explains how the species-being of population interacts with the world around it. Its conceptualization is key to the operation of biopolitics.

The heyday of the sentimental politics of life falls between the emergence of heredity as a biological concept and the inauguration of genetic heredity in the early twentieth century. Whereas heredity previously had been used strictly in an adjectival mode to refer to the transmission of property and titles within families, French physiologists and physicians in the 1830s adapted this legal term to mark differences between human and animal populations across Europe and its colonies and began referring to "hérédité" in noun form.[126] This nominalization heralded the rise of "a structured set of meanings that outlined and unified an emerging biological conceptual space," the new notion that reproduction involved the transmission of a discrete—but not necessarily immutable—part of the body to progeny.[127] Theories of the substance of heredity emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly

in the work of Darwin, Prosper Lucas, and Galton.[128] Historians of science Staffan Müller-Wille and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger argue that the notion of heredity appeared so late as the 1830s because it served the newer biopolitical goal of differentiating within a population, rather than simply tracing familial commonality and descent.[129] Heredity enabled colonial powers to assert, calculate, and adjudicate biological difference across territories and within species. Heredity posits tension between the environment and the individual body, figuring the organism as ontologically distinct from the world in which it is immersed, forged of diachronic relationships of descent that lie in contradistinction from synchronic ecologies.

Heredity marks a key interface that differentiates and conjoins the milieu, individual, and population. Foucault emphasizes the work of sexuality as the junction between the organism and the species; we might broaden the frame of sexuality—which scholars have shown to be a racialized phenomenon—to include the phenomenon of heredity.[130] In fact, the trajectories of sexuality, race, and heredity track closely together. Sex in the nineteenth century does not necessarily fit the criteria of what we today recognize within the domain of the sexual and may be unrecognizable as such.[131] For Peter Coviello, sex was not yet understood to be a property of the self. It took shape as "a mode of relation, a style of affiliation," rather than as an aspect of individual identity.[132] Similarly, heredity was understood to transpire through the expansive dynamics of relation characterizing the sexual in the nineteenth century and thus often looks unrecognizable today. In the nineteenth century, the belief in the impressibility of the civilized body and the Lamarckian inheritance of acquired traits legitimated a range of sexual, childless, and professional relationships to fall within the folds of hereditary transmission. As Jasbir K. Puar has argued, queer theory has mistakenly privileged "the always already implicit heterosexual frame" assumed in critiques such as Lee Edelman's influential notion that the reproductive imperative lies at the heart of modern power, which takes shape in the form of the innocent child figuring as the preeminent subject of futurity.[133] If the assemblages of "race and sex are to be increasingly thought outside the parameters of identity," she suggests, "what is at stake in terms of biopolitical capacity is therefore not the ability to *reproduce*, but the capacity to *regenerate*, the terms of which are found in all sorts of registers beyond heteronormative reproduction." In the nineteenth century, heredity, the mechanism that enables the species being, modulated the broad phenomenon of populational regeneration—including maintaining "health, vitality, capacity, fertility, 'market fertility' and so on"; it did not belong exclusively to the more narrow act of gestational reproduction.[134] In this light, analyses that see biological plasticity, the manipulation of vitality, and other mechanisms of regeneration

as specific only to the contemporary era fall within the heteronormative paradigm Puar notes.

Furthermore, the impressibility of the civilized body held the potential to render queer relations fertile. This suggests the existence of an immediate prehistory to the epoch covered in Siobhan Somerville's important account of the emergence of ideas of the homosexual through biologically determinist race science at the turn of the century.[135] In this earlier period, it was precisely the "biological indeterminism" of the body, the as-yet-undifferentiated roles of the social and biological, that enabled reformers to conceive of same-sex relations as generative.[136] Impressibility discourse exposes the long roots of homonationalism, Puar's apt term for the ranking of civilization and savagery on the basis of the inclusion of same-sex erotic relations in the national agenda.[137] Same-sex relations consolidated as formations within the larger biopolitical project that tied sexual difference, heredity, and vitality into interwoven strands. Furthermore, the emergent nineteenth-century logic of same-sex sexuality necessarily depended on the civilizationist hierarchy that produces sex difference as a racial attribute. From the beginning, queer legitimacy emerges within the frame of civilization—a legacy still reverberating loudly today.

Modern sexual discourse materialized not only in the form of the intertwined emergence of the heterosexual/homosexual dyad and racial determinism increasingly visible by the last decade of the nineteenth century, but also through the inauguration of modern heredity. The two criteria of modern heredity, as proposed by Evelyn Fox Keller, are the notion that inheritance transpires through "the passing on of an internal substance" belonging to the body itself and the belief that hereditary particles are "fixed entities that were passed on from generation to generation without change," immutable in the face of diverse environmental conditions.[138] In this framework, nature and nurture become "disjoint," figured as processes that are not only distinct from one another, but belong to different spheres entirely and have no overlap.[139] Modern heredity brings to fruition a fundamental shift: that the body and milieu contain distinct chronologies.[140] Toward the end of the nineteenth century, experimental and theoretical investigations into the sciences of heredity on both sides of the Atlantic, including the work of Galton and August Weismann, began to test the degree to which impressions were transmitted from one generation to the next as physical adaptations, instinct, or racial memory.[141] This work increasingly showed that acquired characteristics could not be transmitted, suggesting that heredity was an immutable substance. No longer a diffuse index of relational experience, heredity gradually became a biopolitical category of speciation that differentiated sexes, races, sexualities, and family lines.[142] As Keller argues, modern heredity only speaks to the populational

level: it cannot quantify which elements of an individual organism are due to physical inheritance and which are due to environmental conditions.[143] The term *gene* was coined in 1908 to denote the basic unit of immutable inheritance in the wake of the 1900 rediscovery of Austrian monk Gregor Mendel's experiments hybridizing pea plants. The body soon became a blueprint, not a malleable wax tablet, and its key substance was the microscopic gene, not the tangible nervous system. Alongside the emergence of modern sexuality, which identified discrete properties of the body rather than modes of relation, modern heredity theory restricted hereditary transmission from all manner of impressions to the union of male and female sex cells.

Heredity had become, like sexuality, an innate and discrete property of the body. The emergent solidification of modern sexual discourse picked up speed in the 1890s, and sexuality came to be deemed an inherent aspect of interiority, a property of the liberal individualist self that sexologists now identified as either heterosexual or homosexual. Sex before sexuality manifested as a proliferating dynamic between bodies, whereas sexual discourse taxonomizes discrete individual qualities, including the gene.[144] By 1915, determinist notions of sexuality, race, and heredity were increasingly prominent, and both sexuality and race were classified as discrete, identifiable, and innate properties of the biological body itself. In chapter 5, I illuminate how W. E. B. Du Bois reached backward to sentimental models of impressibility to challenge the solidification of genetic racisms, a move that brought along with it the notion that race is a cultural, rather than physiological, phenomenon. While the impressible body rendered reproduction a social act, classical genetics restricted transmission to male and female. Breeding efforts quickly shifted from determining who was most fit to raise the children of the civilizing, to regulating who was the most fit to conceive. In fact, one of the many victories of twentieth-century eugenicists was the conceptual restriction of reproduction to the emergent notion of heterosexuality.

Within biology, the reconciliation of population genetics with natural selection in the modern Darwinian synthesis of the 1930s completed the consolidation of modern hereditary theory and signaled the rapidly dwindling influence of the idea that experience shapes hereditary material—though neo-Lamarckian interpretations lingered in French-influenced settings, such as Mexico.[145] In this modern take on Darwin, environment does not act directly on the body itself, but shapes outcomes at the broad level of population.[146] Evolution, in other words, transformed from a site of disciplinary action that emphasized the molding of the individual and familial body in spaces of "enclosure," to the broader work of populational stabilization.[147] At the same time, the larger political economic structures in which the biological

sciences are immersed similarly came to prioritize the tasks of populational homeostasis and the open-ended "modulation" of markets and people in techniques that Foucault called security and Deleuze referred to as "societies of control," to accomplish the tasks originally outlined by disciplinary mechanisms.[148] The modern Darwinian synthesis marks a large shift in biopolitics in which organic and political processes were now seen as fundamentally distinct. One of the most fruitful outcomes of this division, consolidated by the 1940s and 1950s, has been discourses that identify gender and race as cultural, not biological, phenomena. Yet these newer apparatuses have revitalized, rather than dismantled, the function of racial and sexual differentiation as sites of social control.[149] In this contemporary framework, the task of power—in repressive governments or liberation movements—becomes the conjoining and/or separation of the social and biological at the site of the molecule, the individual, and the population.

At the close of the twentieth century, however, life scientists began insisting once again on the possibility that experience affects the expression of genetic heredity. Epigenetics lessens the cleave between biology and culture dominant since the modern Darwinian synthesis, suggesting that new forms of biopower may indeed be emergent that proliferate novel kinds of racial and sexual differentiation and novel kinds of resistant practices. From the perspective of the twentieth century, the vital politics of the twenty-first century indeed look new. Yet we need to consider new biological technologies and markets in the nuanced terms of scale and effect that contextualize notions of epigenetic imprinting within the history of inherited impressions of the pregenetic age. Promising existing theoretical models that emerge from this broader frame include models of race, sex, and affect as assemblages that combine cultural and biological elements and conceptions that the vital capacities of organisms shape the forms that power assumes, and not only the reverse.[150] These theoretical models exist in relation to earlier biocultural forms, such that the assemblage succeeds the palimpsest and affect updates impressibility. To disentangle radical politics from biopower, we must examine the various ways that power has long managed the circulation of vital energies and the differing ends to which such energies are conceived and enlisted.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 analyzes the function of sentimentalism as a technology of species, race, and sex differentiation by turning to the once prominent but now forgotten work of the American School of Evolution. I argue that these scientists translated the era's deeply entrenched beliefs about the sentimental nature

of knowledge formation as judicious reflection on sensory impressions into a vitalist theory of species, race, and sex formation. They reassured anxious Anglo-Saxons of their ability to direct evolutionary change on the grounds of their unique capacity of sexual differentiation. Chapter 2 explores the work of black feminists, particularly Frances Harper, in developing the palimpsestic notion of race as an accumulative process over evolutionary time. Harper forges a tactile method of racial uplift in which both the erotic and eugenic aspects of the palpable impression play a central role in civilizing the race. In chapter 3, I show how the sentimental politics of life enabled defenses of women's sexual self-determination and women's same-sex domesticity by turning to the medical theories of the vagina of two early women physicians. I argue that Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and Dr. Mary Walker's conceptualization of the corporeality of white women as impressible, adaptable, and ultimately the incarnation of growth itself opened up space for white women's same-sex affiliations, sexual agency, and professional pursuits to be folded within the normative biopolitical operations of civilization. Chapter 4 turns to the effects of sentimental biopower on children subject to biophilanthropic measures to improve hereditary material through schooling and rural and domestic labor, particularly the two hundred thousand kids sent west on "orphan trains." In this method of incremental life, reformers rehabilitate those deemed primitive and marked for expiration into a useful population of wage laborers that will raise the standard of living of the population as a whole. The final chapter moves into the early twentieth century to track how theories and strategies of progress via impressibility gradually gave way to theories of immutable heredity that explicitly overthrew sentimental paradigms of heredity. I show that antiracist figures like W. E. B. Du Bois, in response, adapted impressibility to reconceive of efforts to shape the biological quality of the population through reproductive means in the years leading up to the modern Darwinian synthesis. A brief epilogue considers the ongoing legacy of impressibility within social construction theory and epigenetics.

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In the sentimental politics of life, vital forces unleashed by sex and other forms of sensory excitement circulate among a milieu, adhering bodies to one another in promiscuous relation. Impressibility forges a population through shared vital material, even in the absence of reproduction and parentage. Yet biopower works through a zero-sum game that turns the social sphere into a competitive arena composed of bodies continually shaped through and against each other over time. Responsivity, relationality, and adaptability become technologies of administrative power. In this context, race and sex emerge not as

interior genetic or psychosocial attributes of fixed organisms, but as biopolitical categories ranking the degree to which each body is acted on and/or acts on the larger population—which reaches backward into evolutionary time. The ongoing insidiousness of race and sex lies in their precipitation from intimacy, care, friendship, and alliance. They are calculations of relational capacity, and indeed, biopower governs at the level of basic interactions between friends and lovers, laborers and bosses, and neighbors and families, as well as the state-determined categories of nation and population. Sentimentalism represents a prime example of liberal individualism's transformation of feeling, relationality, and care into an asymmetrical dynamic—a market of feelings. Biopower seeks to transform the very capacity of feeling into mechanisms of population security and biological optimization.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. DiAngelo, "White Fragility."
2. I riff here on Michele Landis Dauber's notion of the "sympathetic state." Dauber, *The Sympathetic State*.
3. See in particular Berlant, *The Female Complaint*; Barnes, *States of Sympathy*; and Wexler, *Tender Violence*.
4. Two scholars who explicitly and importantly theorize sentimentalism in relation to biopower include Strick, *American Dolorologies*; and Romero, *Home Fronts*. See also Luciano, *Arranging Grief*.
5. The topic of sentimentalism has generated a large secondary literature. The first twenty years of scholarship were dominated by a debate about the political relevance of sentimental ideology. Ann Douglas infamously accuses sentimentalism of functioning as an enervating force that sapped the strength from an "authentic," thoughtful, and masculine public culture by helping to bring about "the exaltation of the average which is the trademark of mass culture." Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 4. Jane Tompkins, in contrast, commends sentimental mass literature for serving as an enlivening tradition whose very "familiarity and typicality . . . are the basis of their effectiveness," particularly in formulating a feminine politics that understands submission as power. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs*, xvi. A second wave of scholarship by key figures including Lora Romero, Glenn Hendler, and Laura Wexler examines how sentimentalism is itself productive of political, social, and economic relations, a move that has significantly expanded our understanding of the terrain of the sentimental into visual culture, artistic practice, political theory, racial thought, business culture, and legal practice, among other arenas. For particularly rich collections, see Chapman and Hendler, *Sentimental Men*; and Shirley Samuels, *The Culture of Sentiment*. More recently, studies of affect have turned to sentimentalism as a prime mode that cultivates structures of political attachment. See Berlant, *The Female Complaint*.
6. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*.
7. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*. For this critic, "by such self-baptism, feminine authors become characters in their own sentimental effusions: hothouse products, they are self-announced refugees from history" (186).

8. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 195; Young, *Darwin's Metaphor*.
9. Hendler, *Public Sentiments*, 36.
10. Shelley Streeby argues that the sensational and sentimental modes of popular and political culture are always intertwined. Here I expand her framework to analyze the interdependence of physiological and emotional discourses and practices of feeling more broadly. See Streeby, *American Sensations* and *Radical Sensations*.
11. In the eighteenth century, Denis Diderot explained that sensibility is the capacity "to perceive impressions of external objects," and sentiment, in turn, is "an emotional 'movement' in response to a physical sensation." Quoted in Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility*, 1.
12. I build here on Dana Luciano's crucial analysis of the chronobiopolitics of sentimentalism, in which sentiment entails the capacity of reflection over time—as opposed to the primitive immediacy of sensation—that enables racial progress. Luciano, *Arranging Grief*.
13. Thanks to Ed Cohen for help with this point.
14. Keller, *The Mirage of a Space between Nature and Nurture*, 5.
15. I emphasize the influence of sentiment beyond the domestic novel, prioritizing less well-analyzed aesthetic and political traditions.
16. This methodological pairing perhaps demands justification. Science and sentiment have been familiar groupings almost exclusively as superlative polarities. Currently, however, the seeming naturalness of this opposition is falling apart in the wake of the ontological turn. See, for example, Murison, *The Politics of Anxiety*, 17–46.
17. Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, 6.
18. S.v. "impression, n.," Oxford English Dictionary Online, accessed June 3, 2015, http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/92725.
19. S.v. "impression, n.," Oxford English Dictionary Online, accessed June 3, 2015, http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/92725.
20. S.v. "impression, n.," Oxford English Dictionary Online, accessed June 3, 2015, http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/92725; emphasis added.
21. There is a limited discussion of the notion of impressibility in Victorian studies that approaches the concept as a quality of the mind important in the development of psychology. See, for example, Vrettos, "Defining Habits."
22. Buchanan, *Outlines of Lectures on the Neurological System of Anthropology*, 39. Buchanan identified impressibility in phrenological terms: a region of the brain that only a few possess. I use the term more broadly.
23. Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, for example, explained that in contrast to the "savage," the member of the civilized races "approaches more nearly to the true type of man, and has acquired the capacity of transmitting increased capacities to his children." Blackwell, *Essays in Medical Sociology*, 181.
24. Buchanan, *Buchanan's Journal of Man*, 322.
25. On racialization as the eternal state of flesh, see Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 66–67.
26. On Lamarck's notion of the milieu, see Canguilhem and Savage, "The Living and Its Milieu," 11.

27. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 20–21.
28. Nikolas Rose contrasts the molar scale of earlier biopower from the molecular emphasis of the contemporary moment. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 11–12.
29. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. I further explore Malthus's text in chapter 2.
30. James Chandler defines sentiment as "distributed feeling. It is emotion that results from social circulation, passion that has been mediated by a sympathetic passage through a virtual point of view." Chandler, *An Archeology of Sympathy*, 11–12.
31. Bushnell, *Unconscious Influence*, 16 (hereafter cited parenthetically as *UI*).
32. For example, Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. For insightful analysis, see Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*.
33. Chiles, *Transformable Race*; Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*.
34. As Diane Paul clarifies: "In the nineteenth century, however, 'innate' did not imply 'determined,' for it was generally believed that the environment shaped heredity. Thus an inherited trait could be suppressed or redirected by changes in the condition of life." Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 32.
35. Hunt, *Glances and Glimpses*, 102.
36. Chiles, *Transformable Race*.
37. Elizabeth A. Wilson argues that Darwin and Freud's notion of the body incorporates, via Lamarckism, "a permeable, heterogeneously constituted biology" that includes, in the case of Darwin, "psychological, cultural, geological, oceanic, and meteorological" factors all bound in reciprocal relation. Wilson, *Psychosomatic*, 70, 69. Other work in this vein includes Murison, *The Politics of Anxiety*; and Castiglia, *Interior States*.
38. Gossett, *Race*; Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*.
39. Nyong'o, *The Amalgamation Waltz*, 83.
40. For example, Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification*, 18. The book works from the premise that race in the nineteenth century was figured as a fixed and immutable effect of heredity that was "biological and therefore inescapable" (27).
41. Mel Chen illuminates animacy, or a sentience hierarchy rooted in linguistic principles, as a broad biopolitical tactic to order life according to its relative vitality. Chen, *Animacies*.
42. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*, 9, 52.
43. For another account of the tension between nineteenth-century accounts of racial fixity and the transformational work of civilization, see Blencowe, "Biology, Contingency and the Problem of Racism in Feminist Discourse."
44. These criteria were codified by the ethnologists Lewis Henry Morgan and E. B. Tylor.
45. Freud, "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad,'" 208. Dana Seitler aptly observes that Freud's Wolf Man case reveals that in psychoanalysis, as with modernity more generally, "the nonhuman is not always the abject result of the more civilized human" but is, rather, contained in the human itself. Seitler, *Atavistic Tendencies*, 53.
46. Puar here builds on Rey Chow's notion of the "ascendancy of whiteness." Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 200.
47. Clough, introduction to *The Affective Turn*, 2.

48. Puar, "Prognosis Time."
49. Drawing on the philosophy of reason and the history of science, Denise F. da Silva names the condition of racialization as "affectability," or the idea that some humans are composed solely of exteriority, are wholly "subjected to outer determination," and lack the self-constituting capacity of autopoesis possessed by Europeans. Da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, 47. In my reading of nineteenth-century racial thought, the capacity to absorb the effects of impressions over time distinguishes the civilized state of impressibility from the racialized quality of being easily moved and yet unable to retain the effects of those movements.
50. Cope, *Origin of the Fittest*, 381, 285.
51. On primitive sensation versus sentimental reflection, see Luciano, *Arranging Grief*, 25–68.
52. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 67.
53. Quoted in Hayot, "Chinese Bodies, Chinese Futures," 103. See also Lye, *America's Asia*.
54. The racialized body as machine was celebrated by national capital, which replaced enslaved labor with indentured Chinese labor in the 1860s, and railed against by California's threatened white working class. On the simultaneous ending of legal slavery and beginning of the importation of coolie labor, see Jung, *Coolies and Cane*.
55. Cope, *Origin of the Fittest*, 235.
56. Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 89–125.
57. Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*, 91.
58. Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 13. On *biopower* as an umbrella term, see Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending*, 20.
59. The sentimental politics of life was a key epoch of transition in which disciplinary and security power overlapped. Disciplinary techniques of isolation, atomization, control, supervision, and the goal of perfection attempted to manage phenomena increasingly conceived of as "physical processes," or elements of the real, of measurable and predictable crisis, risk, and danger that affected the population within a certain milieu. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 57.
60. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 45–48.
61. Ahuja, *Bioinsecurities*, xii; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 32–36; Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 39. For an opposing view that delineates biopower from necropower, see Boggs, *Animalia Americana*, 10–21.
62. Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 23.
63. Da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, xl.
64. Mason, introduction to *The Poems of Philip Henry Savage*, xvii.
65. Russett, *Sexual Science*; Laqueur, *Making Sex*. Lynn Wardley argues that Mary Wollstonecraft "sees woman's bodies and minds *as* matter, which means that they are shaped by the vicissitudes of other material systems, including culture." Wardley, "Lamarck's Daughters."
66. Sears, *Arresting Dress*; Kogan, "Sex-Separation in Public Restrooms."
67. Thanks to Arev Pivazyan for help with this point.
68. Looby, "The Man Who Thought Himself a Woman," 242.
69. Looby, "The Man Who Thought Himself a Woman," 252–253.

70. Looby, "The Man Who Thought Himself a Woman," 241.
71. I depart here from Nancy Leys Stepan's pivotal essay "Race and Gender: The Role of Analogy in Science." I see race and sex in the period as operating in interlocking, rather than analogical, relation, in which sex establishes the materialization of racial difference itself.
72. I avoid the term *gender* throughout this project on account of its inapplicability to the pre–World War II period. Gender, a term introduced in its present sense as the social role of biological sex by sexologist John Money, emerges out of a later epoch of biopolitics than the period I examine. The nineteenth century made no distinction between biological and social roles of sex—sexual difference was itself seen as an achievement of civilization. For accounts of the emergence of "gender" and associated biopolitical technologies see Preciado, *Testo Junkie*; and Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*. For a different take on the applicability of gender prior to the twentieth century, see LaFleur, "Sex and 'Unsex.'"
73. Ferguson builds here on Chandan Reddy. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 3.
74. Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended"* and *Security, Territory, Population*.
75. Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood."
76. On bodily disaggregation, see Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology*.
77. Luciano, *Arranging Grief*.
78. Blackwell, *Counsel to Parents*, 7.
79. Mason, introduction to *The Poems of Philip Henry Savage*, xxx. See Mao, *Fateful Beauty*; Gaskill, "Vibrant Environments"; Noble, *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature*; Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion*; Lauren Klein, "Matters of Taste"; Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*.
80. Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 12, 84.
81. Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 77.
82. Keeling, *The Witch's Flight*, 20.
83. I build here on José Muñoz's performative idea of race as something a body does, not something a body is. Muñoz, "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down." For key primary sources, see Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 234–268; Morgan, *Ancient Society*.
84. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 106.
85. Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 41.
86. Mbembe, "Necropolitics."
87. Foucault, *Lectures on the Will to Know*.
88. On the many dimensions of nineteenth-century domesticity and their relationship to U.S. empire, see Amy Kaplan's seminal essay "Manifest Domesticity."
89. In her important early work on sentiment and biopower, Lora Romero illuminates how Harriet Beecher Stowe performs a "hygienist critique of patriarchal power" in which norms of physical health provide the shape and structure of Stowe's analysis of slavery. For Romero, little Eva is a casualty of the rigid mind/body split that slavery imposes on the white and black populations, respectively; Eva's body is quickly "used up" on account of her sympathetic relations with her family's slaves. Romero, *Home Fronts*, 81, 79.
90. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.

91. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, 120.
92. Foucault characterizes governmentality as the institutions and practices that enable a form of "power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument." Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 108.
93. Cope, *Origin of the Fittest*, 29.
94. I use the term *eugenic sciences*, rather than dismissing them as pseudoscience, because they were leading fields of biological thought in their day. Referring to disciplines such as phrenology, Lamarckism, and eugenics as pseudoscience positions science as a transcendent form of knowledge that is independent from its shifting means of knowledge production.
95. Subramaniam, *Ghost Stories for Darwin*, 45–69.
96. Quoted by Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity*, 3. Similarly, the influential Henry Fairfield Osborn defined eugenics as the practice of reproducing the "best spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical forces of heredity" in the national population. Osborn, preface to *The Passing of the Great Race*, ix.
97. Scholars in Latin American, African American, and disability studies, in particular, have demonstrated that eugenics is a flexible program that can be adapted to a number of scientific, political, racial, and national frameworks. See English, *Unnatural Selections*; Ordover, *American Eugenics*; Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*; and Kline, *Building a Better Race*.
98. Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control"; Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*; Preciado, *Testo Junkie*.
99. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 3.
100. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 1–7.
101. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 18, 19.
102. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 16.
103. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 61, 62.
104. Melinda Cooper, *Life as Surplus*.
105. Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 105–106. Pharmacopornopower signals Preciado's notion that the convergence of the chemical and sexual revolutions and expanding media empires in the mid-twentieth century ushered in a new era of biopolitics.
106. Accounts of the new symbolic importance of affective labor tend to overlook the continued semiotic and material significance of industrial production. For a critique of this work, see Martín-Cabrera, "The Potentiality of the Commons."
107. Vora, *Life Support*, 3.
108. Mitchell and Snyder, *The Biopolitics of Disability*, 7.
109. Willey, "A World of Materialisms," 1000.
110. Willey, "A World of Materialisms."
111. Pitts-Taylor, *The Brain's Body*, 40.
112. Pitts-Taylor, *The Brain's Body*, 123.
113. Stacy Alaimo celebrates nineteenth-century Darwinian feminisms as anticipating new materialisms, a move which neglects the civilizationist hierarchies subtending their views of the dynamism of (white) bodily matter. Alaimo, "Sexual Matters."
114. Ahmed, "Orientations Matter," 247.

115. Ahmed, "Orientations Matter," 247.
116. Gaskill, "Vibrant Environments," 69–115; Gilman, *The Dress of Women.*
117. Coole, "The Inertia of Matter and the Generativity of Flesh," 92.
118. On the latter, see da Silva, *Toward a Global Theory of Race*.
119. Jordy Rosenberg proposes that new materialists and others problematically position the object world as existing in a distinct and prior temporality from the social world of the present, thereby echoing the racial structures of colonialism. Rosenberg, "The Molecularization of Sexuality," n.p.
120. Da Silva, *Toward a Global Theory of Race*.
121. Willey, "A World of Materialisms," 1000.
122. Da Silva, *Toward a Global Theory of Race*, 47.
123. Subramaniam, *Ghost Stories for Darwin*, 52.
124. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.
125. Haines, "Martin Delany."
126. Müller-Wille and Rheinberger, "Heredity," 20.
127. López-Beltrán, "The Medical Origins of Heredity," 125.
128. Müller-Wille and Rheinberger, "Heredity," 3–34.
129. Müller-Wille and Rheinberger, "Heredity," 16–24.
130. Stoler, *Race and the Colonial Education of Desire*; Luibhéid, *Entry Denied*.
131. Coviello, *Tomorrow's Parties*; LaFleur, *The Natural History of Sexuality*.
132. Coviello, *Tomorrow's Parties*, 22.
133. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 35.
134. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 211.
135. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line*.
136. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution*, 251.
137. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 9–10.
138. Keller, *The Mirage of a Space between Nature and Nurture*, 21, 22. Keller argues that Darwin and Galton are the two figures most responsible for this development.
139. Keller, *The Mirage of a Space between Nature and Nurture*, 11.
140. Heredity discourse thus parallels the biopolitical work of immune discourse, which delineates a body from the milieu in which it is immersed, that Ed Cohen theorizes in *A Body Worth Defending*.
141. Eliza Slavet argues that Freud drew extensively on neo-Lamarckism in conceptualizing Jewish identity as the inheritance of ancestral memories. Slavet, *Racial Fever*.
142. On the emergence of the X chromosome as the genetic site of sex difference in the 1920s, see Richardson, *Sex Itself*.
143. Keller, *The Mirage of a Space between Nature and Nurture.*
144. Coviello, *Tomorrow's Parties*.
145. Julian Huxley coined the term to note the rise of an evolutionary theory that accounted for both the mechanism of Mendelian heredity and the dynamics of population pressure. On Mexico, see Stern, "Eugenics beyond Borders."
146. Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 78. Foucault dates this shift to Darwin himself, rather than the way Darwin was received.
147. Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 3.
148. Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," 4.

149. Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*; Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism."
150. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*; Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*; Ahuja, *Bioinsecurities*.

1. TAXONOMIES OF FEELING

1. The name riffs on the earlier American School of Ethnology, now infamous for its racist theory of polygenesis.
2. The broad enthusiasm in the United States for Lamarckian evolutionary paradigms, rather than the competition of natural selection, has received remarkably little scholarly attention outside the history of science, even in the midst of the current emphasis on the role of the life sciences in everyday life. Among those projects that do attend to Lamarckian cultural politics, Lamarckian evolutionary theories have often appeared as progressive alternatives to so-called social Darwinism, an evaluation influenced by claims such as that made by American School affiliate Joseph Le Conte in the epigraph to this chapter.
3. My own research for this chapter was greatly enabled by the libraries of UC Berkeley, which hold Le Conte's personal collection of published and manuscript neo-Lamarckian science, some of which is shelved in the open stacks of the Bioscience and Natural Resources Library.
4. Cope, "Two Perils," 2052–2054, 2070–2071.
5. Cope, "The Oppression of Women," 4104.
6. Cope, "The Present Problems of Organic Evolution," 572–573; Cope, "Ethical Evolution," 1525.
7. Cope, "Energy of Life Evolution," 790.
8. Jessica Riskin points to Denis Diderot's definition of sentiment as "an emotional 'movement' in response to a physical sensation." Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility*, 1.
9. Cope, "Ethical Evolution," 1523.
10. Bowler, "Edward Drinker Cope and the Changing Structure of Evolutionary Theory," 252.
11. Barber, *The Heyday of Natural History*, 28.
12. Dana D. Nelson, "'No Cold or Empty Heart'"; Walls, "Textbooks and Texts from the Brooks"; Hallock, "Male Pleasures and the Genders of Eighteenth-Century Botanic Exchange."
13. Thanks to Ann Fabian for help with this point.
14. Quoted in Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, 105; emphasis added.
15. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 44.
16. On late nineteenth-century scientists who investigated sympathy and emotion, see Levander, "The Science of Sentiment."
17. Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility*, 21, 6, 2, 7.
18. Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility*, 1.
19. Figlio, "Theories of Perception and the Physiology of Mind in the Late Eighteenth Century," 191.
20. Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility*, 1–4.
21. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution*, 265, 263.