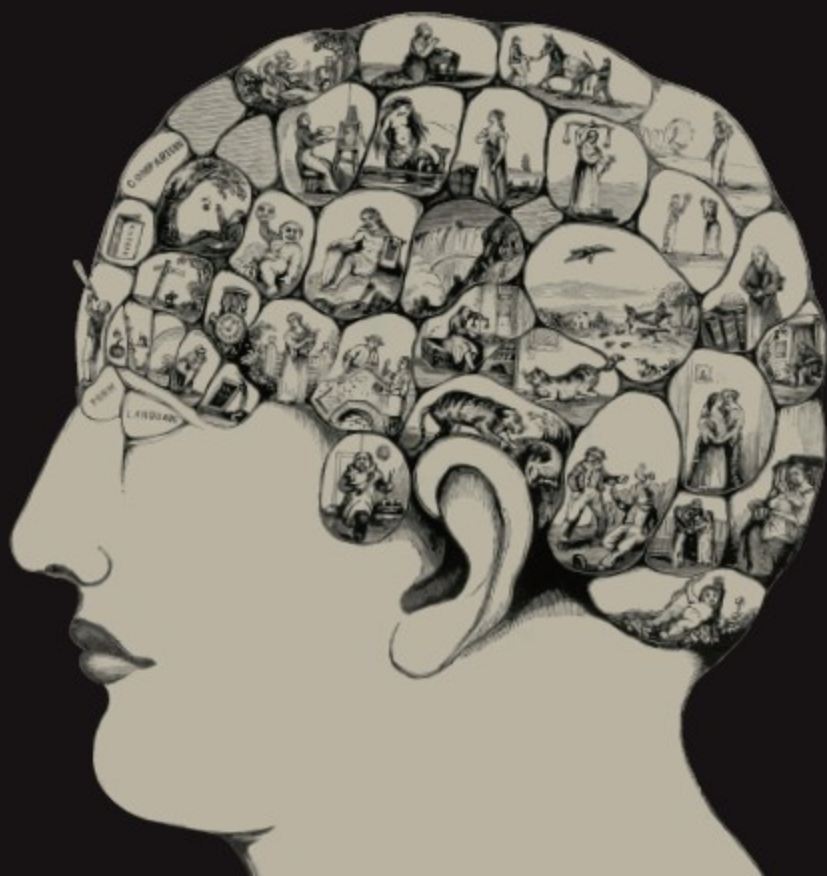

INTERIOR STATES

INSTITUTIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND
THE INNER LIFE OF DEMOCRACY
IN THE ANTEBELLUM UNITED STATES

Christopher Castiglia



INTERIOR STATES

NEW AMERICANISTS

A Series Edited by Donald E. Pease



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Christopher Castiglia

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Durham and London

2008

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States of America on acid-free paper ∞

Designed by Amy Ruth Buchanan

Typeset in Minion by Keystone Typesetting, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

appear on the last printed page of this book.

*To the memory of my father,
Joseph A. Castiglia*

** * **

And as ever, with love, to Chris

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction. Interiority and the
Problem of Misplaced Democracy 1

1. “Matters of Internal Concern”: Federal
Affect and the Melancholy Citizen 17
2. Bad Associations: Sociality, Interiority,
Institutionalism 60
3. Abolition’s Racial Interiors and White
Civic Depth 101
4. Ardent Spirits: Intemperate Sociality and
the Inner Life of Capital 136
5. Anxiety, Desire, and the Nervous State 168
6. Between Consciousness and Revolution:
Romanticism and Racial Interiority 216
7. “I Want My Happiness!” Alienated Affections,
Queer Sociality, and the Marvelous Interiors
of the American Romance 256

Epilogue. Humanism without Humans:
The Possibilities of Post-Interior Democracy
294

Notes 305

References 351

Index 363

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Loyola Center for Ethics and Social Justice, and a leave of absence from Loyola University Chicago, enabled me to complete research for this book. I thank the staffs of the Newberry Library, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the Amherst College Robert Frost Library for their help in my research.

Versions of chapter 3 appeared in *Early American Literature* and *American Literary History*, a version of chapter 6 appeared in *In Search of Hannah Crafts* (Perseus), and versions of chapter 7 appeared in *The Cambridge Companion to Hawthorne*, *The Norton Critical Edition of The House of the Seven Gables*, and *The Blackwell Companion to Herman Melville*. I benefited from the thoughtful criticism provided by anonymous readers for those volumes and by their editors—David Shields, Gordon Hutner, Rick Millington, Robert S. Levine, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Hollis Robbins, and Wyn Kelley—and gratefully acknowledge permission to reprint here.

For inviting me to present portions of my work at conferences or at their home institutions, I am grateful to Steven Carl Arch, Gillian Brown, Pattie Cowell, Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, Teresa Goddu, Kristie Hamilton, Jack Kerker, Robert Levine, Trish Loughran, Chris Looby, Ellen McCallum, Rick Millington, Dana Nelson, Sam Otter, Don Pease, Eliza Richards, Karen Sanchez-Eppler, Laurie Shannon, Frank Shuffelton, Eric Slauter, Tim Sweet, and Al Young.

My life in Chicago has been enriched by the friendship and conversation of George Chauncey, David and Lisa Chinitz, Lane Fenrich, Mary Finn, Verna Foster, Suzanne Gossett, Ron Gregg, Jay Grossman, Sharon Haar, Paul Jay, Tom and Noreen Kaminski, Jack Kerker, Stephen Lapthisophon, Jules Law, Karen Lebergott, Mary Mackay, Jeff Masten, Gerry Reed, Mary Kay Reed, Harry Samuels, Moe Taylor, John Vincler, Wendy Wall, Joyce and Jerry Wexler, and Edward Wheatley. I owe a special thanks to Lynne Simon, who helped me escape the inner life and rediscover the pleasures of friendship. No aspect of my life during the writing of this book has been as stimulating as the conversations

I have had with students. Their wit, kindness, and startling intelligence have helped keep teaching a passionate calling for me. For that, I thank the graduate students at Loyola, particularly Krissy Egan, Danielle Glassmeyer, Doug Guerra, Nick Hurley, Shelly Jarenski, Zach Lamm, Carina Pasquiesi, Megan Pater Phillips, Rick Rodriguez, John Schlueter, and Gale Temple, and at Northwestern, especially Katy Chiles, Peter Jaros, and Sarah Mesle. Wes Whitlatch has been and is, in every way, a rock star.

I have also been fortunate to have an intellectual community that, over the past years, has supported and stretched my thinking. For this, I thank Bruce Burgett, Russ Castronovo, Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, Betsy Duquette, Leigh Gilmore, Teresa Goddu, Glenn Hendler, Richard Morrison, Ben Reiss, Augusta Rohrbach, and Priscilla Wald. Above all, I give heartfelt thanks to Bob Levine, Chris Looby, and Dana Nelson, who shared their homes, their keen intelligence, their wit, and their capacious generosity with me. They read drafts, discussed ideas, offered advice and encouragement, and improved my thinking at every turn. In every meaningful way, I wrote this book for and with them. Every scholar should be lucky enough to have fellow travelers like these.

The incisive intelligence, patience, and warm friendship of Ken Wissoker improved this book immensely. Working with Ken and his staff, particularly Mark Mastromarino, at Duke University Press has been an unqualified joy from start to end.

From the two men to whom I dedicate the book—my father, Joe Castiglia, and my partner, Chris Reed—I have learned everything I know about love. This book is small recompense, but I offer it with all my gratitude.

Introduction. INTERIORITY AND
THE PROBLEM OF MISPLACED DEMOCRACY

Is democracy a lost cause?

In past years, cultural critics in a range of fields have proclaimed the failing health, if not the imminent demise, of democracy.¹ By “democracy,” these critics generally mean not the operations of electoral politics but citizens’ capacity to organize themselves for collaborative negotiation and public action to rectify injustice and improve associational life in ways that take account of divergent expectations and experiences.² Citizens’ democratic agency has been done in, according to such accounts, by a range of economic, ideological, and cultural forces that have led to a radically isolated, privatized, and depoliticized citizenry content, in Robert Putnam’s phrase, to “bowl alone” rather than participate in the broad and eclectic public associations that Alexis de Tocqueville identified as the characteristic form of American life.³ In some accounts, democracy is failing because of a host of contemporary causes, including the privatization of the economy, the erosion of the welfare state, increased xenophobia in the face of rapid globalization and the passing of industrial labor, and the failure of an intellectual left to think its way constructively beyond or, conversely, to effectively revitalize the “identity politics” of the 1980s. In other accounts, democracy was stillborn, done in at its inception by Whig elitism, the social polarization of the enfranchised and the disenfranchised, the absorption of local association into a bourgeois print public, the institutionalization of slavery, and incipient imperialism.⁴

As compelling as such postmortems are, they suffer from an unquestioning adherence to an uncomplicated interpellative model of trickle-down ideology. That is to say, just because an ideological apparatus seeks to generate a depublicized and individuated citizenry does not necessarily mean it produces one, or does so without unforeseen complications. Although the privatization of citizenship and the consequent loss of public and deliberative association and the pleasures and values it generates are certainly a central concern of the analyses that follow, *Interior States* argues that democracy is not dead or dying

but misplaced. Citizens, I believe, still have a good deal of inventive energy and civic-mindedness that are ready to be given to the renovation and innovation of social life in the United States. The problem, however, is that we have been encouraged to misrecognize the location of the social, finding it, not in association with others, but in the turbulent and conflicted interiors of our own bodies. The bodily interior has become misunderstood as a social space, as *the* social space of modernity, and it is exclusively within that interior state that citizens are encouraged to develop democratic innovation and the skills of negotiation across differences.

To claim that human interiority is (mis)conceived as a social space may seem, to say the least, counter-intuitive, interiority being the sanctum of our most private sentiments and secret desires. It is a central argument of *Interior States*, however, that those sentiments and desires are conceived by the modern citizen, aided in that misconception by two centuries of public and psychological reform, in social terms. The increasingly discordant human interior (what I will call the *nervous state*), with its battles between appetite and restraint, desire and deferral, consciousness and unconsciousness, became, I will argue, a microcosm of the equally riven sociality of nineteenth-century America. As the inside became a reflection (and increasingly a displacement) of the ideological conflicts of the social world, citizens were encouraged to understand the incessant labor of vigilant self-scrutiny and self-management as effective democratic action. It is not, therefore, that citizens have lost the capacity to act democratically; they have misconceived the realm where that action can achieve its purported ends. While democracy may not be lost, then, it is certainly misplaced.

The reason for this misplacement may be found as much in what the interpellative model leaves out as in what it offers. When, in Louis Althusser's famous example, the police hail a citizen on the street and the citizen responds—thereby being interpellated into the rule of law, the order of the state, and the subject position of “citizen”—the metaphoric transformation obscures a historical process of self-conception that occurs not on the street or in the institutional spaces of the law, but in the mind, the emotions, the psychology, and the spirit of the citizen-subject. According to Althusser, those interior spaces are not themselves an effect of interpellation (Althusser insisted that the “unconscious” preexists history and hence ideology) but are the always already available arenas of psychosocial identification.⁵ Attempting to analyze—and historicize—this gap, theorists of subjectivity from Michel Foucault to Giles Deleuze and Judith Butler have sought, in Fredric Jameson's words, “to reassert the specificity of the political content of everyday life and of individual fantasy-experience and to reclaim it from that reduction to the merely subjective and to

the status of the psychological projection,” which is “even more characteristic of American cultural and ideological life today than it is of a still politicized France.”⁶ Or, as Butler more succinctly states the problem, “It is a significant theoretical mistake to take the ‘internality’ of the psychic world for granted.”⁷

The mistake of taking “internality” for granted characterizes much theorization of democracy, despite the fact that “internality” developed in tandem with democracy in the early national period. Among the first Enlightenment theorists to join deep interiority and civic order to produce what we might, following Foucault, call disciplinary democracy, the Founders, as chapter 1 argues, developed a philosophy of centralized *feelings* modeled on historically familiar modes of belonging (families, churches, and above all friendships) but newly conceived as metaphorical—rather than embodied and local—simulacra of the government. This new interpellative philosophy, which I term *federal affect*, helped to recast the bodily coercions of government as the apparently voluntary and internally managed orders of what Foucault calls governmentality, an interior state that is both consensual and self-managing.⁸ The process of federalizing affect did not involve eliminating former and often highly volatile associations, but moving them *inward* into the privatized spaces of the new middle-class home and, more insistently, within the politicized spaces of the bodily interior.

In asserting that the bodily interior—the space of a newly conceived and self-managed “consciousness” and its unruly other, the unconscious realm of desire, appetite, and rage—became in the early United States a micro-state, I must be clear about what I am *not* claiming. First, I am not making a case for the origin of human interiority itself. Cultural historians have documented the existence of interiority in discourses of “character” dating from the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, while others have located nascent interiorities in the deliberations of Shakespeare’s Hamlet or in the myriad affects of the Middle Ages.⁹ Rather, I am making a claim for a development within the history of human interiority. During the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, I will show, the interior became a micro-version of the social, not simply as an individual’s “private” realm of desires, affects, and appetites, but as a realm of disruption and attempted order that, mirroring the often tense struggles between popular demand and juridical control, may be called an *interior state*.

Central to this understanding of antebellum interiority, then, is a different conception of the subject not as a being interpellated or disciplined into unitary subjectivity or a single “performative” but, rather, as overpopulated and—as any large population will be—riven by conflicting demands and aspirations. In

the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, after all, the United States was anything but an ordered reflection of federalist design. Rather, that society was diversified and at times disrupted by the often colliding ideological regimes—and the resulting social associations—of slavery, immigration, industrialization, urbanization, imperialism, market capitalism, and liberal humanism, to name but a few. If antebellum society became an arena for contests between the demands of ownership and labor, farmers and urbanites, Catholics and Protestants, free citizens and slaves, immigrants and nativists, then its interior simulacra equally became sites of divisions and conflicts that were, in their origins, not psychological or behavioral but *social*.

The interiorization of the social in the antebellum United States did not produce disciplined subject positions in the image of state ideology, then, but generated a site for negotiating the contradictions and conflicts of the state's myriad ideologies—as well as models of association and social interaction beyond the interests of the state—in ways that belied the coherence of national or market interests. The human interior was, in important ways that *Interior States* addresses, beyond the state's power to regulate. What the invention of a social interior did produce, however, were modes of vigilant and habitual self-management, the first step in the ideological production of the modern security state.

It is worth noting, however, that this self-management was necessarily a *failed* endeavor, a failure essential to the security state, perpetuating in the very moment of failure the continued need for ever greater security. Few seemed to believe, in the antebellum period, that the divided interiors of the antebellum citizen could be integrated once and for all into an orderly and unified whole, a psychic *e pluribus unum*. On the contrary, the relentless production of the “unconscious,” as representative of forces of social demand that perpetually threatened the orders of the state no less than the integrated harmony of self-regulated and unified personhood, demonstrates that the goal was neither to regulate once and for all the unruly interiors of the citizen nor to keep citizens from developing skills of negotiation, but to give those skills a virtual arena in which to operate, the divided and conflictual space of the interior. If moving such negotiations inward protected them, on one level, from state intervention, it also made democracy an essentially mobile phenomenon in ways that served state interests. No longer relying on local relations between people engaged in negotiated association, democracy could now travel with the body, crossing the borders of localities—even nations—without sacrificing the sensation of social continuity. In a period when citizens traveled with unprecedented frequency, the mobile sociality provided by antebellum interiority became a necessary

check on disorientation and alienation and, in the process, enabled the state's expansion across national borders without sacrificing the *feel* of a still intact democratic integrity.

While interiority enabled increased mobility, the semblance of permanence was generated by a corollary public discourse, what *Interior States* addresses as the emerging social theory of *institutionalism*. Distinct from the material practices of particular institutions, the discourse of institutionalism asserted its power to carry current social interests unhindered into the future. Orienting citizens from present negotiations to a perpetually receding horizon of futurity, institutionalism, as chapter 2 demonstrates, deferred temporally what interiority displaced spatially. While interiority left citizens no need for public spaces of association, institutionalism left no present in which to associate. Splitting time into an undemocratic past and a democratic future, institutionalism not only made a democratic *now* nearly impossible to conceive, it assisted in the divisions of *types* of people depending on whether they were oriented toward the future (biologically and ideologically reproductive) or the past (those “stuck” in their memories by an underproductive nostalgia or melancholy).¹⁰

The continuous future promised by institutionalism does not encourage labor today for a glorious democracy tomorrow, however, but naturalizes the immobility of de-historicized stasis. Institutionalism does not imagine a better future, but one that will exactly replicate the present. This projective fantasy has three dangerous effects for democratic citizenship. Most obviously, it denies the very possibility of historical change. Deferring democracy into a future when our always cited grandchildren will enjoy the freedom we willingly for their sake forswear for ourselves, institutionalism assures citizens that, for all our melting-pot, rags-to-riches fictions of generational improvement, our grandchildren will want exactly what we want *for* them. This promise not only denies future generations of citizens the capacity to negotiate needs, values, and aspirations that differ from the present, it also naturalizes the idea of a democratic paternalism: that “we” should make institutions for “them” and not that they should do so for themselves.

Even granting its paternalistic premises, however, institutionalism's promise of a self-same future is not as altruistic as it at first appears. Rather, it flatters “us” with a pleasing image of a *currently* coherent and unified society. That is, if the future is a projection of “us” and that future is a place of democratic harmony, then it follows that we, too, enjoy unity, if only imminently. Our capacity to negotiate difference and generate a different future—the anti-institutional work of democracy—is thus mooted by institutionalism's elimina-

tion of the very appearance, material circumstances notwithstanding, of social division and conflict. To accept institutionalism's future, in other words, is to deny the nature of the social and, hence, of democracy.

What is most disturbing, however, is that institutionalism's appeal comes not despite but because of its cancellation of the needs and capacities for social negotiation and historical change. The power of institutions arises, according to antebellum theorists, from their capacity to outlast the mortality of constitutive members. To believe in the self-perpetuating "life" of institutions is to credit them with an agency of their own, separable from the embodied agency of participants and therefore unanswerable to their demands and visions. Separated from the various and often passionate participation of citizens, according to antebellum theorists, institutions operate impartially, disinterestedly, abstractly. It is precisely through antebellum theories of institutionalism (themselves responses to the popular uprisings of the French and Haitian revolutions), in fact, that the idea arises that democracy *should be* impartial, without conflict or passion. More dangerously, institutionalism imagined citizens, partisan and potentially passionate, as the subjective and therefore threatening others of "the political." While this contrast of citizen and institution in antebellum theory appears as a necessary balancing act, it in fact generates the interiority of citizens as intrinsically "passionate" and hence antipolitical and conversely conceives politics as a realm without conflict (the result of which is the idealization of "nonpartisan" centrism in the political discourse of our own age). Institutionalism thus "cleanses" the agency of partisan negotiation through the supposedly "impartial" operations of the institutionalized state. Even as interiority became the means to alienate citizens from the institutions they supposedly authorize, however, it was perceived as compensation, democracy's door prize. No longer entitled to exert agency *over* institutions, citizens were given the responsibility of regulating and managing the turbulent interiors that supposedly made them unfit for civic participation. Citizens became administrators, in short, of themselves.

The supplemental relationship of institutionalism and interiority produced what Marx in *The German Ideology* called "estrangement," the "consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations." This "objective power" Marx identified as the state, an "illusory form of communal life," which citizens believe comes about naturally, "not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of

the will and the action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these.” In return for our estranged power, Marx wrote, we are given our “particular interest,” which prevents us from seeing our “communal interest.” As interiorized self-management became the primary form of “particular interest” in the antebellum United States, institutionalism became the corollary “estrangement” of citizens’ agency, supposedly supplementing but in fact appropriating the capacity of citizens to act for themselves.¹¹

In focusing on the state as a series of interconnected institutions, I mean to displace the restrictive focus of so many recent studies of early-nineteenth-century U.S. literature on the nation and on nationalism. One finds, in the writing of antebellum political theories such as Lyman Beecher and Francis Lieber, less talk of *nationalism* than of the *state* as a network of civil institutions, of which nationalism is perhaps a late sedimentation. (Hence, as the second chapter shows, in times of “national” crisis the government defends seemingly apolitical institutions such as marriage.) Although *Interior States* is primarily interested in the emergence of a social interior in the antebellum United States, then, it does not make a claim for national particularity, not only because the discourses of reform, self-management, and institutionalism arose in other national contexts and traveled transnationally, but also because those very concepts mooted the efficacy of nationalism, relegating the “social” to the bodily interior and the ever expandable estrangement of that body in institutions, neither of which was bound by geopolitical borders.

Perhaps it was this extranational capacity that linked interiority to the network of tracts, newspapers, fiction, lectures, and material culture that made up what became known collectively as “social reform.” In the first decades of the nineteenth century, movements sprang up to reform almost every aspect of public and private life in the United States, including efforts to liberalize religion, abolish slavery, encourage temperance, ease the condition of the urban poor, renovate education, establish the vote for women, popularize “free love,” and institutionalize the teachings of the French socialist Charles Fourier in agrarian communities such as Brook Farm, Oneida, and Fruitlands.¹² Reformers saw structural inequalities arising from the coercion of labor, the unequal distribution of profit and opportunity, the legal disenfranchisement of classes of citizens, and the stultifying aridity of conventional domesticity. In response, they called for the overthrow of what Ralph Waldo Emerson decried as “a system of distrust, of concealment, of superior keenness, not of giving but of taking advantage,” and sought to establish instead ways of life one might consider with “joy and self-approval in his hour of love and aspiration.”¹³

The popularity of these reform movements suggests how tenaciously citizens

held on to the promise and pleasures of associational life, even as the “societies” they joined, invested in the institutional circulation of social interiority, transformed local associations into what Michael Warner identifies as America’s first mass public.¹⁴ The 527 U.S. antislavery societies in 1836 more than doubled to 1,300 by 1838, claiming 109,000 members, while in 1835 an estimated 1.5 million Americans belonged to temperance societies.¹⁵ Through these societies and their vast networks of publications and lectures, reformers helped generate the concept of “public opinion,” over which they maintained an unshakable hold. “We rarely see the Reformer,” Henry David Thoreau commented, “who is fairly launched in his enterprise bringing about the right state of things with hearty and efficacious tugs, and not rather preparing and grading the way through the minds of the people.”¹⁶

My interest in *Interior States* is not in reform’s role in generating a static mass public, however, but in the significant changes in the objects of reform—in what we might call *reformability*, a set of recalcitrant predispositions rather than of correctable actions—in the antebellum period. Initially, abolitionists in the 1820s and 1830s imagined those predispositions in highly valued terms, as an inclination on the part of African Americans toward hard work, civic order, and emulation of virtuous teachers. Not only were African Americans capable of citizenship, abolitionists argued, they embodied what, in chapter 3, I call the *citizen form*, a compendium of virtues emanating from a *civil interiority*. So exemplary was this interior state, chapter 3 shows, that white abolitionists imagined themselves as black in order to assume a civic depth that white citizens, passionate and prejudiced, were assumed to lack. If such constructions took from African Americans the right to define values and social arrangements that might compete with the citizen form, they nevertheless granted a core civility that contrasts starkly with the gothic interiorities of the 1840s.

During that decade, reform moved from a focus on structural injustices such as slavery to individual vices such as drinking, gambling, masturbation, eating spicy foods, smoking, reading trashy novels, and wearing tight corsets. As increasing numbers of everyday leisure activities—eating, dressing, sex, recreational reading—became conceived as reformable vices, nearly any non-laboring citizen could be said to possess reformability. The dissemination of reformability dramatically extended reform’s reach into the middle-class institutions of marriage and family and, in the process, obscured the *systematic* injustices borne by slaves, the poor, or the disenfranchised, locating the cause of their suffering in individual flaws of character that everyone potentially shared. The shift from structural to individual reform turned the institutions of privacy into sites of surveillance and habitual correction. Parents were encouraged to

spy on children and servants, spouses to inspect one another for signs of disloyalty, children to watch for alcoholism in parents. Ultimately, however, it was not the responsibility of parents or employers to maintain a vigilant watch over unruly natures. Rather, it was each citizen's civic obligation to manage himself or herself.

In the end, however, no amount of self-management could decisively change one's nature, as the interior remained divided and conflictual, out of sight and beyond reach. Because of this resolute irredeemability, interiority became visible not as discrete dispositions, but as their sedimentation into what we today call identities. Reformers sought to codify and regulate identities, conceived as a mass of reformable inclinations and drives, the new language of interior unrest. One could not take a drink without becoming a drunkard or engage in "solitary vice" without becoming a masturbator. Reformers coined terms such as "addict," "alcoholic," "psychopath," "con man," "hoodlum," and "pornographer" to turn actions into identities that were, despite their emergence in reform contexts, ultimately inalterable ("incorrigible," "intransigent," "recalcitrant," and "irredeemable" were also reform coinages).¹⁷ In an age of increased economic speculation, the irredeemable lacked a contractual frame of mind, characterized in terms of ephemerality, immediate gratification, nostalgia, and recklessness, and were incapable of evaluating consequences or of sexual, social, or economic reproduction. By the end of the nineteenth century, such traits would divide and solidify a host of recognizable social identities: the violent and shiftless black, the loose and frivolous female, and ultimately the narcissistic and pleasure-seeking homosexual. Before settling into recognizable population types, however, the attributes that marked citizens as reformable floated promiscuously, attaching to a range of diverse and shifting social bodies and their new literary corollaries—the whore, the swindler, the libertine, the gambler, the social climber, the drunkard—whose natures, like those of their real-world counterparts, were composed of unnatural appetites and desires. In both fictional and sociological accounts of degradation, reformability became the habitual state of groups who were, ironically, the *most* biologically and economically (re)productive: immigrants, slaves, Jews, workers, and urbanites whose bodily acts became the expressive indices of their interiors rather than the other way around. Addicted, licentious, vulgar, and gluttonous, devoted to hedonism rather than productive labor, nostalgic and melancholy rather than forward-looking, trafficking in ephemera rather than building permanent structures, the reformable in effect became the normative modern citizen, whose wayward inclinations could be countered only by the institutional disinterest of the state.

Beyond defining individual identities, however, reformable predispositions

came to characterize clusters of bodies—what became known as *cultures*—that were social extensions of those bodies and their interiors, not the other way around. Cultures, no less than individuals, became characterized, judged, and regulated on the basis of reformable interiority. In so doing, antebellum reformers normalized or vilified forms of sociality depending on whether they affirmed or challenged the values and arrangements of emerging middle-class privacy. Throughout the 1840s, reform targeted modes of sociality that were public, collective, nostalgic, pleasurable, and unproductive (although they often involved the sharing of material goods and information) and that therefore countered the middle-class values of futurity, privacy, self-restraint, generational productivity, and competitive individualism. These adjudications between valuable and reformable socialities were made in the name of health rather than economics or social power (masturbation was said to waste reproductive energy needed to generate children, for instance, while eating spicy foods over-stimulated the nervous system, unfitting one for work). In popular fictions of the 1840s and 1850s, as chapter 4 shows, barrooms were depicted as sites of a raucous sociality that became the primary target of temperance reform, more than the consumption of alcohol itself. Despite the fact that most people in the antebellum United States drank at home rather than in barrooms, the home became alcoholism's other in this fiction, promising health and an orderly productivity by nurturing the values—what I call the inner life of capital—necessary to participate in the competitive market.

As I have already suggested, however, the goal of reform was not self- or collective management but *failed* management. While abolition and temperance reformers might depict conflict between people or groups characterized by clear interiorities (the addicted drunkard versus the self-restrained teetotaler, the licentious overseer versus the chaste slave), reform literature increasingly focused on the conflicts that raged in the interiors of each and every person. As chapter 5 argues, despite reform's production of clear and easily distinguishable "types" of interiority (good or bad, licentious or pure, productive or unproductive, self-indulgent or self-restrained), no one lives in either of these positions. They are impossible endpoints that exist only hypothetically, off the scale of human experience. Rather, citizens possessed of riven interiorities shuttle perpetually *between* self-control and appetite, desire and deferral, wait and want. That shuttling—the condition I analyze in the fifth chapter as nervous citizenship—is the necessary result of the interiorization of social division.

There is, then, an obvious contradiction in reform literature, a tension

between promised resolution and perpetual self-management. On the one hand, reform espoused self-management as achievable through habitual exercise and continual vigilance. On the other, the perpetual presence of a multiply divided interior meant that the forces of addictive appetite were never entirely conquerable, any more than the borders of any given social unit could ever be effectively closed. It is precisely the tension between these two views of interiority that made reform a self-authorizing and self-perpetuating enterprise. More troubling, the two views generate in citizens an endless (and endlessly failed) effort to achieve a goal that is, to say the least, illusory. Struggling continually to achieve an absolute state that existed only as a fictional possibility, shuffled between states of degradation and purity, the reformable subject became the nervous citizen, caught in the tense contradictions between two equally impossible epistemologies in ways that could serve only to escalate the fretful vigilance and failed self-managements of the individual subject. The failures of nervous citizenship ensured the ongoing effort that made an increasingly de-socialized citizenry feel nevertheless active.

* * * * *

Whether the intended outcome of nervous interiority was the benevolent uplift of degraded populations or the production of self-managed social order and productive labor, the results were unforeseen in the period's political theory and reform literature. Encouraging citizens to work at internal integrity rather than to struggle with social negotiation, discourses of interiority produced consequences that filled the flamboyant pages of popular fiction. Those unforeseen yet powerful deployments of interiority make up the counter-narrative of the first five chapters of *Interior States*. Such counter-narratives—made of unruly affects, mental waywardness, and inventive extravagances—took the form of persistent and seemingly unmotivated melancholy (as in Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* or Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," discussed in chapter 1) or of sadomasochistic intimacy (as in Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures*, discussed in chapter 2). Often they took the shape of irrepressible appetites and errant desires (as in the temperance fictions of Timothy Shay Arthur and Walt Whitman or in George Lippard's gothic masterpiece, *The Quaker City*, discussed in chapters 4 and 5). The desires, appetites, and longings that evade reform, that refuse integration into the mandated orders of self-management, I argue throughout *Interior States*, become an archive of democratic aspirations that have been discredited or foreclosed, the visions of citizens who are socially dead yet living—often persistently and even ragefully so—in the interior state.

Although such demands and aspirations were sometimes discredited as unhealthy, illicit, addictive, even monstrous, they were most often simply trivialized as *imaginary*. It might stand to reason that when social relations became the stuff of interiority, imagination, in turn, became intrinsically *social*. And yet it was the capacity of the imagination to see what has not already been seen, to imagine narratives of social interaction unaccounted for by discourses of the “real,” that the antebellum period denigrated as fantastic and trivial, too big and too small to be properly “social.” In the fictions of the period, the work of imagination became screaming dissent and murmured epiphany, the manias, reveries, neuroses, and daydreams that fill the pages of popular fiction. Those fictions were frequently themselves the target of reform efforts, decried in the same terms that characterized the people deemed reformable: ephemeral, seductive, impractical, unhealthy, selfish, and unproductive. The assault on imagination drove a wedge between invention and politics that became one of our most destructive inheritances from the period of popular reform. When antebellum phrenologists analyzed the Great Men of the Republic (John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, Andrew Jackson), using portraits, death masks, and busts, they found them rich in Enlightenment virtues that make public order possible: common sense, reason, civic responsibility, self-control. Yet in every case, the statesmen were lacking in one trait: marvelousness, the capacity to see what is not empirically observable, to think beyond precedent, to imagine. The public orders of the state had no need for the capacity to marvel—to be surprised out of the expected and the already known, to see the unimaginable as if it were real—but the loss for democracy, as the fiction of the 1840s and 1850s demonstrates, was heart-rending.

To denigrate imaginative acts—to place them outside the orders of the state—was not, of course, to shame them out of existence but simply to deny their public status as social theory, as democratic participation. Made unpublic, imagination, like other forms of discredited sociality in antebellum America, became an interior state. *Interior States* demonstrates how the forms of inner labor—nervousness, desire, appetite, fantasy, the language of estranged personhood—became in antebellum fiction articulations of democratic strivings that, however trivialized, refused to disappear. If fantasy is a poor substitute for revolution, as I argue in chapter 6, it is nevertheless a tool available to citizens of the interior state, one that, working in a sanctioned and (seemingly) safely depoliticized register, survived the material normalization of middle-class values in the antebellum United States. Viewed in this light, imaginative fiction is not a mere reflection of social values and mores, handy documents of more immedi-

ate historical and cultural forces. Rather, imaginative fiction is the archive of the socially possible, an archive of alternatives to the historically or sociologically “real.” To study literature of the antebellum period, then, is to find not what “was” but what might have been, what citizens aspired to in an age when public aspirations were disappearing before the interiorized self-managements of reform. The aesthetics of antebellum fiction are not simply transpositions of European literary conventions; they are blueprints of social negotiation and associational empowerment that the socially “real” refused to credit as anything other than neurotic or whimsical. The ongoing work of interiorized democracy, that is to say, can be found in the products of the imagination, which can be read not only in the explicitly social narratives sponsored by reform, but also in the aesthetic conventions—and even more so in the frequent disruptions of those conventions—that constitute antebellum U.S. popular fiction.

As a case in point, the final two chapters of *Interior States* focus on the emergence of the romance as a particularly fantastic refusal of both reformist interiority and middle-class institutionalism. African American authors faced a particular challenge in narrativizing interiority, as enfranchising discourses of racial “uplift” mandated the simultaneity of civility (public order) and identification (interior order). In taking up the inventive strategies of romanticism, black authors assailed that alignment by dismantling the necessary orders of civility and the coherence of identification. Martin Delany’s *Blake* and Hannah Crafts’s *The Bondwoman’s Narrative* undertake this effort, demonstrating how (white) civil order is maintained through discourses of self-regulatory uplift that result not in the public enfranchisement of African Americans as citizens, but in the interiorization of a de-socialized “blackness.” While Delany views that “blackness” as a unifying counter-force to social alternatives that he denigrates as superstition or fantasy, Crafts shows the process of identification (no matter the race or gender of the supposedly unifying imago) to be the disabling work of romantic civility and offers fantasy and superstition as potent alternatives to identification. Although these works counter each other in their strategies, they are alike in demonstrating the disastrous consequences of separating public and interior life, showing public civility to be the enemy of imaginative revolution. Romanticism falls short of revolution in both works, the allure of private civility overcoming the demand for structural justice. It is the imaginative work of romanticism, however, that holds open in both novels the revolutionary potential for sociality without either identity or civility.

Most frequently, romances challenged interiority by denying the power of precedent—the pre-given rules that characterize, classify, and hierarchize inte-

rior traits in ways that make the disciplinary imperatives of those categories seem like the innocent naming of interiority's inevitable conformity. A whimsical example of how romanticism challenged this fictional alignment is found in the "Cetology" chapter of *Moby-Dick*, in which Herman Melville ridicules the "systemized exhibition" of interior traits that will produce a clear taxonomy of whales.¹⁸ Instead of aligning interiority with law, Melville insists, whales' "internal parts" reveal "peculiarities . . . indiscriminately dispersed among all sorts of whales, without any regard to what may be the nature of their structure." If "a rabble of uncertain, fugitive, half-fabulous whales" can defy "right classification," he continues, surely human interiority contains the social possibilities of an "almost frantic democracy."¹⁹ For Melville, the illusory and elusive borders between desire and world making, aesthetics and empiricism, fantasy and freedom, make interiority a realm not of regulatory taxonomy, but of what Michael Rogin names subversive genealogy.²⁰ Revealing not identity but variety, not compliance but deviation, interior states for Melville are intrinsically *queer* places, in the nineteenth-century sense of unpredictable, unusual, and unconventional.

Melville's description of the "rabble" of "half-fabulous whales" suggests that the conditions of queerness—of the "uncertain" and the "fugitive," the ephemeral and the contingent—do not foreclose sociality but may be its most promising opportunities. As chapter 7 shows, the "half-fabulous" qualities of contingency and ephemerality are the basis of queer sociality in the most imaginative romances of the antebellum period: Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* and Melville's *Pierre* and *Clarel*. Those romances undermine interiority by taking it too much at its word, making it so deep, so opaque, so *interior* that its operations can no longer be made public and hence reformed. Throughout these works, the aspirations and desires of characters are so powerful that they pass beyond the regulatory precedents of the law, generating forms and objects of passionate attachment that refuse to conform to normative and institutionalized conventions. Despite their radical inscrutability, however, these forms of attachment are extraordinarily generous, opening to include strangers in a queer sociality built on ethics of mutual responsibility and affection that is not predicated on shared histories or identities. The democratic queerness of *The House of the Seven Gables*, *Pierre*, and *Clarel*—frail, contingent, alienated, but also richly inventive, respectful of mystery, obliquely eroticized, and persistently public—echoes the ephemeral and contingent socialities of the disenfranchised in barrooms, dens of iniquity, and licentious boudoirs throughout the pages of popular fiction. If the appetites, desires, and fantasies generated in these spaces were themselves the productions of inte-

riority, they were also, as the romances of Delany, Crafts, Hawthorne, and Melville show, interiority's most imaginative protest.

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While *Interior States* suggests that romances often deploy imagination to counter the imperatives of interiority, it does not seek to romanticize interiority per se. Quite the contrary. In the contemporary world, interiority has become ubiquitous in public discourse (such as it is), serving as the grounds of conviction ("That's just how I feel inside"), satisfaction ("I felt all warm inside"), and even identity ("I have to be true to who I am deep down"). Deployed as a final determination of meaning, the grounds of adjudication, interiority brings democratic negotiation to an end. While interiority is now ubiquitous—Hayden White goes as far as to declare that interiority has rendered it "not only impossible but also undesirable even to aspire to the creation of full-blown sciences of man, culture, and society"²¹—I do not believe that it is inevitable. The epilogue posits the possibility of post-interior sociality based on debate and negotiation without the interior states of desire as agency or emotions as adjudicative grounds. Unlike other theories of post-interiority that propose the necessary abandonment of humanism, I suggest that a humanist vocabulary, divorced from the adjudicative grounds of interiority, might prove a productive means for generating social associations of citizens skilled in negotiating differences among strangers. This state of social negotiation without the forms of adjudicative interiority that have come to define modern personhood I call *humanism without humans*.

The work of making a post-interior democracy must be local and ad hoc, contingent and creative. It must begin now, among people who have reclaimed their estranged powers, not deferred to a generational future or abstracted to the agency of institutions. As Emerson wrote in "Experience": "I settle myself ever the firmer in the creed that we should not postpone and refer and wish, but do broad justice where we are, by whomsoever we dwell with, accepting our actual companions and circumstances, however humble or odious, as the mystic officials to whom the universe has delegated its whole pleasure for us." Undeferred, local, pleasurable, and inventive, made among strangers who may be odious and still be treated as companions, democracy may yet transform "the true romance the world exists to realize" into "practical power" and a "victory yet for all justice." This is the promise of the post-interior world, for, as Emerson also cautioned, "the world is all outside; it has no inside."²² Taking up the possibilities of humanism without humans, a romantic sociality beyond the reformable interiorities that, in turn, are the grounds of contemporary public

life, we may find that democracy is not dead but ready to emerge in unprecedented possibilities for social action. The power of post-interior sociality is the democratic possibility Tocqueville saw in Americans' proclivity to association. "There is no end which the human will despair of attaining," he wrote, "by the free action of the collective power of individuals."²³ If interiority has become the shadowy archive of that power, then it is time to leave the archive and reenter the world.

“MATTERS OF INTERNAL CONCERN”:

FEDERAL AFFECT AND THE MELANCHOLY CITIZEN

Responding in Federalist 27 to anti-federalists such as William Findley, who cautioned that the new system of centralized governance was “not merely (as it ought to be) a Confederation of States, but a Government of Individuals,”¹ Alexander Hamilton unexpectedly turned his attention to the interior lives of citizens:

Man is very much a creature of habit. A thing that rarely strikes his senses will generally have but a transient influence upon his mind. A government continually at a distance and out of sight, can hardly be expected to interest the sensations of the people. The inference is, that the authority of the union, and the affections of the citizens towards it, will be strengthened, rather than weakened, by its extension to what are called matters of internal concern; and that it will have less occasion to recur to force, in proportion to the familiarity and comprehensiveness of its agency.²

The “more the operations of the national authority are intermingled in the ordinary exercise of government,” Hamilton continued, “the more citizens are accustomed to meet with it in the common occurrences of their political life; the more it is familiarized to their sight, and to their feelings, the further it enters into those objects, which touch the most sensible chords, and put in motion the most active strings of the human heart; the greater will be the probability, that it will conciliate the respect and attachment of the community.”³ Hamilton understood that turning people into citizens required reaching them where they live, which was not yet in a nation but in churches, families, and communities where the affective bonds of loyalty and affection already existed. Those familiar locations of feelings held structures of hierarchy that, if reoriented toward federal affiliation, would render coercive power obsolete. Hamilton saw that education in social feelings precedes the law, rendering its dictates palatable to citizens who might otherwise see little profit in consenting to its restrictions or in answering to its interpellative naming.⁴

In turning the social feelings into “matters of internal concern,” Hamilton makes clear that at the close of the eighteenth century, citizenship was becoming an interior state in which individuals were being encouraged to recognize the interests and disciplines of the state as originating not in coercive legalisms or competitive capitalism, but in their “deep” selves. That Hamilton’s phrase “internal concern” can signify the interior of both the nation-state and the citizen’s body suggests how interconnected the two were becoming in the federal imaginary. The nation-state’s future as an imagined community required, as Hamilton recognized, a federalization of affect: the creation of metaphors of “innerness” to serve as sites of correspondence between individual bodies (character, personality, even biology) and state interest. Although purportedly immutable (beyond the possibility of collective, public redefinition and change) and instinctual (beyond the reach of volitional self-control), federalized affect resulted from collective discourses learned, as Hamilton suggests, through rituals rehearsed to teach citizens that affect determines social order in ways that preexist “the social” itself. This belief that civic life arises from a self-contained depth, and not the other way around, had the effect of limiting citizens’ public participation within prescribed forms of “private” life while promising, through the management of their interior states, a phantom social volition.

Despite Hamilton’s confidence, however, participation in the federalization of affect appears to have been less than universal. The literature of the early republic registers citizens’ resentment at their loss of control over powers to associate, much less to *feel*, as they saw fit. As several critics have noted, early national literature is saturated with a profound melancholy that marks the impassable boundary between sanctioned forms of “private life” and the divergent affects and attachments that animate citizens’ progressive imaginations.⁵ Melancholy marks the border not only between public and private spheres but, more urgently, between a “public” that is increasingly inaccessible to a privatized citizenry and a realm of interactive sociability that is marked as much by disorder and dissent as by the managed “character” of sanctioned citizenship. The latter, characterized within the federalized public as the trivial and self-indulgent “fantasies” of the disenfranchised, moved increasingly into the never entirely subterranean space of the human interior, where it became archived as the losses manifested through melancholy. While melancholy seems to preserve a material loss, it is important to note that, rather than archiving an ideal sociality that existed in historical time, melancholy more often preserves the power of social imagining itself, the inventive potential that makes social alternatives not merely imaginable but attainable. Read in this way, melancholy is

not an involuntary reaction to irretrievable loss, but a productive act of democratic imagination through which citizens safeguard their social aspirations by situating them in history (what is lost must once have existed) and in human interiority (melancholy disguises social visions as involuntary convulsions of emotion). While seeming to concede to calls for citizens to understand the social *as* affective, then, melancholy reveals the tense but constitutive relationship of history and interiority, of the social investments in interior states, and of a consequent “loss” (which is also an aspiration) that is necessarily both deeply personal and inexorably collective. The literary works discussed here—Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette*, Washington Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle,” and Caroline Dall’s *The Romance of the Association*—depict the diminished public participation brought about by citizens’ education in sanctioned interiority while simultaneously showing how affective redaction allowed the unruly interiors of citizens in the making to contest federalization by preserving in their melancholy interiors the hopes for a different—and better—social world.

Federal Affect

A critical problem for the new nation, as Michael Warner has shown, arose from the contested sovereignty of law: having delegitimized British rule, denying the representativeness of law (if the American people were not represented in Parliament, they had no obligation to honor British laws), the Founders could not simply declare the legal authority of a new federal constitution. At the same time, to leave unfettered the revolutionary dispersal of social agency was to legitimize a radically democratic state in which people agreed to rules only when convinced, by demonstrable outcomes, that laws were necessary. The danger faced by the Founders was the unpredictable lines of local affiliation and the unrestrained modes of social imagination they produced. To contain this danger, Warner argues, the Founders reinstated the sovereignty of law through the detachment of writing: by granting agency to the abstract trope “We, the People” that stands as a non-reciprocal substitute for local assembly, “writing became the hinge between a delegitimizing revolutionary politics and a non-revolutionary, already legal signification of the people.” Republican beliefs about the disinterestedness of print further “elevated the values of generality over those of the personal. In this cognitive vocabulary the social diffusion of printed artifacts took on the investment of the disinterested virtue of the public orientation,” Warner notes, “as opposed to the corrupting interests and passions of particular and local persons.”⁶

Warner’s powerful analysis of print’s role in redirecting local presence into

the abstract and, hence, non-negotiable sovereignty of law, however, fails to account for why Hamilton, instead of arguing against “the corrupting interests and passions of particular and local persons,” encouraged those “passions” in managed channels. A crucial question for the interpellative theory of legal sovereignty, in other words, is why, if local assembly was as satisfactorily participatory as Warner contends, citizens invested in the abstract simulacra of the Constitution. How did a people skeptical of the law know to “listen” for their name in its print proclamations? The answer to these questions lies in the rhetorical production of “feelings” that enabled people to believe, affectively, in their federalized name, “citizen,” or to take affective belief *as* the grounds of acceptable naming. The shift in post–Revolutionary America was not simply from local assembly to legal print, then; it was a circulation between those entities carried out through the federalization of affect.

Such circulations were enabled largely through one of the prevailing fascinations of political and literary discourse in late-eighteenth-century America: friendship. In the movement toward constitutional law, friendship linked local speech and abstract print, making the abstract interpellations of law emotionally satisfying and hence believable to the citizens of the new nation. The role friendship played in interiorizing federal law into the affective orders of “social feelings” can be discerned in the emergence of the Constitution from its predecessor, the Articles of Confederation. While the Constitution asserts a unified national entity (“the People”) established prior to the interpellation of print, the Articles located juridical power among bodies assembled in a particular space and time: “whereas the Delegates of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, did, on the 15th day of November, in the Year of Our Lord One thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy seven, and in the Second Year of Independence of America, agree to certain articles of Confederation.” Through the primary authority of locally and historically situated individuals, the states take on the qualities nominally possessed by autonomous citizens, each state maintaining “its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.” Having figured the states as autonomous citizens (“in Congress assembled”), the Articles set forth their association as the affective give-and-take of friendship: “the said states hereby enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their Liberties, and their internal and general welfare.”⁷ By figuring the confederation of state power through a metaphorical equivalence with the negotiations of friendship, the Articles bridged the widening gap between local assembly and abstract legality.

In the Articles, furthermore, affective affiliations took precedence over the abstract categories of law, even while their suturing, through the transfer of friendship to abstract state personalities, became what Warner calls “the site where all lesser collectivities are evacuated.”⁸ Having established this affective rationale, the legal apparatus no longer required its metaphorical equivalences: the primary purpose of law in the Constitution is no longer to guarantee friendship but to ensure its own jurisdiction. The language of rights and immunities, of juridical purview, therefore carried over from the Articles to the Constitution, but the affective rationale of “friendship” was removed.⁹

There is, of course, a tension inherent in the transformation of friendship from a local affiliation with historically and spatially localized subjects into legal sovereignty and abstract affinity. In the *Federalist Papers*, for instance, friendship sometimes describes the peaceful coherence of secular division into national unity (as in Hamilton’s papers 8 and 11) and the already proposed nation’s entrance into international commerce (as in Jay’s papers 4 and 5). At other times, however, friendship figures as a counter-federal force arising from the competing loyalties of still localized citizens. In Madison’s paper 46, for instance, the “superintending care” of federal government is a corrective to the “ties of personal acquaintance and friendship, and of family and party attachments.”¹⁰ In arguing for a single president over a corporate leadership, Hamilton asserts in paper 76 that a president “will have *fewer* personal attachments to gratify” and therefore “will be so much the less liable to be misled by the sentiments of friendship and of affection.”¹¹ The tension in these conceptions of friendship—which serve both as a guarantor of peaceful cooperation and the cause of rancorous discord and disunity—is veiled by the narrative sequence of the papers themselves: having channeled local affection into federal coherence, that coherence, over the course of the papers, serves to eradicate the competing claims of unruly affection and its local affiliations. The theory of constitutional interpellation notes the second step, but not the first, and by ignoring the first—the ways in which citizen-subjects were shaped to guarantee the orderly management of a federalized civil sphere—readings of early American constitutionality miss the opportunities that existed for alternative forms of social configuration and citizenship.

Although scholars have recently investigated early American sympathy and other forms of social feeling, the federalization of affect has nevertheless escaped critical attention, perhaps because it stayed *federal* for a relatively brief period of time.¹² Hamilton’s call for a national pedagogy of orderly affect was quickly translated into—and found its broader fulfillment in—the social “uplift” movements that flourished in the 1820s and 1830s, forerunners of the

institutional reforms that subsequent chapters examine. “Legislature may enact laws, but education must originate their conception, and interpret their meaning,” Jonathan Blanchard told the American Institute of Instruction in 1835. “Government may check and restrain, but duty and obedience are the result of instruction. The hopes of our country depend on the bias which the minds of our children and youth receive.”¹³ Blanchard surpassed Hamilton in placing national pedagogy in the hands of civil institutions that precede law in making acceptable to citizens social orders whose goal is not the enhancement of liberty but its constraint. Those constraints, Blanchard frankly noted, become palatable through the promise (“hopes”) of an abstract national association (“our country”) deferred to the horizons of futurity.¹⁴ If that future never arrives, citizens can prepare for it, in Blanchard’s program, by training themselves in proper feelings, which are presented as the fundamental human desire for social relationships such as friendship:

Desire of society is as truly a part of our nature, as the dread of anguish or the love of life. This simple original desire, finds its gratification in the exercise of those natural affections, which interest us in the welfare of our kindred, our friends, our acquaintances, and our race; and, together with these affections, it forms that complex class of emotion, which we call the social feelings; and these, again, being constantly excited by the circumstances and relations of life, grow into a permanent habit, and become the all-pervading, master-feeling of the soul. (3)

Without explicitly proscribing a citizen’s affiliations (which might take forms other than an abstract and exclusionary “race”) or prescribing the modes of participatory consent (the family, which is based on non-consensual relations of obligation and hierarchy, becomes the affective original of which the civil sphere, nominally based on more evenly distributed consent, is simply a reflection), Blanchard yokes public order and private affect in a way that is seemingly consistent with democratic rhetorics of self-determination. At the same time, the privileging of the private realm as a prior yet equivalent source of “social feelings” promises citizens civic participation while limiting the scope of identification and action. What drops out of Blanchard’s equation of the affections of the private realm and the abstract associations of “race” is precisely the *social* itself, the interactions of people who are perhaps unknown to one another but nevertheless invested in a collectively conceived design for shared opportunity and mutually satisfying justice.¹⁵

Blanchard does not disguise his efforts to naturalize social relations into the private and bodily confines of the human interior. On the contrary, he self-

consciously, if counter-intuitively, locates the “natural” in the disciplinary procedures of training, habit, and mastery—the social technologies that will produce the natural affects that in turn guarantee the orderly operations of society.¹⁶ The initial divergence of feeling and law enables Blanchard to divert attention from the constraints of juridical prohibition by locating the language of coercion (“master-feeling”) within the self-contained human interior. That gesture both permits the naturalizing of constraint in the language of desire (the law’s powers are simply an extension of what the body already craves) and maintains the illusion of democratic consent by giving citizens control not over the law, but over the law written in their own natures. As Blanchard recognizes, social order without habitually trained affect lays bare the potential dispersion of a supposedly unified “race,” the members of which feel no instinctive investment in the managed orders of its law. “Strike out the social feelings,” Blanchard declares, “and a mere intellectual skeleton is all which you leave” (6). The connection between an “intellectual skeleton” and affective satisfaction comes in the priority accorded feelings cast as habitually restrained social order; for democracy to work, that is, sentiment had to supersede legal classicism. With the dissemination of federal affect through the growth of social reform in the 1820s and 1830s, in other words, the Enlightenment era of “legal sovereignty” ended in the United States and the romantic period of interiorized sociality began.

Due in large part to this transition, Blanchard could appear not, like Hamilton, as an architect of federal power, but as an agent of progressive change who believed that “the rules laid down for cultivating the social feelings are such as, if children once thoroughly imbibe, they could not but shrink with horror from all war, spiritual despotism, slavery, intemperance, and impurity—the head evils under which the world at present groans” (25). Moving as it does from war and slavery to drunkenness and illicit sexuality, from structural injustice to bodily illness, Blanchard’s list predicts the increased privatization of reform in the following two decades. While his articulation of the “uplift” available through civic education would seem to proclaim a new phase in civil liberty, in which citizens educate themselves in ways distinct from the juridical imperatives of the state, viewing his program alongside Hamilton’s call for federal affect demonstrates the continuities between legal sovereignty and private affect—what I am calling *interior states*—in ways that complicate formulations of the civil sphere as a site of independence from and contestation of state interests.

The fact that the federalization of affect sought to manage and limit citizens’ affiliations does not mean, however, that citizens surrendered their capability to

imagine competing forms of social relationship, of “friendship,” as Washington Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle” and Hannah Foster’s *The Coquette* demonstrate. Both texts show that friendship remained a concept through which early Americans struggled to understand competing models of sociality and alliance. On the one hand, friendship was a negotiated relationship between proximate people who insist on their autonomous status *prior to* the law. On the other hand, the Constitution’s subsuming of “friendship” into a print circulation that establishes the law prior to human interaction—that establishes consent to a rule-bound model of civil relationship as fundamental to human interaction—places citizens in a privacy severely proscribed by social conventions. If the former asserts the citizens’ entitlement to shape public life in accordance with their particular, localized needs and desires, the latter imagines a civility built on the traits of an abstract and liberal character, serving the interests of the emergent public orders of governmentality (unity, loyalty, self-sacrifice) and capital (openness, diligence, organization).

Central to the ways Irving and Foster wrestle with these competing definitions of friendship is the relationship, in federal rhetoric, between affective alliance and mobility. In the Articles of Confederation, for example, most references to the friendship between states occur in the first three articles. Article IV, however, yokes friendship to the imperative movements of commerce: “the better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the people of the different states in this union, the free inhabitants of each of these states, paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice exempted, shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several states; and the people of each state shall have free ingress and regress to and from any other state, and shall enjoy therein all the privileges of trade and commerce, subject to the same duties, impositions and restrictions as the inhabitants thereof respectively.”¹⁷ Friendship gives way to mobility—the movement between states—tied not only to a growing market economy, but to the presumed *stability* of private life. The vagabonds, paupers, and fugitives from justice who shape friendship’s outer boundaries establish an ideal citizen who is economically engaged, situated in a definable home, and willing to believe that laws sufficiently ensure justice. While privacy becomes apparently more stable, public life, tied to commerce, is structured by mobility, the site where no citizen has a time or place. Suturing the asserted, only ever imaginary, split between localized privacy and mobile publicity is the law, which maintains the local and affective dynamics of “friendship” in the face of growing physical and economic distances generated by an increasingly federal (and, quickly, global) market. Caught between law and commerce, “friendship” holds the space of negotia-

tion, contingency, and dissent—of citizen participation—in a discursive structure that is already designed to play both ends off the middle.

Even in such a seemingly well-ordered legal structure, however, citizens' dissent often took the form of unruly, ungainly, and unpredictable interiority. As Blanchard acknowledges, "When, from neglect of cultivation, the social feelings sink into selfishness or sensuality, the imagination becomes introverted or polluted, and the heart thenceforth a festering centre of uncomfortable emotions," creating "the volcanic eruptions of furious anger, mad enthusiasm, or unbridled licentiousness" (8). Just as the hopes of the republic can be read, Blanchard suggests, in the properly cheerful, sympathetic, and benevolent emotions that suggest the proper installation of legal "bias," so its threats can be traced in the darker, more volatile emotions that suggest an interiority resistant to civil order: "ill regulated social feelings produce nearly all the fretfulness and repining, melancholy and dejection, so common in society" (8).

Blanchard moves quickly to contain such expressions of social dissent, deploying the shame that would become, in the reform rhetorics of nineteenth-century America, the prison door on the private locations of identification and alliance constituting the everyday lives of citizens. "Few, indeed," Blanchard contends, "are those, who if their hearts were letters, would dare to have their nearest friends read them" (15). The epistolary misgivings of Foster's heroine are just such an open text, in which one may read not just legal abstractions, but the melancholic, licentious, and petulant longings for proximate and negotiable connections—friendships—that held open the space of a more radically contingent democracy within the abstract legal simulacra of national affinity.¹⁸ Friendship, for Eliza, is not the second-best relationship it has become in contemporary America (and was already becoming for the Founders). Rather, friendship was for Eliza something akin to what Foucault describes as a way of life, a mode of self-conscious invention beyond the interior prescriptions of civil institutions.¹⁹ Citizens living in the wake of the war might well have hoped, as Eliza does, that new freedoms, new virtualities, could be opened by a network of equally inventive citizens who would decide among themselves the ethical shape of their lives, with all its flexible pleasures, loyalties, and responsibilities. That, after all, is what democracy promises.

The Republic of Intercourse and the Supplemental Citizen

If the flexible intimacies of friendship rigidified into the abstract sovereignty of law, codifying local negotiations of social life into the abstract jurisdiction of the state, modern discipline required the opposite movement: the rules of civic

order needed to find expression in the local domain of the citizen's interiority, a task accomplished through discourses of "character." As Blanchard notes, the "social part of our nature is the scale of character upon which different degrees of excellence are marked down in heaven" (10). Absorbing local interactions ("social feelings") into something both more universal and more ordered, Blanchard makes character a sign of self-determined consent (what one has cultivated in oneself) and of identifications with abstract conventions of social behavior. "You may inform the intellect, in many things, by precept alone: but teaching the affections by precept is a flat absurdity," Blanchard states. "There is a chameleon habit in our nature, which makes our feelings change their colors to those we behold" (20). Having used "social feelings" to locate civic participation in the limited realm of one's affective training, Blanchard deploys "character" to put affect in the identificational thrall of social convention, a realm in which the citizen need no longer take an active part, affective satisfaction being the consolation for lost participation. For Blanchard, it is precisely the subject's willed and multiple identifications (one's "chameleon habit") that are stabilized by the abstract order of character.

Such notions of character grow from late-eighteenth-century endorsements of liberality that, like metaphors of friendship, yoked local affiliation to national identification. Needing to preserve the values of social interaction while severing citizens' local allegiances, the Founders (and the reformers who adapted their rhetoric) reconceived the affective qualities of local communities—sympathy, benevolence, tolerance—as functions not of relations *between* persons, but of something both larger and smaller: autonomous and abstract character.²⁰ Self-possessed character was measured not by empirical effects on other people, but on its likeness to definitions made familiar to citizens through circulation in newspapers, pamphlets, and manuals. Public and private, abstract and heartfelt, character emerged in dialectics of affect and alienation that promised freedom to those who were willing to reshape themselves along the lines of sanctioned character.²¹ Character thus assumed both an interpellative and a disciplinary function in the new republic, as pressures to exhibit conventional character became paradoxically recognized as "freedom."²²

Rhetorics of national belonging are rarely—if ever—constituted without the aid of an imagined "other," however, and character, despite its inclusive universality, is no exception.²³ The traits deemed "illiberal," character's constitutive other, became synonymous with those allegiances whose discrediting helped incorporate citizens as affective members of an abstract union: the prejudice of families, the narrowness of church and parties, the provincialism of small communities. Allegiances that competed with what Dana Nelson has aptly

called the imagined fraternity of national manhood were denigrated as constraining and coercive, the enemy of freedom. As discredited local formations lost their instructive authority over citizens, liberalized discourses of etiquette, manners, and health became civic preoccupations, preserving the order risked by the evacuation of localized sociality and attaching the discipline of individual bodies to increasingly generalized allegiances.²⁴ Beyond constituting local assemblies as inherently illiberal, the guides to early national character defined a series of traits and activities—anger, boisterousness, gossip, sensuality, intemperate desire—as illiberal, the unruly interiority not just of individual subjects who were the targets of antebellum reform, but of categories of identity that were *collectively* disenfranchised on the basis of their illiberal characters: women, African and Native Americans, the poor, the insane, prostitutes, drunkards, immigrants, bachelors and spinsters, children.

At the same time, character bore traces of the discredited affiliations it supplemented and supplanted. If Americans supposedly possessed an unusually high degree of exemplary virtue, character's alleged universality simultaneously threatened jingoistic claims to national exceptionalism. Especially as character became central to international commerce, its global circulations challenged the nation-state's self-contained and autonomous status, while international trade brought about cultural exchanges that highlighted character's composition in language and, hence, its deep ties to cultural ambition and prejudice. Regularly revealing its origins in language rather than deep selfhood, character further opened the vexed question of interpretation, the tendency of words to circumvent conventional meaning. Moved increasingly to the "soul" or the "heart," where language allegedly played no part, character attempted to stabilize the diversity of linguistic invention—and the subsequent multiplicity of local allegiances—by insisting on a solidity of virtue at the citizen's core while discrediting competing cultures and their linguistic practices. Yet those very practices—passion, temper, gossip, sensuality, fretfulness, boisterousness—continued to constitute other affiliations that contested the natural status of federal affect and the national character it allegedly cohered.

Character's ambitions and its attendant contradictions become apparent in a commencement address delivered in 1846 at Miami University in Ohio by the eminent political theorist Francis Lieber. In the widely reprinted address, "The Character of the Gentleman," Lieber articulates the transition from revolutionary concepts of social liberty to reformist insistence on orderly character.²⁵ "Liberty, which is the enjoyment of unfettered action, necessarily leads to licentiousness," he states. While "liberty offers to man, indeed, a free choice of action, it cannot absolve him from the duty of choosing what is right, fair,