

A QUESTION OF TIME

This book brings together leading critics in American literature to address the representation of time throughout a wide range of genres, methodologies, and chronological periods. American literature, from its beginnings to the present, provides a particularly rich set of texts to examine in this regard, with its interest in history, modernity, and progress. Each essay considers how time embeds itself in a variety of textual representations, including Native American rituals, Shaker dances, novels, poetry, and magazines, in order to provide readers with a capacious view of time's constitutive role in American literature. The essays are organized into four parts: Materializing Time, Performing Time, Timing Time, and Theorizing Time. Each section reflects a particular approach to the question of time, but taken as a whole, the volume makes visible unexpected temporal patterns that cut across time period and genre.

CINDY WEINSTEIN is Eli and Edythe Broad Professor of English at the California Institute of Technology. She is the author of *The Literature of Labor and the Labors of Literature: Allegory in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (1995), *Family, Kinship, and Sympathy in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (2005), and *Time, Tense, and American Literature: When Is Now?* (2015), all published by Cambridge University Press.

A QUESTION OF TIME

*American Literature from Colonial Encounter to
Contemporary Fiction*

EDITED BY
CINDY WEINSTEIN
California Institute of Technology



Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42288-8 — A Question of Time
Edited by Cindy Weinstein
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108422888
DOI: 10.1017/9781108525510

© Cambridge University Press 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-42288-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42288-8 — A Question of Time
Edited by Cindy Weinstein
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

For Jim, Sarah, and Sam

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page ix</i>
Introduction: A Question of Time: American Literature from Colonial Encounter to Contemporary Fiction <i>Cindy Weinstein</i>	I
PART I MATERIALIZING TIME	15
1 The Sense of Impending: Nathaniel Beverley Tucker’s <i>The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future</i> <i>Christopher Looby</i>	17
2 Mary Chesnut’s Epic Time <i>Julia A. Stern</i>	32
3 “I read my Mission as ‘twere a book’”: Temporality and Form in the Early African American Serial Sketch Tradition <i>Derrick R. Spires</i>	48
PART II PERFORMING TIME	75
4 “At the Time of that Look”: The Problems with Simultaneity in the Testimony at Salem <i>Nan Goodman</i>	77
5 Bad Timing: Indigenous Reception and American Literary Style <i>Angela Calcaterra</i>	93
6 André, Theatricality, and the Time of Revolution <i>Jonathan Elmer</i>	111
7 Shakers, Not Movers: The Physiopolitics of Shaker Dance <i>Elizabeth Freeman</i>	130

viii	CONTENTS	
PART III	TIMING TIME	153
8	And <i>Per Se</i> And: Time and Tempo in “The Masque of the Red Death” <i>Geoffrey Sanborn</i>	155
9	The Late Forever: Queer Temporality in the Poems of Frank Bidart, D. A. Powell, and Richard Siken <i>Marta Figlerowicz</i>	169
10	DeLillo, Slowing Down <i>Mark Goble</i>	184
11	Rhyming Times: The Architecture of Progressive Time and Simultaneity in Richard McGuire’s <i>Here</i> <i>Stefanie Sobelle</i>	206
PART IV	THEORIZING TIME	227
12	The Tone of Time: Specious Presence and the Jamesian Sentence <i>Jesse Matz</i>	229
13	Mediterraneans of the Americas: Going Anti-Imperial, Comparatively <i>Susan Gillman</i>	242
14	Faulkner’s <i>Light in August</i> and New Theories of Novelistic Time <i>Dorothy J. Hale</i>	266
15	“End of the End of the Line”: The Broken Temporality of David Foster Wallace’s <i>Infinite Jest</i> <i>Stefano Ercolino</i>	293
	Afterword <i>Robert S. Levine</i>	312
	<i>Bibliography</i>	325
	<i>Index</i>	347

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to many people for helping me bring this volume to fruition. The contributors, first and foremost, gave me a set of beautiful, creative, and thought-provoking essays. The task of introducing and arranging them was a pleasure and a challenge that I feel fortunate to have had. I would especially like to thank Dori Hale for being the first one to sign on to this project and for always being willing to talk about it one more time. To Bob Levine, thank you for changing your mind and agreeing to write the afterword, despite juggling a myriad number of other commitments.

Colleagues at the California Institute of Technology have been generous with their time, funds, and coffee. Thank you to Tracy Dennison, Catherine Jurca, Cecilia Lu, and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal.

Several people at Cambridge University Press have been indispensable, beginning with Ray Ryan, my editor and friend for many years, whose support for this project was unwavering right from the start, and Edgar Mendez and Sapphire Duveau for getting the manuscript into the production line and into the hands of Allan Alphonse and Plaegian Alexander. For her careful reading of the manuscript, I am deeply grateful to Sarah Weinstein. For assistance with the cover image, many thanks go to John Benicewicz of Art Resource and Todd Leibowitz of Artists Rights Society.

The dedication to Jim, Sarah, and Sam doesn't begin to convey how thankful I am for our shared past, present, and future.