

Introduction

During the early months of the U.S.-Mexico War, fueled by the writings of “The Pathfinder,” John C. Frémont, a sickly but adventurous seventeen-year-old from Cincinnati named Hector Lewis Garrard found employment with a shipping company in Missouri run by Céran St. Vrain and headed west on the Taos Trail. Garrard published a lively account of his experiences in his book *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail; Or Prairie Travel and Scalp Dances, with a Look at Los Rancheros from Muleback and the Rocky Mountain Campfire* (1850). Recorded in its pages is a remarkable succession of intercultural bewilderments, including one episode that commences with the arrival of the mule train at a Southern Cheyenne village in the western foothills of the Rocky Mountains, in November 1846. Fashioning himself as both an explorer and cultural documentarian, Garrard undertakes a glossary of the Cheyenne language, an endeavor that provokes considerable amusement among his Cheyenne hosts.

Thinking me a queer customer (*mah-son-ne*—“a fool”—as they were pleased to denominate me and my vocabularic efforts), [they] replied willingly to my inquiries of “*Ten-o-wast?*”—“What is it?”—at the same time pointing to any object whose name I wished to know. The squaws of our lodge gave me words, purposely, not easily articulated or written; my attempts at correct enunciation were greeted with lively sallies of laughter. Our conversation was carried on in broken, very broken sentences; and, I must say, the part that they too ably sustained was not of the most refined character.¹

As Garrard further relates, what these Cheyenne women found so entertaining about Garrard’s “vocabularic efforts” was the novelty that they were undertaken by one so young. Yet, Garrard’s youthful pantomime of the role of anthropological linguist invites the recognition that he, and the Cheyenne women who humored him, were participating in a highly conventionalized scenario of white-Indian contact—one that, by virtue of its

familiarity, was open to playful subversion of its informally scripted parts. In her influential book *The Archive and the Repertoire*, the Latin American performance theorist Diana Taylor invites us to recognize such scenarios, alongside more common objects of colonial study such as texts and narratives, as “meaning-making paradigms that structure social environments, behaviors, and potential outcomes.”² Such scenarios, and the paradigms they reflect and contingently reproduce, are at the heart of this book. Prototypically, the colonial scenario of linguistic collection in Native North America (whether undertaken for purposes of trade, missionary activity, treaty making, or ethnological inquiry) relies on certain epistemological and representational assumptions: American Indian words have the status of unitary artifacts, which may be collected in the manner of physical specimens; European and Indian languages fundamentally correspond in content and structure, with interchangeable words for common objects that combine to produce parallel meanings according to common laws; and, finally, the expectation that a successful written representation of Indian phonemes will provide a neutral and reliable basis for future communication.

Although Garrard’s disorienting experience suggests that such assumptions are highly unstable fictions, he seems unable to recognize that their underlying premise of fundamental symmetry between languages may be flawed. Garrard assumes that Cheyenne must bear an essential (if only teasingly withheld) relationship to writing and suspects that the Cheyenne women knowingly offered words that would be particularly difficult to transcribe. Succeeding only at “broken, very broken sentences,” Garrard is yet capable of supposing that the apparent absence of refinement in their manner, which they “too ably sustained,” revealed likewise a willful departure from a social etiquette that must be shared. More disorienting still was his subsequent discovery that any transcription of oral speech could, at best, offer only a partial image of the full spectrum of Cheyenne communication practices. Immediately following this scene, he writes: “So complete and comprehensive is their mode of communication by signs that they can understand each other without a word being said, and with more facility than with the lips.”³ In this slippage of the colonizing frame, Taylor’s conception of the scenario invites us to recognize and “take seriously the repertoire of embodied practices as an important system of knowing and transmitting knowledge.”⁴ Indeed, as the sudden and belated revelation of Plains Indian Sign Language in Garrard’s narrative demonstrates, the scenario of linguistic exchange in which he understood

himself to be participating was, in fact, false. Attempted as an earnest effort to possess Cheyenne speech according to established practices, Garrard's linguistic scenario returns as farce. As Garrard acknowledges in ironic and self-deprecating fashion, the most definitive act of naming produced by this linguistic exchange was the Cheyenne denomination of him as "*mah-son-ne*—'a fool.'"

Such scenarios of troubled linguistic exchange and communicative misrecognition echo routinely across the shifting borderlands and contact zones of American history.⁵ As Garrard's example suggests, the practice of lexical collection as a text-based paradigm for the documentation of Native speech is highly susceptible to incompleteness, but it also reveals the signifying copresence of Native bodies within the performative scenarios of multilingual borderlands encounter in an indigenous space that is, in this instance, both sovereign to the Cheyenne and nevertheless shifting in its geopolitical assignment in the context of the U.S.-Mexico War. As Taylor's fellow performance theorist Joseph Roach has argued: "Genealogies of performance also attend to 'counter-memories,' or the disparities between history as it is discursively transmitted and memory as it is publicly enacted by the bodies that bear its consequences."⁶ Like every scenario of colonial performance, there are several actors here. On one hand, Garrard's awkward approximation of the actions of frontier vocabulary collectors (such as William Emory in Frémont's narrative) speaks to a degree of cultural saturation with U.S. scientific and linguistic discourse that is perhaps surprising, a penetration of esoteric research and collection practices into popular consciousness such that a teenager might roughly perform a role that was commonly understood. On the other are the Cheyenne women themselves, unnamed here on land indigenous to them, whose ludic if haunting presence should remind us of the geopolitics reflected in those Native expressive practices and embodied textualities that lie on or beyond the margins of documentation and historical recoverability. Indeed, among the intellectual elite who developed the research practices pantomimed by Garrard, within the hallowed precincts of learned societies in Philadelphia, New York, and Worcester, Massachusetts, American Indian Sign Language, the most widely shared linguistic system practiced in Native North America, was not recognized as a developed form of human speech—and would not be classified by linguists as a language until the 1960s.

In its broadest outlines, this book explores colonial language scenarios in the contested national, indigenous, and cultural spaces of the

nineteenth-century western North American borderlands in an effort to contextualize the emergence of ethnological linguistics as both a professionalized research discipline and popular imaginative concern of American literary culture prior to the U.S.-Mexico War.⁷ Dating to seventeenth-century New England missionaries like John Eliot and Roger Williams but reframed through monumental works of naturalism by such Enlightenment figures as the Comte de Buffon and the Baron Alexander von Humboldt, ethnological linguistic study in United States in the early decades of the nineteenth century was transitioning from an amateur field led disparately by gentlemen travelers, missionaries, military explorers, and armchair speculators into a more specialized discipline of knowledge production. Not yet established as the formal academic field of anthropology in American colleges and universities, the developing methodologies of what was known as ethnology instead coalesced through ad hoc constellations of state historical and antiquarian societies, athenaeums, networks of personal acquaintance, and the traffic of print commodities through bookshops and private libraries. By the 1840s, prominent ethnologists such E. G. Squier had begun to promote ethnology as a uniquely totalizing discipline of human knowledge that matched the aspirations of American empire; ethnology was “the science of the age,” in Squier’s words, that “begins where the rest stop” and “neglects no subject of inquiry.”⁸ Such boundless conceptions of ethnological practice were at the heart of the philosophy and mission of the new American Ethnological Society (AES), founded in New York in 1842. Announcing “the promotion of a most important and interesting branch of knowledge, that of Man and the Globe he inhabits,” the inaugurating “Preface” printed in the first volume of the AES *Transactions* is presented in a stream of manifest-destinarian rhetoric, finding the global importance of ethnological investigation “to be of daily increasing moment in relation to the commercial and maritime interests of the nation” and proclaiming that “the artificial barriers that have hitherto divided nations and kept them from a knowledge of each other, are every where seen falling the advance of commerce, and its attendant, civilization.”⁹ *Ethnology and Empire* undertakes an archival survey of the ensemble of cultural, scientific, and government practices that gave rise to this coordination of scientific and national agendas in the first half of the nineteenth century. Throughout, I argue that relays between developing theories of Native American languages, works of fiction, travel and captivity narratives, and the political and communication networks of Native peoples gave imaginative shape to U.S. expansionist

activity and federal policy in the western borderlands, even as the exigencies of imperial activity contributed to the consolidation of ethnological practices through the research programs of institutions with an avowedly national sense of mission, such as the AES, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Antiquarian Society.

More intimately, *Ethnology and Empire* tells stories about the traffic of words and ideas, and of ideas about words, and the interanimating networks of peoples, spaces, and communication practices that carried them across western borderlands regions and metropolitan centers of knowledge production and power. Those locations span from New York and Philadelphia to Washington and Mexico City, across, in Robert Warrior's term, the "intellectual trade routes" that connect the Great Lakes region of Tecumseh's Pan-Indian Confederacy to the Muskogee peoples of Florida, the diaspora of displaced Native peoples who emigrated to Texas in the 1820s, and the U.S. and Mexican officials, surveyors, and soldiers who sought to clarify and inscribe lasting boundaries of national geopolitical difference.¹⁰ Exemplifying one such story is the life and career of John Russell Bartlett (1805–1886)—antiquarian bookshop owner, amateur ethnologist, talented sketch artist, accomplished lexicographer and bibliographer—whose unlikely appointment as the U.S. boundary commissioner charged with establishing the U.S./Mexico border pursuant to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo closes an important chapter in the collaboration of amateur learned societies with the War Department in the work of westward expansion. Cofounder, with Albert Gallatin, of the American Ethnological Society in New York, Bartlett sought out his appointment to the Boundary Commission as an opportunity to conduct the linguistic fieldwork necessary to make his own lasting contribution to the field of ethnology, predicting boldly to his friend Evert Duyckinck, "If I can carry out a scheme which is now on the carpet, I shall be able to do more for American Ethnology, than has been done by any one, not even excepting Humboldt or Squier."¹¹ However, following his controversial in-field decision to concede back to Mexico a substantial portion of New Mexico claimed by the United States following the U.S.-Mexico War (which prompted the Gadsden Purchase of 1854), Bartlett was ousted from his post, and his ambition to publish the full results of his researches under the imprimatur of the United States Congress was unrealized. Nevertheless, Bartlett wrote and published his *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua* (1854), a rich though rarely discussed first-person account

of his experiences that, as I discuss in chapter 5, represents a key literary consolidation of the agendas of ethnology and empire along the U.S./Mexico borderlands.

John Russell Bartlett's interest in Native American linguistics grew out of an earlier research project rooted in popular culture, newspapers, and cosmopolitan sociality—his *Dictionary of Americanisms*, widely regarded as the most significant glossary of nonstandard American English produced during the nineteenth century. In his *Autobiography*, Bartlett recounts the origins of his *Dictionary* on an Erie Canal boat, headed west from Utica, New York, in the early 1840s. Reading a “late work in which the vulgar language of the United States abounded,” Bartlett amused himself by marking its “strange words and expressions” in the margins of the text; upon his return to New York City, he copied these words, along with a greater sampling of unconventional speech gleaned from several popular works attributed to David Crockett, in his personally customized copy of John Pickering's 1816 *Vocabulary; Or, Collection of Words and Phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States*. The particular copy of Pickering's *Vocabulary* in his possession had been altered to become, in essence, an amateur lexicographer's field kit. Disbound, and then rebound with interleaved blank pages, Bartlett used it to supplement Pickering's *Vocabulary* by recording alphabetically new specimens of American dialect he encountered on any occasion—in newspapers and magazines, from the lips of cosmopolitan New Yorkers, from conversations overheard aboard the canal boats he took on his regular journeys to Cape Vincent, and primarily from the literary texts that circulated through his famous bookshop on the ground floor of the Astor House Hotel in New York.

What is perhaps most striking in Bartlett's brief reminiscence is the assemblage of conditions and material circumstances it brings into relation: the development of an innovative technique of linguistic collection; the practice of that technique as a form of nonstandard ethnographic survey; its ready enlistment of literary sources of dubious historical authenticity; and, finally, its execution on a new transportation network that refashioned relations of national space through the circulation of persons, texts, and commodities from New York to distant western geographies. Although he could not have known it at the time, Bartlett's self-fashioned field dictionary replicated an identical research technique used by American Philosophical Society's Peter Stephen Du Ponceau, the most important scholar of Native American languages in the United States, who, in

the 1810s, had disbound and intercalated with blank leaves Benjamin Smith Barton's important 1797 work on Indian languages, *New Views of the Origin of the Tribes and Nations of America*.¹² While patterns of connection between the developing research practices of figures like Bartlett and Du Ponceau shed light on one kind of story about the relationship of lexicography to literature and transforming conceptions of western spaces in North America, the content of their ideas tells another. Du Ponceau's pioneering work in comparative grammar at the American Philosophical Society, and particularly his development of the concept of polysynthesis to describe the combinative qualities of Algonquian languages, are foundational to the development of ethnological linguistics. A major story line in the chapters that follow addresses the impacts of his model of comparative philology on early anthropological research, military and topographical expeditions, exploration and captivity narratives, and literary form. Drawing new energy from recent developments in German linguistics and studies of human anatomy, the early-nineteenth-century practice of Native linguistic comparison constitutes an important, though seldom discussed, paradigm for the construction of racial difference—an emergent philology of race that is not simply reducible to familiar discourses of embodiment. Comparative philology is thus a major topic of my book, but it is also the grounds for developing techniques of interpretation that foreground the linguistic and literary encoding of race, national and borderlands spaces, and human networks in a transnational, scientific, and indigenous archive.

Rooted in the interpretive practices of literary studies but positioned at the conjunction of Native American and indigenous studies, borderlands history, performance studies, and the history of ideas, *Ethnology and Empire* aims to build on a range of important recent disciplinary efforts to reimagine the cultural practices of nineteenth-century North America, while emphasizing the geographically, politically, and culturally transformative impacts of western expansionism and Indian Removal for future conceptions of hemispheric American literatures.¹³ Implicitly and often explicitly, these elements highlight the appeal of thinking about the early work of U.S. imperialism in terms of the concept of “the network”—an approach that tends to recognize institutionalized networks as vehicles of power, instruments of conquest. Such a formulation casts institutional actions as the material and logical precursor of ideological completion, the groundwork and scaffolding upon which national narratives and official story lines are made. This implicitly sequential logic has a familiar

ring in Americanist historiography and frontier histories, even as that logic always risks passively reproducing, rather than interrogating and reimagining, the structural vantage point of historical projects of imperialism. For example, this logic underwrites the projections of a writer for the *New York Globe* heralding the 1819 Long Expedition into the southwestern borderlands (which is the topic of chapter 2), who suggested that Lewis and Clark “were the pioneers to establish the practicability of a safe journey,” but who posited their goals and gains as merely a national prolegomena: “Their journal is an outline of a scheme to be yet filled up—the present expedition bids fair to add some splendid touches, if not to complete the work.”¹⁴ To “complete the work” of expeditionary design is to figure national expansion and empire formation as a kind of representational enterprise, a “scheme to be filled up” in, perhaps, much the same manner that a blank topography awaited the inscription of geopolitical boundaries, or that skeletal vocabulary forms awaited only the incorporation of linguistic data. While this book examines the relays between expeditionary frameworks and the imperial story lines to which they have given rise historically, what interests me primarily are the forms of linguistic slippage between the two, in a manner suggested by the following passage from Foucault’s *The Order of Things*:

Having become a dense and consistent historical reality, language forms the locus of tradition, of the unspoken habits of thoughts in a people’s minds; it accumulates an ineluctable memory which does not even know itself as memory. Expressing their thoughts in words of which they are not the masters, enclosing them in verbal forms whose historical dimensions they are unaware of, men believe that their speech is their servant and do not realize that they are submitting to its demands. The grammatical arrangements of a language are the *a priori* of what can be expressed in it. The truth of discourse is caught in the trap of philology.¹⁵

There is powerful and enduring irony at play here. Philology was, in Foucault’s estimation, one of the signature disciplines that constituted the emergence of taxonomic discourse and its modern regimes of power. To suggest that the hidden truth of that discourse is subject ultimately to its own genealogical procedures—caught in its own trap, as it were—is to recognize that truth as constituted both by its internal necessities and by its unconscious externalities, and by implication that the transformation of words into objects of study realizes power that is neither stable nor

unidirectional, but recursive and circular. In this view of the unspoken, unconscious, and unmemorialized historical dimensions at the heart of the philological tree, Foucault anticipates the rhizomatic figure imagined by Deleuze and Guattari as a rejoinder to the prototypical tree of knowledge and opens critical thinking to reflexive strategies of deterritorialization, and new assemblages of knowledge and power.¹⁶ In a famous passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest the explanatory power at stake in this metaphorical reconfiguration: “Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states.”¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizomatic figure asks for a fundamental reorientation of critical assumptions and procedures of interpretation; even so, as the Chickasaw theorist Jodi A. Byrd suggests in her own trenchant reading of their work, this reorientation should provoke the recognition of more fundamental truths: “The maps of settler colonialism were always proliferative, the nation-state’s borders were always perforated, and the U.S. lines of flight across treaties with indigenous nations were always rhizomatic and fluid rather than hierarchical, linear, and coherent.”¹⁸ As a practical matter, a type of literary and historical study informed by this recognition is and must be, in part, a speculative exercise of intellectual, disciplinary, ideological, institutional, and biographical documentation—but one that must assemble, as Bruno Latour has argued in *Reassembling the Social*, a “tracing of associations” that reveals and incorporates “a type of connection between things that are not themselves social.”¹⁹ The promise of such a paradigm is a different kind of explanatory and critical utility—one that does not rely on intentionality as such or posit an ideological center that entails a fictitious reduction of the reach of empire to the narrative elements of a coherent (if decentered) nationalist paradigm, such as “manifest destiny.”

In this, I take insight from Mark Rifkin’s rejection of traditional portrayals of manifest destiny as “a monolith, an unstoppable force” and his understanding of the U.S. appropriation of Native lands in the West as “a shifting matrix in which national territoriality remains haunted by geopolitical formations absorbed but not entirely eliminated.”²⁰ Rifkin’s formulation of an expansionist national territoriality as a haunted, shifting matrix relative to Native America offers a compelling model of *reassembly* that anticipates the future promise of an emergent project of borderlands history that is, in the benchmark assessment of Pekka Hämäläinen and

Samuel Truett from the *Journal of American History*, “anchored in spatial mobility, situational identity, local contingency, and the ambiguities of power.” Hämäläinen and Truett characterize this trend in relation to traditional histories of the western borderlands in the following way:

These are not traditional frontier histories, where empires and settler colonists prepare the stage for nations, national expansion, and a transcontinental future. The open-ended horizons of borderlands history cut against that grain. If frontiers were the places where we once told our master American narratives, then borderlands are the places where those narratives come unraveled. They are ambiguous and often-unstable realms where boundaries are also crossroads, peripheries are also central places, homelands are also passing-through places, and the end points of empire are also forks in the road. If frontiers are spaces of narrative closure, then borderlands are places where stories take unpredictable turns and rarely end as expected.

Whereas the emergence of borderlands history began preponderantly with “mostly small-scale tales, privileging local description over large-scale conceptualization,” Hämäläinen and Truett identify the future challenge of borderlands work in incorporating “the very real power of empires and nations without missing the field’s central insight: that history pivoted not only on a succession of state-centered polities but also on other turning points anchored in vast stretches of America where the visions of empires and nations often foundered and the future was far from certain.”²¹ As I take up the challenge posed collectively by these thinkers, my broad strategy here is to foreground not only theories of language and scenarios of encounter but also seemingly dry imperial matters of bureaucracy, law, and policy, as reflexive conditions of legibility for literatures of encounter on an unstable, shifting borderlands—mirroring in that literature, and also reflecting from it, relations that are inescapably both local and national, individual and systemic, firmly terrestrial yet deeply vested in the cultural imaginary of nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism.

In work that spans more than twenty years, Walter D. Mignolo has developed a more specific model for the style of “border thinking” I have in mind here, grounded in a process he has termed “colonial semiosis.” Conceived as a corrective to “the tyranny of the alphabet-oriented notions of text and discourse,” Mignolo’s approach to colonial semiosis introduces philological procedures and comparative hermeneutics to “indicate a network of semiotic processes in which signs from different cultural systems interact” and

highlights the production of subaltern knowledge (or *gnosis*), “conceived from the exterior borders of the modern/colonial system.”²² Mignolo’s work is highly abstract and relies to an unusual degree on theoretical neologisms. But in substituting such terms as *gnosis* for knowledge, *gnoseology* for epistemology, Mignolo thematizes in his use of critical language a potent decolonizing agenda of hegemonic displacement that anticipates an emergent language of subaltern resistance to legacy forms of colonial and imperial action. In contrast to the concept of transculturation, Mignolo’s work in this vein emphasizes neither syncretism nor hybridity; it delimits, rather, “an intense battlefield in the long history of colonial subalternization of knowledge and legitimation of the colonial difference.”²³ In this sense, the aim of Mignolo’s work is not the excavation of “pristine” forms of indigenous knowledge in an ahistorical moment prior to their encounter with colonial power (and the regime of Occidental reason), but rather the illumination of indigenous knowledge in historical contest with those colonizing procedures through which subalternity itself is created and the colonial difference inscribed. Although it remains debatable whether postcolonial theory is truly apposite to the context of Indian Removal in the early-nineteenth-century United States, I am attracted to this paradigm (despite its imposing theoretical threshold) both for its expansive approach to semiotics in historical borderlands charged with power and for his interest in discerning the “loci of enunciation” of indigenous resistance. What Mignolo has in mind with “loci of enunciation” are primarily new and future possibilities of cultural and political engagement in the postcolonial scenario, a point of inception from which subalternized forms of knowledge may be creatively reimagined and transformed. But I am more interested in what this concept might offer as a means of reorienting an extant historical archive of Native expressive practice, and in exploring that possibility I will take Mignolo literally at his word: to imagine “loci of enunciation” as the locations (bodies, contact zones, and in networks that transcend them) and manners of speaking (signed, embodied, written, oral, and through signifying objects) of Native peoples in an effort to highlight a linguistic network of intertribal pathways through which acts of Native resistance might be reimagined historically and projected spatially.²⁴

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Within and against this backdrop of shifting borderlands, intellectual currents, and schemes of representation, chapter 1 of this book begins in a cultural world in which the generic boundaries of literature were far more

fluid than they are today to explore the cross-pollination and consensus building of emergent ideas about Native American languages in relation to James Fenimore Cooper's developing program for American fiction. In his 1826 "Preface" to *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper voices regret over the disjuncture between his fictional project of romantic realism and what he describes as a scientific state of "utter confusion" pervading Native American languages. Cooper's concerns offer a major cultural touchstone for a widespread transformation in practices of philological ethnology that paradoxically seemed to generate and multiply the kind of linguistic confusion it was designed to clarify. In this chapter, I explore the influence of Friedrich Schlegel's and Sir William Jones's pioneering work in comparative grammar on U.S. debates concerning Native American origins as an early turning point for the emergent practice of ethnology in North America in the 1810s and 1820s. Even as Schlegel's comparative techniques promised a standardization of method that was seen to usher in new era of philological research, I argue that the subsequent projects of figures like Peter Du Ponceau, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, and Albert Gallatin to map the linguistic families of North America entailed the establishment of an epistemological framework that was itself highly unstable. Comparative grammar operates on the assumption that, while surface-level linguistic phenomena may be highly variable, foundational grammatical structures (like skeletal architecture) are fixed over time and therefore expressive of ancient patterns of human kinship and difference. Adjunct to this emerging philology of race, the actual practice of linguistic mapping as advanced by such figures as Gallatin (who provided the first consolidated map of the linguistic families of North America in 1826) proceeded through the collection and comparison of relatively small lexical samples in isolated conditions. Lacking a standardized orthography across languages and, frequently, a common lexical basis of comparison, small language samples tend to exhibit patterns of linguistic exchange between groups and lexical variability between individuals more readily than deep structures of enduring similarity or difference. For some, the consequent image of widespread linguistic promiscuity between groups produced by this knowledge project amplified widespread cultural anxieties about racial mixing between whites and Native Americans—a paradoxical phenomenon I document with what I call "interracial speech acts" in Cooper's *Mohicans* and *The Pioneers*.

Chapter 2 explores early written documentation of Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL)—often referred to as Plains Sign Talk, or Hand Talk—a

widely practiced Native American linguistic system noted pervasively across nineteenth-century literatures of encounter. Misrecognized routinely as a form of sublinguistic pantomime prior to the 1960s, and almost preponderantly overlooked in nineteenth-century Americanist literary study to date, PISL yet represents a central mode of expressive discourse across the Great Plains with important implications for questions of language, embodiment, race, disability, and politics across a range of critical horizons. My attention to PISL focuses on key shortcomings in developing theories of Indian languages and explores PISL's semiotics of embodiment in racial theories of Indian oratory and an emergent U.S. discourse on disability. In my reading, I emphasize the hidden or misrepresented linguistic content of a transnational expansionist literature that failed to recognize PISL for what it was and is: a rule-based grammatical language with important ritual, oratorical, and intertribal communication functions. This discussion begins with a review of the Long Expedition along the Red and Arkansas Rivers (1819–21), organized by the War Department to survey the new international boundary negotiated with Spain in the Adams-Onís Treaty. Outfitted with highly detailed philological instructions by the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, the Long Expedition was intended to realize a concert of imperial and scientific interests. What they found was a highly developed manual linguistic system that existing theories of Indian languages were ill-equipped to assess but that demonstrated a largely unrecognized network of linguistic communication across the territorial horizons of the “Great American Desert” and beyond. Examining PISL documentation first in scenarios of expeditionary encounter, this chapter also explores a broad intellectual climate of literary reception in which the findings of the Long Expedition concerning PISL were taken up eagerly by a host of figures like Thomas Gallaudet and Samuel Akerly, who theorized in Native sign language practice a suggestive analogue to a developing program of manual instruction for deaf students in the United States.

Chapters 3 and 4 revisit the famous case of John Dunn Hunter as a means of reading comparatively the Shawnee leader Tecumseh's Pan-Indian movement in the Old Northwest and the ill-fated Red and White Republic of Fredonia spearheaded by Hunter near Nacogdoches, Texas, in the 1820s. An internationally famous author of a popular captivity narrative and ethnographic treatise on Plains Indians, Hunter championed Tecumseh's Pan-Indian politics and published the only record of the latter's speech before the Osage—only to be denounced by such figures

as Lewis Cass and William Clark as an imposter, his writings fabrications. The historical record has largely vindicated Hunter. Revisiting his case here, and the vehemence with which he was attacked in the 1820s, reveals the degree to which the ideological struggle to shape an emergent national narrative concerning Indian Removal in the 1820s was impacted by nineteenth-century Indian linguistics (and, more to the point, the limitations of that discourse in regard to sign language), even as it underscores the challenges of working with ambiguous sources of oral and manual evidence that exist on the margins of historical recoverability and verifiability. In reading Hunter's popular *Memoirs* and ethnographic writings, I pay particular attention to the relationship between Indian languages, embodied speech, and literary representation, and emphasize the manner in which slippages between these expressive registers complicate (both for Hunter and his readers) his status as a racial and national outlier.

Chapters 3 and 4 also explore the level of threat that intertribal Native resistance, and the nonoral and nonprinted communication systems upon which they relied, were perceived to represent by the U.S. government within the public dialogue surrounding Indian Removal and to contextualize Hunter's revolutionary actions in Texas in the 1820s. In this work, I consider evidence that Tecumseh, enduring emblem of Pan-Indian resistance, knew American Indian Sign Language and may have incorporated elements of it into his transnational diplomatic oratory—a previously unexplored possibility that has significant implications for the linguistic and cultural histories of intertribal resistance movements and the politics of Pan-Indianism, even as it highlights the existence of a largely unacknowledged linguistic system that enabled Native political organization and insurgent military action in a range of historical settings from Canada to Mexico. Chapter 4 closes with a discussion of the Fredonian Rebellion and the response of the Mexican government to it in the wake of the Colonization Laws and the widespread displacement of Native peoples from U.S. territories and highlights the shifting national and racial loyalties of a U.S./Mexico borderlands region undergoing processes of major political and demographic upheaval.

As a closing case study, chapter 5 historicizes Bartlett's controversial tenure as boundary commissioner in terms of previous acts of scientific collaboration between the American Ethnological Society and the War Department, and exposes the degree to which the ethnological project participated in the larger national and imperial enterprise of the U.S.-Mexico War and international boundary creation. At the same time,

I explore in depth the complex manner in which ethnological prerogatives shape the techniques of Bartlett's literary representation. This work focuses on two contrasting dramatic episodes in which Bartlett acts on the authority of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo to liberate Indian captives, examples that illustrate the legal problematics of intercultural negotiation on an area of land not yet officially within American jurisdiction. While committing to ethnological techniques of representation that cast the Apache encountered by the Boundary Commission both as political adversaries and objects of scientific speculation, Bartlett deploys the mid-century romantic conventions of literary sentiment to represent the plight of his liberated Mexican captives. As I suggest, the literary boundaries between Bartlett's oscillating styles of representation correspond powerfully to the troubled efforts of the commission to establish stable boundaries in their survey of the international border.

The completion of the post-1848 U.S.-Mexico Boundary Survey brings to a close an important early chapter of the interlocking institutional and literary histories of ethnology in the United States and thus concludes this book. Spurred by American efforts to map and politically incorporate large areas of western North America, the ad hoc pattern of coordination between the War Department and the Department of Interior and private learned societies led by figures such as Du Ponceau, Gallatin, and Bartlett was displaced by the official establishment of the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 and the Bureau of Ethnology in 1879; by the turn of the century, Franz Boas's establishment of the Ph.D. in anthropology at Columbia University signaled the consolidation of disciplinary authority for the field of anthropology as an academically credentialed enterprise. For Bartlett, the beginnings of this tectonic shift were experienced with remarkable rapidity. In November 1849, the editor Evert Duyckinck wrote from New York to Bartlett in Washington, who was then angling for his appointment as boundary commissioner, inquiring about the date of his return and congratulating him on the burgeoning scientific and literary culture Bartlett had helped to create: "Are not the ethnologists accumulating in Manhattan?" he asked.²⁵ This question was, of course, rhetorical; its obvious and affirmative answer was intended as a tribute to its recipient. As the senior partner of Bartlett & Welford, a bookstore that, throughout the decade, was one of the nation's premier locations for the collection and sale of ethnological and antiquarian research titles, and as Gallatin's cofounder of the American Ethnological Society, Bartlett stood near the center of a broad intellectual and commercial project. But less than two

years after Duyckinck spoke so brightly of the wealth of ethnologists converging on New York, the Yale linguist William Wadden Turner wrote to Bartlett in New Mexico to inform him that the internationally famous Ethnological Society Bartlett cofounded had “come almost to a stand still” and at best “dragged out a prosaic humdrum sort of existence.”²⁶ With Gallatin’s death in 1849 and Bartlett’s absence in the Southwest, there was little to hold the center; the intellectual community Bartlett had helped to cultivate in New York had become moribund. Moreover, Bartlett’s national reputation was badly damaged upon his return in 1853, and the dissolution of his business partnership with Charles Welford was not to be renewed. Partly as a consequence, their shared vision of a centralized program for the advancement of American ethnology in New York, and the commercial and scientific networks upon which this vision materially relied, passed into obsolescence.