REMAPPING THE POLITICS OF SPACE: ANTEBELLUM COUNTERGEOGRAPHIES AND PRINT

A dissertation presented

by

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to
The Department of English

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the field of
English

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
April, 2016
ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English in the College of Social Sciences and Humanities of Northeastern University
April, 2016
Abstract

This dissertation examines a series of transformative geographic narratives in the first half of the nineteenth century. In this period, the area of what is now considered the territorial borders of the United States was in the process of extensive geopolitical, economic, and scalar negotiation, punctuated by border wars, the changing economic geographies of slavery and colonial enterprise, and the absorption of western spaces through the appropriation of Native American land. However, this process of claiming, occupying, and demarcating what would become U.S. national space was by no means a uniform project and would rely on various political, representational, and rhetorical strategies employed by a variety of writers in order to achieve the narrative coherence often attributed to the development of the nation. Despite the presence of complicated and conflicting histories, the transformation of national space is made to appear homogeneous, indistinct, and free from social hierarchies. While the hemispheric turn in literary studies has led early American literary geographers to examine the supranational material, ideological, and discursive relationships between America and the larger Atlantic world, this project focuses on the internal geographic transformations of the nineteenth century, arguing that texts by disenfranchised groups like African Americans and Native Americans challenged these forms of scalar reconfiguration through print to form countergeographies of belonging and exchange, developing alternative socio-spatial formations beyond the paradigm of the nation state. Thus, this project examines countergeographical discourses to understand the role of uncounted, misrecognized, and displaced groups in resisting the scalar negotiations of empire.
Acknowledgements

Thanks to Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, Theo Davis, and Ryan Cordell who have guided me throughout the development of this project and the ideas contained within. I am also grateful for having received the Northeastern Provost’s Office Dissertation Completion Fellowship, which provided much-needed support as I finished this project. Also, many thanks to Danielle Skeehan, Anne Gray Fischer, Victoria Papa, Benjamin Doyle, Emily Artiano, Duyen Nguyen, Elizabeth Polcha and the entire Northeastern Atlantic Studies reading group for all their help. Additional thanks to Marina Leslie, Nicole Aljoe, Melissa Daigle, Amy Greenstadt, Leerom Medovoi, James Capell, Simon Green, Reginald Barnard, and Joseph Fultz for their continued support. I would also like to thank my parents, Randy and Karen, for their never-ending support. Finally, I’d like to dedicate this work to the memories of my grandfather and grandmother Robert “Bob” Sawyer and Neta Sawyer and to Milo.
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Introduction: Empty, Flat Spaces and Those Who Inhabit Them

Figure 1. John F. Smith, "Historical Geography," 1888. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

This 1888 thematic map of the “Historical Geography” of the United States by John F. Smith suggests many stories, or at least a different version of a familiar story. Essentially, it is a historical-revisionary map, tracing the unfolding of American history imagined as two trees to “two colonies:” Plymouth and Jamestown. As the map suggests, these different historical-political genealogies radiate from two textual sources: the Bible and what is identified on the map as “mammon” or “the dollar.” The limbs of each tree extend the respective qualities associated with freedom and slavery over different national-regional spaces. The Tree of Liberty, not accidentally stemming to San Francisco (the Western hub of commerce during the Reconstruction era), spreads
“justice,” “industry,” and “equal rights” across the nation to those free states on the Western edge of the frontier. Conversely, the twisted, gnarled Tree of Slavery snarls the Southern states, entwining “lust,” “treason,” and “rebellion” within political-economic policies such as the Missouri Compromise and the Fugitive Slave Act until, it seems, the Emancipation Proclamation, figured as an axe, cuts the tree down. Here the map traces an axis across both time and space that not only looks backward to these two founding moments, but that also attempts to trace their unfolding as two separate processes contributing (in different ways) to the nineteenth-century project of Manifest Destiny. Thus, despite its noble polemic against the historical processes of slavery, the map nonetheless functions as an imperial cartography, handily imagining the manifesting nation through an organic, arboreal metaphor of growth where the negative qualities associated with this process, tied solely to Southern slavery and avarice, are conveniently constrained to the American South.

As with any map, several stories are missing or glossed over here. In divorcing the processes of national spatial production into two, ethically distinct genealogical spatial heritages, Smith can “cleanse” the developing nation of the problematic aspects of national-territorial advancement—namely those processes associated with consumption, acquisition, and the exploitation of both land and labor. Of course, these activities are not confined to the South; they are part and parcel of the nation as a whole. For example, the branches of the Liberty Tree extending toward San Francisco don’t reflect the processes of conquest and divestment following the Mexican-American War that allowed California to come into being, or the obscene racial conflicts involving whites, Mexican-Americans, different Native American tribes, and Chinese laborers as part of “liberty’s”
extension, let alone the longer, bloody history of European settler colonialism. In imagining something like these qualities as distinctly Southern phenomena, the map exonerates the federally issued mandate of territorial expansion and its own destructive consequences reaching its apotheosis in Smith’s time.¹ Hence, the map promotes what David Harvey has called a “spatial-fix” concerning the processes of expansion, war, and the disenfranchisement of diverse minority groups in the antebellum period.² These fixes are, of course, merely palliative, capable only of keeping more complex diagnoses for both formal and informal patterns of inequality, oppression, dispossession, etc. from coming into view.³

In this way, the historical conditions for the natural increase of what Jefferson some fifty years earlier described as the “empire of liberty” are regulated through a sort of split regional consciousness, taken up again during Smith’s time and forcibly resuscitated after the Civil War.⁴ Despite the traditional representation of state territory in the map’s background, the figurative additions included in Smith’s map imbue those spaces with an additional historical and political meaning that is concretized in the two-dimensional map form, generating a convenient Reconstruction-era narrative of spatial difference.

¹ Beyond the problematic processes of Reconstruction and the “modernization” of the South, the series of
² Specifically, see David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2001). Harvey develops the term across his works referring to how capital uses space to mitigate its crises of production, flow, and consumption.
³ According to Andrew Herod, Harvey understands these fixes as “constitut(ing) the very basis for the uneven development of the geography of capitalism.” *Labor Geographies: Workers and the Landscapes of Capitalism* (New York: Guilford, 2001), 10. This tautological formulation reproduces the conditions for the endless cycle of capital.
In addition to the deep regional schisms leading to the War and persisting, arguably, to this day, the process of national expansion and the transformation of the “wilderness” into State territory (cheerfully celebrated in Smith’s map by the growing Tree of Liberty) generated new spaces of political instability, social conflict, and the breakdown of a clear and coherent social-symbolic order. These transformations, arising from territorial conflicts, overlapping claims to spaces, the imposition of explicit racial and gendered spatial hierarchies, and conflicting historical accounts concerning occupation, belonging, and human rights, rippled through the antebellum world. American territory and its attendant maps coevolved with a process of reinscribing particular histories and narratives within the land itself, yielding an imperial narrative capable of synergistically organizing these transformations. The ideological trick of the map then is twofold: firstly, it reduces the historical-political narratives of state spatial production into a territorial container, and secondly, the map delimits the visual representation of processes of transformation and contestation to that container. Space is only recognizable as state space, a trick of many maps that lends implicit legitimation to formal political institutions and their capacity to organize citizens within these territorial dimensions; narratives and the boundaries of exclusion maps sustain are meant to remain hidden, lying at the threshold of our understanding of “place.”

Henri Lefebvre, one of the preeminent scholars of space, describes this kind of productive boundarization as an inherently “social relation…[linked] to the relation of property (the ownership of the

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5 See Yi-fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977). Tuan pithily notes that “place is security, space is freedom” (3). The mutual relationship between these two concepts is complicated by the cartographic projection because readers must use their own understanding to piece together the relationship between that which is “place” and that which is “space” in the larger scalar imaginary denoted by the map. In any case, Tuan’s note here also prefigures the relationship between metropole and colony/territory in early America and the tensions inherent in expansion and consolidation.
land, in particular), it is also linked to the productive forces that fashion this land. Space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations, but it is also producing and produced by social relations.”

Space, and the social practices that constitute each other’s meaning, tend to appear as a natural correspondance between the individual and the *genius loci*, or “spirit” of the land. As Harvey warns however, this correspondance is too-often directed by the ruling classes as a resolution of, rather than as a occasion for conflict. How is this correspondance maintained and, perhaps more importantly, what are the means of its disruption, of a coming into being of *something else*? These questions undergrid how I approach texts, for example, by Martin Delany or Harriet Jacobs specifically as *countergeographical* texts.

Texts like Delany’s *Blake or the Huts of America* and Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* organize new social relations, both within, and yet, apart from scenes of colonial annexation and the flows of capital by critically approaching the space-social relation connection from different vantage points. As capital extends its domain, through seizure, annexation, or marketization, new social relations, organized within places like homes, churches, and plantations, come into being at scales incompletely regulated by formal politics or marketization. These locations and the transformations they engender are nonetheless imagined as exceptions to the processes of territorialization and the maintenance of State space. While the hemispheric turn in literary studies has led early American literary geographers to examine the supranational material, ideological, and discursive relationships between America and the larger Atlantic world, this project

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7 David Harvey, *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 181.
generally approaches this problem from smaller scales considered within these texts, arguing that disenfranchised and displaced groups challenged these precise forms of scalar reconfiguration through print to form what I describe as *countergeographies* of belonging and exchange.

Building on and complicating Michael Warner’s concept of a “counterpublic,” this work considers texts by African-Americans, Native Americans, and other immigrant communities as key to the development of alternative socio-spatial formations beyond the “official” narratives of American statist territorial expansion.8 Thus this project reconsiders developmental geographic narratives, such as the strictly linear transformations imagined in the movement from east to west that have long organized relationships between subject, citizen, alien, and the state, alongside countergeographical discourses to understand the role of uncounted, misrecognized, and displaced groups in resisting the scalar negotiations of empire. I employ the term “counter” when describing spatial configurations developed through texts located outside the hegemonic patterning of national identification. While “counter” might to some suggest a clear and ever-present opposition to hegemony while privileging that hegemony as prior to any form of opposition, this work considers various forms of spatial thinking and belonging as participating in a culture whose territorial dimensions were, for the period considered here, in flux. Hence “counter” in this account suggests an opposition to a predominating discourse as opposed to a preexisting or totalizing one. Countergeographies, then, are

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8 For more info on this term, see Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone, 2002). Warner defines counterpublics as, “formed by their conflict with the norms and contexts of their cultural environment, and this context of domination inevitably entails distortion. Mass publics and counterpublics, in other words, are both damaged forms of publicness, just as gender and sexuality are, in this culture, damaged forms of privacy” (63). Warner is correct in this description to identify the contextual nature of publics and counterpublics as “damaged forms of publicness;” however, given that my subject is geography, a field within which all subjects participate knowingly or unknowingly, and not constituent publics, my concern is with challenges to the imagined cohesive “whole” of space in individual contexts.
generative of counterpublics, organizing and shaping belonging as a feature of one’s situatedness.⁹

One of the questions explored here is how much the national conception of space making influenced and informed the countergeographies undertaken by nineteenth-century writers. “Belonging” of course figures as an important dimension to the production of space. However, situating space, boundaries, and identities across divergent scales presents a unique problem to the determined territorial scale of the nation. As an example, Thongchai Winichakul’s study of national boundaries and sovereignty in nineteenth-century Siam (Thailand) suggests that Siam presents a fascinating example of culturally transmissible sovereignty that isn’t restricted to the dividing line particular to European cartography and nationhood.¹⁰ Specifically Winichakul suggests that the provisional, fluid boundaries of different sovereignties in Siam were maintained in relationship to the lived experiences and needs of the people who inhabited the borderlands. While some of the authors I study here, like Martin Delany and John Rollin Ridge develop experimental spatial narratives built on different configurations of the nation, others like Jane Schoolcraft, Harriet Jacobs, and William Apess provide literary

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⁹ This dissertation looks back into the first half of the nineteenth century, to spaces of immense transformation engendered, as the story goes, exclusively by a shift in the mechanisms of national-imperialism into proto-capitalist systems of exchange, production, and consumption. When considering the transformation of Native spaces into British colonial and then American national spaces, or the later removal of South Eastern tribes such as the Cherokee and Seminole under the 1830 Indian Removal Act and the resulting development of their lands into plantation space, no word describes the nineteenth-century as well as “transformation.” However, the goal here is not to simply demonstrate the diverse, heterogeneity of nineteenth-century spaces, nor to argue for hitherto unrecognized “fluxes” in spatial-political configurations. This point is of course important, but these fluxes are also immersed within the processes of late capitalism. “Fluxes” can be both imperial and revolutionary, though as I explore in greater detail later, the particular mechanisms of change should not be overlooked or generalized. In this sense, the fragmentation, reification, and reconsolidation of space initiated by the processes of capital could be both destructive and generative of new spatial forms and constellations.

countergeographies at odds with or outside the frame of the nation. The imagined communities built out of these authors’ readership were thus exposed to alternative scales of reference beyond the nation. Here I begin to sketch out the contours of these scales and how particular literary and non-literary forms participated in their construction, leading to a more thorough analysis regarding how these authors produced space in non-traditional ways.

This is to argue that the correspondence between land and man is not simply reducible to sovereign right or one’s claim over another’s within territorial space. The production of sovereignty and territory (two concepts I explore in greater detail later) themselves require claimancy narratives—whether found in the figure of the Homo Sacer in Roman law or in the Westphalian myth of the nation state. The European powers of the early-colonial period were founded on their recognizability as nations, situated within a complex process further complicated by the colonial relation and the expansion of empire. Tensions between the metropole, the commons, and other sites of production, for example, in the Caribbean or in Africa, or the relationship between the American North and the South as regions of exchange, disrupt the tidy narratives of sovereignty and claimancy that might have served the political and commercial interests of the metropolitan centers.

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Revolutionary myths of United States national formation are also founded upon the transformation of colony into metropole—a complex process that involves less a reinterpretation of sovereignty than its redistribution as private and state property. For example, the sovereignty narrative empowered those who were in a position to benefit from redistribution after the Revolutionary War to reconsolidate proprietorship of the land and the means of production within the turbulent processes of spatial transformation. These new modes of civic and economic sovereignty were fueled by a growing discourse on human rights, initially inspired by the American revolution and works like the Declaration of Independence and given more explicit form in the French and Haitian Revolutions.

Human Rights discourses found new spaces of agency in New World places like America, Mexico, and Haiti, and served the processes of material redistribution and rights granting in impactful ways. However, just “who” was identifiable as a subject of these rights, let alone who would retain the land, posed a major problem to the reconstruction of the social body after the American Revolution. Native Americans of all tribes, Mexican colonials, and African Americans, as well as many lower-class whites and women, found themselves excluded or unrecognized participants in the formal

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13 One only has to look at the number of territorial rights disputes like the Whisky Rebellion following the war to see instances of this myth doubling back on itself. Here, for example, we see the founding rights myth exercised at the level of both State power (representing the interests of the new American upper class) and local grievance voiced by frontier distillers. The transmissibility of these ideas as employable by both groups while inconsistent, is nonetheless unsurprising in this littoral of State-empowered dominion and the frontier.

14 The influence and importance of these discourses are examined throughout this dissertation as they undergird the ideological foundation of proprietorship, self-determination, and belonging in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. For a larger discussion of these documents and their impact on the colonial world see Laura Doyle’s *Freedom’s Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008), which details how long-standing English forms of sovereignty informed New-World constructions of the racial subject, and Laurent DuBois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Williamsburg: Omohundro, 2004) who situates these discussions within the context of the French and Haitian Revolutions.
political systems both before and after the Atlantic Revolutions that transformed the spaces on which they lived. So too these subjects played important, if often disavowed, roles in effecting these revolutions, for example, as writers, mothers, soldiers, and doctors. What of these others left out of the reconstituted social-symbolic orders born out of the American and Haitain Revolutions, who nonetheless produced their own accounts and narratives of occupation, belonging, and rights as a manifestation of spatial being, of existence and practice? How do we approach works such as William Apess’s *Son of the Forest* or John Rollin Ridge’s *Joaquín Murieta* given the implied spatial dimensions of the American literary cannon?

**ONE LAND, MANY MAPS: COUNTERGEOGRAPHIES AND THE LITERARY DIALECTICS OF SPACE**

If twenty years ago, noted geographer Edward Soja could suggest that, “geography may not yet have displaced history at the heart of contemporary theory,” then today we can at least say that it has made strides. While poststructuralist thought on space provides a set of valuable tools for the counterintuitive imagination of space, most critical studies have focused on cartographic representation itself, predominantly concerning urban areas—and all almost entirely within spaces of the last hundred years or so. Edward Soja’s *Postmodern Geographies* provides an excellent tool kit for considering the organization of urban structure and power, using 1980’s Los Angeles as a primary example of urban spatialization, but has little to say about the historical process.

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of development outside of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, Harvey has contributed work toward rethinking urbanization, the nation, and the production/disruption of different publics within these spaces, and Doreen Massey’s work has focused on the intersections of urbanization and economic and feminist geographies, but all within the context of postmodernity.\textsuperscript{17} This work deploys these theoretical insights in an effort to think about space as a historically productive medium, not only in its nineteenth-century setting, but also as tools for considering the historiographic mediation of space through consideration of nineteenth-century texts.

Traditionally, space has often been imagined as an \textit{a priori} medium through which “actual,” tangible action took place, where any deeper relationship between narrative, action, and space was subsumed under an understanding of space as given, static, and empty. As David Gregory suggests, in this construction, “sight has been privileged across these different topographies to construct a vision of the world amenable in various ways to capital control.”\textsuperscript{18} However, recent transdisciplinary work, ranging from critical geography to anthropology, and literary studies has complicated the representational, interpretive, and dimensions of space, opening up a radical set of emancipatory and practical potentialities. The primary nineteenth-century American texts explored here, when read in this context, present an important engagement with the processes of “making” space. Space is never stable; even political spaces represented on the Cartesian grid vary depending upon the maps’ function and who is printing it and whom it is printed for. Part of this instability pertains to the historical production of

\textsuperscript{16} Soja, \textit{Postmodern Geographies},
\textsuperscript{17} See, David Harvey, \textit{The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change} (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1980) and Doreen Massey, \textit{Space, Place, and Gender} (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1994).
space. The nineteenth-century world (as well as our own) abounded with disputed spaces where belonging and enfranchisement were precariously established and maintained. Approaching these concerns from the vantage point of the critic, we can observe that questions of space and spatiality extend to almost every dimension of human existence; though it remains the case that space is rarely explicitly understood as the subject of analysis itself.

The frame and scale through which scholars address these concerns has become a defining feature of twenty-first century American studies via a body of scholarship I loosely identify as “transgeographic studies.” These studies include Atlantic studies, initiated by Paul Gilroy’s 1993 work, The Black Atlantic; Circumatlantic studies, or the study of the exchanges between Europe, America, and the Caribbean, as set forth by Sean X. Goudie and Jane Landers; Oceanic studies, or the study of movements across and within the sea itself as described by Hester Blum; and the hemispheric turn itself and the concept of the Global South.19 Whereas an earlier generation of critics were quick to situate a distinctly New England set of authors and their literary values at the forefront of American cultural production, these newer frames have expanded not only the inclusive territory of literary works, but also the geographic imaginary regarding American spaces. Transgeographic studies have expanded the frame of what we consider strictly “American” texts and how we consider the production of these texts in a global context.

For too long American literary consciousness has lingered in a process of disavowal that

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is inherently spatial. The present work continues this critical process of refining the scope and reimagining the landscape of American geographic literature.

Struggles to define space in all its critical-theoretical manifestations are as diverse as struggles to define actual spaces themselves. These conflicts—critical, conceptual, and historical—present the main tensions I explore here. However, the struggles to define space, seen in its most obscene form through the genocidal “cleansing” projects practiced upon different ethnic and racial groups such as Native Americans, reflect only one portion of the historical struggles over space in the early American period. Many of these struggles are fundamentally related to these larger, perhaps better-understood processes of political contest that assume a historical dimension when we recognize the role of print narratives in uniting space with historiography. Further, many of the scales explored here have been rendered ungeographic or outside of the scope of spatial and historical theorization. However, these seemingly small, perhaps inconsequential and ephemeral spaces and practices should figure more prominently not only for theorists of space, but early Americanists as well, who were some of the first literary critics to recognize the importance of the discarded, forgotten, and unpopular.

Hence, whether we are talking about geopolitical scales or, at the other end of the spectrum, subjective, “inner-space,” we are, in either case, dealing with an experience of multiplicity: your space vs. my space and the relation and negotiation of diverse spaces manifested through print. As countergeographies, the texts and authors I explore here are, indeed, reactive toward (in most cases) hegemonic socio-spatial alignments built (one way or another) on an ideology of racist, gendered, and nationalistic exclusion. Their
texts narrate different spatial histories from different, sometimes shared vantage points, tracing alternative ways of theorizing the coming into being of space and territory.

Spatial production is, I argue, always reactive and layered. In contrast to Cartesian, colonial spatial ontologies and their modern-day iteration in positivist geography, many critical geographers of different disciplinary ilk, from Lefebvre to Massey, have argued for a fluid model of space—in terms of both how it is imagined and represented as well as how it is produced and used. Thus, it can be said that space, whether imagined by powerful, enfranchised men like Thomas Jefferson, or by disenfranchised, dispossessed women like Harriet Jacobs, is always in a state of movement, operating in response to preexisting spatial constellations of bodies, histories, and arrangements, despite the effort to make them appear otherwise. There is no blank canvas—merely the image or configuration that came before and the new possibility of its meanings. For example, part of the acceptance of national identity associated with how one signifies one’s affiliation with the state relies upon an uncritical recital of space-time as possessing a beginning and being unbounded (in time), but nevertheless exclusionary (in space) futurity. This formula both imagines the preexistence of socio-spatial formations as blank or unworthy of consideration, but also (paradoxically) impossible to modify, erase, or, to extend the metaphor, “paint over.”

The texts explored here play a role in negotiating the inclusive and exclusive parameters of territorialization and belonging. When spatial concepts like “territory” (a distinctly political dimension defined by sovereign boundaries or claims) or “region” (a complicated and potentially combative matrix of cultural, political, and linguistic differences), for example, are explicitly theorized, the spatial production of belonging
becomes much more complicated. We are all familiar with colonialist maps, fables, and stories of other places far away declaring “this is now our land.” But who is this “we” implied in so many accounts – a citizenry, a religious community, a single race? Countergeographies contest these declarations, arguing for inclusion, rights, and recognition through the production of alternative scales and spaces while at the same time disrupting the exclusionary forms of spatiographic production. These disruptions can be rendered in terms of critical and even theoretical engagement. These overlapping spatial dimensions and the forms of belonging produced through them represent the contested terrains of literary geography.

ANTEBELLUM COUNTERGEOGRAPHIES

My first chapter, “Narrating Space: Historiography and the Production of American Spaces,” examines the transformative territorial-spatial narratives of colonial America and the early days of the new Republic. Narratives of national origin arise from various commentators as regional tensions between North and South, East and West evolve and the nation expands westward, engaging in its own colonial endeavors. These activities positioned U.S. expansionism at odds with not only British and other European, Old-World histories, but Native American ones as well. As John Pickles has suggested, the narrative history of any space relies on processes of “socio-spatial decoding, recoding, and over-coding” to generate maps that reflect different ideological suppositions and assertions.20

This chapter thus asks how different authors imagine the relationship between historiography and space in order to reconstruct particular claims to the production of national spaces. Works like Daniel Webster’s *Oration on Plymouth Rock* and Washington Irving’s *Sketchbook* developed unique strategies for dislodging extant colonial and Native spatial histories in attempting to produce reified accounts of national origin. These accounts recast the scale through which subjects were asked to identify with particular spaces and the histories that give them shape. In Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle,” Native history and presence is displaced by a Dutch mediator, where the ghost of Hendrick Hudson replaces a sublimated Native American past as a colonial haunting of the land in order to give birth to national transformation. In Daniel Webster’s “Oration on Plymouth Rock,” a bi-centennial speech celebrating the Puritan landing at Plymouth Rock, the static location of the Rock is imaged as a “rooted” point within the construction of American history, around which different events are included and excluded as consentient or inconsistent with national founding. Webster’s narrative casts Native Americans as a “roving” people, incapable of being located within either the historical record or in space. Here, the Native American influence is forcibly expelled as specifically New England virtues are extended westward during this moment of inter-regional tensions.

In contrast to these narratives of origin and divestment, Pequot writer William Apess offers the figure of King Philip (or Metacom) as a countergeographical disruption to these exclusionary histories, locating Philip within the processes of national, historical, and spatial displacement as a figure out of space and time. Apess’ 1836 “Eulogy on King Philip, as Pronounced at the Odeon, in Federal Street” imagines multiple Indian conflicts
like King Philip’s War and the Mashpee tribal lands conflict leading into American
nationhood specifically as problems of both history and space, where the reintegration of
Native socio-spatial discourse challenges the seamless scalar transformation of the
colonial state into a national one. As the nation expands it simultaneously continues to
usher Native Americans into increasingly limited spaces, prompting Apess to ask,
“Where, then, shall we place the hero of the wilderness.”21 Neither affixed to the land as
a “haunting spirit” imagined in so many later white accounts, nor remembered through a
series of monuments and paintings dedicated to a national hero, Apess’ Philip inhabits a
transgressive space within the wilderness retained in “hearts and minds” of his people,
thereby linking Native Americans across a transpatial geography beyond the control of
transformative white spatial narratives.22 Thus, Apess’ work offers a productive way of
disentangling the history-space relationship and this relationship’s role in maintaining
community and belonging.

My second chapter explores a different kind of cartographic division of space:
namely between the space of the home, or what critics have termed “domestic space,”
and so-called “public” or national spaces. “Domestic Geographies: Jane Johnston
Schoolcraft and the Refabrication of Native Domestic Space” extends this critical
trajectory by considering the poetical works of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, who was born
and raised near the Sault St. Marie on the upper panhandle of present-day Michigan.
Schoolcraft’s complex identity is situated within the intersection of at least two
geographies: one Native (Ojibwe) and the other (bourgeois) domestic. These spaces and
identities are threaded together in her work in ways that oppose both the separation of

21 William Apess, Son of the Forest, in On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a
22 Ibid., 106.
home and political/public spaces, as well as the dispossession of Native spaces and histories to the forthcoming nation, specifically by transfiguring these diverse geographies through the scale of the domestic.

While different public spaces and scales have figured as the primary concern of cartography and geography, domesticity has rarely (if at all) been considered as important to the partitioning of space—especially outside of the space of the bourgeois home. As I show, domesticity for Schoolcraft is not a stable register through which gendered identity is constructed, but rather a system for the recalibration of tensions within the colonial production of gendered, racialized spaces unfolding as the nation expands westward into Native spaces. Through a complicated process of territorialization, protocapitalist production and consumption, and knowledge production that included mapmaking, the history of these supposedly “undomesticated” identities was quietly mapped over. Thus this process severed the social relations embedded within these spaces—a process disrupted by Schoolcraft’s poetic re-rendering of what I define as the “concentricity” or overlapping relationship between domestic and Native spaces. Considering these geographies as contingent in significant ways figures as an important step in contesting the spatial epistemologies of empire that would situate these two spaces in politically manageable ways—a process Schoolcraft’s “domestic countergeographies” initiates.

Turning to the geographies of the slave narrative, my third chapter, “Geographies of Freedom and Unfreedom: collectivism, capital, and individual spatial revolutions in Delany’s Blake and Jacobs’ Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,” explores two dramatically different accounts of space, spatial production, and political being mapped through the slave narrative. As Katherine Mckittrick suggests, spaces of the enslaved and
the plight of enslaved African Americans have traditionally been rendered
“ungeographic.” Enslaved women, in particular were rendered as situated between or outside of spaces of belonging. This chapter concerns two critical geographies suggested by Martin Delany’s *Blake: or, the Huts of America* and Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. *Blake* concerns the revolutionary aspects of African-American resistance as the narrative follows the protagonist Henry, or Blake’s peregrinations through the American South in a state-by-state process of fomenting rebellion. However, Delany ultimately argues for a process of revolution *and then* redistribution, following the tenets of a civic republicanism that organizes the recognizability of the subject to specifically masculine gendered forms of labor.

In contrast, Jacobs’ *Incidents*, located within a series of concealed slave spaces, exposes the disorienting and disruptive geographies of slavery across multiple scales including the home, the plantation, and the North and the South paradoxically revealed through Linda Brent’s location within what Miranda Green-Barteet calls the “interstitial space” of the garret. Within this excerpted space, Brent articulates a perspective of confession—through both her confession to her grandmother and the process of confession generated by the composition and publication of the narrative itself—out of which the concealed dimensions and distortions of slave geographies are revealed. Through this process, Brent recognizes her own position as an enslaved woman outside of a law she is already outside of in formal-recognizable terms, rendering the extension of slavery transparent across both spaces of supposed freedom and enslavement.

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23 Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2006), x.

My fourth and final chapter, “Unstable Geographies: History, Representation, and the Spaces of the Dispossessed in John Rollin Ridge’s Joaquín Murieta,” considers Ridge’s 1854 novel Joaquín Murieta within the context of the rapidly-changing territorial and racial boundaries of California after the Gold Rush as negotiating spatial claims in complex ways. Ridge himself inhabited a complex subject position as a Cherokee émigré to California following his father and grandfather’s executions at the hands of their fellow tribesmen for treason. Ridge wrote his novel in the wake of the Mexican-American War, the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mine, and a subsequent wave of daring robberies and murders reported in the Californian press as the work of a “Joaquín Murieta.” Claiming to be a “living romance” and contributive to “the most valuable history of the state,” Ridge’s Joaquín Murieta blurs the line between fiction and history, producing in turn a productive version of Mexican occupation and history in Alta California that diachronically registers the polyphony of spatial regimes enacted in this rapidly changing space. Joaquín Murieta challenges traditional thinking about space and historical writing, functioning as a fictionalized supplement to the spatial complexity of nineteenth-century California.

Each chapter in this work approaches unique spaces within the antebellum world through texts that reveal a particular negotiation of the subject-space-history triad. These texts offer varying accounts for realizing and reimagining ways of inhabiting and producing space and each concern the constitution of the subject in relation to larger communal scales such as the home, the town, a culture, a region, or even the nation. Perhaps counterintuitively, this work contains few actual cartographic or mapped representations of space. Instead, I focus on circulating print geographies or
representations of space that appear in narratological form that both invest these traditional cartographic renderings with meaning, and disrupt them. We have much to gain if we can understand these narratives, critically speaking, as negotiable living geographies, or geographies perpetually mapped through the flux of physical, conceptual, and textual spaces.

In returning to the complex intersections of space, identity, and participation/production of the commons we revisit the possibilities for a reconstructed, responsive social order and a transformative, evolving scope concerning literature of the Americas. The historical imbroglio between the processes of nationalism, Manifest Destiny, frontierism, the eradication and displacement of Native Americans, and the struggle between free and slave spaces continues today when we consider space as a paradoxically historical phenomenon, one that grounds history within the spaces we inhabit.

SPATIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL

One final aspect germane to the discussion of alternative spatiographies is the historiography of revolution. As I explore in the forthcoming chapters, the meaning of particular spaces and the political implications of belonging and exclusion embedded within them are drawn from the challenged historiographies of particular spaces. In different ways, each chapter considers not just one space, but rather the multiple, often conflicting geographies and spatiographies that constitute space. These conflicts are structured according to different forms of power relations. Revolution, not necessarily in
its outright political form, but in its revisionary or critical capacity to engender new ways of being, coincides with the transformative power of spaces, embracing the role spatial narratives play in imbuing place with meaning. To gather this through the political thought of Heidegger, “only what is revolutionary attains the depth of history. Revolution doesn’t mean here mere subversion and destruction, but an upheaval and recreating of the customary so that the beginning might be restructured.”

This suggestion has clear implications for the temporal-spatial dialectic explored at different points throughout the present work.

One of the best theorists on the subject of transformative revolution is none other than Ralph Waldo Emerson. In a wonderful article illuminating this facet of Emerson’s thought, Branka Arsić describes Emerson as the “thinker of revolution par excellence.”

Following her reading of Emerson’s essays “Circles” and “Powers of the Mind,” Arsić argues that in contradiction to readings of Emerson that understand the “I” as external to nature, as a figure of “the mind [which] imposes itself on what is natural, ideating it,” that “Emerson expects the ‘I’ to assume a posture of utter exposure and fragility (hence of unsafety), in order to allow what is external to it to impress itself on it and so fashion it.”

Arsić situates this reading of the “appropriative subject,” the subject of “receptive personhood,” as a political figure within a “celebration of the goals and means of the Haitian Revolution.” This “I” who dares to subject itself to “revolutionary shattering” presents us with the countergeographical subject proper, a subject given to the fluidity

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25 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982), 41. It is also important to note that Heidegger’s thought presents an interesting and perpetual challenge to political theorists, historians, and literary critics for his involvement with fascism. For a persuasive account of the utility of Heidegger’s works in this context see Žižek’s discussion in a chapter titled “Radical Intellectuals” in *In Defense of Lost Causes*.


27 Ibid., 109-110.

28 Ibid., 110-11.
and receptive reformation of spaces within flux, a subject whose negotiation of the space-subject relation exposes the tensions between “us and them” within spaces of belonging. The primary texts I explore here share different commitments to this process, negotiating, transforming, and reconstructing space through exposure of the physical and literary self.

How does the critic approach these moments of “shattering”? In his fascinating book, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, Slavoj Žižek returns to several “failed revolutions” such as the Bolshevik, the Nazi, and Chinese communist revolutions, in order to explore the emancipatory potential lost within the horror of these horrific failures. As a note both to revolutionaries and critics, Žižek suggests, “The first lesson thus seems to be that the proper way to fight the demonization of the Other is to subjectivize her, to listen to her story. To understand how she perceives the situation—or, as a partisan of the Middle East put it: ‘an enemy is someone whose story you have not heard.’”29 I would add to this: “whose story and in what context?” “Whose story have we not yet heard?” is a serious question in 2016. Some of the texts I examine are well-discussed like *Sleepy Hollow*, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and “Oration on Plymouth Rock.” Others, like Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s poems and stories and John Rollin Ridge’s *Joaquin Murieta* are barely known at all, even within early American circles. In any case, I’m more interested in what kinds of stories these authors’ texts can tell, rather than wondering if we have heard it all through the lens of this or that theoretical engagement. Further, to “subjectivize” the Other we must be sensitive to the perspective or distance between us

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29 Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008), 11. Žižek poses an important caveat to this formulation: “can we imagine inviting a Nazi thug to tell us his story? Are we ready to affirm that Hitler was an enemy because his story hadn’t been heard?” (12). Žižek’s point here is to dispel the idea that recognizing what is “more human” in individuals necessarily grants a better understanding of and sympathy with their public actions (12). I deploy this formulation here to understand how critical approaches to space defamiliarize static narratives of the Other.
and them because not only time, but our own subjective sense of ourselves and our identities and how we negotiate our relationship to power has changed. I think, often enough this process of subjectification concerns how *justice* is delivered or given over to the Other, or, in other words, the relationship between one’s power and the story told. There are, of course, many more points of tension between the “us,” whoever “I” am and whoever “you” are, and “them.” Hence, we should be careful to understand the complexity of response and relationship to hegemony, capital, and dominant social practices so that we don’t, in our quest for justice, flatten out the meaning, or the complexity of justice itself in the process. This not only is an important consideration to keep in mind for anyone who would accept the responsibility of telling another’s story, but also a necessary process for those whose stories we would tell, whether they are heroes or villains in the complicated narratives we try to reconstruct.

This requires a kind of attention to texts and subjects that cosmopolitan universalism (of the Kantian variety) can’t reconcile because it considers those complicit with forms of provincial and systemic exclusion solely as perpetrators of injustice rather than as actants within a complex cultural superstructure. Perpetrators though they may be, I am still more concerned with the processes, patterns and practices that structure antebellum spatial being. What I would encourage readers to consider is an ethics for analysis that is complicating, complicated, and necessarily incomplete. This is why space is such a vitally important concept. At best, these texts don’t simply imagine a new world; they disrupt the operative, organizing logic of the prevailing one in terms of spatial production. They are of ideology but also present a challenge to it. As Žižek suggests, ideology always admits the failure of closure, and then goes on to regulate the
permability of the exchange with its outside,” subject to an endless rehearsal at the behest of its forgetting.\textsuperscript{30} When we think we are outside of ideology, we are that much further within it. However, in examining the parallel between space and ideology through the authors considered here, we can begin to problematize the dialectic between inside and outside as critical witnesses to the revolutionary transformation of this relation.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 29.
Chapter 1

Narrating Space: Historiography and the Production of American Spaces

Where did America originate? This seems like a simple, if potentially abstract, question. However, the historical moments that complicate the question, or more specifically, the series of historical moments, involve further questions regarding the intersection of historiography and space. These questions concern not only whose stories are included within founding historiographies, but also how those stories contribute to the production of American spaces. The New England Puritans landed somewhere near, if not on (as later historians would claim) Plymouth Rock in 1620. Whether they came from England under the threat of religious persecution or of their own accord merely as settler colonials, or, as is more likely the case, the former cause gave way to the latter only a few years after arrival, their “citty upon a hill” was imagined as the culmination of a Christian eschatological process that required a new, separate space far from the European metropole.\(^\text{31}\) In 1776, when the American nation was founded, the Puritan landing at Plymouth and, what Samuel Danforth had termed the Puritan “errand into the wilderness,” began to develop a different kind of revolutionary significance than suggested during the preceding colonial years.\(^\text{32}\) Originally conceived as an *escape into*

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\(^{32}\) See, Samuel Danforth, "A Brief Recognition of New-England’s Errand into the Wilderness" (Cambridge: SG & MJ, 1670). Though Danforth poses his jeremiad as a critique of New England society at the time, we can begin to see the process of interpreting Puritan colonization as inherently more noble than other colonial processes taking place within North America. Danforth encourages his audience to reconsider their
the wilderness, the Puritan landing had figured as an important, but smaller part of the larger colonial processes of British settlerism, one event in the developing colonial relation between metropolitan Britain and the American colonies preceded by more formal commercial endeavors like Grenville’s 1585 Roanoke Expedition and the Jamestown Colony. However, after the American Revolution, the Plymouth landing evolved to occupy a more prominent place in the origin of America and distinctly American spaces than those earlier commercial endeavors.

Why, and more specifically, how did this event, and the bloody wars and epidemics that soon followed it, become so important for the consolidation of a distinctly American geographical and historical consciousness? This chapter focuses on the particular intersections between writing on space and attempts to produce a history of spaces at the heart of founding narratives of American nationhood—of which the Puritan errand perhaps figures most prominently today. The authors examined here, Washington Irving, Daniel Webster, and William Apess, each weave a particular version of America’s founding, wrought out of both the production of history and a particular vision of space, or more specifically, the production of space through its location within diverse historical narratives. These narratives respond to a variety of tensions inherent in the transformation from colony to nation, taking up these tensions to develop different narratives of nationhood varying in their inclusive propensity.

Referring to the Western literary and folkloric traditions of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries that, in part, consolidated the contemporary vision of the original goals in coming to the New World: “You have solemnly professed before God…that the Cause of your leaving your Country, Kindred and Fathers houses, and transporting yourselves with your Wives, Little Ones and Substance over the vast Ocean into this waste and howling Wilderness, was your Liberty to walk in the Faith of the Gospel” (10).
American State, Leslie Fiedler notes that, “Geography in the United States is mythological.” 33 Fiedler observes that American geographical consciousness is rooted in the meaning attached to different regions, that is, the North and the South, the East and the West. These mythological dimensions then accrue meaning through particular historical fabrications. In turn, the mythic quality of space presents a vessel through which different ideologies pertaining to national formation operate as political fantasies—primarily through the image of limitless expansion and resource potential. Strategies for representing these fantasies were rooted in the explosion of cartographic expression in the early nineteenth century, and on the other, the historiographic narratives that embedded meaning within those often shifting dimensions. Susan Schulten suggests that, “after the creation of the Republic, maps became an important way to document a ‘national’ past that extended back to the fifteenth century.” 34 As the nineteenth century began, “writers of history began to define the study of American history as that which explained the emergence of the United States, particularly in political and territorial terms.” 35 These terms often included a sense of the seemingly infinite potential of territorial growth and dominion. Thus, these “maps structured American history as territorial growth, and, because the colonies and nation never shrank in size, its history was well suited to mapping.” 36 As I discuss below, these maps coevolved with a growing body of geographic historiography directed toward refining the contours by which expansion was to occur in concert with the consolidation of national history and identity.

34 Susan Schulten, Mapping the Nation: History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012), 11.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
The mythology of the American West, for instance, has a deeper, more complex history rooted in competing, revisionary Revolutionary mythoi that transformed the western colonial landscape into a national one. Here, the process of transforming a colony into a nation carries on as the nation in turn acquires colonies. From Jedidiah Morse to Albert J. Beveridge, the authors of these transformations imagined these acquisitions as stages of development in the Jeffersonian “empire of liberty,” drawing into being a westward-moving geographic transformation seemingly overnight. However, the uniformity of these transformations, produced over different locales, regions, and urban spaces, had radically different effects for marginalized groups such as Native Americans, frontier settlers, recent immigrants, and free and enslaved blacks to name only a few of this new empire’s discontents. Hence, the narrative surrounding the “empire of liberty,” as a form of linear, homogenized socio-political space, remains a dubious way of characterizing the widespread but uneven political and geographic shifts that followed the American Revolution.

Unfortunately, this narrative continues relatively unchallenged in the age of free-market neoliberalism, where the ideology of capital has intersected in insidious and invisible ways with territorialization and globalization. In this scenario, the sanctity of the nation and its territorial borders are (paradoxically) positively related to the growing

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37 Thomas Jefferson, Letter to George Rogers Clark, Dec 25, 1780, in George Rogers Clark Papers, ed. James Alton James, (New York: AMS, 1972), 490. Jedidiah Morse was an early and influential proponent of Westward expansion. His oft-reprinted American Geography (Elizabeth Town: Shepard Kollock, 1789) advocated Westward expansion as a necessary component to the fulfillment of the nation. Almost 100 years later, Indiana Senator and Pulitzer-prize winning historian Albert J. Beveridge would evoke this phrase as part of his rationale for the annexation of overseas territories like Puerto Rico in his 1898 “March of the Flag” speech in Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents, ed. Amy S. Greenberg (Boston: Bedford, 2012), 154-58. Beveridge was an unapologetic advocate of free-market expansion who echoed the ongoing “errand” of the Pilgrims as well in his justification for aggressive territorial acquisition.

extra-national circulation of capital and the borderless world of circulation. Additionally, this narrative remains only partially challenged in the critical literature, whether in Perry Miller’s early “Puritans to the present” model or in more recent work exploring how Native Americans fought back against their relegation to the margins of U.S. political life. These more recent narratives of belonging have tended to focus solely on reconstituting the subject of either inclusion or exclusion without paying specific attention to the transformative spatial-political shifts engendered, at least in part, by early forms of geographical writing. So while the subaltern has indeed been found, their stories, more often than not, do not yet coordinate our understanding of historical-spatial transformation, let alone our understanding how these historical-spatial transformations coordinate subjects.

Furthermore, these traditional narratives tend to follow a linear narrative of national formation and spatial consolidation. The story remains basically the same even if the actors traditionally left on the fringe of the narrative gain a more complete measure of recognition. As I will demonstrate, narrative claims to space tend to focus on producing

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39 Perry Miller, "Errand Into The Wilderness," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 10.1 (1953): 3-32. Other examples pertaining to this latter point are numerous and primarily stem from a variety of useful historical writing concerning Native appeals to Federal and State governments, rebellions, and attempts to “fight back” after dispossession. For example, Page Smith, *Tragic Encounter: The People's History of Native Americans* (Berkley: Amberley, 2015) offers itself as an expansive “people’s history” concerning various historical myths regarding Native encounters. More particular histories such as Richard A. Radune, *Pequot Plantation: The Story of an Early Colonial Settlement* (Branford: Research in Time Publications, 2005) and Elias Castillo, *A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions* (Fresno: Craven, 2015) collect data and supplement common gaps in historical knowledge pertaining to particular areas, persons, tribes, and/or events. This work is also reflected in contemporary studies of U.S.-tribal relations and present-day issues such as Vine Deloria Jr., “Trouble in High Places: Erosion of American Indian Rights to Religious Freedom in the United States,” in *The State of Native North American: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M.A. James (Boston: South End, 1992), 267-290 and Marcus H. Price, *Disrupting the Dead: U.S. Law on Aboriginal Remains and Grave Goods* (Columbia, University of Missouri, 1991). These are useful materials, a few of which I use in this work. However, the work of these scholars is, by and large, directed toward historical *supplement*, rather than theoretical revision.

40 While redressing this fundamental gap is part of the goal of the present work, examples abound in Native American studies where the recognition of people and place has formed a major cornerstone of the modern
particular histories that emphasize alternatively, key moments of departure while ignoring others across important spatial-political dimensions—dimensions that prove invaluable for the critical and countergeographical narratives that are the focus of this work. Certain kinds of spaces are produced, for example, in Texas and Gold Rush-era California, imbued with particular histories, and populated with specific kinds of subjects while supposedly emptied of others under the formal transition from colony to nation and finally to national empire.

This transformation is in turn consolidated in the kind of texts we study and in the critical accounts responsible for recovering them. Unlike cultural memory, which is reconstituted and lost from many perspectives, space (in most cases) remains, even if significant parts of its interpretive content is hidden or disavowed. Geography, as an agent of territorial transformation, is often lost in the calculus of knowing and representing—whether we are talking about a space’s territorial manifestation over time or our historical recognition of what happened “there.” The stakes of these oversights are high. As Cindi Katz suggests, “Allowing geography to go missing or be seen as somehow unimportant in academic discourse as much as in politics or the American imaginary, eclipses all those many spaces that make it possible even to imagine placelessness or frictionless mobility.”41 Thus, while space itself presents an endlessly contestable medium, its theorization as “produced” remains outside of the boundaries of traditional examination.

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In contrast, this chapter examines how disparate authors envisioned narratives of occupation and claimancy throughout the early nineteenth century by evoking (and sometimes invoking) widespread geographic and political-territorial transformations—in some cases producing and in other cases disrupting the historical-spatial narratives of empire. Thus, this chapter suggests ways Americanist scholarship looks to understand not only how early national writing helped imagine or produce the boundaries of national belonging, but also how these boundaries were negotiated, contested, and disrupted through different narrative claims to space.

This drama unfolds primarily as a socio-spatial process of establishing origins—a process replete with the transformative negotiation of various temporal and spatial scales in order to produce the apparatus of a national chronology. There are multiple factors involved in establishing this process in the early-American context, including Native presence and history, America’s own disavowed colonial origins (including both its British and more specific Puritan roots, as well as other Old-World European origins), and the nation’s later colonial ambitions. The texts examined here attempt to negotiate the confluence of these factors in different ways. To begin, I examine Washington Irving’s *Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon* and more specifically “Rip Van Winkle.” In this text, Irving emphasizes the process of escape involved in the Puritan project, but looks back in time not to an Anglo-Puritan past but to a Dutch, old-world cultural historiographies. Here, “Rip Van Winkle” disavows the Catskill’s Native historical presence, substituting Native “haunting” for a colonial (Dutch) mediator to negotiate the transformation from colony to nation. This chapter then shifts to consider Daniel Webster’s “Oration at Plymouth Rock.” “The Oration” reorients variations in colonial
and national time through the sacralization of Plymouth Rock as the temporospatial
origin of the young nation. As Stephen H. Brown suggests, “Webster's address is taken to
exemplify a proprietary struggle for control of public memory.” 42 Focusing on the Puritan
endeavor, Webster refines the historical zero point of American history in identifying
Plymouth Rock as the genius loci of American space, in turn producing a mediated
spatial historiography where the continuity of old-world European culture in the New
World requires the transformation of the wilderness and the extinction of those “roving
barbarians,” who cannot but disrupt the fulfillment of national being. 43

Finally, I turn to Pequot Native William Apess’ 1836 Eulogy on King Philip. In
this address, Apess redeployes the revolutionary-geographic mythos of the nation Webster
collates with the landing at Plymouth Rock, at once rewriting Native Americans into
colonial and national histories of United States history while offering a powerful
argument for Native American (in particular the Mashpee-Wampanoag tribe) claims to
sovereign space and self-rule. As the nation expands, it simultaneously ushers Native
Americans outside of its history and into increasingly limited spaces, prompting Apess to
ask, “Where, then, shall we place the hero of the wilderness (Philip).” 44 Apess’ Philip is
remembered as a “hero of the wilderness,” imagistically comparable to George
Washington as a Revolutionary hero however, locatable only within the indeterminate
context of a shrinking wilderness. Neither affixed to the land as a “haunting spirit”
imagined in so many later white accounts, nor as a series of monuments and paintings

42 Stephen H. Brown, “Reading Public Memory in Webster’s Plymouth Rock Oration,” Western Journal of
43 Daniel Webster, “Plymouth Oration,” in The Great Speeches and Orations of Daniel Webster, ed. Edwin
Percy Whipple (Boston: Little, Brown, 1879), 72.
44 William Apess, Eulogy on King Philip, in On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William
dedicated to a national hero, Apess’ Philip inhabits a transgressive space within the wilderness retained in the “hearts and minds” of his people, thereby linking Native Americans across a geography beyond the colonizing dimensions of white spatial narratives. Thus, Apess offers a countergeographical vision of pre- and postcolonial transformations where particular revolutionary histories and accounts imagine widely divergent transformative histories that still inform questions of presence and space today.

Part I. A NEW COLONIAL RELATION: “RIP VAN WINKLE” AND THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE BY WAY OF DUTCH GHOSTS

Figure 2. 1610 Velasco Map, in Issac Phelps Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island* vol. 2 (New York, Robert Dodd, n.p.).
The above 1611 or 1613 “Velasco Map” is most likely a collaborative work based on Englishman Henry Hudson’s initial forays into present-day New York on his 1609 voyage. Hudson, for whom the Hudson River and Hudson’s Bay were named, was commissioned by the Dutch East Indian Company in 1607 to explore the northern waterways. Following the cartographic historian R.C.D. Baldwin, Douglass Hunter notes that the Velasco Map “was the work of an elite team, comprised of Samuel Argall, Richard Hakluyt, John Smith, and William Strachey,” drawing primarily on Hudson’s accounts. The map employs a curious color code to demarcate different spaces and with the exception of spaces presented in blue, scholars are still unsure what these colors are meant to denote. As shown in the above map, “all the blue is dune by the relation of the Indians.” Here, the “Velasco Map” refines the line between knowledge and belonging. The lands within European purview are knowable, whereas those lands rendered by Native knowledge remain at the threshold of the knowable, empty but for the large bodies of water of the Northeastern and Great Lakes.

The map here presents a representational paradox. Within the cartographic index of European exploration, this contradictory tension invests new spaces with colonial meaning while these “wild” spaces are divested of it. Through this way of representing Native spaces, the map provides a kind of cultural erasure, exchanging knowledge concerning landmarks, tribal boundaries, and historical sites for colonial territorial knowledge, rendering a flat, empty, historically void “wilderness” ripe for conquest.

45 While exploring that would eventually be named after him in 1611, Hudson’s crew mutinied and Hudson and the men who remained loyal to him were marooned, giving rise to various folklore and tales concerning their fate, most famously Irving’s narrative. Nonetheless, reports of Hudson’s expeditions enabled Dutch colonization of present-day New York and specifically the Catskills. See Peter C. Mancall, *Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition of Henry Hudson—a Tale of Mutiny and Murder in the Arctic* (New York: Basic, 2009) for a basic overview of the reported events.

Disavowing the unnamable and unmappable while producing the boundaries of knowledge and belonging, this “colonizing trick,” utilizes the indigenous mediator as a figure within its own erasure.

More than simply the figure of Henry Hudson links the “Velasco Map” to Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle.” Both herald spatial transformations built upon the disavowal (if not the entire erasure) of Native presence, rewriting the historical conditions that lend meaning to these spaces through the mitigation of a colonial interlocutor. In the “Velasco Map,” Native geographic history is supplanted for Hudson’s account, refined and topographically presented by English (as opposed to Dutch) cartographers and explorers.47 Similarly, “Rip Van Winkle” excises Native claims to space through not one but two intermediaries: Dutch colonial history and subsequent haunting of the Catskills, and the “petticoat government” run by Rip’s wife.48 These figures coalesce to present a spatial historiography that imagines a local community’s claim to particular spaces embedded within the transformation between colonial occupation and national consolidation.

Irving’s story has become intimately familiar to American audiences through a variety of media over the years. I remember as a child first wondering who this Rip Van Winkle character was who slept so long in Alabama’s 1982 song “Mountain Music.”49

47 As Hunter notes in *Half Moon*, Hudson, an Englishman, went on two voyages: the first for the English Muscovy Company and a later one for the Dutch East India Company (23).

48 Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle,” in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and Other Stories, or, the Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* (New York: Random House, 2001), 39. Interestingly, Irving depicts Hudson’s crew in the story as uniquely Dutch. Hudson himself, described as “Hendrick Hudson” (38), wore a “dress … of the antique Dutch fashion” (31). While Hudson’s crew was primarily Dutch, his own national origins seem to have been written out here to provide a national-genealogical link to Rip’s pre-sleep community.

49 Alabama, “Mountain Music,” *Mountain Music* (Nashville: RCA, 1982). In it’s second verse, the song evokes two large figures of the distinctly American tradition, Irving and Twain: “Drift away like Tom Sawyer. / Ride a raft with old Huck Finn. / Take a nap like Rip Van Winkle. / Lay streaming again.” These
“Rip Van Winkle’s” less-than subtle subtext concerns the process of Americanization. Rip falls asleep a Dutch subject in a British colony and reawakens 20 years later an American. Despite the extraordinary circumstance of having slept for this long, Rip, like all his fellow colonists, simply wakes up and is told he is now an American in spite of any preexisting European cultural affiliations retained in frontier communities like the Dutch Catskills. However, unlike Rip’s somnolent experience, the narrative process of this transformation is more complex.

Non-Anglo European colonial communities like the Dutch Catskills enjoyed something like a heterotopic existence under British colonial rule, especially on the geographic periphery of national cultural centers like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. However, after the American Revolutionary War, independence generated the need for a cohesive national consciousness, even if different individuals and groups imagined national belonging differently. The continuity of these national identities is at the heart of the story’s conflict. As Donald Pease suggests, “No longer Dutch settlers, they [Rip and his fellow villagers] had to become citizens of the United States.” Pease explains that, “like Rip they [the villagers] needed a way to make their present cultural lives continuous with rather than disconnected from their past.” In this reading, Rip’s

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author’s characters are familiar enough for pop-country audiences. Irving’s impact on American culture continues to this day through various programming like the current Sleepy Hollow television series. Germantown, Pennsylvania and the Dutch Catskills and Poconos are a few examples of immigrant communities that maintained some semblance of their old-world identities even, to an extent, into modernity.

A version of this process is outlined in Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-century America (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990), where he argues that print and civic participation coincided to form identities committed to Republican values, thereby constituting a sense of national community.


Ibid., 15.
character is forced to mediate the difficult transition between regionally specific customs and national belonging that the villagers upon his return have already internalized.

In Pease’s reading then, Rip symbolically functions as a thread between the Old and New worlds, that conveniently bypasses the trauma of warfare and the history of cultural confrontation. While Rip’s transformation happens (to him) literally overnight, his character shoulders the nostalgic longing for an old-world past. The narrative is framed as a history within a history within another history, first as a historic account of Diedrich Knickerbocker, then as Rip’s personal account, and finally through his newfound status within the narrative “as one of the patriarchs of the village and a chronicle of the old times ‘before the war’” responsible for remembering Henry Hudson and the Dutch ghosts. Through these narratological mediators, historical continuity is cautiously preserved (ultimately in the form of a pleasing, light-hearted narrative) without infringing on the transformative futurity of the nation.

In this configuration, Rip is understood as a link to the colonial past without presenting a threat to the national future. Here, the story “Rip Van Winkle” suggests a radical transformation of what Irving understands as the Dutch old-world character toward the ends of American nation-building—a process grounded in the spatial transformations brought on by material changes. In this scenario, newfound American citizens can connect their local experiences to a deeper sense of national-historical time while preserving their regional differences through a renegotiated attachment to, in this case, the Catskills. However, in compartmentalizing European roots as “ghosts of the land,” “Rip Van Winkle” displaces a deeper anxiety regarding Native history and presence concerning farther-reaching “spirits.”

Within the frame of the story as a “found” narrative of Dietrich Knickerbocker, Rip is, proleptically speaking, a relic of an unproductive, old-world colonial past. The story begins in the Catskills, in “a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of good Peter Stuyvesant.”

Rip frequents a “small inn” wherein “a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village… talk…listlessly over village gossip.”

Dedicated solely to the scale of the local community, the geographically and culturally isolated villagers of the Dutch Catskills fixate upon local events whenever a traveler happens to leave behind an old paper “deliberat[ing] upon public events some months after they had taken place.” These Dutch cultural remnants exist only at the scale of the local community; the larger imagined community, defined through print and national affiliation, simply doesn’t exist except through a clear sense of genealogical national identity.

Indeed, several cultural and political frameworks are seen operating at different scales within the narrative. The British colonial scale the story begins in remains at the fringes of the narrative; it exists at a symbolic level but has little to do with the actual activities of the townsfolk. Despite Rip and his friend’s meetings beneath “a rubicund portrait of his majesty George the Third,” the more proximate political framework manifests within the scale of the home or, as Irving describes it, “the petticoat government.”

Dame Van Winkle is described as a force of nature who, “continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on is

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55 Ibid., 26.
56 Ibid., 29.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., 28, 39.
family” induces Rip to “draw off his forces and take to the outside of the house—the only side which in truth belongs to a henpecked husband.”

Despite the light-hearted, albeit sexist, humor readers might draw from this characterization, Rip is ultimately a passive participant in the prevailing forms of government prior to his sleep—whether as a Dutch subject of the British crown or as a husband to Dame Van Winkle. However, in another twist I detail below, the excising of the matriarchy and the monarchy is interestingly paralleled with the excision of another form of power only mentioned in the postscript addendum: a Native American matriarchy.

Rip’s explicit transformation from colonial subject to national citizen and “chronicler” of the old times is accompanied by a necessitated change in the productive capabilities of his household and, in turn, his household’s relationship to the community. On Rip’s farm, only Indian corn and potatoes seem to thrive as Rip “declares it was of no use to work on his farm,” it being the “most pestilent piece of ground in the whole country.”

This kind of barely-sustainable farming that Rip practices on his overgrown, poorly traced-out plot of land doesn’t participate in the processes of land development and marketable labor necessary for the transformation of “empty” space into national space. Nonetheless, while Rip is negligent with respect to forms of labor that would bring profit to his family, he nevertheless seems perpetually committed to pro bono work tending others’ fences, helping the women of the village with “odd jobs…their less obliging husbands would not do for them,” and telling children stories of (apparently) illusory “ghosts, witches, and Indians.” The gothic undertones (and they are indeed subtle) here further implicate Rip in a sort of old-world way of reckoning time.

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59 Ibid., 28-29.
60 Ibid., 38.
61 Ibid., 27-28.
Interestingly, Rip’s conflation of Indians with ghosts and witches—figures of European high Gothicism—suggests that these forms of terror only carry weight in an already dated past detached from American futurity. In this way, Rip is indeed a bridge between the past and present as a figure whose untimeliness directs the reader to a more productive future within the rescaling framework of Hamilton’s Empire of Commerce.62

Rip’s sleep, just as much as his life, also exemplifies a backwater form of pre-national capitalist production contributive to naught. According to Irving’s nascent productive logic, Rip’s sleep is only a more intensified form of unproductive labor embodied within the village and its inhabitants, alternatively described as “idle,” “sleepy, and “lazy.” That is to say, his futurity, confined to a particular regional, old-world national, and geographically isolated space, is wasted, linked as it is to his miserable farm, a couple of lazy children, and a provincial group of friends.

Returning on an election day 20 years later, Rip notes the growth of the town and the loss of its former Dutch character, having undergone a large-scale transformation economically, politically, and culturally through their incorporation into the national body. This change is signified by Washington’s portrait in “blue and bluff” having replaced George the Third that so confuses Rip.63 Not only that but “the very character of the people had changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquility” and in place of his month-old newspapers Rip finds “a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, … haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of congress—

62 The first Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton was fundamental in establishing many of the economic policies and institutions of the new government, including the first iteration of the National Bank, the U.S. Mint, and various changes to public and private forms of debt. For more on Hamilton, see Willard Sterne Randall, _Alexander Hamilton: A Life_ (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

liberty.” He is asked whether he is a “Federal or a Democrat,” to which Rip spontaneously answers, “I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a loyal subject of the King—God bless him!” His submission to the crown, now interpreted as Loyalism, earns him no new friends in his former village, and the active, almost zealous political interest evidenced by a citizenry is much more attuned to political enfranchisement than the Dutch community twenty years earlier.

Rip’s former subjection lay not only in his allegiance to King George, but also, at a different scale, to his wife, and both forms of government have disappeared after Rip’s awakening. Prior to his sleep, Rip’s unproductive farm only impacts his family, incurring the wrath of Dame Van Winkle, and his predilection for helping his neighbors is unrewarded and in fact discouraged by Dame Van Winkle’s management. However, after awakening, Rip’s bonds at these scales are severed. Though he is “now a free citizen of the United States,” this freedom is incomplete without his simultaneous release from his wife’s bondage.

Here too, gendered spaces play a part in the transitional imaginary of the national. In “Rip Van Winkle,” the constellation of the female-run, domesticated household and the colonial-regent government are dismantled and reassembled through the process of Americanization, forming one of the first versions of distinctly “Americana” literature. However, continuous with the process of displacing the role of women in the national

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64 Ibid., 36.
65 Ibid.
66 As Elizabeth Maddock Dillon notes in The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2004), “the ideological organization of liberal social space relies, in both cultural and juridical terms, upon a perceived distinction between public and private spaces” (3). Thus, in formal terms, Dame Van Winkle disrupts the process of late eighteenth-century liberalization by encroaching upon Rip’s public presence, though, paradoxically, Rip’s unproductivity is more humorously dealt with. Here, in the dialectic of negative and positive forms of liberty, Rip’s freedom from the constraint of his wife is imagistically more valuable than positive forms of liberty concerning his productivity and the maintenance of his share of the household.
imaginary is the further process of displacing Native American spectral presence for a Dutch one. This odd pairing is revealed in the story’s “postscript.” Described as “notes from a memorandum book of Mr. Knickerbocker,” the postscript provides a curious analogue to the story and we should read them as reflective of parallel processes. The postscript notes that the “Indians considered them [the Catskills] the abode of spirits who influenced the weather, spreading sunshine or clouds over the landscape and sending good or bad hunting seasons.”

Like the Van Winkle household, this spectral realm is “ruled by an old squaw spirit, said to be their [the spirits] mother. [Who] dwelt on the highest peak of the Catskills and had charge of the doors of day and night to open and shut them at the proper hour.” This spirit is, like Dame Van Winkle, imagined as a mercurial sovereign over her domain, who, “if displeased…would brew up clouds as black as ink, sitting in the midst of them like a bottle-bellied spider in the midst of its web; and when the clouds broke, woe betide the valleys!”

Here, couched within the primary narrative, this marginal narrative conflates female authority with Native presence not as a “ghost story” like that told by Rip regarding Henry Hudson’s crew, but rather like those stories told by Rip to the village children. Here we see a version of the “old stories” about “ghosts, witches, and Indians,” told as a nature myth concerning the changing weather of the Catskills. Here, the “old squaw spirit,” in her displeasure is seen throwing tantrums not unlike the story’s representation of Dame Van Winkle.

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68 Ibid., 40-41.
69 Ibid., 41.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., 27.
On one level, the inclusion of this material evidently adds another layer of mystery and atmosphere to the narrative; however, this narrative should be understood as parallel, rather than continuous, with the primary narrative. The postscript also describes a “Manitou or Spirit, who kept about the wildest recesses of the Catskill Mountains, and took a mischievous pleasure in wreaking all kinds of evils and vexations upon the red men.” This figure parallels Hudson and his crew’s impish behavior, bedeviling the Native inhabitants the same as rip is bedeviled by Hudson. In paralleling the primary narrative, this secondary narrative presents an older, discredited account of the atmosphere of the Catskills and the feminine cosmology behind its workings. Interestingly, a “note,” written by Diedrich Knickerbocker describing the veracity of the primary narrative, separates the primary narrative and the postscript. Knickerbocker notes that “the story of Rip Van Winkle may seem incredible to many, but nevertheless I give it my full belief, for I know the vicinity of our old Dutch settlements to have been very subject to marvelous events and appearances.”

Locating the atmosphere of the Catskills squarely as a consequence of the Dutch influence, this addendum “interrupts” any possible continuity drawn between the Dutch and the Native spectral cosmologies, dismissing female authority by attaching it to a discredited “note” about Native cosmology as an excised account of a fictional haunting.

The anxiety regarding the placement of Native Americans is incurred in the narrative’s postscript and in other stories in *The Sketchbook* like “Philip of Pokanoket.” In “Rip Van Winkle,” the Dutch mediator untethers the Native Lenape and Mohican...

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72 Ibid., 40.
claims to historical occupation of the Catskills. Philip in “Philip of Pokanoket” is presented as a figure rooted in the past without a place. In contrast, “Rip Van Winkle” produces its erasure of Native presence through the spatial divestment of time, as opposed to the temporal divestment of space. As I detail below, William Apess’ *Eulogy on King Philip* contends with both these formulations.

Hence, “Rip Van Winkle” neither dramatizes a national break from a colonial past nor does it solely preserve white regional and cultural differences within a new national framework as Pease suggests. Rather, more specifically, the story dramatizes the capitalist and political-geographical transformations necessary to orient disparate colonial, regional affiliations and spaces toward the goals of the nation, sublimating the possibility of Native haunting for a Dutch one and a patriarchal creative impulse for an egalitarian or matriarchal one. As a whole, the *Sketch Book* employs different strategies aimed at negotiating the transition between Dutch come British Colony and the nation-state, whether through stories that displace British metropolitan culture for American readers through ethnographic travel narratives like “Rural Life in England” and “Rural Funerals,” or the more popular stories that thematize the transition between old world colonial and national modes of affiliation like “Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle.”

With regard to the production of space, “Rip Van Winkle” concerns the production of uniform, nationalist space over the uneven cultural contours of the colonial landscape. However, lost within the emphasis on regional Old-World transformations are the stories of Native Americans occupying and slowly being relegated to the periphery of national space and the American political imaginary. As Michael Mayerfeld Bell

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73 “Catskill” itself is Dutch for “cat river” or “cat creek.” It is interesting that this name, and more generally, the “kill” description remained attached to many parts of Upstate New York.
suggests, “ghosts—that is, the sense of the presence of those who are no longer physically there—are a ubiquitous aspect of the phenomenology of place.”\(^74\) By presenting the Catskills as haunted by Henry Hudson’s crew, Irving exorcises the Native American ghosts of place. Native American presence is still retained in the story, indeed, Rip’s daughter imagines that Rip either “shot himself or was carried away by the Indians.”\(^75\) However, these “Indians” are potentially real, excised to the periphery. Divested of their spectral force, they are not part of the phenomenology of the Catskills as a place imbued with cultural histories.

If Rip offers a sort of model for citizens affiliated with European ancestry to transform themselves into national capitalist subjects, its relegation of Native Americans to the absolute periphery of the narrative suggests that they are of no consequence to the transformation of the nation. Before his sleep, Rip would recount to the village children the “long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians.”\(^76\) However, after his encounter with the ghostly crew of the Half Moon, he becomes a historian and “chronicler of the old times ‘before the war.’”\(^77\) This narratological maneuver recognizes colonial ghosts within the land, i.e. the ghosts of a different form of social life, if only to disavow the Native presence for the colonial one. In mythologizing the Dutch ties to the land, Irving writes out the Native presence that has both a spectral-historical and real historical-political being.

These historiographies demonstrate the tensions inherent in competing spatial narratives of empire that anxiously juxtapose colonial occupation and national extension

\(^{75}\) Irving, “Rip Van Winkle,” 38.
\(^{76}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{77}\) Ibid., 39.
while simultaneously writing Native American occupation and claimancy outside of the production of the United States. Lost within the transformation of colonial space into national space lies not one but two narrative processes: firstly, this process entails the transformation of local colonial distinctions between European national origins and new world, national spaces. Here, the colonial past and old-world cultural history is preserved and transferred to these new spaces as historical memory. This history is traditionally imagined as part of a pluralistic national past without infringing on the nation’s future imperial goals. Secondly, the framing of this transformation between parochial local cultures and hegemonic forms of national affiliation masks the uneven development of national capitalist space, including the processes of material extraction and spaces of production, while concomitantly dislodging and displacing other (read: Native American) formal and narrative claims to those spaces.

Thus, on one level, “Rip Van Winkle” signals a series of transformations ultimately culminating in an authorial investment of the male author through triangulation with a disavowed agent (Native Americans, Native origin myths, and more specifically, a Native Great-Goddess figure), a past but nonetheless haunting figure (Dutch and then British colonial origins, Dame Van Winkle’s petticoat government), and a nascent cultural order (the American nation, the male author). Fielder, in describing Rip as “presid[ing] over the birth of the American imagination,” interpretively concludes this process as the figure of Rip, himself born out of the author’s imagination, takes on the responsibility of “presiding” over American cultural reproduction. 78 Rip the character may still be lazily sleeping, but his figure nonetheless continues to haunt, in turn, the

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American cultural imagination. In “Rip Van Winkle,” we are given a land capable of being haunted, but only by the right kind of ghosts.

PART II. DANIEL WEBSTER’S REINVENTION OF NATIONAL ORIGINS

As we have seen in Irving, haunting and disavowal are processes intimately tied to the production of history and the phenomenology of place, including its meaning and its potential for transformative change. Coupled with the need for new colonial-national histories, Native American stories and characters would come to figure more prominently in nineteenth-century Anglo-American texts as archaic figures perceived as unrecoverable and untraceable in the context of America’s colonial past. Contrary to this fantasy however, stood the thousands of Native Americans living both within and without the territorial borders of the nation during the early years of the nineteenth century. These narratives, along with others that address the topic of Native American presence within sovereign American space are fraught with what Sean X. Goudie has termed “paracolonial anxiety.”

Goudie’s paracolonialist frame traces the extra-territorial economic and political relationships wrought between nations outside of the explicit command of the State. Thus for the U.S., the Caribbean remained a constant source of anxiety that revealed America’s own colonial origins and which lay outside of America’s ability to monopolize lucrative Caribbean markets of production as many European nations did. In the Caribbean context, the U.S. sought to coerce and control West Indian political movements and markets less through outright warfare and dominion, and more

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through a series of economic and political policies that imagined the Caribbean as dependent upon, yet hopelessly “other” than the United States. In other words, the United States’ colonial origins are anxiously sublimated through the transformative rehearsal of its own imperial relations.

If the national revolutionary mythos must always rehearse the conditions of its epigenesis against paracolonial anxiety, i.e. its own colonial origins and its paracolonial relations to different colonial states and markets, then the presence of “unassimilated” Native Americans and their claims to sovereign space within the boundaries of the nation present a key disturbance in the production of national uniform capitalist space. In this context, the Native American is imagined not only as a supposedly unassailable intruder, but also as a troublesome political figure challenging white, American claims to space.

The haunting of American spaces by Native American ghosts, exorcised or otherwise, presented a complex problem for writers trying to establish a national metahistory and challenged the founding logic through which the state gained legitimacy and imbued the land with its own colonial ghosts. As Renée Bergland suggests, the role of spectral Indians in the white American historical imaginary “are complicated and ambiguous… they insist that Indians are able to appear and disappear suddenly and mysteriously, and also that they are ultimately doomed to vanish. Most often they describe Indians as absent or dead.” However, whereas Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle” writes Native Americans out of the processes of national consolidation, Daniel Webster’s 1820 “First Settlement of New England,” also called the “Oration Given on Plymouth Rock” or the “Plymouth Oration,” exorcises the Native genius loci in a

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different way, anxiously reformulating the metahistory of the nation within the context of national expansion. Within either context, local scale is metonymically reconfigured in terms of the national scale as a way to overcome the complexities that arise when groups like the Pequot threaten to disrupt the scalar imaginary. 

Where Washington Irving founded his national historiography in relation to old-world gothic antecedents, David Webster located the American, and more specifically New England, *genius loci* in an event, namely the Puritan landing at Plymouth Rock. Literary scholarship on Daniel Webster has tended to focus on those elements in his early writings that predict the “orthodox, eastern conservative” he became famous for in his later years. However, Webster’s role in producing a particularly powerful national historiography is itself a fascinating, if politically distasteful achievement as equally influential as his later contributions to American culture. Predating by thirty or so years the New England authors of the American Renaissance, Webster’s “First Settlement of New England” speech, popularly called “The Oration at Plymouth Rock,” delivered on the bicentennial anniversary of the Plymouth landing, conflates the regional culture of New England with the grand genealogy of the “more exalted” elements of U.S. national

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81 Daniel Webster, “First Settlement of New England,” in *The Great Speeches and Orations of Daniel Webster*, ed. Edwin Percy Whipple (Boston: Little, Brown, 1879). For example, in the “Plymouth Oration,” the national is figured precisely in New England, as opposed to Southern or Western terms. Peter Parish notes that Webster’s attitude toward Western expansion was ambivalent concerning its productive capabilities but he feared that territorial expansion would threaten the Republican forms of governance coming into being, already recognizing, as early as 1845, the strain between Northern and Southern interests on the country. “Daniel Webster, New England, and the West,” *The Journal of American History* 54.3 (1967): 524. Republican values represented specifically New England values and interests to Webster and, as I demonstrate below, the Oration is clearly concerned with the tensions inherent in westward expansion.

82 More folktale than monumentalized history, the “Plymouth Rock,” as a particular piece of “granodiorite,” wasn’t identified until some 120 years after the original landing. As James Thatcher notes, in 1741, Thomas Faunce, then 94 years old, claims to have identified the exact rock the landing occurred on as passed down by his grandfather, one of the original pilgrims. *History of the Town of Plymouth; from Its First Settlement in 1620, to the Year 1832*. (Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1832), 312.

culture. Importantly, “The Oration” moves between vastly different geographic scales, tethered to Plymouth Rock as a sort of sacralized temporospatial point of origin. Webster notes,

There is a local feeling connected with this occasion, too strong to be resisted; a sort of genius of the place, which inspires and awes us. We feel that we are on the spot where the first scene of our history was laid; where the hearths and altars of New England were first placed; where Christianity, and civilization, and letters made their first lodgement, in a vast extent of country, covered with a wilderness, and peopled by roving barbarians.84

Webster here moves through a variety of sociospatial and temporal scales, reorganizing different histories through a narrative vision of space imagined as a temporal aggregation of familiar scenes to the Anglo imagination. History is coterminous with civilization (a popular cultural elitist thought that seems to take on new forms with each generation). The “wilderness” and the “roving barbarians” are outside the scope of an imaginable history. As in the “Velasco map,” there is a placelessness here inscribed into the wilderness that extends to the “barbarians” themselves as “roving,” non-stationary people. These images are contrasted with the “fixed hearths” of New England and are generative of a transformative rootedness Webster would imagine covering the entire nation.85

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85 The imagined placelessness of these Natives is highly suspect in and of itself. Indeed, many found themselves either in bound service or enslaved to the masters of these “fixed heaths.” As Margaret Ellen Newell suggests, “slavery flourished in colonial New England, and… Native Americans formed a significant part of New England’s slave population” in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery (Ithaca: Cornell
Though Webster’s spatial historiography takes on a linear aspect, imagined as issuing forth from “this spot where the first scene of our history was laid,” ‘The Plymouth Oration’ importantly reaches across different temporalities as well. Webster suggests that,

Neither the point in time, nor the spot of earth, in which we physically live, bounds our rational and intellectual enjoyments. We live in the past by knowledge of its history; and in the future by hope and anticipation. By ascending to an association with our ancestors; by contemplating their example and studying their character; by partaking their sentiments, and imbibing their spirit; by accompanying them in their toils, by sympathizing in their sufferings, and rejoicing in their successes and triumphs, we mingle our own existence with theirs, and seem to belong to that age.  

This description offers a sort of sentimental haunting, where, like Rip, we are asked to become one with not only the spectral world, but also its historical conditions, taking part in the cultural processes of those of a different age. However, in identifying or “mingling” the reader/listener’s experience with these ancestral pilgrims, Webster’s narrative likens the individual to Plymouth Rock itself. Hence, where Irving decenters time through Rip’s sleep (Rip is, in fact, present in the same space, just unconscious to the passage of time) to describe a complicated spatial transformation, Webster’s narrative

UP, 2015), 3-4. Not only do these accounts disrupt the more familiar “borderlands” narrative, where “interactions between colonizers and Indians are framed in the context of the fur trade or warfare” (6), they also challenge the celebrated engineering and productive power of the Puritans so central to Webster’s lionization of their way of life. Slavery was not only a Southern phenomenon, though historically we are taught to imagine it as such.

86 Webster, “First Settlement,” 26.
grounds time in concretized space (Plymouth Rock). If Plymouth Rock represents the temporal-spatial focus of this narrative history, the citizen body becomes the vessel through which this concretized moment is realized across space, culminating in a hypostatic manifestation of history, presence, and place. The reader/listener “seem[s] to belong to that age,” but that age is also transported and transposed onto the land inhabited by the living. This configuration is an example of what Barthes describes as the mythologizing process or the dressing up of an object or event in “the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying,” covering up an “ideological abuse which…is hidden there.”

In other words, in its ideological obfuscation, myth ascends to a timelessness, concretized within the symbolic object as a discourse, or a set of signs, supplemented by the narratological strategies tracing the contours of Webster’s ideological goals, in this case the maintenance of the Union.

In the process of mythologizing or stabilizing Plymouth Rock’s semiotic intervention into national historical consciousness, the collapse of scale involved with weaving the regional (New England) colonial and geographic history into the larger metahistory of the nation is overcome. Space is broken down, aggregated, and resituated in an a-temporal tableau in “The Oration,” delivered just prior to a vitally important moment in the nation’s history when regional differences within the union were becoming all too recognizable. In other words, the exact moment when space on the national scale becomes of immense concern is when Webster asks us to imagine the folding and unfolding of different scales as an a-temporal vision of European colonial history that centers New England at the epicenter of these transformations.

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Webster differentiates between the Puritan transformation of space he suggests forms the originary base of what becomes the American nation and Southern (including, in his account, both the Southern United States and the Caribbean) colonial capitalist endeavors. For Webster, only New England can be credited as the one uniquely American region—and the only one transportable to the growing west. Webster suggests,

It (New England) has overflowed those boundaries, and the waves of emigration have pressed farther and farther toward the West. The Alleghany has not checked it; the banks of the Ohio have been covered with it. New England farms, houses, villages, and churches spread over and adorn the immense extent from the Ohio to Lake Erie, and stretch along from the Alleghany onwards, beyond the Miamis, and towards the Falls of St. Anthony. Two thousand miles westward from the rock where their fathers landed, may now be found the sons of the Pilgrims… (emphasis mine).  

As Peter J. Parish notes, imagining the continuance of not only the nation, but more particularly New England itself was seen as critically important to people from the Northeast who saw their tenuous hegemony over national politics encroached upon not only by the South, but also by the westward expansion many saw as draining New England of its laboring class.  

If, as Leslie Fielder argued, Harriet Beecher Stowe crafted the lasting image of the antebellum South from the space of an “absolute New

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88 Webster, “First Settlement,” 41
89 Parish, The North and the Nation, 524.
England” (Bowdoin, Maine), Webster was desperately trying to craft a guiding image of the growing West from a similar space. 

By aggressively tying the origin of the nation to a specific space, but disrupting the temporal and regional scales through which the nation is recognized as a symbolic whole, Webster attempts to transcend evolving regional differences while displacing Native participation and presence in either the historical or political register of that account. Unlike even the facile portraits of happy Natives handing out corn and turkey to thankful Pilgrims, Webster’s account debases Native presence, leaving no trace of the role King Philip’s forbearers played in helping to establish the desperate Pilgrims upon their landing or their continued participation and claims for formal political recognition in his time. Situated at the threshold of national expansion and the beginning of regional dissension, The Oration looks back in time to refashion the nation’s metahistory over a tenuously expanding national-imperial landscape that, like The Sketch Book, shuffles Native American participants outside of the possibility of territorial transformation accounts.

PART III. WILLIAM APESS AND THE RECLAIMATION OF WAMPANOAG (MASSASOIT) HISTORY

In contrast to the paracolonial anxieties of works like The Sketch Book, and the anxious interregional tensions that inform nationalistic spatial genealogies like Webster’s “Plymouth Oration” stands Pequot Native William Apess’ “Eulogy on King Philip, as

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90 Leslie A. Fiedler, “New England and the Invention of the South.” The Devil Gets His Due: The Uncollected Essays of Leslie Fiedler, ed. Samuele F. S. Pardini (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008), 56.
Pronounced at the Odeon, in Federal Street.” “The Eulogy” was delivered in Boston on January 8, 1836, just one year after Apess advocated on behalf of a group of Mashpee who had attempted to prevent white logging groups from trespassing and removing trees on Mashpee land near present day Barnstable, Massachusetts. For a time Apess was recognized as an eloquent and important leader in the Massachusetts and Connecticut Native communities as a minister and orator. “The Eulogy,” one of his last known works, offers a revolutionary spatiography concerning America’s deeper, Native origins through a revisionist historical process set against national expansion.

Apess published his first and most well-known work, *A Son of the Forest*, in 1829. The text details his difficult early life, growing up with abusive grandparents and moving from one foster family to another until he finds God, becomes a Methodist preacher, and is reunited with his parents. Primarily an autobiographical description of Apess’ conversion experience to Methodism, *A Son of the Forest* discusses the inconsistent treatment New England Natives received from their privileged white neighbors but has little of the revolutionary furor expressed in Apess’ later works like *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe*, including “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man” (1833), *Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts Relative to the Marshpee Tribe; or, the Pretended Riot Explained* (1835), a narrative of the exchanges between the different players in the Mashpee conflict and a reaction to the hypocritical response of the U.S. and Massachusetts state governments to Indian claims; and “The Eulogy on King Philip” (1836), a sermon delivered as a stinging rejoinder to white responses to the Mashpee conflict. As Drew

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91 For more on the historical conditions of the Mashpee Revolt see Donald Nielsen Nielsen, "The Mashpee Indian Revolt of 1833," *The New England Quarterly* 58.3 (1985): 400-20.
Lopenzina notes, the early conversion narrative form of *A Son of the Forest* may have served as a vehicle for Apess’ subversive interests he articulated in these latter works.92

Despite the generic constrictions of *A Son of the Forest*, Apess begins to articulate his view on history and knowing toward the end the narrative:

> When I reflect upon the complicated ills to which my brethren have been subject, ever since history has recorded their existence—their wanderings, their perils, their privations, and their many sorrows, and the fierceness of that persecution which marked their dwellings and their persons for destruction…I am led to believe that they [Eastern Native peoples] are none other than the descendants of Jacob and the long lost tribes of Israel.93

Here, Apess uses his newfound faith as a means of anchoring the Native complaint against European colonization to a deeper temporal scale, overcoming the gap in written history by forming a genealogical and spatial connection between persecuted “wanderers.” “Wandering” is an important descriptor here. As noted before, Webster described the New England natives as “roving barbarians,” suggesting an endemic quality of placelessness through constant movement. This implies a kind of statelessness and foil to narrative claims to occupation. However, Apess’ connection of Native peoples to the Tribes of Israel emphasizes the fact that this placelessness is an imposed condition, a feature of a persecuted diaspora.

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The diasporic condition recalls a troubled and constantly negotiated relationship between history and space. Statelessness implies, above all, spacelessness, or the condition of lacking all symbolic referent to actually being a part of the space one actually exists within. Whether through the strategic narrative processes of Irving or Webster or other Anglo-American authors like them, Native presence is ultimately disavowed through the patterning of their histories as unlocatable—especially when history itself is rooted in geography. In these moments, time and space, as the provinces of the historian, play off each other, generating both knowledge and its lacuna, or that which is known and that which appears unknowable—producing an image of the past made recognizable for the present. This dispenses with the need for clarity where figures like Philip have for so long been absent from the processes of historiographic production. Apess continues, “The Indian character...has been greatly misrepresented. Justice has not, and I may add, justice cannot fully be done to them by the historian. My people have had no press to record their sufferings or to make known their grievances; on this account many a tale of blood and woe has never been known to the public.”

This cynicism concerning the role of historical inquiry is well taken. Apess’ own contributions to revisionist Native history are accordingly situated at the point of European contact and further concern contemporary issues like the Mashpee conflict. As I argue below, Apess’ “living historicism” supplements that historical lacuna, but more specifically attempts to reclaim the ability to produce a countergeographical history itself, to locate Northeastern Natives within history as the means of producing a Native spatial historiography in an age of occupation.

94 Ibid., 60.
Following the Revolutionary War, the state of Massachusetts in 1788 revoked the Mashpee right of self-governance originally promised them on their reservation (one of the first such reservations in North America), though the Mashpee had regained some limited forms of self-rule by the time of Apess’ protest. In effect, Mashpee lands existed in a transitional state as Massachusetts tried to introduce farming techniques and ways of plotting out parcels of land to select individual families (as opposed to the tribe as a whole) in the hope that these practices would eventually lead to the integration of both the tribe and their lands into Massachusetts’ mainstream white culture. However, despite their limited independence, tensions between whites and Natives escalated when, beginning in 1834, Mashpee lands were encroached upon given the quality of timber still available within their borders.  

Though ultimately unsuccessful, the Mashpee challenged the state government’s actions within two formal political contexts: appealing to the tradition of their own imagined territorial sovereignty and to the existing political system of Massachusetts. As Apess argues in his retelling of events, “the Mashpee Indians, to whom our laws have denied all rights of property, have a higher title to the lands than the whites have…Every time they [the Mashpee] had petitioned the legislature, the laws, by the management of the interested whites, had been made more severe against them.” While a full-scale treatment of the political history of early Native American reservations is impossible here, the Mashpee dispute remains an important event in the history of Native American-U.S. territorial relations informing the occasion of Apess’ historical treatment of King

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96 Apess, “Indian Nullification,” 167. Apess was prompted to write this piece in 1835 as a response to sensationalist claims that he and three others had incited a “riot” for which he and his small group of protesters were imprisoned 30 days.
Philip (or Metacomet) as a revolutionary figure within the histories of conflicting, yet overlapping national narratives.\textsuperscript{97}

In certain respects, the difficulty the United States government had in assimilating/conquering Native Americans groups lay in part in the inability to draw conclusive maps concerning the territorial dominion of different tribes. Often multiple tribes lay claim to contested areas, and as would be the case throughout the history of nineteenth-century tribal disputes, certain members of the tribe would exceed their authority in negotiating matters with white representatives.\textsuperscript{98} This would, in part, play into the characterization offered by Webster and others, of Natives as ‘wandering” and “roving” peoples. Colonial English writers also produced histories that imagined different tribes as illegitimate owners of the lands they inhabited. As early as 1677, William Hubbard suggested that the “Pequods being more fierce, cruel, and warlike people than the Rest of the Indians, come down out of the more inland Parts of the Continent, and by Force, seized upon one of the goodliest Places near the sea and became a Terror to all the Neighbors.”\textsuperscript{99} These particular claims have been refuted by modern historical and

\textsuperscript{97} The Mashpee revolt initiated a series of events that increasingly yielded self-governance. For example, by 1834, they were allowed to elect civic officials “who would exercise their duties as overseers of the poor, highway surveyors, and school committeemen under the supervision of a single commissioner and a treasurer appointed by the governor.” (Donald M. Nielsen, “The Mashpee Indian Revolt of 1833.” \textit{The New England Quarterly} 58.3 (1985): 416). However, the political clout accumulated by the Mashpee was lost in 1869 after the passage of the “Indian Enfranchisement Act” that subdivided and privatized Native communal lands as a path to assimilation into mainstream American culture. (Colin G. Calloway, \textit{After King Philip’s War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England} (Hanover: U of New England, 1997), 200). For more on this act, see Ann Marie Plane and Gregory Button, “The Massachusetts Indian Enfranchisement Act: Ethnic Contest in Historical Context, 1849-1869,” \textit{Ethnohistory} 40.4 (1993): 587-618.

\textsuperscript{98} An example of this is described in Chapter 4, which details John Rollin Ridge’s family’s authority to speak for the tribe in such matters.

Initial intertribal disputes were frustrating to individual white speculators and policy makers whose claims to certain territories and markets would be varyingly recognized. However, these differences would later come to be exploited by federal policy makers who, exercising their own ultimate authority, pitted groups of Natives against each other, using a “divide and conquer” method to achieve the best results for national acquisition and expansion. However, the strategy undertaken by the U.S. government to standardize territorial exchanges between tribes and the nation required the recognition that Native peoples had at least some sovereign claim to the lands they were encouraged to divest themselves of.

Observed in hindsight, one of the effects of remaking the way Native peoples were allowed to do business with the United States government was not only to standardize the transmission and sale of land grants between smaller Native communities and an ever-growing and consolidating federal machine, but, more conceptually, to renegotiate the scales through which Native Americans recognized themselves as a cohesive community with particular occupational claims. This process was conducted as writers like Irving and Webster produced metanarratives of national, spatial consolidation.

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101 The most fundamental case concerning these conflicts is the 1831 Johnson v. M’Intosh decision, which has significantly informed private, public, and federal land ownership and policies ever since despite its specious argumentation. This case held that Natives held “Aboriginal Title” to their lands and that tribal lands were not alienable to private parties but to the United States Congress only. Chief Justice John Marshall’s conclusion was based on the principle of “sovereign discovery” which held that founding sovereigns have right “through either purchase or just war” to deal with Natives. (Eric Kades, “History and Interpretation of the Great Case of Johnson v. M’Intosh,” Law and History Review 19.1 (2001): 67). As Kades notes, “Both legal and historical scholarship on this ‘great case’ is surprisingly thin. There are no studies examining the litigants or the actual acreage under dispute (surprising for a real property dispute). There are also a number of unanswered legal questions surrounding Chief Justice Marshall’s opinion in M’Intosh, perhaps none more glaring than the failure to pin down the legal basis for the decision” (67). The practical result of this case was that the acquisition of Native lands would be mediated first by Congress as a sort of interested middleman. This in effect paved the way for private parties to take part in the proliferation of the American empire (uniting at once Jefferson’s Empire of Liberty and Hamilton’s Empire of Commerce) through the tenuous legal appropriation of Native lands.
that at the same time displaced alternative possibilities of enfranchisement. In other words, a historical displacement was later necessary to justify the conditions of spatial displacement. Apess understood this later challenge to the Native historical imagination quite acutely. As Lopenzina notes, “the functions of history-keeping remained, in fact, the central problematic of Apess’ career as a writer.”

In part, Apess’ *Eulogy* attempts to negotiate these various scales while reproducing a recognizable form of national and affiliative history against the various forms of spatial divestment practiced upon Native Americans.

Apess’ *Eulogy* begins by equating King Philip’s character and the role he played in the eponymous war to George Washington’s “patriotism” and community leadership in the Revolutionary War. However, Apess considers these revolutionaries within two different physical and psychic geographic registers, suggesting on the one hand, that if Washington should live on “endeared and engraven on the hearts of every white in America,” so too should the “rude yet all-accomplished son of the forest” Philip, who Apess suggests, is still “held in memory by [his] degraded, but yet grateful descendants.” Hence, Philip is located and locatable in time and space by his descendants, who, as living agents of memory, carry his memory and bear witness to his exception from the dominant culture’s historical calculus into the present.

The location of these figures within different psychic and historiographic registers pervades Apess’ framing of “The Eulogy” when he asks, “Where, then, shall we place the hero of the wilderness”—in the heart or in the mind? Apess’ rhetorical choice of words here echoes his own *A Son of the Forest*, however, it may also self-consciously mock the

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103 Apess, *Eulogy*, 277.
104 Ibid.
“roving barbarians” in Webster’s “wilderness.” But is not this hero of a place, specifically a “wilderness,” encouraging us to ask where this wilderness has gone? This is an especially provocative question considering the historical circumstances of the conflict and Philip’s death and the then contemporary Mashpee revolt. Killed and beheaded at the end of the war that bore his name, many of Philip’s tribe who survived, including his wife and son, were enslaved and sold off in the West Indies. Those who remained saw their political solvency evaporate as they were relocated into one of a handful “praying towns” in Western Massachusetts and Connecticut. Similarly, (according to Apess) Philip was also “misplaced” in the historical register, yet comparable to those “mighty of the earth” like “Alexander the Great” and “Washington,” another of those lost Natives whose “noble traits… remain untold.” Thus, Philip and his kin are not only forgotten, but have similarly been excised from the spatial register of history, a figure in history without a place.

Importantly then, Apess’ Eulogy speaks to two forms of displacement: one spatial and the other historical and importantly, theorizes the relationship between the two. In considering the dual processes of displacement and forgetting that mark the relationship of Native Americans to the production of national space in the post-Revolutionary era, the “placement” of Philip, in history, in the memory of his descendants, and in the minds of the Anglo-Americans demos is correlated with the placement of these Natives within U.S. territory and on its threshold. Rather than disappearing from history as a result of their dispossession, Natives are both shorn of their land and their place within American

105 Webster, “First Settlement,” 1.
107 Ibid.
history through the mutually constituent processes of *forgetting and displacement*. In this sense, Apess’ response is situated within the effacement of Native American histories, and set against the revolutionary mythos of expansion, suggesting that if Philip were remembered within the same transformative, revolutionary context Washington is held in, the listener may not, in fact, be in possession of a more productive, inclusive version of history. Further, the recognition of this dual displacement within the context of national expansion draws the listener’s attention to the processes of imperial expansion as a process of not only spatial, but also historical divestment.

It would be a mistake to claim, even as early as King Philip’s War in 1675, that Native American groups weren’t actively and extensively tied to colonial and later national political and commercial networks. Stripped of their lands and distanced from expiring inter and extra-tribal trade networks, many Natives (often Native women) within the borderland regions would resort to fashioning and selling household products like brooms, ladles and spoons, and other similar wares to supplement their increasing lack of sustainable means.\(^{108}\) As the Mashpee conflict made clear, Native tribes by that time were actively engaged in agricultural and industrial processes as part of a regional and circumatlantic commerce network.

The result of these processes, at least at a certain level, interpolated Native Americans within an extra-territorial United States geographic landscape that repeatedly sought to deny them access to the benefits of Jefferson’s expanding Empire. The wilderness in these accounts becomes a readily deployable space, always on the horizon, always within reach yet forever foreign and in need of absorption. Nevertheless, this

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suggests that, unlike the various linearly oriented spatial narratives of the frontier
(imagined in various media, from Cooper’s novels to Jefferson’s national imaginary)
Native Americans and white settlers increasingly inhabited similar spaces, performed
similar kinds of work, and participated, at least on local and regional levels, in the
governance of their nearby communities. Their material and historical eradication from
the national account then is a construction of a historical imaginary out of place and out of
time.

Hence, “The Eulogy” weaves the story of King Philip both within the antebellum
Revolutionary mythos that for many (mostly) white Americans imagistically nurtured the
processes of western expansionism, and through Native American spatial narratives that
attempt to disrupt the benign vision of Jefferson’s Empire of Liberty. As Cindi Katz
suggests, “The absence of such vibrant imagined geographies marks and undergirds
particular relations of power that work off of and on quite material historical
geographies.”¹⁰⁹ Hence, mere “truth telling” is inadequate; Apess’ cynicism regarding the
historian’s role in producing history is drawn from his experience with commentators like
Webster, yet also reflects a recognition of the narrative and symbolic processes by which
the nation was forming and the formal policies that accompanied the symbolic and
narratological divestment of Native space within time. However, works like Indian
Nullification and “The Eulogy” provide a way of resetting the stage as it were for the
historical consideration of Native figures through the figure of the land. “The Eulogy”
thus reproduces a revolutionary counter-narrative that challenges the historiographical
logic informing works like Irving’s that attempt to produce national capitalist space
through the transformational effacement of Native American presence.

Chapter 2

Domestic Geographies: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and the Refabrication of Native Domestic Space

Three cranberries were living in a lodge together. One was green, one white, and one red. They were sisters. There was a snow on the ground, and as the men were absent, they felt afraid and began to say to each other, “what shall we do if the wolf comes.” “I,” said the green one, “will climb up a shingoup tree.”110 “I,” said the white one, “will hide myself in the kettle of boiled hominy.” And “I,” said the red one, “will conceal myself under the snow.” Presently the Wolves came, and each one did as she had said. But only one of the three had judged wisely. The Wolves immediately ran to the kettle and ate up the corn and with it the white Cranberry. The red one was trampled to pieces by their feet, and her blood spotted the snow. But she, who had climbed the thick spruce tree escaped notice, and was saved.

[Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, “The Three Cranberries, 189”]

This fable, written by half Ojibwe, half Irish writer Jane Johnston Schoolcraft sometime prior to 1839 (and possibly much earlier) records the fate of three variously “colored,” female cranberries.111 The cranberries are sisters but each of a different color.

110 “Shingoup” is Ojibwe for a spruce tree and was also the name of a high-ranking “Midew” or medicine man who lived in roughly the same area as Schoolcraft. See Michael Angel, Preserving the Sacred: Historical Perspectives on the Ojibwa Midewiwin (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2002), 124.
111 The common term for children of European Fathers and First Nations mothers is “Métis” or “Anglo-Métis” in Schoolcraft’s case. Today Métis are officially recognized as one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. For more on the Métis see David McNab and Ute Lischke, The Long Journey of a Forgotten People Métis Identities and Family Histories, (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2007).
As the fable makes plain, it is both their color (red, green, white) and their place (the kettle, in the snow, and the tree) that ultimately determines their fates. All three are housed collectively in a lodge—a scene of both Native and domestic labor. While there is little paratextual content to situate the allegory in this fable, one could read each of the colors as a racial allegory with spatial dimensions, each representing different modes of racial and spatial identification. The white berry, representative of whiteness, domesticity and femininity, remains in the lodge, hiding in what is probably the worst hiding place: the kettle. Stepping out of the lodge, the red berry, in trying to lay low in a sea of white, is nonetheless trampled, unable to hide as her red blood stains the snow. If we read the red berry as representing someone wholly identifying as Native attempting to live in a transitionally white world then this fate would seem consistent with the structural oppression imposed on Natives living in increasingly white, Americanized spaces. Most enigmatic is the green berry, who, of seemingly indeterminate race, saves herself by climbing up a spruce tree, thereby distancing herself from both the space of the lodge and the snow covered outside. Salvation, it would seem, comes from blending into a world apart from either of these domestic or public spaces. What are the features of this alternative terrain able to mask this unassimilable identity?

Like many (if not most) of Schoolcraft’s published works, this story appeared in her husband Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s 1839 *Algic Researches*, an odd collection of tales, poems, legends, and other sources acquired through his position as the first Indian agent

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112 The symbolic significance of color in her stories is varied and complex and is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. While “red-man” or “red-skin” are traditionally understood as (generally offensive) names given to American Indians by way of colonial-European race theory, it should be noted that Schoolcraft herself uses the adjective “red” to describe Native peoples in several pieces, for example, in the “Peboan and Seegwun” (198) and “Song of Okogis” (215). Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, “The Three Cranberries,” in *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft*, ed. Robert Dale Parker (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007).
to the Michigan territory. As I will discuss later, many of these stories were either written or translated by Schoolcraft from their Algonquin sources. Jane Schoolcraft was nonetheless only ever partially credited for her creativity and skill in translation. Schoolcraft, it would seem, inhabited a world of anonymity much like the green berry in her tale, moving through both white and Native spaces, committed wholly to neither and passing for the most part unrecognized in both. In this sense, the berries represent three different possible combinations of identity and space presumably available to Schoolcraft. These identities are contingent upon her movement through different geographic spaces. However, through her poetry, Schoolcraft crafts these spaces as continuous spaces of transformation within which different scales intersect, rather than strictly delimited spaces within which only certain subjects are located.

This chapter explores a different kind of cartographic division of space apart from the territorial scale: namely between the space of the home, or what critics have termed “domestic space,” and so-called “public spaces.” While different public spaces and scales have figured as the primary concern of cartography and geography, domesticity has rarely (if at all) been considered as important to the partitioning of space—especially outside of the space of the bourgeois home. The previous chapter discussed ways in which history writing (including fiction) gives form and imaginative recourse to the territorial lines organizing the cartographic map. As that chapter tried to demonstrate, these histories, or spatial metanarratives such as the history of New England or the Catskills, are mobilized in different ways, sometimes complimentary to the territorial lines inscribed by political hegemony and sometimes in opposition to these prevailing ways of partitioning space. In this sense, spatial metanarratives embed important
distinctions of meaning across varying spatial scales. These conflicting spatial histories play a vital ideological function, powerfully influencing the lived experiences of those within these spaces, as well as helping to establish and regulate the very forms of exchange and kinds of relationships available within them. This chapter considers the home as a fundamental spatial unit positioned at the heart of a vast array of spatial-ideological forces and scales.

This chapter examines the (primarily) poetical works of Schoolcraft who was born and raised near the Sault St. Marie on the upper panhandle of present day Michigan (then called the pays d’en haut or “upper country”). Schoolcraft’s complex identity is situated within the intersection of at least two geographies: one Native (Ojibwe) and the other domestic. These spaces and identities are threaded together in her work in ways that oppose the separation of home and political/public spaces and the dispossession of Native spaces and histories of the forthcoming nation, specifically by transfiguring these geographies through the framework of the domestic. As I demonstrate, domesticity for Schoolcraft is not a stable register through which gendered identity is constructed, but rather a system through which the tensions within the colonial production of gendered, racialized spaces (unfolding as the nation expands westward) are reconfigured. Through a complicated process of territorialization, protocapitalist production and consumption, and knowledge production that included mapmaking, the history of these depoliticized identities was conveniently mapped over by statesmen like Schoolcraft’s husband. In short, the colonial map, as a powerful exercise in knowledge production, “mapped over” the social relations embedded within these spaces. Considering these geographies as contingent in significant ways figures as an important step in contesting the spatial
epistemologies of empire that would situate these two spaces in politically manageable ways—a process Schoolcraft’s “domestic countergeographies” initiates.

Neither domestic space, nor the daily regulation of Native spaces, were of much political importance to the nation. What went on within the home or reservation mattered little until it spilled out into the surrounding world. It is an irony (operative at multiple levels) that even today Native reservations are legally referred to as “domestic dependent nations.” Conversely, Native spaces would not have been recognized by many whites as domestic or domesticated spaces—either as foreign, non-national space or in the more traditional sense of the bourgeois home. Particularly, neither of these geographies would have been considered a part of the expanding political-territorial geography of the nation proper but as zones of exception within these territorial dimensions. Further, unassimilated Native geographies were often referred to simply as “spaces” if not more generically unbounded areas designated as “woodlands” or the “forest,” and few were taken seriously as recognizable political entities by white politicians and speculators. As chapter one explored, these designations were meant to not simply imagine non-national territorialized space as empty, but also as politically unrecognizable—a feature routinely exploited in U.S.-Native boundary disputes well into the twentieth century. Similarly, the space of the home was imagined as an important but ancillary space to the nation, not inherently political in itself except as an exception to the civic realm. As I explore further below, gender then operates as an important, reifying discourse coordinating the map and the disciplinary spaces articulated and hidden within it.

113 For a history of more modern Native conflicts with the U.S. Government, see Troy R. Johnson, Red Power: The Native American Civil Rights Movement (New York: Chelsea House, 2007).
Whereas critics have fruitfully attended on the one hand to specific instances of actual domestic spaces (bedrooms, kitchens, coffee shops, etc.) and the reliance upon these scenes of gendered labor to shape the intransitivity of particular subjects within them, and on the other to the circulation of women and writing by women across and through these divisions, few have considered how literary texts can constitute a response or challenge to the spatial epistemologies that attempt to dictate ways of inhabiting these diverse spatial scales. This chapter considers how Schoolcraft’s poetry rechanneled the powerful ideological forces directed toward both the construction of distinct gendered spaces like the home, and processes of national development. This then leads us to ask what kind of domestic topographies could be imagined if we were able to imagine a more complex series of “border crossings”—crossings between home and empire that critically engage these scenes of both domestic and political isolation? As my reading of “The Three Cranberries” suggests, none of the available predicated identities (white, Ojibwe, female, etc.) or socio-spatial constructions were adequate to Schoolcraft—though in her life she had to adopt one or the other at different moments. The countergeographies she constructed in her works were highly unique and spiritual, but also fully engaged with the contradictions between home and homeland her own life placed her in. Despite Schoolcraft’s engagement with these terrestrial spaces, this chapter finishes by considering a transformation in Schoolcraft’s spatial-domestic thought—namely through the trope of loss in a section I title “Eschatological Geographies.” While loss, in terms

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114 See Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1980). Kerber demonstrates the importance of women to the Revolutionary War and how the rhetoric of freedom had particular ramifications for women who saw the war as possibly leading to forms of enfranchisement within the new republic. One of the key figures to come out of Kerber’s account is the Republican Mother who is seen as playing a vital political role in establishing the homes out of which national citizen come forth.
both of land and history, represents a common if not over-explored concept in Native American studies, it represents an especially important element in Schoolcraft’s life and work after the death of her son William. This geography of loss is figured by a disruption of contingent material spaces, where order between nature and the home is projected into the hereafter. An examination of her works helps us to reconsider the relationship between domestic and public spaces, charting the topographical possibilities for a new set of relations between these seemingly ideologically separated spaces.

This chapter engages two related bodies of scholarship in addition to the critical-spatial theories and methodologies employed throughout the dissertation: firstly I engage with a range of critical work by Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, Amy Kaplan, and Karen Sanchez-Eppler that builds off of foundational work by Habermas and Tompkins concerning domesticity and public/private sphere theory. These more recent scholars direct these larger frameworks through critical refractions of the nation, empire, and race. Domesticity’s relationship to larger, oftentimes national spatial scales was originally conceptualized as inherently separate and as an antidote to the evils of empire. In these accounts, domesticity makes available both a material and conceptual space apart from the bloody excesses of empire, a haven where order is restored through the bonds of sympathy and kinship. However, as I will detail below, these later theorists conceive of domesticity as a powerful, mutually constitutive participant in the extension of national empire. I argue that Schoolcraft’s geographic imaginary offers a unique variation on both of these narratives. Her work, concerned with domesticity and the family, is also self-

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consciously and critically engaged with the processes of empire. In other words, these spaces and spheres are consciously intermixed in her spatial imaginary in important ways often denied in sentimental fiction by white men and women. In this formulation, domesticity is extended beyond the borders of the home to remap topographical connections and arrangements between home, nature, and nation displaced by empire. This chapter regards Schoolcraft’s unique relationship to these varying processes of domesticity and empire as an example of a countergeography threading both of these discursive spaces together toward anti-imperialistic ends.

Secondly, I also draw on critical work concerning Native American literatures and the politics of removal, assimilation, and inclusion—specifically where it concerns Native American women writers. While many earlier examples of this work were directed toward processes of recovery and reestablishing excluded or suppressed Native histories and historical contributions to Anglo-American culture after contact, other contemporary Native critics are more skeptical of non-Native critical methodologies and the processes of restitution that have dominated discussion in the academy. For example, Native critics like Craig Womack and Eva Marie Garroutte have criticized postmodern or post-structural approaches (a field critical geography is often considered a part of) to understanding Native literatures, instead suggesting that Native criticism must originate within the community along tribal lines. This is particularly emphasized in Womack’s influential 1999 book Red on Red, where he argues for a Native nationalist and separatist politics that decries what he characterizes as a top-down model of Native-white relationships—an admirable if challenging goal.116 I believe Womack is correct that

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116 See Craig S. Womack, Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999). Womack’s argument against post-structuralism is most explicitly based on criticizing
Native self-determination must first develop out of a sense of shared community. However, as a non-Native myself, my goal is to approach Jane Schoolcraft’s work carefully through these theoretical concerns, eventually offering a critical way of understanding the relationship of spaces and identities in flux through the Native experience. Schoolcraft’s work reflects a critical—if sometimes uneven—process of imagining oneself in the world that doesn’t neatly fit into any readily available epistemological categorization. No act of interpretation is ever free from the threatening possibility of interpretive colonization. Nevertheless, recent Native American scholarship has taught us all to critically consider the particular perspectives through which we approach historical and literary restitution and compensation. Attending to this concern, this chapter closes by drawing attention to the politics of historic preservation and monumentalization while also moving toward a reformulation of colonial spatial legacies that continue to negatively shape many communities calculated outside of its domain.

My concern then is in seeking to understand the role authors such as Schoolcraft could play in disorienting the predominant logic of a spatial politics applied toward the exclusion of groups like the Ojibwe and Chippewa. This process has something more in common with José Esteban Muñoz’s theory of “disidentification” where materials (including geographic materials) from, in Schoolcraft’s case, both Ojibwe and white cultures are appropriated and repurposed for her purposes, including spatial negotiations

“outside-looking-in” approaches to understanding and articulating Native concerns. However, a second, more subdued strain of criticism comes about in regard to post-structuralist identity politics that in his account emphasize the individual over the collective concerns of the community. In this way, Womack’s argument relies on a theory of individual and collective “sovereignty” that serves as the fundamental point of concern for political struggle. However, while sovereignty as an individual concept is usefully explored in his account, strangely absent is a critique concerning collective sovereignty and the function of state power to designate and assign “rights.” As theorists from Arendt to Rancière have suggested, self-determination and political recognition are rarely consistently imagined concepts and even more rarely imagined in coordination for oppressed and silenced groups.
confined (and confining) to both her gender and her status as a person of mixed race. According to Muñoz, “Disidentification for the minority subject is a mode of recycling or re-forming an object that has already been invested in powerful energy.”

Reformulation is a vital concept when discussing space because of the shared terrains we all inhabit. For Schoolcraft, this object was the very ground she walked on, the home where she lived, and the nation or nations she inconsistently counted herself a part of. Her process is both deconstructive and reconstructive while trying to maintain a critical sense of both, all the while re-identifying the subject across these different spatial registers. Thus, the strategies of disidentification aim to both preserve Native contributions to historical spaces of cultural exchange while maintaining a critical glance toward the various frameworks we might unassumingly imagine we are contributing to—namely the nation (both Native and white versions) and the home. These two (highly fluid) bodies of critical work have much to say to each other especially when we consider the relationship between Native domestic spaces to scenes traditionally understood only in the context of the nation.

HOME, HOMELAND, AND THE NATION, OR: DOMESTICITY LEAVES THE HOUSE

In Writing on the Body, Kate Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury suggest that there is a “tension between women’s lived bodily experiences and the cultural

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meanings inscribed on the female body that always mediate those experiences.”118 As many critics and historians have suggested, women in the nineteenth century were not silent figures, cooped up in the home never to enter public spaces. However, the ideological patterning of women as inhabiting specifically domestic spaces, and the relationship of domestic spaces to empire in Schoolcraft’s life, to her “lived bodily experiences” as a métis woman traveling between the American frontier, her native homeland, and the eastern seaboard, is suggestive of the way women negotiated the inscription of meaning attributed to their bodies. Schoolcraft’s life was located at a complex intersection of these spaces and discourses. This section lays out some of the critical groundwork necessary to understand the complexity of these intersections while beginning to explore how Schoolcraft negotiated a world inimical to her experience and identity.

Whereas earlier critics like Jane Tompkins could celebrate the domesticating tendencies of women’s labor and writing about children and the home as offering an alternative to different forms of capitalist-nationalist expansion, critics like Karen Sanchez-Eppler, Amy Kaplan, and Elizabeth Maddock Dillon find these racial and gendered discourses and processes related in important, co-articulating ways particularly useful for this chapter. Dillon’s work is particularly important for exploring the ways in which writing by and about women is central to liberalism’s disciplinary framework. As Dillon suggests, public and private spheres are mutually constitutive despite varying historical and critical narratives attesting to their separateness. Dillon argues that “Gender is one of the key categories through which liberalism scripts the interrelated public and

private lives of citizens in the liberal state” and that the centrality of women to the modern liberal state (rather than their exclusion) is one of the defining features of liberalism’s reach into the private lives of its citizens.\textsuperscript{119} Dillon’s work aims, in one regard, to place “writing by American women less squarely within a nationalist framework than most previous accounts.”\textsuperscript{120} This work does an excellent job exploring how domesticity, through its exclusion as a political construct, orients a series of other conceptual spaces. However, Schoolcraft’s work is positioned within a nexus of competing “sphere ideologies” of which gender is only a part. What of her identity as a Métis woman?

Specifically then, how does women’s labor, as both writers and readers, produce the lines of inclusion/exclusion through racial parameters? In “Manifest Domesticity,” Amy Kaplan explores the relationship between different definitions of the domestic to the processes of empire, arguing that critical work directed toward the breaking down of the public-private binaries that distinguish gendered spheres of production and labor have left “another structural opposition intact: the domestic in intimate opposition to the foreign.”\textsuperscript{121} This domestic feeling of “at-homeness,” whether in reference to familial space or to national space, always denotes an exclusionary sense of belonging “in contrast to an external world perceived of as alien and threatening.”\textsuperscript{122} Accordingly, in shifting between the domestic space of the family to the domestic space of the nation, Kaplan argues, “men and women become national allies against the alien, and the

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{121} Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” \textit{American Literature} 70.3 (1998): 581.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 582.
determining division is not gender but racial demarcations of otherness.”

In Kaplan’s view, this final domestic register attends to the concerns of empire through the making at-home or the interpolation of the alien through an ongoing “process of domestication,” where ‘the home contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed; domesticity not only monitors the borders between the civilized and the savage but also regulates traces of the savage within itself.” Domesticity then is not a safe space apart from national-capitalistic processes of transformation and acquisition, but a concept very much in line with it.

Similarly, in her reading of children’s conduct books and missionary activities, Karen Sanchez-Eppler suggests that “the moral revolution of the world in the image of American Christian domesticity and the economic and political forms of American imperialism are interdependent.” In this formulation, discourses of empire and home relied upon each other in order to give coherent form to the dual processes of empire. Sanchez-Eppler goes on to suggest that domesticity offered a way to overcome the tensions identified by Benedict Anderson between nation and empire. In Anderson’s account, the nation is imagined as a core space of cultural production in relation to the larger web of empire, which is viewed as a complicated and often problematic component of the nation. An ever-expanding empire would bring with it the paradox of what to do with those already occupied extra-national spaces.

These racial tensions manifested differently in different places and solutions rarely favored the conquered. Domesticity—in the eyes of many sentimental writers—

123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
was imagined as an inclusionary impulse at work in the forging of domestic, national empires that helped to tone down the exclusionary and exploitative processes of empire.\textsuperscript{126} Sanchez-Eppler suggests that because the shifting borders of the nation figured as such a prominent aspect of nineteenth-century American cultural life, these stories offer a way to imagine the inclusion of subjects only "half-civilized."\textsuperscript{127} In this way the racial other is maintained in a transitional “nonspace,” neither belonging to nor apart from domesticity’s enfolding grasp.

Dillon’s work thus gives us a useful toolkit for imagining the disciplinary function of gender within liberalism, while Sanchez-Eppler and Kaplan help us understand the interdependency of domesticity to the nation and forms of racial inclusion and exclusion. Now we can ask how these accounts help us explore the process of inclusion-exclusion for subjects who exist at the threshold of state intervention—namely Native Americans, and, more particularly, Native women. As much as women are figured as the disavowed center of liberalism’s ideological engine, what about responses from the racialized periphery? What kinds of spatial interventions are possible for these subjects? Could these women on the periphery engage domesticity and empire in a way that can be reoriented back against the repressive practices of spatial exclusion? What would this map look like and how could it speak back to the colonial map?

While this work demonstrates that gendered spaces and domestic discourses have served a critical role in the production of national-territorial space, it has less to say about countergeographical domesticities, or domestic spaces that resist this disciplinary coding. If gender, and domesticity, more particularly, help to script the “public and private lives

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 403.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 404.
of citizens in the liberal state,” as well as contribute to the interpolation of the “other” through the extension of imperial dominion, it would suggest that domesticity expresses little revolutionary possibility—especially when cast squarely in terms of either the home or the nation. However, while it seems clear that gender, and more particularly domesticity, has functioned as a "spatial fix" within an ideology of separate spheres, able to allay (to a degree) the tensions involved in the expansion of empire, the intersections between race and gender complicate this paradigmatic formulation. In this view, gendered spaces function as tools to smooth over the reorganization of spaces into territories consistent with the nation when they are threatened by the racial logic of the “other.” In other words, the home is imaginable as a retreat from the heterogeneous social fold brought about by the tensions between nation and empire. Hence, the domestic home proves a powerful stabilizing force operating in the wake of territorial expansion—whether related to the nation as spaces of exception (as earlier scholars believed) or as part of a territorializing ideology directed toward the production of national space.

However, I hope to show that the same categorical constructions of exclusion can be redirected against this spatial epistemology. I propose that we begin to think about domesticity outside of the dialectical registers of only either the home or nation. As well, we should consider alternative domestic formations that arise apart from the precepts of specifically “white” domesticity. Perhaps then it is possible to see the evolution of alternative topographic connections between place, identity, and the spatial histories that rehearse these bonds in new, potentially liberating ways. Before turning to the poems themselves, I briefly turn to discuss the publication history of Schoolcraft’s poems and her vexed relationship with her husband, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, in order to

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contextualize her personal intersection with the larger processes through which her work redraws the topographies of empire, redefining home and homeland through an intertwined geography of preservation.

INTERLOCUTORS BOTH HOSTILE AND BENEVOLENT

Only within the last decade has Schoolcraft’s life and work begun to attract serious critical attention. Unfortunately this has meant that several editorial and biographical features of both her life and work remain obscured. Robert Dale Parker’s 2007 collection, *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky* (a translation of Schoolcraft’s Ojibwe name Bamewawagezhikaquay), offers the first serious treatment of Schoolcraft, yielding an at least partially reconstructed overview of her works. However, as Parker himself notes, the available overview is far from complete. For example, there is great difficulty in organizing Schoolcraft’s writings, either chronologically or geographically. As Parker suggests, Schoolcraft’s “Surviving writings (raise) challenges that pose a fascinating case study in the history of literary editing.”129 His practice in compiling this first collection aims to supply “a record of more substantive variants in the annotations to each poem [that] allows readers to construct such hybrids as the evidence allows them to imagine, while it presents as a reading text, the product of [Schoolcraft’s] authorship in the social environment she lived in historically.”130 Parker provides a useful, if incomplete, record of these differences in a handful of cases, sometimes providing little rationale for his inclusions and omissions. Hence, claims based upon a

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129 Parker, appendix to *The Sound the Stars Make*, 221.
130 Ibid., 223.
strict sense of either chronology or attribution should only be carefully and provisionally accepted.

Whether as editor, publisher, or muse, Henry Schoolcraft’s influence over Jane Schoolcraft is also of vital importance to any consideration of her poetry. Schoolcraft, it seems, wasn’t overly concerned with the publication of many of her stories and poems except for some of her translation work that appears in collections assembled by Henry, including his irregularly published periodical *Literary Voyager*, and his 1839 observations on Native life and collected stories, *Algic Researches*. Parker describes Henry Schoolcraft as a “sometimes unsavory character known for his corruption as a federal official and his readiness to take credit for other people’s work, not least the work of Indian people,” and Jane Schoolcraft’s work may have been edited at different points by him “with or without her approval.”

It can still be unclear exactly where Jane Schoolcraft’s contributions end and another (most often Henry’s) begins, even where she is actually attributed in these works. Sometimes her poems were written in Ojibwe and translated in her hand; in other cases it is clear that Henry Schoolcraft provided what he would call “free translations” of her work, such as the poem “On leaving my children John and Jane at School, in the Atlantic States, and preparing to return to the interior.”

As Parker suggests, Jane Schoolcraft often “deferred to his [Henry’s] judgment,” leading to a variety of complications concerning authorial intent, editorial and archival practices,

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131 Ibid., 221. Henry Schoolcraft remarried in 1847 after Jane Schoolcraft’s death in 1842 and seemed little inclined to revise any of her earlier attributions or publish her papers afterward. In regard to his corruption, he was dismissed from his office as Indian agent in 1841 after his various abuses became better known following a change in administration (222).

and translation issues. These concerns attain an extra level of complexity when set against the ideological, racial, and gendered differences between Schoolcraft and all of her subsequent interlocutors. It is worthwhile then to characterize what we know about Jane Schoolcraft and Henry Schoolcraft’s professional relationship as located within a series of conceptual intersections.

In several accounts, Henry Schoolcraft stresses Jane Schoolcraft’s cultural exposure to European culture as initiating an epochal transformation of her sensibilities. Interestingly, Henry reads Jane Schoolcraft’s seeming perpetual sadness—especially toward the end of her life—as representative of her having been able, through her schooling in English literature and culture, to have seen the "burned out...picturesque tapestry that adorned the temple of her native mythology, and left its frame standing as a collapsed wreck at which she gazed, often with pensive melancholy thoughts." In this fairly classic form of social imagination, the earlier, "primitive" culture is palimpsestically replaced by the "more esteemed," "higher" culture of European letters, similarly limited in the spatial imagination as a “temple” in a “burned out…frame.” Henry Schoolcraft notes that after all she had witnessed in Ireland and England, she clung with a strong attachment to the landscape and history of her mother's side of her heritage—“her picturesque and wild relations." He cites several of her poems, including "To the Pine Tree," as evidence of a sensibility able to read prior experiences through the sight of an educated European. However, as I will suggest, these poems, when read through the critical framework of disidentification, engage European tropes and genres

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133 Parker, afterword to “On Leaving my Children,” 143.
135 Ibid., 243.
(namely Romanticism and Sentimentalism) in a way that dislocates the imperial logic normally embedded within these forms.\textsuperscript{136} In this sense, despite the near constant pressure put upon her by Henry—through his editing practices and his pedagogy—to identify as an “American,” Schoolcraft’s process of disidentification constantly redeployes these colonialist tropes against not only the identities prescribed by national empire, but also the (according to Henry) divested spaces of her memory and her heritage.

With this in mind I now turn to consider the dual registers of “homeland” in Schoolcraft’s poems. Home and homeland in Schoolcraft’s work sometime function synonymously and sometimes apart as spaces of alternating permanence and transformation. This cyclic rendering of spaces serves to connect domestic and natural spaces in two ways: firstly, by disrupting the temporal logic of colonial spatialization that moves in a linear, east-to-west fashion across space disrupting and supplanting local histories, and secondly, by reimagining the natural world as preexisting domestic space one aesthetically and spiritually renders oneself a part of. These cyclic transformations that bring the inside out and the outside in afford a feeling of “at-home-ness,” or a sense of familiarity and intimacy leading to the forging of kinship bonds outside of the traditionally defined domestic spaces. Home and homeland, in other words, do intersect and help to define each other in Schoolcraft’s spatial imaginary, but in a way that intervenes in the reifying processes of national-colonialism and its attendant “separate spheres” ideology.

\textsuperscript{136} Concerning genre, Jane Schoolcraft was influenced both by European Romanticism as well as early strands of American sentimentalism. Both of these movements have been alternatively praised and condemned for their role in justifying and promoting, as well as criticizing empire. While “genre” doesn’t feature as one of the primary interventions of this work, we should not forget how these important movements tended to imagine space in specific ways relevant to Schoolcraft’s countergeographical imagination.
A DIFFERENT SENSE OF SPACE: NATURE AND POIESIS IN REINVENTING HOME AND HOMELAND

Schoolcraft’s poetry is deeply saturated with symbols drawn from the natural world and suffused with meaning drawn from domestic imagery. In this section, I explore how Schoolcraft articulates a unique relation between the two spaces that destabilizes the avowed distinction and separation of the two. As Bethany Schneider suggests, “home” [for Schoolcraft] is not alienable, not exchangeable, even as ‘land’ and sovereignties shift beneath her feet, … land cannot be a blank template for the new nation.”

Schneider discusses the synchronic nature of landscapes as possessing different political histories/memories and provides an excellent analysis of the aesthetic recombination of space as an “intransitive” series of Native spaces. This is a useful figure for considering resistance to the obliteration of prior histories brought about by territorialization. However, Schneider only briefly touches on the gendered dimension of this refabrication in discussing Jane and Henry Schoolcraft’s relationship. A key part of the rendering of overlapping intransitive spaces must include a discussion of the predication of domestic space, a pattern of spatial recognition paradoxically integral to Schoolcraft’s rendering of natural space. Indeed, much as in Kaplan’s account of the overlap between different kinds of domestic spaces, Schoolcraft’s spatial imaginary draws from isolated spaces, drawing them together to transform the world she inhabited through her poetry. Take for example “To the Pine Tree”:

138 Ibid.
To the Pine Tree

*On first seeing it*

*On returning from Europe*

The pine! The pine! I eager cried,
The pine, my father! See it stand,
As first that cherished tree I spied,
Returning to my native land.
The pine! The pine! Oh lovely scene!
The pine, that is forever green.

Ah beauteous tree! Ah happy sight!
That greets me on my native strand
And hails me, with a friend’s delight,
To my own dear bright mother land
Oh ‘tis to me a heart-sweet scene,
The pine—the pine! That’s ever green.

Not all the trees of England bright,
Not Erin’s lawns of green and light
Are half so sweet to memory’s eye,
As this dear type of northern sky
Oh ‘tis to me a heart-sweet scene,
The pine—the pine! That’s ever green.

[Schoolcraft, “To the Pine Tree,” 89]

According to Henry Schoolcraft, on her return from her father’s Irish homeland, Schoolcraft exclaimed “There Pa! see those pines! After all I have seen abroad, you have nothing equal to the dear pine!” Schoolcraft later recalled this even when drafting the poem, which was originally written in Ojibwe and then translated—possibly by herself, possibly by Henry, or a combination of the two. The English translation comes from the 1839 edition of Illinois Letters and may have been one of the first poems Schoolcraft ever wrote. In any case, the poem’s clear autobiographical perspective is imagined from the point of view of her younger self returning to America after what Parker describes as a few “miserable” months touring Europe. Hence, the poem is situated both in this visceral, first-hand perspective and in “memory’s eye,” where the pine functions as a symbol of the unchanging in a changed world retained only in memory. Permanence in this sense is a quality attached to the cyclic or transformative constant of experience retained in memory.

Here the pine tree remains “ever green,” however, the poem itself celebrates the speaker’s transformative journey between the continents and the threshold between familiar and comfortable spaces. Familiarity as a quality of “home” is found in the tree as a symbol of continuousness or permanence. However, familiarity is also found in the cyclic qualities of natural transformation, which is contrasted in much of Schoolcraft’s work with colonial processes of linear development—most intimately recognizable in

139 Schoolcraft, The Sound the Stars Make, 90.
141 Schoolcraft, “To the Pine Tree,” 15.
Henry’s ethnographies. The tree’s symbolic significance, as a beacon toward the spatial registers of both “native” and “motherland,” suggestively weaves together racial and gendered patterns of space within an extrafamilial set of kinship relations as the pine “hails…with a friend’s delight” Schoolcraft toward her native motherland.142

The multiple removes of memory are worth discussing further here. The poem not only evokes “memory’s eye” to suggest the cyclic return and celebration of the speaker, but this perspective is placed at an even further remove in the poem’s paratext quoted above regarding its later composition. These repeated returns suggest a “geography of reorientation” through periods and processes of great transformation, situated specifically within the contextual framework of the home/homeland. The cyclic return to the “ever green” is presented not only as a recount of personal experience but also as a process of poetic composition, a sort of spatial poiesis brought into being by recognition of the familiar even in its reified context.

*Poiesis* is a useful term to dissect because it refers not only to poetic production, but also to spatial production itself. In “The Question Concerning Technology,” Heidegger describes poiesis as a “bringing forth.”143 Heidegger argues,

> It is of utmost importance that we think bringing-forth in its full scope and at the same time in the sense in which the Greeks thought it. Not only handcraft manufacture, not only artistic and poetical bringing into appearance and concrete imagery, is a bringing-forth, *poiesis*. *Physis* also, the arising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth, *poiesis*.

*Physis* is, indeed *poiesis* in the highest sense. For what presences by

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142 Ibid., 4, 10.
means of *physis* has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth, e.g.,

the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself (*en heautoi*).\(^{144}\)

Poiesis then refers to both the conceptual and the material, and, most importantly, the relationship between the two borne out of the process of *revelation*. In Heidegger’s analysis, *poiesis* and *techne*, imagined in our modern world as two entirely separate processes, are in fact inextricably linked: “*Techne* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiesis*; it is something *poietic.*”\(^{145}\) This relationship is realized in the process of the “opening up,” but this opening up is not epigenetic; rather it is situated within the revelation of the familiar: “From earliest times until Plato the word *techne* is linked with the word *episteme*. Both words are names for knowing in the widest sense. They mean to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up. As an opening up it is a revealing.”\(^{146}\) With regard to space, this not only concerns the intersection of scales, but also their concentricity, each circumference reducible or expandable to another scale. With regard to Schoolcraft’s poetry, we see that reflected within the domestic space, the parallel structure of the entire natural world is recognizable. Conversely, within the natural world, the familiar, the homely, and the enclosed are recognizable through the aesthetic transportation of spaces; they are borne out of one another. In “To the Pine Tree,” the “ever green,” as a static beacon of memory, reveals the intersecting scales of home and homeland retained in the cyclic processes of experience. This relationship between the static and the constant, drawing the familiar out of a diversity of spaces, is explored across Schoolcraft’s work.

\(^{144}\) Ibid., 4-5.


\(^{146}\) Ibid.
Indeed, many, if not all, of Schoolcraft’s poems also concern themselves with recognizing the familiar or domestic within natural spaces. Another poem that evokes similar imaginative processes is “Lines written at Castle Island, Lake Superior.” However, unlike “To the Pine Tree,” “Castle Island” articulates a geography of memory and removal or escape suggestive of a related but slightly different process of refashioning space:

“Lines written at Castle Island, Lake Superior”

Here in my native inland sea
From pain and sickness I flee
And from its shores and island bright
Gather a store of sweet delight.
Lone island of the saltless sea!
How wide, how sweet, how fresh and free
How all transporting—is the view
Of rocks and skies and waters blue
Uniting, as a song’s sweet strains
To tell, here nature only reigns.
Ah, nature! here forever sway
Far from the haunts of men away
For here, there are no sordid fears,
No crimes, no misery, no tears
No pride of wealth; the heart to fill,
No laws to treat my people ill.
Originally published in *Illinois Letters*, “Lines written at Castle Island, Lake Superior” is one of two important poems in Schoolcraft’s corpus written on the occasion of her travels to different islands in Superior’s waters. As with “On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior,” Schoolcraft’s nomenclature in the title fits with the general theme of the poem, which is concerned with personal seclusion, respite, and removal. Michigan became a state four years before Schoolcraft died and it’s important to note that she uses the name “Castle Island, Lake Superior,” rather than either Euro-American territorial or Ojibwe territorial names—though she does identify Superior as her “native sea.” Here Castle Island is identified through its proximity to Superior, which was governed, from the Anglo perspective, by the Hudson’s Bay company and later John Jacob Astor’s American Fur Company until the 1842 Webster-Ashburton treaty established the international division of Superior after the failure of Astor’s company in early 1842. Further, much like Doric Rock, Castle Island draws its European nomenclature from a classical past, though interestingly the Ojibwe name for the island is “Na-Be-Quon,” which translates to “ship or vessel,” so that the earliest recorded Ojibwe name for the island is drawn from a history of European contact. This is all to say that the waters of Superior, perhaps more so than the land, existed in a state of, at best, indeterminate dominion—a feature discussed in the poem I explore below.

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147 Schoolcraft, “Lines Written at Castle Island,” 2.
149 Parker, afterword to “Castle Island,” 93.
Like several of her poems, “Castle Rock” is thematically concerned with escaping pain and suffering through removal to familiar landscapes and spaces. A cursory reading of this reoccurring theme in Schoolcraft’s poetry could be misread merely as a hypertrophied Romantic exercise in a fantasy of escape from the terrors of her daily life in a transforming space. As I have suggested, the production of these spaces of remove in her poetry borrows from the rhetorical and positional vantage point of the domestic. In this sense, these spaces are removed and refabricated as incorporated, familiar space against colonial dispossessioin.

However, we shouldn’t read Schoolcraft’s work as a counter-project in the same way that William Apess tries to radically challenge the colonial production of space articulated by Daniel Webster. Apess, in short, aimed to produce a revisionary, revolutionary history mapped onto space. Contrarily, Schoolcraft existed at the threshold of both changing Native space and encroaching national space—and she was ostensibly part of both of these spaces. However, rather than imagining an escape from either of these worlds, “removal” in Schoolcraft’s poetry is more specifically tied to a process of refabricating spaces of racial and gendered sequestration, a way of producing movement in space where the ability to move is ideologically restrained by colonial-national spatialization. In her analysis of John Neal and Bronson Alcott in Formalism, Experience, and the Making of American Literature in the Nineteenth Century, Theo Davis suggests that “Encompassing criticism, fiction, essays, even transcribed conversation, these texts work both to represent and to analyze experience, in doing so composing a writing of analytic invention which would shape and project
experiences.” Perhaps not surprisingly, the reconciliation between analyzing, representing, and intervening in experience in Schoolcraft’s work takes place primarily within an interspatial dimension. Hence, what we see, especially in the poems published in *Illinois Letters* such as “Castle Rock” and “To the Pine Tree,” is less a removal of self from one space to another—or in other words, a foreclosing of possibility of shaping or inhabiting multiple spaces—but rather a reinterpretation of spaces through disentangling their overlaps and extending the possibilities inherent in either onto the “other” space. In this sense, the “transport” imagined in the poem is one of a situated transformation—not only *away* form the “haunts of men” (a specifically gendered reference to what, at the end of the poem, amounts to colonial space as well as non-domestic space)—but away from colonialist ways of perceiving space. This process brings the historical spaces/moments Schneider traces through latitudinal time into concert in the present moment specifically through the textual representation of public or natural space as domestic space.

The sense of seclusion described in “Castle Island” is at the same time both real and imagined, reflecting the tendency in Schoolcraft’s work to reimagine even natural spaces as dependent on her rendering. This practice is closely connected to her view of divine design explored in “On Doric Rock” As my reading of that poem suggests below, Schoolcraft might have imagined the relationship between God’s design and the art of the Indian poet as initiating a process of true seeing, a way of knowing apart from exploration and European arts “In mimic pride.” Indeed, the moment of transport in the

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152 Ibid., 22.
poem, initiated by the “...view/ Of rocks and skies and waters blue” culminates in an
instant of aesthetic reflection, “unit(ing) as a song’s sweet strains/To tell, here Nature
only reigns.”153 The speaker is then moved from an experience of solitude on the “lone
island in a saltless sea” into a more conceptual geography away from what she saw as
colonial decadence.154 In other words, this process transports her from a geography of
isolation into an enfolding familiarity initiated by poetic vision, a bringing into being of
possibilities that exist within each space but are not yet made manifest. This trajectory
also moves the narrator away from rumination on personal “pain and sickness,” apart
from the “haunts of men” and the more abstract pains of social being (“fears,” “crimes,”
“misery,” “tears,” etc.) articulated in the closing lines of the poem.155 This sense is
particularly expressed in the poem’s strongly anticolonialist final line, “no laws to treat
my people ill”—into a space of tranquility apart from the protocapitalist/colonialist
projection onto the land.156 Is this escapism, critique, reformulation, or something more
entirely?

In answering this I think we should be careful not to frame Schoolcraft’s spatial
imaginary in terms of a false dialectic between “natural” and “public” or colonialist
space. Predicated through the framework of domestic space, natural space in her
imaginary is reproduced against the reifying patterns of colonialist socio-spatial practices.
Another way this is brought about is from a repurposing of the image of the Native as
existing in the indeterminable, wild space of the forest lacking not only territorial or
political distinction, but also the borders between home, public, and the political itself. As

153 Ibid., 7-10.
154 Ibid., 5.
155 Ibid., 2, 12.
156 Ibid., 16.
I briefly mentioned before, Native spaces were imagined as potentially both public and private—if private spaces were imagined in white discourse it was often imagined in the image of the “cave” as in the Inkle and Yarico story or in various versions of the Pocahontas story—but distinctively neither. This is the figure of the “open” wilderness, populated, according to Webster for example, by “roving savages.” In this sense, Schoolcraft’s enfolding of nature and public space into domestic space (and vice versa) functions as a sort of disidentification with the colonialist predication of both Native and white, domestic identities. These disidentifications inverse the subjective parameters of these spaces, allowing for a reassembled spatial production of subjectivity.

Disidentification implies futurity, or the enabling of possibility out of impossibility or the “not supposed to be.” A disidentified aesthetics exists at the limit of colonialist knowledge, but also in a world saturated with its logic—a world unmistakable in its Leviathan-like coming, even in Schoolcraft’s time. Natives aren’t supposed to exist as Natives within U.S. borders and women aren’t supposed to be seen outside of the home. Despite the obvious ridiculousness of this statement, it sums up the defining logic of colonial-spatial politics at the start of the nineteenth century. “Castle Rock” imagines the narrator’s imbrication in a world governed by this logic as a given, but refabicates the possibilities available to her through the transforming narrative of the familiar, the “at-home,” and the natural. Escapist perhaps as a personal remedy, her rendering of this sentiment and scene in her poetry provides for a critique and a reformulation that is ultimately recuperative and engaged within the socio-spatial processes developing around her. In focusing on the transitioning vantage points through which spaces are
apprehended, Schoolcraft’s aesthetic refabrication of space also redraws the relationship between sundered spaces.

Through this poetic process, the gendered subject is reproduced across concentric scales, revealed not by but through the transitional vantage point by which the concentric relationship is revealed. “To the Miscodeed” continues Schoolcraft’s fascination with the transitioning seasons, and the changing nature of inhabiting spaces of transition primarily as a gendered subject. Further, like “Three Cranberries,” this poem evokes an image of both racial and gendered differences that are seemingly misaligned. “To the Miscodeed” then, registers their realignment with regard to the manifestation of the gendered subject. “Miscodeed” is the Ojibwe name for a plant that in Latin is called the Claytonia Virginia, named after an early Virginian botanist. Corroborating Schoolcraft’s description, the Missouri Botanical Society describes the flower as possessing “white to light pink flowers (to ¾” wide) with pink veins and pink anthers.” However, unlike the pine tree, the Miscodeed is an annual. The flower, the “first to greet the eyes of men,” hails the changing of the season from winter to spring, while the “wintry wind… {still} hath power.”

To the Miscodeed

Sweet pink of northern wood and glen,
E’er first to greet the eyes of men
In early spring, --a tender flower
Whilst still the wintry wind hath power.

How welcome, in the sunny glade,

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158 Schoolcraft, “To the Miscodeed,” 2-3.
Or hazel copse, thy pretty head
Oft peeping out, whilst still the snow,
Doth here and there, its presence show
Soon leaf and bud quick opening spread
Thy modest petals—white with red
Like some sweet cherub—love’s kind link,
With dress of white, adorned with pink.

[Schoolcraft, “To the Miscodeed,” 91]

The flower, of course, is permanently rooted in place. However, the flower, gendered here as feminine, is situated at the threshold between both winter and spring, “peeping out” in both the “snow” and the “sunny glade.”159 The Miscodeed, like the crocus and other bulbous plants, survives the winter by storing nutrients in a corm or bulb which functions to store nutrients in scarce times. Many of the Algonquin peoples in the Great Lakes region prepared the root of the plant much like a potato during the winter months.160 This is all to say that the plant’s life cycle, as a bulb and then a flower, is rooted in both a natural and social history of hardship, transition, and beauty underwriting the poem’s sensibility.

The feminization of the flower is also significant here and is suggestive of the several important concepts having to do with space and change. The “peeping out” of the snow recalls the cranberry hiding in the snow in the “Three Cranberries,” however, where that cranberry was seen hiding, this flower and its “modest petals…Doth here and there,

159 Schoolcraft, “To the Miscodeed,” 5, 7.
The comparison of the flower's “white” and “red” petals first with the “cherub—love’s kind link” is suggestive of early or first love, blossoming with the coming spring and the beginnings of sexual maturity. “White” and “red,” and the resultant mix of “pink,” is also suggestive of the transition between the virginal state (white) and the more erotic or physically suggestive condition of sexual maturity symbolized by the red. However, these two colors are held in “…kind link, / With dress of white, adorned with pink.” Again, as in “The Three Cranberries,” the white of the flower presumably blends in with the snow, while the pink, mentioned twice in the poem in both the first and the last lines, stands out as a figure of both the transition into womanhood and potentially as an image of racial and cultural hybridity. Here, the flower is revealed, but “modest” as transitional figure in a space of transition, feminine, multiracial, and public, though tucked away in both “northern wood” and in “sunny glade.” However, the articulation of the flower as both “modest” and “tender” (2), two terms associated with traditional constructions of femininity, is compared with its sturdiness and ability to withstand both “wintry” snow and “wind.” I’m careful here to say “compared” as opposed to “contrasted.”

These two qualities intersect as descriptors of an experience outside of the proscribed racial and gendered thresholds of being developed in early Antebellum America. Further, while we might be inclined to compare the Miscodeed to Schoolcraft herself in this poem, we could also imagine the text as describing her poetic process, a reflection of her poietic process revealing the potentialities of “spaces within spaces.”

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161 Schoolcraft, “To the Miscodeed,” 7-10.
162 Ibid., 12.
164 Ibid., 1,5.
“On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior” further explores these themes from the perspective of the expansive imagination looking upon scenes of discovery. Here, the poem draws an important distinction between the perspectives of the European and the Native, while also obliquely referring to its own artifice by mentioning the constructed remove of the “traveler’s tale,” a generic form endemic to European colonialism that is contrasted with the Native perspective and, I argue, the poem itself.165

On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior

Dwellers at home, in indolence and ease,

How deep their debt, to those that roam the seas,

Or cross the lands, in quest of every art

That science, knowledge, pity can impart

To help mankind, or guild the lettered page

The bold discoverers of every age.

This spirit—in thy breast the ardent guide

To seek new lands, and wastes as yet untried

Where none but hunters trod the field before

Unveiled the grandeur of Superior’s show

Where nature’s forms in varied shape and guise

Break on the view, with winder and surprize.

Not least, among these forms, the traveller’s tale

These pillared rocks and castle pomps prevail

Standing, like some vast ruin of the plain,

165 Ibid., 13.
Where ancient victims by their priests were slain
But far more wondrous, --for the fair design
No architect drew out, with measured line
‘Twas nature’s wildest flower, that graved the Rock,
The waves’ loud fury, and the tempest’s shock
Yet all that arts can do, here frowning shine
In mimic pride, and grandeur of design.

The simple Indian, as the work he spies,
Looks up to nature’s God above the skies
And though, his lot be rugged wild and dear,
Yet owns the ruling power with soul sincere,
Not as where, Asia’s piles of marble high,
For idol gods the beast was doomed to die,
But, guided by a purer-led surprise,
Points to the great good sovereign of the skies
And thinks the power that built the upper sphere,
Hath left but traces of his fingers here.


This text, also from IL, continues a series of themes also explored in “Castle Island,” concerning excluded spaces and Schoolcraft’s complicated, multiracial view of changing spaces. “Doric Rock” is curious in that it begins in detailing a European colonial perspective extoling the virtues of the “bold discoverers of every age” while
criticizing those “Dwellers at home, in indolence and ease.” The poem then ends with the perspective of the “simple Indian” who is able to perceive the “traces of {God’s} fingers” in the Rock. This poem also demonstrates a romantic concern with what many later poets would call “design,” or the relationship between God, man, and the natural world as comprehensible through poetic perception. In the trajectory from European to Native perspectives, the poem can be read as reflective of its own aesthetic construction, where the “ruling power” of the Native in “soul sincere” reflects one’s situatedness in revised space by recognizing its design and the relationship of the nature environment to its own crafting. “No architect drew out, with measured line,” for “‘Twas nature’s wildest flower, that graved the Rock.” Here, the distinction is not between nature and artifice, but rather nature as artifice, or rather, one might say, the techne of nature that parallels that of man and poet. Conversely, the poem is a self-conscious reference to and depiction of this space where, “all that arts can do, here frowning shine / In mimic pride, and grandeur of design.” Here, the processes of revelation, distinguished by the art of man and nature, operate in relation to each other within the manifestation of space.

The speaker’s reservations concerning the relation of art and nature are located in the distinction between the discoverer’s perspective and the Native’s perspective, traceable to a difference of historical comparison as a mode of understanding the significance of what lies before each. The European gaze looks “To seek new lands, and wastes as yet untried/Where none but hunters trod the field before…/Where nature’s

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167 Ibid., 23, 32.
168 Ibid., 26.
169 Ibid., 18-19.
170 Ibid., 21-22.
forms in varied shape and guise/Break on the view, with winder and surprize.”

However the speaker, riffing on the name of this landmark, this new scene where none but the Native have gone before, is compared to the European-historical artifice of “pillared rocks…and) castle pomp.” It is important to note that Doric Rock, now called Chapel Rock after the French La Chapell, got its name from the 1820 Cass expedition to the area for its supposed resemblance to the Doric genre of classical architecture. This comparison of nature to features of classical civilization is, beginning as early as Hakluyt’s journals, fairly common in European explorer literature and constitutes what many critics have described as the “ethnographic gaze,” or the ability to implement European knowledge frameworks as a way of effecting the colonial state.

However, the trajectory in “Doric Rock” moves in the opposite direction. While the poem makes an insistent distinction between the realm of God “above the skies” and nature, the closing of the poem underscores the “Indian” ability to perceive the intersection between these two realms. In this sense the Native’s sight replaces the ethnographic gaze of the explorer while at the same time eradicating the distinction between those “Dwellers at home, in indolence and ease,” which could refer to both the European sense of “national” home as well as the domestic home. In this way the adjective “simple,” as a modifier for “Indian,” could suggest an ironic indistinction between the partitioned spaces of European contact and influence.

In this reading it’s unclear if “all the arts” includes the poem itself. It’s unclear if the speaker of the poem is merely reflecting on personal experience or more specifically
art and artifice of the specifically European kind. Given that the next stanza moves us clearly away from the European perspective and into the Native one, it seems possible to suggest that the Native voice in this poem reflects a kind of primacy of understanding and experience without reliance upon the generic form of the traveler’s tale. The poem engenders another form of sight where new spaces are familiar because the landscape exists for the speaker within a larger, recognizable cosmology. Looking out upon the landscape, the Native speaker’s gaze parallels the explorer’s, but is witness to a larger field of experience within which domestic, Native, and spiritual spaces are recognizable as distinct but continuous.

Where “On Doric Rock” reverses the trajectory of discovery by substituting the perspective of the Explorer for the expansive perspective of the Native, Schoolcraft’s “By an Ojibwe Female Pen” begins from the perspective of the home, expanding into the garden, and then ends in the recognition of the parallel realms of earth and heaven. Framed as an invitation to the speaker’s “sisters,” to leave the home on a rainy day and walk within the garden to witness realms of “light and peace,” the poem directs the domestic gaze outward as witness to larger scales of being.  

By an Ojibwe Female Pen

Invitation to sisters to walk in the Garden, after a shower

Come, sisters come! the shower’s past,

The Garden walks are drying fast,

The Sun’s bright beams are seen again,

And nought within, can now detain.

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175 Schoolcraft, By an Ojibwe Female,” 1, 18.
The rain drops tremble on the leaves,
Or drip expiring, from the eaves;
But soon the cool, balmy air,
Shall dry the gems that sparkle there,
With whisp’ring breath shake ev’ry spray,
And scatter every cloud away.

Thus sisters! shall the breeze of hope,
Through sorrow’s clouds a vista ope;
Thus, shall affliction’s surly blast,
By faith’s bright calm be still’d at last;
Thus, pain and care,—the tear and sigh,
Be chased from every dewy eye;
And life’s mix’d scene itself, but cease,
To show us realms of light and peace.

[Schoolcraft, “By an Ojibwa Female Pen,” 108]

This poem explores the other side of Schoolcraft’s concern with the transitional state of static spaces: namely from the domestic, “inside” perspective gazing out. In this case, the garden space is transformed by the changing weather: “The Garden[’s] walks are drying fast” and “The rain drops tremble on the leaves, / Or drip expiring, from the eaves.”¹⁷⁶ This movement occasions the recognition of “the breeze of hope, / Through

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 2, 5-6.
sorrow’s clouds vista ope.” Through the changing weather, the cloistered world of the home and “life’s mix’d scene” gives way to the predominance of sight and hope. However, unlike “life’s mix’d scene,” the alternating cycles of “peace” and “affliction” are imagined as thresholds, observed but as yet unreached from the garden. This is suggestive of a “drawing out,” a process of extension by which the speaker and her sisters may anticipate an “unmixed” futurity only hinted at by the coming of the sun.

While the recuperative perspective embraced by “an Ojibwe Female Pen” centers on the extension of the home and the garden as sites of transformation, the poem ends on a bitter note, comparing the “rain drops tremble[ing] on the leaves” to humanity’s “dewy eye” in sequence. The former is a sign of passing while the living are yet made to suffer the latter as the speaker strains to witness this revealed futurity through their tears. This melancholic strain concerning the trials of life persists throughout the majority of Schoolcraft’s later works and is especially prevalent after the death of her son William in 1827. Her poem, “Sweet Willy,” is emblematic of this concern and presents a growing sense of departure from the material world and embrace of the metaphysical, even if the vision that confounds the “dewy eye” is drawn from terrestrial experience.

Schoolcraft’s poems discussed above imagine the home as a networked socio-spatial structure that is political and familial, intimate and open, extended across radically changing territorial and physical space. In this sense, domesticity doesn’t lose its imagined function as a way to resist empire, but Schoolcraft reconsiders the socio-spatial features of domestication consistent with both white domesticity and national empire in a way that is critical and recuperative. However, her geographical imagination shifts in the

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177 Ibid., 11-12.
178 Ibid., 17.
179 Ibid., 15, 18.
last phase of her life following the death of her son Willie. This closing section finishes by considering the “eschatological geographies” of death and loss in what appear to be Schoolcraft’s final poems. In this figuration, the home is broken apart, initiating a crisis of space where all the familiarity present across the spaces in Schoolcraft’s poetry are transported into a spiritual-eschatological geography that leads us to imagine space and memory, both in domestic and in political terms, in a different way. Thus, this section closes by considering monumentality and remembrance as key features of a politicized countergeography that impacts how we consider historical space today.

Sweet Willy

A hundred moons and more have past,
Since erst upon this day,
They bore thee from my anguished sight,
And from my home away
And pensively they carried thee
And set the burial stone,
And left thy father and myself
Forsaken and alone

A hundred moons have more have past
And every year have we
With pious steps gone out to sit
Beneath the graveyard tree
And, often with remembrance
Of our darling little boy

Repeated—“they that sow in tears

“Shall reap again in joy.”

Lo! children are a heritage

A fruit and a reward,

Bestowed in sovereign mercy

By the fecit of the Lord

But he, that giveth gifts to men

May take away the same

And righteous is the holy act,

And blessed be his name.

For still it is a mercy,

And a mercy we can view,

For whom the Lord chastiseth

He in love regardeth too.

And sweetly in remembrance

Of our darling little boy

Bethink we still, that sorrow’s tears

Shall spring in beds of joy.

And aye, that Word is precious
As the apple of the eye
That looketh up to mansions
Which are builded in the sky
That pallet with this scene of tears
And vanities and strife,
And seeketh for that better home
Where truly there is life.
I cling no more to life below,
It hath no charm for me,
Yet strive to fill my duty here,
While here below I be.
And often comes the memory
Of my darling little boy,
For he was sown in bitter tears,
And shall be reaped in joy.

[Schoolcraft, “Sweet Willy,” 138-139]

This autobiographical poem thematizes the loss of and distance between
Schoolcraft and her son William and the tension between the loss of joy in the present
world and reunion in the world to come. Like “By an Ojibwe Female Pen,” this poem
establishes a relation between the two by a series of “mix’d” scenes, for “the life below /
…hath no charm,” yet the speaker “…strive[s] to fill [her] duty here, / While here below I
Yet, this tension between “here” and “there” is sustained between the “apple of the eye… / That looketh up to mansions / Which are builded in the sky” and the “memory” of the speaker’s “Darling little boy.” The poem hinges sight and memory to the past and future states promised in Psalm 125:5: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Both spaces are contextualized within the domestic, though the material world is identified by the loss of this dimension from the home, or its “unhomeliness,” when the boy is buried, taken from the speaker’s anguished sight,

And from my home away

And pensively they carried thee

And set the burial stone,

And left thy father and myself

Forsaken and alone.

Here, the domestic familiarity of home and the relationships involved in the rehearsal of the domestic are sundered by Willy’s death, paradoxically leaving Schoolcraft and Henry (who nonetheless have each other) “alone.” The taking of his body from the home to the “burial stone” transforms the home into somewhere unfamiliar, dislocating the recognizability of space where permanence is transferred onto the stone. In contrast to the “ever green” tree in “To the Ever Green,” the “memory” of the boy doesn’t serve as an occasion recognizing permanence within the cyclic transformation of scales, but rather as recognition of the impassible dimensions of life and death. However,

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181 Ibid., 34-36, 44-45.
182 Psalms. 125:5 (KJV).
situated between the past and the future, between what is “reaped” and what is “sown,” the poem’s perspective in positioned in a transitional state itself. Here, the “eye” is directed not only away from “life below,” but also from the past. In contrast, the speaker’s perspective is directed “up to mansions / Which are builded in the sky / That pallet with this scene of tears.”\textsuperscript{184} The “pallet” here implies a relationship between life and death and a continuity of spaces, while unrealizable in the present, even through memory, are deferred to a futurity through the “mercy we can view.”\textsuperscript{185} Here then, the transference of hospitality of the afterworld is premised on the poetic transmissibility of the refabricated material one. In other words, Schoolcraft doesn’t imagine the worlds of life and death as discontinuous so much as she recognizes the ability to recognize the metaphysical world promised in Christian theology within the transformation of the present, material world. In this sense, Schoolcraft’s “loss” propels the possibility of reunion toward the forthcoming afterworld wherein the poet not only will be reunited with her son, but also placed within the dimensions of home and kinship lost through his passing. Hence, the spiritual world imagined by Schoolcraft represents a final strategy for renegotiating the distance between herself and her lost son in her lifetime, drawn out of her reformulation of the material world as scales of the domestic. This relation represents the final spatial renegotiation effected by her poetry: namely, the concentric relation between heaven and earth.

\textbf{CONCLUSION: ENSURING A WORLD REMEMBERED IN CHANGE}

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 35-37.  
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 26.
As I hope to have demonstrated, gendered and racial categorical constructs evolved and were deployed in different, complex, and sometimes contradictory ways that are not always reducible to the linear processes of empire. In Kaplan’s account, the domestic gaze seeks to consolidate space, looking out and across space, from center to periphery, to incorporate foreign spaces within the domestic region of the nation. However, this process requires imagining foreign space as inexorably alien, or, in other words, to be domesticated is paradoxically to be imagined as undomesticatable. As Kaplan suggests, “a sense of the foreign is necessary to erect the boundaries that enclose the nation as home” even if the foreign figures as the object of domestication. Cartographically speaking then, domestic and foreign spaces are created through the dialectic of bound and unbound enclosures, usurping other topographical qualities linking spaces and peoples together. This provides yet another disavowed linkage between the ( politicized) space of the nation and (supposedly a-political) domestic space as mutually constituting parts of empire. This formulation leads to processes of inclusion/exclusion, manifesting through the various scales of the nation, resorting individuals according to their recognizability within political networks. Whether under the banner of empire or domesticity, this logic also lends itself to processes of development and underdevelopment that reformulates, often in terrifying way, social and familial relationships. In other words, the processes of the home don’t only work out to inform the superstructure of empire, they also function as the subject of its territorial logic paradoxically through its imagined exclusion from the calculation of empire.

It is commonly accepted that gendered spaces and domestic discourses have served a critical role in the production of national space. I hope by now to have also

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186 Kaplan, ‘Manifest Domesticity,” 582.
proven that gender can be directed against these spatial epistemologies when understood within the context of racialized space. As I suggested earlier, these constructs evolved and are deployed in different, complex, and often-contradictory ways. However it seems clear that taken apart from this contextual complexity, gender functions as a "spatial fix" within an ideology of separate spheres, able to allay (to a degree) the tensions involved in the expansion of empire. In other words, gendered space functions as a way to smooth over the reorganization of spaces into territories consistent with the nation when they are threatened by the racial logic of the “other.” Hence, the domestic home has proven a powerful stabilizing force operating in the wake of territorial expansion—whether related to the nation as spaces of exception (as earlier scholars believed) or as part of a territorializing ideology directed toward the production of national space.

Jane Schoolcraft’s poetry isn’t often concerned with direct political statements concerning which vision of space, or which culture, or which race reigns over the other. Rather, her work concerns a recuperative process, initiated by aesthetic revision, which ensures that there is a world capable of inhabiting. If, following her son’s death and her own poor health, she was unable to sustain this mode, she nevertheless can be meaningful to those of us still trying to revise the world we are given into a world we would actually want to inhabit. In closing I want to ask what is pragmatic value of understanding this refabrication of space, from either a historical or socio-spatial perspective?

Monumentalization has also played a significant role in how we historicize space—especially the spaces of the dispossessed. However, many monuments—even monuments created specifically to retain Native cultural and historical contributions—tend to commemorate space in a way that is subsumed to specific historical events like
war, heroism, slaughter, and massacre, for example, Plymouth Rock itself, the site at Little Big Horn, or the seemingly ill-conceived Crazy Horse monument proposed in South Dakota. In these cases, it is the act of dispossession, rather than the process of remembering, in any specific terms, what was lost that figures as the central cultural memory necessary to retain. This suggests, as Craig Womack has put it, more of an obsession with the “world of contact” rather than “innovation” built off of understanding other ways of seeing the world. At best, these monuments might commemorate an important Native leader or some other such figure. However, what is “important” in many of these scenarios is often decided by tribal agencies working in coordination with the United States government. One effect of this is to monumentalize events and spaces of dispossession as inevitable.

While these symbolic reminders certainly have their place, the practices of the poet and critic, as agents of revelation to alternative cultural ways of seeing and knowing the world such as those developed by Schoolcraft, are vital to the cultural imagination of space. Loss itself, as Schoolcraft understood it, requires a sense of permanence and of change and transformation. In this sense the linearity of colonial-national space is recast in stone through the dimension of time where “memory”—as opposed to change—serves as the only disorienting variable in a seemingly homogenized, flat plane. Make no mistake, we are dealing with memory here, but how to remember, and how to critically orient these memories beyond placing a few noble, but small memorials, little more than imperfections dotting the landscape of a seemingly inescapable hegemonic space? The recovered memories of the everyday should figure prominently as we strive to answer these questions.

187 Womack, Red on Red, 12.
Chapter 3

Geographies of Freedom and Unfreedom: Collectivism, Capital, and Individual Spatial Revolutions in Delany’s *Blake* and Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

This chapter transitions from consideration of supposedly “ungeographic” Native spaces to another set of supposedly “ungeographic” spaces, namely enslaved spaces. Antebellum slave narratives are suffused with an attention to space, place, and movement, as well as to political and cultural assemblages imaginable through their negotiation. As Katherine Mckittrick suggests, “black matters are spatial matters. The displacement of difference, geographic domination, transatlantic slavery, and the black Atlantic Ocean differently contribute to mapping out the real and imaginative geographies of black women.” In the antebellum world, these geographic matters extended to free and slave states, the Underground Railroad, the figure of the “runaway,” and scenes of confinement and concealment. Slave narratives thus offer an invaluable and challenging perspective on the formal politics of space central to antebellum slavocracy. Formal policies such as the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, along with a series of important Supreme Court cases such as *Dredd Scott* and the *Prigg* cases set slavery, and specifically the territorial management of slavery, at the heart of national debates leading up to the Civil War. However, as Robin Blackburn points out, while the slavery

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189 Concluding that blacks were property (rather than citizens) that could be transported as other commodities, the notorious 1857 *Dredd Scott* case allowed at least the economic extension of slavery into
question figured as the primary ideological undercurrent of the war, Northern leaders like Lincoln were reluctant to explicitly mention emancipation as a justification for war, despite abolitionist leaders like Garrison and Douglass’s insistence on recognizing this goal as formal policy. This antislavery culture was perpetuated by a print culture voicing various emancipationist responses that included endorsements for everything from black emigration to outright rebellion and revolution like that in Haiti some forty years earlier. This print culture played a major role in keeping the question of free and unfree territorial space as a guiding force within ante bellum politics that could not explicitly come to terms with outright emancipation. Including a wide array of firsthand accounts of slavery, this genre reframes the scales through which we approach and understand a variety of cultural forces, including the transformation of ante bellum culture from a slavocracy to a proto-capitalist (though still profoundly racist) society, the means and goals of revolutionary emancipation, and their intellectual heritage as countergeographical accounts.

For early Americanists, this recognition has led us to reconsider the geospatial frames of reference through which our discipline is organized. Atlantic Studies, for

free states and the Louisiana Territory (since it had fallen under the domain of the Union after the ratification of the constitution). In the 1842 Prigg vs. Pennsylvania case, the Court ruled that only the federal government (as opposed to states themselves) had the power to recapture slaves and solve slave disputes between states. This decision lead to the notorious 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. See Don E. Fehrenbacher Slavery, Law, and Politics: The Dred Scott Case in Historical Perspective. (New York: Oxford UP, 1981) for more detail.

190 Robin Blackburn, The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights. (London: Verso, 2011), 410-11. As Blackburn notes, “it was not until his Second Inaugural in March 1865 that Lincoln described slavery as central to the conflict” (410). While this surely was a strategic move in many respects, the ideological issue at hand was disavowed specifically in spatial terms—namely that of maintaining the Union and staving off Southern secession while ending slavery. My argument concerns how writers like Delany, Jacobs, and Stowe recast freedom and revolution in alternative spatial terms, situated at the forefront of these debates despite lukewarm political endorsement.

191 Indeed, Blackburn argues that “the contribution of the anti-slavery radicals was not that they had influence on the option for war but rather that, once that war had begun, they influenced its course and objective” (415). While maintaining the role of black leaders and thinkers in this guiding process, Blackburn has little to say concerning informal modes of resistance given the scope of his study.
example, was born out of an engagement with the literatures and cultures of the African diaspora. Critical offspring like Oceanic and Circumatlantic studies have continued to generate new terrains for how we approach both new and old literary corpuses. As a result, we are better able to understand how different or alternative geographies enabled subjects purposefully and oppressively limited in their situatedness to imagine freedom, and happiness, in part because access to freedom and happiness are not always correlated with political enfranchisement as enfranchisement only attains meaning within different territorial dimensions and scales. For those who exist in a state of formal non-recognition, the practices associated with ways of inhabiting space and modes of mobility that contribute to one’s own sense of freedom and self-determination are of vital importance in reshaping the scales through which subjects draw meaning from their world. These practices are suggestive of new forms of spatial assemblage, offering new methods of (re)politicizing spaces left out of nineteenth-century imperial cartographies.

In this sense, the slave narrative itself could be said to represent a “countergeographical” genre. As Leigh Anne Duck has suggested concerning the frames through which scholars have approached space in the slave narrative, the “parameters previously established continue to obscure our view.” These frames organize what she describes as the “culturally isolated” spaces of slavery, such as the American South, the British (or French, or Spanish) Caribbean, or Western Africa, divorced from both the larger and smaller scales of slavocracy’s influence. In what follows, I explore the relation between space and the complex geographies of the slave narrative—in particular through consideration of Martin Delany’s *Blake or the Huts of America*, Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents*.

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in the Life of a Slave Girl and to a lesser extent Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Jacobs’ text especially offers an incisive critique of the plantation geographies of the antebellum South and suggests new ways of recognizing the intersections of cultural and spatial production beyond the political-territorial frames of nation, state, and property to reforge belonging out of a state of radical unbelonging. This is consistent with my goal to understand the novel, improvised, and often unsystematic forms of socio-spatial practice unrecognizable in a state (and space) of political “unbelonging” by directing our attention to the production of spaces left out of accounts of imperial-capitalist development.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, many black writers tried to imagine the futurity of black spaces post emancipation, whether through emigrationist, integrationist, or separatist political arrangements. Their narratives offer a spectrum of revolutionary appeals with many employing Anglo political models to envision formal political and commercial systems.193 For example, Blake charts a trajectory from a revolutionary counter-spatial politics toward an emigrationist, civic-agrarian vision of the (male) black subject. Blake presents a novel of collective, revolutionary action; however, Delany’s model of black sovereignty and self-determination is built off of a model of land ownership and capitalist discipline imagined through a nationalist frame.

In contrast, Jacobs’ multispacial Incidents invites us to consider small-scale, domestic spaces of radical unbelonging as equally relevant to the production of alternative spatial formations outside or hidden from the territorializing dominion of

slavery. Jacobs’ motivation in hiding in the attic revolves around maintaining proximity to her family and especially her children. The choice to remain in this constricted space, then, is in part driven by a need for a domestic sensorium, which paradoxically extends the scope through which her narrator, Linda Brent, is able to experience space within the disorienting structure of slavocracy. Pointing toward a way of envisioning lived space beyond the national-territorial framework of the State, Jacobs’ narrative engages the anti-spectacular, or spaces hidden from sight, through which the disorienting sensorium of slavery’s spaces manifest, asking us to consider different geographic imaginaries and alternative socio-spatial practices under the most difficult of conditions.

In accordance with the ongoing themes of this work, this chapter also asks what happens when we critically engage our own assumptions concerning space and belonging as we move between different cartographic imaginaries both critical of, and informed by, colonial-spatial practices. This work has primarily focused on the aesthetic production of alternative spaces in opposition to the hegemonic interests of the nation state. This doesn’t mean, of course, that these dominant modes of spatiality don’t intersect with novel, revolutionary ones. Hegemony, by definition, implies that to there is no outside proper; one may only approach hegemony from a perspective that might ultimately shift its focus. Until then, one is locked in what might be described as a “serial misinterpretation of reality,” a kind of ongoing illusion within an illusion.

Hence, one common pattern to what I believe are the most contrarian (and hence interesting) geographies are the scenes furthest alienated from the logic of capitalist spatial production—for example, those countergeographies found in Jacobs, Apess, and Schoolcraft, as opposed to the petit-bourgeois revolutionary models proposed by Delany.
As we have seen, Schoolcraft and Apess’ works involve a critical reframing of the racialized, colonial-capitalist relation to, in Schoolcraft’s case “a-political” space, and in Apess, “the wilderness.” That is not to argue that they exist wholly external to dominant spatial practices. Rather, as I hope to have shown, these authors challenge the limits of the colonial-capitalist (and it’s nationalist offspring) purview as a governing spatial logic; they offer a perspective from which one can self-consciously observe their existence within the imposed construction of colonial space. As we will see here, Jacobs’s negotiation of this relation is even more fraught, both in her real life (in her struggle through bondage as well as through the process of getting *Incidents* published), as well as her narrative concerning these events. Put simply, these experiences position Jacobs in a space of what I describe as “radical unbelonging,” or a continual, everyday, rehearsed condition of divested political subjectivity with explicitly spatial dimensions out of which truly revolutionary forms can spring.

These changes suggest a close relationship between kinship networks and land use and the forms of labor that tie land and community together. Within the kinship networks of the enslaved, the transition from a marginal/local subsistence economy to an inclusive large-scale plantation economy severely circumscribed real and conceptual forms of social organization. We see a reaction to these lost ties in many antebellum slave narratives, primarily in the form of a complaint articulated through human rights discourses. These texts are critically reactive to the social conditions imparted by the changing nature of nineteenth-century capital and its relation to unfree labor and space, even if, however, as in the case of *Blake* and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, these critiques could not fully break with the form and language of this commerce.
EMANCIPATION CAPITAL: MARTIN DELANY, BLAKE, AND THE POLITICS OF EMANCIPATIONALIST SPACES

Martin Delany was an active participant in various formal political positions in his day and his writing reflects his commitment to formal change through both the successes and disappointments he experienced as an early black leader. Delany was one of the first black students admitted to Harvard Medical School, though he and two fellow black classmates were later dismissed as the result of a controversial petition to bar them from mingling with white students.194 An enraged Delany reached out to various liberal Boston publications including Garrison’s Liberator, all to no avail.195 This event seems to have triggered Delany’s first attempt at public writing. The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered, published in 1852, presents one of the first sustained analyses of the condition of free and enslaved blacks in America by an African America. Condition, Elevation, Emigration includes a unique attention to various emigrationist spaces, wherein Delany argues against the Liberia project while advocating for temporary asylum in Mexico, Cuba, and other Global Southern spaces.196 Blake, or the Huts of America, a novelized expression of

195 Ibid., 133. Indeed, Sterling notes that despite Delany’s apparent expectation that the paper would provide some news of the event, the paper remained silent.
196 Martin Delany, The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered (Philadelphia: Author, 1852). Here, Delany remarks, “Go on to the North, till the South is ready to receive you—for surely, he who can make his way from Arkansas to Canada, can find his way from Kentucky to Mexico…go either way, and in the majority of instances must run the gauntlet of the slave states” (n.p.). Here Delany again shows a prescient consciousness of territorialization, offering different strategies for escaping spaces of bondage.
many of the same ideas, centered on the experiences of an enslaved black family in Mississippi, quickly followed *Condition, Elevation, Emigration*.

An incomplete first section of *Blake* first appeared in *The Anglo-African Magazine* in 26 chapter-length installments in 1859. A complete version of the first section appeared between Nov. 26, 1861 and May 1862 in Robert Hamilton’s *The Weekly Anglo-African*, which had earlier printed a version of William Wells Brown’s *Clotel*. Hamilton saw *Blake* as a “circulation-builder” for the paper, though sadly this did not prove to be the case. Floyd Miller attributes *Blake*’s lukewarm reception to the novel’s strong emigrationist policies, ideas that were popular only with a small set of the black and abolitionist communities. Furthermore, the escalation of the Civil War by the time of its publication in the *Weekly Anglo-African* at least temporarily relegated these debates to the background of the black-nationalist political consciousness. The second part of *Blake* had to wait until the twentieth century to see publication, with the final chapters still missing.

*Blake*’s political imagination is saturated with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century discourses on freedom and human rights, drawn from the so-called “Atlantic Revolutions,” including the Haitian, French, and American experiences. Even if those rights are ultimately manifested within the framework of production and commerce, the novel offers an interesting counterpoint to the intersection of freedom and capital found in frontier narratives concerning the westward development of the nation. Jeffory Clymer suggests that *Blake* offers “fascinating insights into the relationship between the US and Cuban slave economies immediately prior to the Civil War,” ultimately suggesting that

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197 Floyd Miller, introduction to *Blake*, by Martin Delany (Boston: Beacon, 1970), ix.
198 Ibid., xii.
the novel “provides a highly nuanced meditation on the reciprocal effects that international commerce and ideas regarding property, in its several legal forms, had upon each other and on how both persons and nations understood their identities.” However, over the course of the novel, the titular character’s interests turn toward negotiating a system of international capitalist relations and commerce as a way to control property and the means of production as a way of manufacturing identity.

Indeed, the “identities” Clymer refers to are loosely identifiable under the rubric of “civic humanism,” an ideology wherein the nation is brought into being through the composition of a Habermasian public sphere composed of self-interested, rational subjects closely tied to the early American, small-scale agrarian view of space (I address the significance of this feature of Delany’s political philosophy further on). In short, Delany seems to argue for a rehabilitated republicanism, consistent with the early American political ideology depicted in Michael Warner’s *Letters of the Republic.* However, lest it appear that I am merely condemning the political imagination of *Blake,* we need to consider the text’s novel aspects for its revolutionary potential, particularly its revolutionary imagination—a process that begins with the peculiar restructuring of the political scales through which Delany imagined Black Nationalism.

The plantation and the larger extension of the slavocracy was not a static system. Technological, spatial, and political transformations also impacted how slaves formed

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social bonds and experienced forms of self-reliance under the changing organization of the plantation. For example, in the late-colonial period, it was more common for “favored slaves (domestics, artisan laborers, etc.) to mingle in Sunday markets,” interacting with slaves from other plantations, free blacks, and (potentially) a variety of whites from different classes in the Caribbean.\textsuperscript{201} In North America, “the gap between the slave elite and the mass of slaves was here much narrower than on Caribbean plantations” where “North American conditions fostered a somewhat greater homogeneity among the slave community, but inserted this community into a stronger, more defined, and policed system of racial subjugation.”\textsuperscript{202} In the Caribbean, slaves were sometimes granted “provision grounds” or small plots of land where they could produce their own subsistence farming, even bringing any surplus to market.\textsuperscript{203} Blackburn notes that provision grounds could also be valuable to slaves who, in certain circumstances, could pass down the land through generations, though plots remained “fragile, temporary, and conditional.”\textsuperscript{204} However, these provisions were paradoxically much more “fragile, temporary, and conditional” as slave territory and the demand for production increased. Southern plantations needed to meet a world wide consumptive demand for more cotton, initiating drastic changes to plantation management, especially, as many authors including Delany suggest, in the expanding Deep South (Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia) and Texas. Measures taken to increase slave productivity, coupled with a cotton monoculture in the Deep Southern states, stifled the formation of enslaved social networks, reducing their potential for communal exchange within what Edward Lamau

\textsuperscript{201} Blackburn, \textit{American Crucible}, 122.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid., 122.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.
Brathwaite has called the “Interstructure” or “the interaction between inner and outer plantation, inner and outer metropole, and the lateral and diagonal relationships between these.”

Like several slave narratives, *Blake* was written in response to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s wildly popular *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and it is important to consider Delany’s departure from Stowe’s recuperative spatial politics concerning black emancipation, emigration, and self-determination. Contemporary reviewers of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* noted that Stowe’s novel championed what might be understood as a “soft form” of political transformation. Caleb Smith argues, “William Lloyd Garrison and others had articulated a well-developed theory of how literature should move reading publics to action. Its appeal to the sympathetic heart would inspire a feminine readership to exercise moral influence over the male authorities who made and enforced the law, and its invocation of a ‘higher law’ would provoke a limited form of civil disobedience against the fugitive slave statutes.”

This formulation draws a curious relationship between those who create and enforce the law and those who are subject to it. The “invocation of a ‘higher law,’” recognizable and exercised by the disenfranchised, was understood as the result of one’s increased sympathetic capacity—a process initiated by consuming sympathy literature. However, it seems that this relationship nonetheless operated at a distance from more direct political action that might trouble the boundaries of who had the right to tend formal law.

The model of political praxis particularly scrutinized in *Blake*. *Blake*’s polemical overtones are the result Delany’s strong reaction to the themes of sympathy, passivity,

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and even Christianity in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Blake’s narrative involves a series of character reversals that directly responds to what Delany (among many of his black contemporaries) saw as a reified portrait of African-American experience in the South in Stowe’s novel. Rather than focusing on the tribulations of Daddy Joe (Uncle Tom’s analogue), the story focuses on Daddy Joe’s son-in-law, Henry, “a black—a pure negro—handsome, manly and intelligent, in size comparing well with his master, but neither so fleshy nor heavy built in person.” With the exception of Tom, all the black protagonists in Stowe’s novel are mixed race, or lighter-skinned “mulattoes” like Eliza. Similar to George Harris’s character in the beginning of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Henry runs away following the sale of Maggie, his wife and Daddy Joe’s daughter, to Cuban slavers. At this point, the novel diverges significantly from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, focusing on Henry’s attempt to foment a slave rebellion among the dispossessed and displaced of the American South and his attempt to raise an insurrectionary army in Cuba. Rather than situating the plot as a narrative of escape and redemption, Henry’s movements through particular Southern regional spaces and ultimately to Cuba propel the primary narrative action into a quest for black revolution, refining Stowe’s North/South spatial dialectic.

Here it is useful to contrast Stowe’s narrative with Delany’s, noting how the functioning of different scales in the two texts organize the potential for action. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* appeared as a serialized novel in 1853 in The *National Era*, a smaller abolitionist newspaper published in Washington D.C. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is often

207 Delany, *Blake*, 16-17.

208 Indeed, as is well known, many representations of Eliza, one of the “most tragic” figures in the novel, depict her as nearly white. Supposedly, the threat to the nearly-white female body would have evoked more sympathy from white readers than a darker complexioned figure like Blake’s Maggie, who is described as “a dark mulatto of a rich, yellow, autumnlike complexion, with a matchless, cushionlike head of hair, neither straight nor curly, but handsomer than either (6).
credited as the novel that started the Civil War and indeed, while critical of the formal political process, Stowe’s novel does not advocate overt political resistance or praxis outside of this formal dimension, particularly concerning enslaved blacks themselves.\textsuperscript{209} James Baldwin, in his famous polemic, describes the novel as the “cornerstone of American protest fiction,” a genre whose “failure [lies] in its rejection of life, the human being, the denial of his beauty, dread, power, in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended.”\textsuperscript{210} Specifically, Baldwin argues, “\textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}…is activated by what might be called a theological terror, the terror of damnation.”\textsuperscript{211} This “report from the pit,” as he puts it, “reassures us of its reality and its darkness and our own salvation.”\textsuperscript{212} Baldwin’s condemnation here centers on the rendering of painful experience in order to shield the reader from a more intimate relation to that experience, situated within the Christian dialectic of sin and redemption. In this sense, \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin} is not a revolutionary novel, but a novel of reprisal, of injustice remediable by invocation of divine law rather than material action. Despite the cultural shockwaves unleashed by the novel, the narrative’s revolutionary force is circumscribed by its theological philosophy, which restricts the full rendering of its spaces. Collective action is only recognized through the topmost political scales. This dimension is mediated by the North-South dialectic that frames the social conflict in the novel.

Stowe’s narrative concentrates on cabins, homes, and plantations and these spaces represent the ethical core of the novel. However, the movement between these spaces is

\textsuperscript{209} Though the quote is most likely apocryphal, Abraham Lincoln himself was said to have greeted Stowe upon first meeting her, “So this is the little lady who started this Great War,” from Cindy Weinstein, ed., \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe}, (New York: Cambridge UP, 2004), 1. Regardless, the popularity of this sentiment, true or not, speaks to an investment in the novel’s power.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid., 19.
fraught with great anxiety and the outside world, including the contextual narrative concerning the national political situation, hovers at the threshold of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, the Birds’ home, and the Shelby plantation. Here, within the processes of slavocracy, the intersection of domestic space with the commercial economy is rendered problematic. The commercial in this context threatens the sanctity of the private. This “separate spheres” ideology frames the novel’s spatiography and can be understood as a Northern reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act, which essentially invited the Southern interests into Northern homes. In this context, domesticity becomes the ultimate subject of rehabilitation. For example, in chapter four, “An Evening in Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” Tom and Aunt Chloe’s residence is described in the very specific terms of the household œconomy. Directing the “evening meal,” Aunt Chloe, “presid[ing] over its preparation as head cook, has left to inferior officers in the kitchen the business of clearing away and washing dishes…”213 The cabin is described in intimate detail, depicted with distinctly American, black and Victorian elements, rendering it both recognizable and strange to white readers.214 This is the home, not so much unlike the white reader’s, wherein the injustices of slavery are measured in the novel. True to its genre, Uncle Tom’s Cabin seeks to redeem the domestic space from intrusion by the Southern political economy, specifically slavocracy’s role in mediating familial relationships.

In writing the book itself, Stowe may have engaged in a form of informal resistance.215 Yet, Baldwin’s criticism of Stowe’s novel as a “rejection of life” I think

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214 Take for example Stowe’s description of the cabin’s hearth, which includes a “portrait of George Washington,” “a couple of wooly-headed boys,” and a “table…with a cloth, displaying cups and saucers of a decidedly brilliant pattern” (27).
215 Responding to the Fugitive Slave Act in a letter to the *National Era*, Stowe writes: “I feel now that the time is come when even a woman or a child who can speak a word for freedom and humanity is bound to
accurately recognizes the novel’s incomplete theorization of the home (specifically in terms of its sexual politics), most tellingly symptomized by the pandering depictions of melodramatic black characters for (apparently) relentlessly clueless white audiences. Here, the intersection between these figures as they exist in relation to the social imaginary is maintained at the level of implication. The veiled sexuality, the consorting intimacies, the bizarre denial of those intimacies between characters, that, as Henry Louis Gates suggests, signal a character’s true humanity in novels, are missing from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. It is a representation of life seen in its horror, but held at arm’s length.

Whether Stowe intended this or not is irrelevant. This feature speaks to a social desire to glimpse, but not actually acknowledge these relationships that were nonetheless ever present in the antebellum world. In this sense, the rendering of this sensed but unarticulated social feeling achieves a strange mimesis in the novel at the sacrifice of a realistic and politically distinct representation of black (and white) characters as complex subjects. This sentimental mimesis maintains the tension in the novel between social advocacy/polemic and the disavowed representation of sexuality and intimacy. These juxtaposed threads generate the emotional force that powers the novel through the politically fraught disavowal of these intimate proximities.

This effect is explicitly revealed through the spatial dimensions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, where the cabin itself is imagined as anterior to the all-too-prying eye of the reader even as Tom’s body is rendered in intimate physical display. Similar to John Smith’s map presented in the introduction, slavery could be imaginatively separated from... I hope every woman who can write will not be silent.” From Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: The Life of a Literary Woman*. (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), 208.

the national economic interest only through the partitioning of the imagined community into local and regional spaces. Within the private spheres of the novel, Tom and Aunt Chloe’s domestic space is depicted as a reprieve from the slavocracy but ever subject to its threat. However, this does little to account for the sublimated sexuality of the characters. As Gates notes, Tom (and to an extent Topsy) are the only sympathetic black characters rendered as fully black and in great detail and even that detail is hyperbolic.\textsuperscript{217}

The text describes Tom as “a large, broadchested, powerfully-made man, of a full glossy black, and a face whose truly African features were characterized by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindliness and benevolence. There was something about his whole air self-respecting and dignified, yet united with a confiding and humble simplicity.”\textsuperscript{218} Here, the cabin is an extension of Tom’s character and it is the sanctity of these values, set apart and preserved in the disavowed intimacies of the cabin’s physical space, which structures the novel’s ethical conceit.

Stowe is of course correct in seeing and depicting a fundamental relationship between domestic and national economies and the intimate relationship between public and private spheres. Modern scholarship has done a fine job theorizing the complexities of this relationship.\textsuperscript{219} However, the novel imagines slavocracy’s role in constituting a superstructural threat to the routine functioning of these spheres, as opposed to providing a part of the substructural conditions for their maintenance. The routinized form of

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  \item \textsuperscript{217} Gates, “Introduction” to \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}, xli.
  \item \textsuperscript{218} Stowe, \textit{Uncle Tom’s Cabin}, 40-41.
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private sphere is intimate but simultaneously built upon the disavowal of these intimacies when represented in forms like the protest novel.

Whereas we begin to see the romanticization of space in white narratives in this moment, many slave narratives reveal an entirely different process, rendering these spaces political in the most concrete of terms. Many black antebellum slave narratives, intuitively, tend to show little nostalgia or feeling for Southern spaces at large—a sense of place that extends to the cabins and quarters of the enslaved. More specifically, black narratives tend to divest both Southern domestic and public spaces of their romantic content. Beyond the difficulty in remarking fondly on spaces of subjection, this is because the relationships organized through these spaces were under constant threat of disassemblage, so that even safe spaces fondly remembered could be violently taken away. However the domestic ideal is valued, there nonetheless remains a clear tension on the one hand between a consciousness of concrete, territorial space and the possibility of movement considered vital to daily survival and any future hopes of attaining freedom, and on the other with the uneven extension of slavery, the slave state, and the inability to manage public and private space under this system. For example, as I detail below, Harriet Jacobs’ “conservation” of domestic space concerns how those spaces organize kinship relationships and how they mitigate intimacy and access; there is much less bourgeois recognizability in the homes Linda Brent moves through than in the quaint but familiar intimate spaces of Uncle Tom’s cabin.

Blake’s criticism of this formulation is situated within the triangulation of the public (national) – private (domestic) spheres, and slavocracy and capital, figuring as an emancipatory roadblock to the prevailing conditions of oppression. Specifically, the
novel imagines extra-national spaces as the grounds of political and subjective mediation, essentially turning the principle of expansion, so much at the heart of Southern slavocracy, back upon itself as a revolutionary strategy. The novel’s protagonist, Henry, “a man of good literary attainments,” was “educated in the West Indies.”²²⁰ The marginally sympathetic Mrs. Franks devises a plan to sell Henry to Cuban slavers, from where he can then purchase Maggie’s freedom.²²¹ Henry escapes on his own accord, setting the stage for rebellion through the Southern states before finally traveling to the North. The first part of Blake ends with Henry in New York making plans to travel to Cuba and gain back Maggie. The second, and incomplete part of the novel describes Henry’s endeavors to establish an agrarian cultural infrastructure for black emigrants in Cuba while avoiding detection. Here, not only is the relationship between private and public national spaces reconsidered, so too are the extra-national spaces that structure the different economic relationships related to the home.

In assaying these different spatial scales, Blake rearranges the generic character elements of the sentimental novel, assigning the “Tom” role directly to a father (Daddy Joe) of one of the main characters (rather than the Uncle). In the character of Mammy Judy, Delany crafted not only a pacified, hypertrophic Christian character like Tom, but also, at the same time, created a sympathetic character charged with overseeing the imperiled black domestic household. Within this imperiled domestic space, the too-recognizable “mammy” character and the white, domestic bourgeois woman from so many sympathy novels like Stowe’s intersect. In this sense, Mammy Judy represents something like a parodic pastiche of Uncle Tom and Stowe herself that complicates a

²²⁰ Delany, Blake, 17.
²²¹ Ibid., 20-21.
reader’s expectations and sympathies concerning the sanctity of domestic spaces solely. Here the suffering of the characters is neither rendered in over-the-top pastiche (like Topsy) nor in particularly sympathetic terms but as pathetic, pitiable, and most importantly, all-too-human.

Indeed, in direct contrast to Stowe, Delany depicts slave domesticity as an endlessly violable space. The narrator describes Mammy Judy’s hut, noting that it “served as a sort of headquarters on Saturday and Sunday evenings for the slaves of the plantation and those in town belonging to the ‘estate’ who this evening, enjoyed a hearty laugh at the expense of Daddy Joe.”222 While the slaves are sitting down to enjoy their porridge, Colonel Franks yells “Joe [heard ‘from without’]….Take my horse to the stable!”223 Daddy Joe does as he is commanded, while some of the younger slaves switch bowls with him, leaving his bowl “partially filled with large black house roaches.”224 Subsequently, “Daddy Joe lost his supper, when the slaves retired for the evening.”225

The disruption here is imagined in two related ways. First, the scene depicts a violation of domestic space (Mammy Judy’s cabin) through Franks’ command. Franks need not enter; his control extends into this space without exposure to the intimate proximity of the cabin and the enslaved inside. The dimensions of these kinds of invasions compromises all the senses spatial partitioning tries to avoid; the master need not enter to effect command, but of course has ultimate right to do so. Secondly, the inversion of gender roles and who is “master” of the cabin figures prominently in Delany’s portrayal of Daddy Joe’s submission and emasculation. This is Mammy Judy’s

222 Ibid., 49.
223 Ibid., 50.
224 Ibid., 51.
225 Ibid.
hut, not Daddy Joe’s cabin. Here, the clownish but pious Daddy Joe is consciously portrayed as emasculated, a fool in his own home. Daddy Joe’s submission to Franks directly results in his foolishness as the butt of a disgusting prank. After chewing on the roach, little Tony mocks Daddy Joe’s prayer, saying “‘Reckon Daddy Joe do’n tank’im fah dat!’… amidst an outburst of tittering and snickering among the young people.”

The gendered component of this representation is palpable and reflects Delany’s masculinist, “self-made man” ideology. Thus, where Stowe depicted Tom as a strong male figure made submissive by his piety, Delany understands this attitude as emasculating, a disruption of the gendered order of private and public spaces. This rendering is consistent with both Delany’s criticism of the Christianity of the enslaved and with the republican agrarianism espoused in his later political endeavors. Indeed, these two elements are tied in the narrator’s depiction of Henry as he stops to consider his endeavor before crossing the Mississippi. In this scene, Henry suffers a crisis of confidence, emblemized through how he recognizes the “submissive” component of faith. The text reads:

Here for the first time since his maturity of manhood, responsibilities rose up in a shape of which he had no conception. A mighty undertaking, such as had never before been ventured upon, and the duty devolving upon him, was too much for a slave with no other aid than the aspirations of his soul panting for liberty. Reflecting upon the peaceful hours he once enjoyed as a professing Christian, and the distance which slavery had driven him from its peaceful portals, here in the wilderness, determining to renew his
faith and dependence upon Divine aid, when falling upon his knees he
opened his heart to God, as a tenement of the Holy Spirit.  

“Manhood” and the “peaceful hours” of a “professing Christian” are juxtaposed, indeed even Henry’s “falling upon his knees” is explicitly understood as “a tenement of the Holy Spirit.” Here, the difference between Henry’s old and new faith is quite explicitly contrasted. Upon hearing a steamer, Henry’s “first impulse was to surrender himself to his fate and be devoured,” however, “While gazing upon the stream in solemn reflection for Divine aid to direct him, logs came floating down, which suggested a proximity to the raft […] when going but a short distance up, he crossed in safety to the Louisiana side. His faith was now fully established, and thenceforth, Henry was full of hope and confident of success.” Here the image of crossing the river equates to a “leap of faith” as an active agent of Christian faith rather than as a passive supplicant.

Henry’s ultimate success in crossing the river, a metaphor for his transformation from pious Christian retained on the plantation to revolutionary agitator, is crafted on an intimate knowledge of the spaces he transverses: “Being a scholar, he carefully kept a record of the plantations he had passed, that when accosted by a white, as an overseer or patrol, he invariably pretended to belong to a back estate.” This series of borders, culminating in the crossing of the Red River into Louisiana, where lie “a hundred thousand bondsmen seeming anxiously to await him,” relocates the figure of the rebellious slave beyond the dimensions of the plantation and into the larger territorial geographies of the antebellum South. Delany’s text thus offers a “territorial” rather

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227 Ibid., 69.
228 Ibid.
229 Ibid., 68.
230 Ibid., 69.
than local or regional map for investing spaces with meaning, with the intent to generate insurrection and ultimately empowerment. What spaces are imagined, created, or rejected within this spatiography through Blake’s revision of slavocracy’s territorial map?

Blake’s revolutionary spatial framework relies upon an unquestioned sense of what territory means and how territorialization—specifically through the paradigm of the American state—functions as a container for an a priori meaning or a fundamental quality attached to the state. This 1:1 correspondence between states and enfranchised and even disenfranchised subjects within it is an example of what John Agnew has described as “the territorial trap.” According to Agnew, the territorial trap “relies on three geographical assumptions—states as fixed units of sovereign space, the domestic/foreign polarity, and states as ‘containers’ of societies.” In Blake, this assumption is consistent with Delany’s ethics of black empowerment and nationalism and the revolutionary plot of the text both rises and falls according to this paradigmatic frame.

The text describes Henry’s peregrinations from state to state within the Union to foment slave rebellion—a rebellion whose culmination eventually rests in Cuba. Even, as I describe below, Native territories are described in relation to state space, and these spaces indeed serve to define the “containers” of both white and slave societies within them. The narrator notes that, “in Georgia, though the laws were very strict, the Negroes were equally hopeful [as those in Alabama]. Like the old stock of Maryland and Virginia blacks from whom they descended, they manifested a high degree of intelligence for slaves.” These slaves are in contrast to the slaves of “haughty South Carolina.”

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233 Ibid.
South Carolina, the narrator explains, “the most relentless hatred appears to exist against the Negro…to be a ‘master’ in South Carolina is to hold a position of rank and title, and he who approaches this the nearest is heightened at least in his own estimation.” This self-aggrandizing has “been extensively incorporated with the elements of society among the colored people, giving rise to the ‘Brown Society’ an organized association of mulattos, created by the influence of the whites, for the purpose of preventing pure-blooded Negroes from entering the social circle, or holding intercourse with them.”

Here, the territorial dimension of the state is mappable to specific racial distinctions and reflects Delany’s personal understanding of racial difference.

This “trap” is perhaps most interestingly exhibited in a chapter titled “Advent among the Indians.” In this chapter, Henry discusses plans with Chief Joseph Braser, “chief of the United Nation,” later explained as comprised of the “Chickasaw and Choctaw” peoples. While the European conquest of North America is hinted at, the “Indian nation near Fort Towson, Arkansas” is never explicitly described as a reservation. It is an amorphous territorial space in the text, given meaning through its relationship to a military installation in (then) Arkansas (now Oklahoma). Interestingly, Chief Braser’s account of black and Native relations traces an ambiguous line between territorial relations and other forms of kinship and communal meaning—namely kinship bonds. Chief Braser (in a ridiculous characterization of Native speech) tells Henry that ‘Now you can see…the difference between a white man and Indian holding slaves. Indian work side by side with black man, eat with him,

\[^{234}\text{Ibid.}\]^ {235}\text{Ibid.}\[^{236}\text{Ibid., 85, 88.}\]^ {237}\text{Blake’s editor Floyd Miller notes, “Fort Towson was located about seven miles from the Red River in Oklahoma, then Indian Territory” (316).}\]
drink with him, rest with him and both lay down in shade together; white man even won't let you talk! In our Nation Indian and black all marry together. Indian like black man very much, ony he don't fight 'nough.

Black man in Florida fight much, and Indian like 'im heap!'\textsuperscript{238}

In Chief Braser’s account, Native and black people’s lives are tied through labor and (presumably) reproductive kinship ties. In this account, Native and black people, even where the latter were enslaved by the former, are marked by a series of intimate proximities, “eating,” “drinking,” “resting,” and “marrying” interchangeably. No matter how accurate or inaccurate this account might be, Braser’s description is girded within territorial lines.\textsuperscript{239} Braser worries that blacks “don’t fight 'nough,” except for those from Florida, presumably referring to the role of black maroons in the Seminole Wars. Additionally, in noting the inter-racial marriages, Braser identifies them as legitimate within “our Nation.” Admittedly, there is ambiguity here, between the “Nation” as a form of formal political sovereignty, which, concerning Native tribes, would only have been recognized to varying degrees under the rubric of domestic dependent nationhood, and “Nation” as a pre-European constellation of relations. As Blake takes place after the events of the Removal Era (1837), Braser’s comment would most likely indicate the constellation of Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes established by the Federal Government after removal to the Oklahoma territories—a constellation plagued by a series of formal

\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{239} For more on inter-racial sex and marriage in the colonial and antebellum periods, see Elise Lemire, "Miscegenation": Making Race in America (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2002). For more on black maroons in Florida and their relationship with the Seminole of that region see Canter Brown, "Race Relations in Territorial Florida, 1821–1845," The Florida Historical Quarterly 73.3 (1995): 287-307. For more on the Seminole Wars and the expulsion of these groups west, see Kevin Mulroy, Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas (Lubbock: Texas Tech UP, 1993).
misrecognitions and unequal treatment between the Chickasaw and the larger Choctaw tribe.\textsuperscript{240}

While I am critically framing Delany’s territorial recourse to the container of the state, it would be foolish to dismiss the imaginary power of the state. Who would deny that the state and its various relationships between different territorial divisions structures power, organizes different forms of labor and production, and exercises certain formal powers within its boundaries? It is precisely because of the divested form of enfranchisement given to slaves, and their relative unrecognizability within the political processes of American statecraft that this model is both productive \textit{and} limited in imagining the conditions for successful black rebellion. As I detail below, Delany’s model of labor is founded on the power dynamic between regional spaces of production, a series of unequal relationships directly tied to the mechanisms of American and Caribbean slavocracy.

Despite its shortcomings, Blake’s spatiography is productive in taking the reader beyond the borders of only American spaces, reminding us that the analysis of the black African diaspora shouldn’t only be considered in their local context, but as part of a larger, global complex of race and statelessness. In Carole Boyce Davies and Babacar M’Bow’s essay, “Toward African Diaspora Citizenship: Politicizing an existing Global Geography,” the authors, after a thorough recitation of oppressive state sponsored or sanctioned measures undertaken against members of the African diaspora across various global nationalities, suggest that “In the final analysis, these various denials of entry denials of right to vote, deportation, and incarceration indicate that nation-state

\textsuperscript{240} For more on the general history of the Chickasaws see Arrell M. Gibson, \textit{The Chickasaws} (Norman: U of Oklahoma, 1971).
citizenship for black people anywhere in the diaspora is a fragile and mutable condition.” While reliant upon the nation-state model of territorialization, Delany’s work reveals, if not directly challenges, the extra-national conditions that continue to plague the diaspora.

This feature is especially pertinent given slavery’s relation to global capital and forms of black enfranchisement that followed in the wake of emancipation. To my knowledge, the impact of partisan politics at work in the “free soil” debates regarding Kansas, Missouri, and, to a lesser degree, the Western states, have been sparingly discussed in terms of their legacy for Native tribes and free African Americans in these areas. These spatial transformations are primarily cast in strictly national terms, “what will the nation do?” “Will new states bring the nation to freedom or more slavery?” In this imaginary, the tipping point focuses on the question of admitting new states as either free or unfree. However, these debates, perhaps most prominently characterized by the “free soil” debate, also reflect a more complicated spatial legacy, begun prior to the Civil War concerning emigrationist, integrationist, and separatist politics profoundly influenced by black and Native writers struggling with their place in the national vision. Black revolutionary struggles, colonization and emigrationist undertakings, and global state activity at the level of race all functioned within a larger Atlantic, if not world-wide context, involving geographies that spanned from America, the Caribbean, Africa, and

Europe all the way to the pacific islands and, in the context of forced or exploited labor, to China.243

Delany was clearly concerned with these relationships, both in Blake and in his public and professional life. After the Civil War, Delany was involved in attempts to retain land granted to black ex-soldiers as an agent for the Freedman’s Bureau—a plan that met with little success and may have gotten the sometimes radical Delany pushed out of office.244 His vision for black liberation and enfranchisement continued to be informed by a strong sense of entitlement concerning land and place that he fought for on the behalf of freed blacks on multiple fronts and through various appeals.

Accordingly, Delany appears sharply critical of the other predominating ideology of the Atlantic world: namely liberalism—in particular its Southern variant. Blake opens up in a chapter titled “The Project” in Baltimore in a dialogue between Southern businessmen and Cuban merchant marines debating the ideal place to perform the “refitting of the old ship ‘Merchantman’”—a ship we find out is engaged in the illegal, international trade of slaves.245 The Cubans want to move the project to Havana “on the ground that the continual increase of liberal principles in the various political parties …made the objection beyond a controversy.”246 However, the Americans assure them that this is no danger to their mutual interests and Baltimore is decided upon as a base of operations. This debate, taking place on the eve of the Pierce administration, suggests that

243 For example, see Lisa Lowe, The Intimacies of Four Continents (Durham: Duke UP, 2015) for an analysis of the complicated set of formal race relations between enslaved blacks and Chinese indentured servants manufactured by plantation owners, both in the American West and in the Caribbean.
244 Miller, “Introduction” to Blake, xvii.
245 Delany, Blake, 3.
246 Ibid., 3.
Delany recognized proslavery interests as consistent with national expansion.\footnote{Pierce’s presidency was marked by widespread derision of his policies, namely his support for the \textit{Ostend Manifesto}, an 1854 tract that called for the forcible annexation of Cuba. This, and his support of the Kansas-Nebraska Act earned him the designation “doughface,” a term used specifically in this context for a Northerner with Southern sympathies. During the war, Pierce supposedly supported the Confederacy. For more on Pierce’s stance on mid-century spatial debates see Peter A. Wallner, \textit{Franklin Pierce: New Hampshire’s Favorite Son} (Concord: Plaidswede, 2004).}

Implicating what appears as otherwise competing interests between white Northerners and white Southerners, this model associates national expansion with a descent from politically engaged forms of economic and civic republicanism into less politically engaged forms of commercial liberalism traditionally associated with Northern capitalist impulses. In this context, it is interesting to note that Henry moves West rather than East as he begins to foment insurrection in the slave states, only at the end of his journey coming around to the old Southern states and eventually to Cuba.

Despite Delany’s misgivings regarding early nineteenth-century liberalism, Floyd Miller identifies Delany as “committed to nineteenth-century capitalism,” endorsing a “commercial aptitude for blacks distinct from the grassroots proletarian politics many black intellectuals espied.”\footnote{Miller, “Introduction” to \textit{Blake}, xvii.}\footnote{Robert S. Levine, \textit{Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity} (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 1997), 190. This stark characterization of the dialectics of engaged politics is a bit misleading I think. Black self-determination can no more be situated solely between bourgeois capitalism and “grassroots proletarianism” than any other emancipatory struggle, even today.}\footnote{249} Further, Robert Levine associates \textit{Blake} with "a Pan-African vision of black nationalism that means to combat and expose the limits of the U.S. nationalism espoused by blacks aligned with [Frederick] Douglass."\footnote{248} More problematically, Delany’s vision of transforming pan-African spaces centered on cotton production as the means for a changing black labor culture.

In his colonization plans for West Africa, undertaken after the publication of \textit{Blake}, Delany advocates cotton production as an economic and political tool for
abolitionism and black self-determination. Delany’s vision of black labor within white-generated forms of commerce bears consideration here. More recent work, drawn from Foucault’s later lectures and Agamben’s work on biopolitics such as Robin Blackburn’s *The Making of New World Slavery* and Scott Lauria Morgensen’s “The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism,” have extrapolated analyses of these spatial features to consider the inclusion and exclusion of black individuals as political subjects within white systems of dominance. These works manifest another relationship of especial importance: namely, the relation between labor and the spatial practices of the plantation. These day-to-day practices are consistent with a specialized form of bodily organization and capital that are mutually constitutive rather than coincidental iterations of each other.

This relationship is important to explore within Delany’s work because in *Blake* it results in a disavowed conundrum between self-regulation, production, and spaces of labor both free and unfree. In an article on the role of accounting practices in American and British-Caribbean slave spaces, Fleischman, Oldroyd, and Tyson argue that accounting measures profoundly influenced the labor structure of the plantation. Far from simply a “value-free calculative technology,” plantation accounting practices spawned a number of social-spatial organizations, functioning as “a social mechanism that was employed to sustain slave workers’ economic degradation…Particularly in regard to tasking, accounting was used to manage the transition from slavery to “free” plantation labor, and, thus, to modernity.” Despite the apparent collective nature of these forms,

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250 Miller, “Introduction” to *Blake*, xv.
the authors argue that these organizational strategies allowed for new forms of individual accountability for enslaved persons. Techniques such as ganging and group tasking were coordinated with new methods of accounting for slave productivity as part of a larger matrix of subjective control, maintained through both positive and negative reinforcement, organizing a modern space-labor-subject relation bourn out of the practices of slavery.

In this sense, the plantation economy could gradually be understood exactly in terms of a “value-free calculative technology” because individuals themselves were expected to shoulder the weight for their collective and communal fates. Further, these less spectacular forms of both power and violence are consistent with Saidiya Hartman’s concern with the “more mundane and socially endurable forms of terror that mitigate the subject in less obviously pervasive ways.” Fleischman et al. note, “Slave workers were often graded according to their ability; highly skilled and/or tireless workers were selected to establish task rates; work norms were established and generalized to different work groups and work settings; and output was measured individually.” As with other forms of marketized labor, the subject, here enslaved, but not without the seductive tokens of positive reinforcement endemic to capitalist modernity, is beholden to the internalization of production (albeit with little consumption) as a means of recognizing one’s self-worth. In the microcosm of the plantation, the capitalist world of signs thus demands a brutal and incomplete form of duty, complimentary and more complex than the disciplinary apparatus of the panopticon that could render revolution as unthinkable.

In this context, the processes of “unworlding” and “reworlding,” as described by Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, present key spatial metaphors of being I seek to pair with the concept of radical unbelonging. Dillon’s use of the terms builds off Orlando Patterson’s concept of “social death,” or the refusal of a slave society to recognize certain individuals, based on skin color, gender, etc., as not only subjects of the social fold, but even as human. Dillon explores these features in light of the slave narrative in consideration of Olaudah Equiano’s Atlantic travels, recounted in his *Interesting Narrative*. For Equiano, Dillon notes, “the slave ship is the scene of unworlding and social death that eradicates both domestic and worldly space, the ships he (Equiano) later inhabits grant him a modicum of social identity and belonging such that he is able to reconceive a larger world and to achieve mobility within this world”.

In *Blake*, the processes of “reworlding” described by Dillon, however, is organized more specifically around the processes of “territorialization.” From a scalar perspective, this internalization of the plantation economy would only be tenable through the political constellation of the plantation—*itself* a fundamental unit of the state. Delany’s developed model of black enfranchisement relied upon the organization of the state as a productive unit—a model bourn out of the organization of the plantation economy. These units were recognizable within the smaller scales of the plantation, operating as symbolic mediators of disenfranchised belonging. For example, As Frederick Douglass notes in his first autobiography, different national scales figuratively collapse into the scale of the plantation, which is compared to the “seat of government”

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and the “American Congress.” Douglass here laments that many slaves, knowing little more than a series of inter-plantation political relationships, brag about belonging to their masters over other plantation owners.

Douglass’ narrative is fascinating in that his increasing ability to move as a slave, then as a runaway, and finally as a legally free person engenders a growing sense of both political and cultural space that is then retroactively compared to prior limited scalar experiences. In this sense, Douglass challenges the territorial trap manifested at the scale of both plantation and state, recognizing in his own narrative movement between scales and spaces, and the interdependence between supposedly free and slave spaces. The movement of many blacks after the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act became an obsessive concern of Southern slaveholders—especially in border-states such as Virginia and Maryland—who sought to retain what they saw as their property. Here then, the ability to move was not only important as a quality of being free, but also as a way to expand and articulate the forms of worlding and reworlding available to slaves after the radical forms of reification generated by plantation life that, after 1850, extended to ever-larger scales.

Though Delany’s concern in bothBlake and his later life extends beyond the scalar transformation of American spaces to the transformation of transnational, Pan-African spaces, his commitment to civic republicanism, paradoxically linked to international capitalism, limits the scope of a realizable, revolutionary transformation of the space-labor-subject relation. While we should laud his ability to recognize the role of extra-national forces in shaping the nationalization of the black African diaspora, his model falls short of challenging the spatial parameters of the “national” itself. At heart then, Delany offers a redistributive model, not a revolutionary one. Delany’s

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257 Frederick Douglass, Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 9-10.
emancipatory map here is exemplified by the statist map organizing the slave rebellion in
Blake, where the relationship between the ossified macropolitical units of the state
ultimately trumps the border crossing of the novel’s early spatial imaginary. Here, the
ideological distinction between liberalism and republicanism fails to account for the more
complex relationship between slavocracy, capital, and labor, particularly when
considered in terms of spatial enfranchisement.

Antebellum African-American slaves inherited a rapidly changing ideology of
freedom and human rights but were also subject to the commercial and productive
processes that had undergirded those rights and yielded wealth to the white
revolutionaries half a century before. This “middle-class culture of consumption”
permeated not only the South, but also the North and the West as well, and made
questions concerning slavery in the new territories and states an economic (as opposed to
ethical) dilemma for many.258 The invention of the cotton gin in 1792 and the Louisiana
Purchase in 1802 set the stage for the expansion of large-scale inland plantations and the
construction of what Beckert describes as an “empire of cotton in the south and south
west.”259 The relationship between national expansion and spaces and places of labor
(both national and extra-national) constitutes an obvious, if under-theorized, component
of the mechanisms of American slavocracy. Critical attention to this relationship has
traditionally revolved around the carceral aspect of the plantation system, drawn
primarily from Foucault’s analysis of the panopticon in Discipline and Punish.260
However, we should also consider these elements within the context of the “territorial

258 Blackburn, American Crucible, 17.
260 See Lisa B. Randle, “Applying the Panopticon Model to Historic Plantation Landscapes through
trap” and how the spatial imaginaries born out of its assumptions continue power imbalances apparent within the plantation model. *Blake* is an important novel, charting a trajectory from a revolutionary counter-spatial politics toward a civic-agrarian vision of spatial production and self-determination. This trajectory however, is the trajectory of the failed revolution, reflective of an ultimate inability to imagine a necessary alternative to the formal maps of *global slaveocracy*. Nonetheless, Delany’s vision of postbellum reconstruction and the enfranchisement of American blacks remains inherently more radical than the realized policies of the Republican and Free-Soil parties after the War and invite us to consider the revolutionary grain within his complicated text.

Emancipation and revolution must be followed through with a full transformation within the social order rather than an incomplete reassembling of the slavocracy’s constituent parts—a process that continues to this day. Slavery itself was defeated from both on high and from the ground up but, to use Benjamin’s terms, the angel of liberatory history was, and is yet, forthcoming (a telling syntactical formulation), realizable in part by the constituent practices of the oppressed.261 The geographies of slavery are embodied within the territory of the state; countergeographies not only reconsider these boundaries, they also call for a full historical divestment of how territories of slavery are invested

261 Here I am of course referring to Walter Benjamin’s famous analysis and critique of progressive historicism from "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*. Ed. Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 253-64. Benjamin reads the figure of historical witness through Klee’s *Angelus Novus*, the “new angel,” which “shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress” (263). I am tempted to read this “pile of debris” as longitudinal or historical space itself, including the struggles of the left, hidden even from a historicism that looks forward only to understand the past.
within the state. My analysis now moves to Harriet Jacobs’s description of Linda Brent’s experience in the garret of her grandmother’s house, understanding this narrative as a sustained challenge to the social-spatial order sustaining the slavocracy and offering insight into the realization of an alternative order, positioning us back to see the forthcoming liberatory angel.

“BETWEEN ATTICS AND STATES:” HARRIET JACOBS AND SPACES OF RADICAL UNBELONGING

Space in the slave narrative has functioned as an integral part not only at the scales of plantation and nation, but also in imagining the possibilities for self-determination in the wake of removal from regional enslavement. However, as many authors of the slave narrative, from Douglass to Jacobs readily point out, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law unmade political freedom for blacks within the territorial boundaries of the United States. Similarly, it is worthwhile to point out that while not legally manumitted or politically free until much later, both authors trace their path to freedom and self-determination to key spaces in the process of escape: Douglass through his acquisition of literacy and a night spent in the woods preceding his fight with the “slave breaker” Covey, and Jacobs through her ties to her children and her seven-year survival in the garret of her grandmother’s house. In each case, both authors reveal a strong impulse to condition space as something more responsive to human activity and needs than the top-down model of political space organized by the state or the plantation.
Indeed, whether we are talking about the space of the forest or the garret, we are discussing space on a very small scale when compared with the national or even plantation-wide scales that traditionally dominate discussions concerning American literature and the slave narrative. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot has suggested concerning the process of creolization and community formation, “the resistance they encapsulate is not best seized by the epics that typify cultural nationalist treatments of creolization…[it is] the heroism of anonymous men, women—and too often forgotten—children going about the business of daily life. And for more than three centuries, such daily life was conditioned primarily by the plantation.”262 Importantly, Trouillot frames this resistance, in part, within a spatial-disciplinary context—namely between the spaces of the enslaved (the plantation) and spaces of the terminally free or (specifically in the Caribbean), maroon spaces or what he calls “the enclave.” Trouillot’s argument focuses on these small spaces and moments, or what he calls the “petit marronage,” defined by the “tensions,” “interces,” and “circumventions,” of plantation command traced to the “edges of the plantations,” in other words, in the spaces between the plantation and the enclave.263

As a form of spatial conditioning productive of creolization, or the hybridization of lived spaces, Trouillot discusses an example of the petit marronage through the example of the “provision grounds” or the generally small spaces afforded to some slaves by their masters used primarily for subsistence farming and, to a lesser extent the production of small-scale crops bound for market. Trouillot contrasts the cultural-spatial practices engendered by of this type of farming against the mono-agri[cultures] produced

through the stolen labor associated with “sugarcane, coffee, and cotton,” noting that though the provision ground barely registers in size comparison to colonial agricultural production, these spaces still played a vital role in creating, maintaining, and reproducing culture where none was supposed to exist.264 Whereas Trouillot’s point is, in his words, to “rehistoricize creolization… as a process rather than as a totality,” my point in rehearsing Trouillot is to draw attention to the seemingly marginal spaces of the antebellum slave narrative as producing identities and forms of belonging violently stripped away from the enslaved.265 These spaces are of the utmost importance in Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

In this section, I extend consideration of these “petit marronages” to include a variety of domestic spaces and thresholds recounted in *Incidents*. In *Incidents*, Jacobs’ proxy, Linda Brent’s wounded body is repeatedly displayed and endangered; there is no “safe space”—at least not in the narrative of her younger years. Indeed, in moving across spaces of absolute vulnerability to immobility (or invisibility) and finally to freedom (however complicated), Jacobs’ narrative charts a trajectory from slavery’s disorienting spatiography, to radical unbelonging, and finally to reworlding. Though this process is incomplete at the end of the narrative, the writing and publishing of the text itself continues the trajectory of reworlding, offering an emancipatory position of critique. This is to suggest that the common, lived, everyday geographic practices recounted in narratives of the enslaved, and their impact on forms of self-determination, should feature strongly in our analysis of this important genre. From this vantage point, how do we recognize the plantation, or even the slave South as geographical when slavery is defined

264 Ibid., 26.
265 Ibid., 27.
by a lack of movement in space? Can a place also be imagined as a space through a narratological rendering of its potential, of what it has yet to achieve as a distinguishable space? This is a driving question when we consider what Kimberly Juanita Brown has called “radical unbelonging.” To attempt to answer this question is to recognize the disavowed, intimate link between self-representation and space making. In this process, Jacobs’ narrative represents the most radical form of countergeographical writing, bringing into being something new, aligned with a different mode of inhabiting and being within space when even one’s mere presence in space is denied.

Harriet Ann Jacobs was born into slavery in Edenton, North Carolina in 1813. As her narrator Linda Brent mentions in the course of *Incidents*, the first six years of her life were free from many of the horrors enslaved children typically experienced. Eventually she was sold to the daughter of Dr. James Norcom, who appears as Dr. Flint in the narrative. Jacobs escapes to the infamous garret in her grandmother’s house in 1835, making her way to New York in 1842, and finally gaining “legal” freedom in 1852 when a white friend, Cornelia Grinnell Willis, purchases and releases her and her children. Soon after, her friend, Amy Post, a prominent abolitionist, encouraged her to write down her story. After soliciting and being denied help from Stowe in publishing an early version of her story, Jacobs published three accounts of her trials in the *New York Tribune* in 1853. Despite continued material difficulties and challenges stemming from the potentially scandalous content of the text, Jacobs finished a manuscript edition

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266 Brown is currently developing this term in her forthcoming work titled “Their Dead Among Us: Photography, Melancholy, and The Politics of the Visual.”
269 Ibid.
270 Ibid., xii.
of Incidents with the editorial help of Lydia Maria Child in 1858. However, several opportunities for publication fell through until 1861, when a Boston printer accepted the project.

While Incidents had a complicated publication and reception history in its day, it has come to be recognized as one of the most important antebellum slave narratives with implications for a range of literary and historical concerns. A significant portion of criticism on the text has centered on not only the racial, but also gendered forms of trauma specific to enslaved women. For example, as Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman has eloquently suggested “Jacobs indicts slavery for its total consumption and commodification of black bodies by representing sexual violence, whether threatened or actualized, as the strongest evidence of the destructive force of slavery on the individual, family, and wider community.”

Abdur-Rahman’s analysis focuses on forms of sexual violence purported on the black body that at the same time excused white sexual violence and deviance. In this mode, distinctive racial and sexual identities were crafted that modeled black bodies as repositories of the fears, deviances, and violence of white masters. This process relies on both the violent, serial violation of the black body, as well as the transgression and destruction of one’s autonomous space—for example one’s own bed or bedroom.

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271 For several years critics debated Child’s role in preparing or even writing the text. As McKay and Smith Foster note in their introduction, the text “generated a controversial debate among scholars who disputed the validity of its authorship and its authenticity as a slave narrative” (xiii). However, beginning in 1981 with Jean Fagan Yellin’s excellent work in “Written by Herself: Harriet Jacobs’s Slave Narrative,” critics concluded that Jacobs indeed wrote the text and that Child merely provided useful assistance. For more on the publication and editorial history of Incidents, see Fagan, “Written by Herself: Harriet Jacobs’s Slave Narrative.” American Literature 53 (Nov 1981): 479-486, Fagan, Harriet Jacobs, A Life (Boulder: Westview, 2005).

However, Rahman’s evocation of “the specter of the black sexual deviant,” who organizes and stabilizes white heteronormativity, suggests a transformative spatial form beyond the disciplinary processes of containment and order. In Incidents, the repeated threat of violation, suggested by both Flint and his wife, is carried out as a sort of sexual surveillance organized around the production and deconstruction of personal spaces. This process also rends the kinship networks Brent attempts to maintain, imperiling her own sexual relationships and her relationship with her family. Frustrated at his inability to force himself upon Brent as a subject of race slavery, Flint appeals to her, offering a sort of parodic vision of domestic comfort and isolation offered to white women. Brent describes “in the blandest tones, he [Flint] told me that he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen, while he talked of his intention to give me a home of my own, and to make a lady of me.”273 When later he violently chastises Brent for her relationship with Mr. Sands, it is clear that he imagines her as something like a wife when he insists “did I not take you into the house, and make you the companion of my own children.”274 This attitude on the part of Mr. Flint leads Mrs. Flint to (infamously) undertake stealing into Brent’s chamber. Brent describes that “Sometimes I woke up, and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it was her husband who was speaking to me, and listened to hear what I would answer. If she startled me, on such occasions, she would glide stealthily away.”275 Later in the narrative, Brent also recounts a story about her Aunt Nancy who she claims, had “consent of her master and mistress [to marry], and a clergyman performed the ceremony. But it was a mere form, without

273 Jacobs, Incidents, 45.
274 Ibid., 32.
275 Ibid., 31.
any legal value.”276 She was promised a “small room in an outhouse…but on the wedding evening, the bride was ordered to her old post” as Mrs. Flint’s maid.277

Here it is important to understand that these violations operate at multiple scales. Of course the violations just described take place within the Flints’ home, estranging Brent from the possibility of a self-determined space. However, this process is also carried out at other scales, for example, the master’s home, Brent’s personal bedroom, and Brent and Sands’ shared bedroom. The repeated violation of these spaces, and the attendant offer to recondition them according to Flint’s design destabilizes the ideological parameters normally holding these spaces and relationships together. Brent is displaced and dispossessed, on the one hand, as a subject of race slavery where there is in fact no “space” for her, and on the other as a gendered subject whose agency as a woman and as a mother to her own children is imperiled by the repeated violation of her private space and the threat of removal to Flint’s “lonely cottage” where, Brent rightly fears, she will lack even the “gossip of the neighborhood” to keep Flint’s actions in check.278 The violation of these spaces exposes both the tenuous nature of inhabiting space as an enslaved woman and the threat of concealment effected by the isolation of place. In other words, the serial destabilization of Brent’s personal space, alongside the constant threat of physical and sexual abuse, renders her, at least initially, completely alone, in a state of total (or radical) unbelonging outside the geographic frameworks of community, home, and womanhood.

These instances suggest that an enslaved woman’s position was situated in a series of disassociations, culminating in a form of unbelonging that, as a state of
hopelessness, reproduces the physical terrors of slavery practiced upon the body as a state of space that appears more as a “non-space” of being. As McKittrick suggests, the distribution of subjects according to “prevailing geographic distributions… displaces black geographic knowledge by assuming that black femininity is altogether knowable, unknowing, and expendable: she is seemingly in place by being out of place.”

According to Lisa Marie Cacho, subjects recognized within these parameters “are excluded from the ostensibly democratic processes of that legitimate U.S. law, yet they are expected to unambiguously accept and unequivocally uphold a legal and political system that depends on the unquestioned permanency of their rightlessness.” This condition concerns not only the formal political dimension and the ideological parameters of law-breaking and law-abiding subjects, but also extends to how subjects are mapped onto racial and gendered belonging—which is to say that they constitute a disavowed part of the map, yet are inextricably bound to a strict geography, be it plantation, county, or house.

For Brent, this “de-spatialization,” as both an enslaved African American and as a woman, cruelly culminates following the birth of her first child. Brent describes the harassment Flint directs at her, offering to take care of her and her child if only she consents to his total command over her body. Additionally, she fears going to her grandmother’s house out of a sense of shame regarding her status and the need to describe the years of sexual harassment at the hands of Flint. Brent asks, “Where could I go? I was afraid to return to my master's. I walked on recklessly, not caring where I went,

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279 McKittrick, Demonic Grounds, XV.
or what would become of me.\textsuperscript{281} Indeed, before Brent summons the courage to describe her abuse, her grandmother exclaims, “never come to my house, again.”\textsuperscript{282} Fortunately, Brent returns to her grandmother’s able to describe to “her the things that had poisoned my life; how long I had been persecuted; that I saw no way of escape; and in an hour of extremity I had become desperate.”\textsuperscript{283} These ‘disidentifications” arise through a being “out of place” in any place, nearly dislocated by the shame that denies her honor (according to the bourgeois domestic ideal) as a woman with children out of wedlock, and as an enslaved black woman.

This geographic experience is especially pertinent to considering the ongoing processes of displacement of the black female diaspora. Considering the dimension of the region, Michelle Burnham suggests, “the North acts as confessor in …Jacobs’ narrative, the South plays the role of concealer…concealment is thus both what slavery demands and what it fears.”\textsuperscript{284} Burnham is correct in identifying the paradox of Southern slavocracy’s spatial tactics. Plantation culture (here used as a shorthand for the variety of spaces within a given American plantation) both requires the exposure of all its moving parts in order to be regulated, but at the same time requires a blindness or “concealment” to perpetuate its functioning. These plantation strategies, as it were, restrain the scope of historical witnessing, occluding and disavowing the possibility of recognizing the black female subject and as such, are consistent with the continued processes of radical unbelonging. According to Brown, to see the full range of these displacements “requires

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., 49.
a totality of vision—the image and the afterimage—in order to grapple with all the ways in which black women fail to be seen with any clarity or insight.” Brown’s concern here is specifically tied to an argument regarding the preponderance of the visual in black women’s Atlantic histories, specifically the role of haunting and memory in the viewer’s witnessing of the black body. My concern is with the memory of these seemingly forgotten spaces and the revolutionary insights we might draw from their study. As McKittrick suggests, “the relationship between black populations and geographies… allows us to engage with a narrative that locates and draws on black histories and black subjects in order to make visible social lives which are often displaced, rendered ungeographic.” This requires a new way of approaching not only the “concealed spaces” of history, but also the forgotten spaces as well.

These approaches suggest the ability to observe the processes of reworlding with a difference, exposing the ideological construction of both explicit (the “big house,” the plantation, and slavocracy generally) and implicit (private and public spheres, the state, etc.) geographies and spaces of exclusion and difference. How then does one begin to locate themselves within a renegotiated series of spaces and places? Miranda Green-Barteet and Gloria Randle have discussed Jacobs’ infamous living situation in the attic of her grandmother’s house primarily as a space associated with incredible adversity, trauma and survival. However, this space has yet to be considered specifically in terms of its implications for reorienting “geographical” space or place. Yi-fu Tuan suggests, “the

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286 McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, X.
ideas ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. From security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space and vice versa…if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.” Yet, in Jacobs’ description, this presents a paradox where the “unfreedom” associated with static place generates the freedom of space. If we are to consider the garret as a particular place, then I suggest that we understand it as productive of a series of renegotiated subjective identifications for Jacobs, out of which renegotiated kinship networks can emerge. Additionally, if we consider the garret as a space opposed to the slave geographies of the “big house,” plantation, and nation, then considering how the relationship between space and place functions in Jacobs’ narrative offers the reader a unique view of the processes of spatialization in the slave narrative genre.

The plantation culture fostered by the Flints—and plantation slavery more generally—revolved around the unmaking of familial and cultural networks and the impossibility of feeling “at home” through jeopardizing every conceivable possibility of self-determined belonging. However, these plantation geographies not only aim at disrupting the spaces in which these bonds are formed; they are also directed toward the continued production of disorientation and unworlding. Born into slavery, Jacobs’ narrative describes what I define, following Dillon, as “enworlding,” or the disruptive, imposed territorialization of the geographies of slavery that structures the individual’s interaction within and between private and public spheres while disorienting the imagined continuity normally afforded between these spheres. Several terms are important to parse out here. Territorialization in this case refers not only to state space,

but also other formal and informal delineations of space that organized an enslaved person’s world. “Disruption” refers to the defamiliarization of “normal” spaces and their function in organizing political, familial, and cultural relationships. How individuals are sorted and organized in these relationships are typically mediated by less explicit forms of spatialization such as the ideology of separate spheres.289 “Disorientation” refers to the effect of these serial disruptions, limiting the ability to locate oneself within political, communal, and even psychological geographies. Brent’s experiences within the Flint’s house and plantation more generally reflect this pattern of disruption and disorientation—a process her narrative challenges in the process of self-determined reworlding.

Both the semiotic and material dimensions of the “garret” should be considered here. While we tend to use the words “attic” and “garret” synonymously as names for a place designed primarily for storage, the word “garret” comes from German specifically as a place of defense, closely linked to the idea of a housing for a garrison or guard.290 While I want to resist reading into this too much, the distinctive origin of the word garret, as opposed to an attic, suggests the dynamic and productive nature of Brent’s spatial experience there, which, despite the physical trauma of confinement, operates as a space of convalescence from which the rest of the world can begin to manifest.

Many critics have attempted to define this space (perhaps a testament to its indefinability). Emphasizing the garret as a “makeshift space,” Miranda A. Green-Barteet identifies the garret as an “interstitial space […] one that exists betwixt and between other

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290 Oxford English Dictionary, “Garret.”
more clearly defined spaces.” For Gloria Randle, the limited confines of the garret represent a kind of metonym for slavery itself while nonetheless providing “viable mediating spaces between the tensions that threaten her well-being.” At a larger symbolic scale this is evident as geographies of slavery operate as tools of oppression. This latter point is worth emphasizing, namely as it appears in Jacobs’ text: plantation ecologies not only constrict meaning; they also perform a fundamental disruption of its possibility. In this sense, the limitedness of the garret benefits Brent’s ability to glean information and perspective on the disoriented world outside as an excerpted witness to slavery’s disorienting strategies, allowing her to begin the process of creating a holistic map out of the disjointed set of slave spaces, offering a first step toward the subjective mediation of space.

It is important to recognize that the garret itself is not an exception to slave space; it functions, rather, as a singularity within the dimension of slave space itself—a geopolitical field that as I discuss below, extends much further than simply the American South. Green-Barteet’s description of the garret as an “interstitial space” offers the best departure point here. Green-Barteet argues that “Jacobs’ garret is interstitial because it exists literally between other spaces of her grandmother’s house and because it is undetectable to those unaware of its existence. Further, it has been designed specifically to conceal that which is housed within it—Jacobs.” Green-Barteet continues, “In the garret, Jacobs’ life itself comes to be interstitial as she is neither one thing nor another—she is neither free nor enslaved, neither able to mother her children nor removed from

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291 Green-Barteet, “‘The Loophole of Retreat,’” 53-54.
292 Randle, “Between the Rock and the Hard Place,” 43.
293 Green-Barteet, “Interstitial Spaces,” 54.
294 Ibid.
their lives, neither subject to her master’s tyranny nor completely safe from his threats.”295 This description seems developed from Jacobs’ own description of the space as “a loophole of retreat.”296 Though the garret and the life it affords Brent exist apart from slave space itself, it is a space of radical unbelonging at the terminus of slavery—a singularity that both looks back within slavery’s domain, and forward to eventual escape and freedom, but is constrained to neither. Brent describes the garret as “a wretched hiding-place to which [slavery] had driven her.”297 However, what is most interesting here is how this space mediates the sensorium of slavery within the garret itself as a way of combating slavery’s disorienting effects.

Brent’s cobbling together of the disparate forms through which slavery is effected are drawn from her isolation and discomfort. However, throughout this process, Brent develops a growing sense of the totality of slavery and its geographic dimensions. It is interesting to note here, however, that this sensorium is primarily filtered through the domain of domestic space, namely her grandmother’s house. Brent’s first remarks concerning the garret identify the paradoxical pain and promise of her confines: “I suffered for air even more than for light. But I was not comfortless. I heard the voices of my children.”298 Brent can hear, and eventually see her children through “three rows of holes, one above another” she slowly carves out using a “gimlet…her uncle had left”—though for the majority of her time in the garret, they cannot see her.299 Brent describes this interstice within an interstice as an “aperture,” one through which not only light

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295 Ibid.
296 Jacobs, Incidents, 91.
297 Ibid., 109.
298 Ibid., 92.
299 Ibid., 92-93.
passes. A new world slowly comes into perception through this “aperture.” Brent remarks that she “sat by it till late into the night, to enjoy the little whiff of air that floated in. In the morning I watched for my children.” Brent, situated on the other side of this aperture, rather than as a subject situated within the purview of the master’s eye, reframes the series of “incidents” endemic to slavery, offering insight and context into different, hitherto unrecognizable scales.

Indeed, Brent’s time spent in the garret allows her different opportunities for deconstructing and reconstructing spaces disrupted by slavery. Brent describes overhearing conversations about her location, stating, “the opinion was often expressed that I was in the Free States. Very rarely did any one suggest that I might be in the vicinity. Had the least suspicion rested on my grandmother's house, it would have been burned to the ground. But it was the last place they thought of. Yet there was no place, where slavery existed, that could have afforded me so good a place of concealment.”

It is worthwhile to note that she describes this “place of concealment” not as the garret specifically, but rather her “grandmother’s house.” This suggests that while isolated in the garret, Brent nonetheless has begun to imagine a continuity of spaces, organized through her constrained but nonetheless wider purview. Brent takes especial care here and throughout the text to note that indeed, there is “no place, where slavery existed” where a black woman such as herself would be safe, revealing the disorienting conditions of locating oneself within slavery’s geography:

But uncomfortable as my situation was, I had glimpses of things out of doors, which made me thankful for my wretched hiding-place. One day I

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300 Ibid., 93.
301 Ibid.
302 Ibid., 94.
saw a slave pass our gate, muttering, "It's his own, and he can kill it if he will." My grandmother told me that woman's history. Her mistress had that day seen her baby for the first time, and in the lineaments of its fair face she saw a likeness to her husband. She turned the bondwoman and her child out of doors, and forbade her ever to return. The slave went to her master, and told him what had happened. He promised to talk with her mistress, and make it all right. The next day she and her baby were sold to a Georgia trader.

Another time I saw a woman rush wildly by, pursued by two men. She was a slave, the wet nurse of her mistress's children. For some trifling offence her mistress ordered her to be stripped and whipped. To escape the degradation and the torture, she rushed to the river, jumped in, and ended her wrongs in death.

Senator Brown, of Mississippi, could not be ignorant of many such facts as these, for they are of frequent occurrence in every Southern State. Yet he stood up in the Congress of the United States, and declared that slavery was 'a great moral, social, and political blessing a blessing to the master, and a blessing to the slave!'

These overheard "incidents," witnessed and recounted within the garret, make up part an important part of the geographical imagination of Incidents—operating at multiple, collapsible, and intersecting scales alongside the kinship networks involved within them. Along with Brent, we see the fusion (and confusion) between the operations of the domestic economy, the absorption of the

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303 Ibid., 97.
reproductive labor practices of the enslaved, the “territorial” fix to the problems of the masters, and the formal political dimension by which this confusion is concealed.

As evidence of this reworlding, Brent’s survival is based on reclaiming and maintaining these kinship and extended social networks from the secluded purview of the garret. For example, from the garret she is able to manage the sale of her children Benny and Ellen to one of Mr. Sands’ agents.\(^{304}\) The children are then taken care of by an Aunt Martha. As I detail in greater detail below, Brent is able to arrange something like a postal network through which she taunts Flint with letters stamped from New York, enlisting her friend “Peter” to find a “trustworthy seafaring person, who would [deliver] such a letter to New York.”\(^{305}\) Through this expanding and contracting aperture, Brent is able to witness the disciplinary strategies of slavery’s force across both the larger political scale and machinations of the United States slavocracy, and within the larger, local plantation economy, emblematic of southern slave experience. Brent describes the sensation of being “an ignorant child, just beginning to learn how things went on in great cities.”\(^{306}\) Brent remarks that even as she moves north, that she “was, in fact, a slave…as subject to slave laws as I had been in a Slave State. Strange incongruity in a State called free.”\(^{307}\) For the first time she is able to view the ecology of slavery in its insidious constructedness, its awkward shifts, and its strategies for destabilizing the space of the enslaved and denaturing those within it, notably outside the familiar territorial boundaries typically defined as “free” and “unfree.” Here, the blossoming of the political

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\(^{304}\) Ibid., 108-113.
\(^{305}\) Ibid., 101.
\(^{306}\) Ibid., 128.
\(^{307}\) Ibid., 150.
imagination is concomitant with the spatial imagination and Brent’s increasing awareness of the tenuous nature of enslaved and free spaces induces her to begin writing—a rhetorical process of enworlding.

Further, Brent’s unlocatability as a fugitive slave parodically inverts the relationship between the perpetually displaced black body in bondage and the white master when, as some critics have pointed out (though not in spatial terms), Brent is able to turn the tactic on Flint himself, disorienting him by way of sending and receiving letters to his house, laundering them through different cities in the Northeast. These tactics lead Flint to undertake several, obviously unsuccessful missions to recapture Brent in New York. Flint’s frustration at Brent’s unlocatable status reverses the slavocracy’s ability to displace the “place” of black women. Dislodging herself within the “no place” of the “slave order” and subsequent reorientation emanating out of the garret allows Brent to locate herself within a network of friends and family and forge kinship networks unavailable in open slavery because of rather than in spite of her concealment in the garret. This is not to celebrate the persecution and the admittedly terrible, adverse conditions brought on by living in a tiny, uncomfortable space, but rather to draw attention to the tenuousness of the social world around the narrator and author, and the role of the slavocracy in implicitly and explicitly mediating both private and public spaces and the exchanges between contracted spaces—in the racist ideological functioning of both the North and the South. In a political-legalistic sense, Jacobs’ singular position in the garret positions her outside of a law she is already outside of in formal-recognizable terms.

308 Ibid., 101.
In this sense, Brent’s confession to her grandmother, a first-step that ultimately results in Jacobs’ complicated decision to “confess” to the horrors of slavery through publishing *Incidents*, initiates a process of relocating herself both within and without the recognizable tenets of the self. This confession—taking place both at the level of the narrative and within the process of publishing *Incidents*—completes a cycle of both experiencing and witnessing the processes of dislocation and disorientation. Burnham casts this process in terms of the Foucauldian panopticon—through which the subject “is produced by institutional structures” and Jacobs’ “integrat[ion], rather than eli[sion]” of “the problematic and overlooked category of the structure.” Burnham’s interest lies in understanding the tensions between what is veiled and what is concealed regarding the constitution of the subject Linda Brent. Here, Brent’s confession functions both as an injunction on the part of the slavocracy to self-revelation, and as a disruption of the idealistic components of the sentimental heroine. Considered spatially, Brent (and Jacobs) cannot be considered wholly relocated within part of the power structure of self-knowing organized by the slavocracy, nor in a sovereign state of exception, but rather within a zone of working indeterminacy emblematic of the critical posture.

At the end of the narrative, Brent remarks to the “reader,” after her passage through multiple domestic geographies, political territories, and small-scale spaces, that …my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage. I and my children are now free! We are as free as are the white people of the north; and though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in my condition. The dream of my life is not yet realized. I do not sit with my children in a home of my own. I still long for

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309 Burnham, "Loopholes of Resistance," 53.
a hearthstone of my own, however, humble. I wish it for my children’s sake far more than my own.

… It has been painful to me…to recall the dreary years I passed in bondage. I would gladly forget them if I could. Yet the retrospection is not altogether without solace; for with those gloomy recollections come tender memories of my good old grandmother, like light fleecy clouds floating over a dark and troubled sea.\(^{310}\)

Brent’s juxtaposition of sky and sea as conduits of memory continues her preoccupation with the dialectical form of interstitiality, of “being between” states—here articulated through her reservations regarding the recognizable forms of “freedom” enjoyed by wives in marriage and white people in the north. Brent renders freedom in these recognizable forms in order to distinguish the marked differences between her past and current life, yet this description retains the position of singularity out of which emancipatory politics is generated, refusing to define this “greater” freedom while establishing the contours of difference in how one imagines it as a black woman between the North and the South. Her desire for a future “home of her own” and her memories of both her grandmother and her bondage defy the simpler dialectic of freedom and slavery, and, as Burnham suggests, points toward the “blind spots” of the disciplinary gaze. As a critical geography, Jacobs’ text offers a critical revision of space in resisting the urge to supplement another version wherein the subject is conclusively affixed. It is precisely in these spaces of exception that the *work*, rather, than the *state*, of reworlding is undertaken. This is not to get into a never-ending poststructuralist game of endless signification concerning freedom, self-determination, and the subject, but rather to

\(^{310}\) Ibid., 156.
suggest that the process of spatialization and enworlding and accounts of the subject are related in ways that can challenge, rather than determine, each other.

The aspects of Jacobs’ spatiography, as explored through her narrative of the life of Linda Brent, are best described in terms of a trans-territorial reworlding process. In a sense, there are only two cartographical possibilities available at the beginning of Brent’s narrative: cartographies of slavery and cartographies of freedom. The former was the only known form Jacobs knew even up until the publishing of *Incidents*. However, the limited dimensions of the latter, and the less-than-promised fulfillment of freedom within her life in the North suggests the scope and extent of slavery’s geographies outside of the scale of the plantation and the American South. Her reworlding process was thus accompanied aside, rather than beyond the geographical coordinates of slavery where all the known markers of meaning (like the state, the South or the North) were invested, either implicit or explicitly, in the continuance of this domination. This work conceivably continued well on into her life. As Davis notes, Jacobs’ post-Civil War work “includes tenure as the secretary of the Rochester Anti-Slavery Reading Room, founding and running a school for freedmen and refugees in Alexandria, Va., and other activities as part of a wide circle of reform-minded Americans.” While the home formed the symbolic core of so much sentimental fiction, so too does that space center the imaginary in *Incidents*. Yet, Jacobs’ text looks out first, upon the world of American slavery, to return and reorient the conditions by which the home is made recognizable as a countergeographical space of critique rather than a bulwark to intrusion at other scales.

311 Here I refer not to Jacobs’ personal liberation but the formal end of American slavery, taking place four years after the publication of *Incidents*.
Jacobs’ radical geography then should be considered in relationship not only to the larger space of the nation, but also to the evolving domestic ecologies associated with the plantation, the everyday practices of the enslaved, and the mundane spaces available to those whose lack of dominion over space was formally equivalent with possession over their own bodies. Jacobs’ radical geography then is a reconstructive geography that concerns the everyday and how what is right in front of her could so easily be taken away. This kind of attention suggests a bold step away from both the large-scale, Black Nationalist revolution imagined by Delany and the autonomous liberal subject imagined as the telos of belonging according to mainstream nineteenth-century political theory.

Jacobs’ sensitive depiction asks us to consider the relationship between space, scale, and cultural flows within the plantation ecology at a scale easily overlooked. While that ecology was, at least on paper, directed toward an idealized system of production and disciplinary management, it often, as Trouillot suggests, worked according to an improvisational set of rules and practices concerning the movement and interactions of slaves who nonetheless produced alternative spatial imaginaries. The long-range goal of this work then is to understand how these everyday practices, these small spaces, and the textual representations that helped produce and shape them contributed to change both the formal politics of inclusion and exclusion as well as how they might have changed (or can continue to change) the spatial epistemologies, born out of the colonial world, that we have inherited.
Chapter 4

Unstable Geographies: History, Representation, and the Spaces of the Dispossessed in John Rollin Ridge’s *Joaquín Murieta*

Nineteenth-century California witnessed a diverse array of political and spatial regimes come and go in rapid succession. The processes of power dispensation over the land organized under these regimes varied greatly, contributing to a culture of instability and a growing rise of ethnic nationalism following the discovery of gold in 1848 and California statehood in 1850. Prior to Spanish contact in 1769, the Mohave tribe occupied the southeastern quadrant of the state with the Tejóns (comprised of the Kitanemuk, Yokuts and Chumash tribes) located in the southern valley and the Miwoks in the north-central valley.313 In northern California lived the Pomo and Shasta, who were some of the first people displaced by the Gold Rush.314 The Klamath, Modoc, and Yahuskin tribes occupied territory in the far northern section of California and into southern Oregon until their removal and confederation in 1864 to the Klamath and Warm Springs reservations.315 Spanish occupation prior to 1821 had organized Alta California into a series of twenty-one missions with a central capital city in Monterey.316 The remoteness of Alta California from the Mexican metropolis after the War for Mexican Independence (1810-1821) kept many of the liberalizing processes of the Mexican Revolution from

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314 Ibid., 9.
taking hold in the provincial culture fostered by the missions.\textsuperscript{317} However, given the area’s remoteness from Spain and the declining interest of the independent Mexican government in resourcing them, the dominion of the missions gradually eroded, leaving something of a power vacuum increasingly taken up by the larger, more powerful “rancheros,” or private entrepreneurs, who were granted title by the government.\textsuperscript{318}

In the course of this process, newfound animosity between native-born Californios, Mexicans, Native Americans (some immigrants, some native), and European and Anglo-American immigrants began to develop.\textsuperscript{319} James Parins notes that from the Anglo perspective, “Peruvian, Chilean, Mexican, and Chinese newcomers to the state were considered ‘foreigners,’ even though many of them had arrived in California before the great influx of miners.”\textsuperscript{320} Within this space of provincial and often indeterminate governance, the “rights” to occupation were increasingly cast in a familiar racial-hierarchical mold that would bear the force of law following the conclusion of the Mexican-American war in 1846, the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in January 1848, California statehood in 1850, and the passage of the 1851 Foreign Miner’s Tax law.

Nonetheless, previously existing spatial histories (organized around different national identities such as, Native, Spanish, Mexican, or Chinese groups) continued to distort the territorial function of U.S. national sovereign space and its consumptive and extractive colonial imaginary. This is all to suggest that, given the radical and overlapping changes

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{318} Karen Clay and Werner Troesken, “Ranchos and the Politics of Land Claims,” in \textit{Land of Sunshine: An Environmental History of Metropolitan Los Angeles}, ed. William Francis Deverell and Greg Hise (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh, 2005), 52-53. Clay and Troesken note that in taking over land formerly granted to the missions, the processes of “secularization and the continued strength of the foreign [cattle] market in turn drove an economy centered on ranchos (large ranches) and gave increased prominence to rancheros” given primarily to the already politically and materially powerful people within the new government (53-54).

\textsuperscript{319} Ibid., 6-7.

\textsuperscript{320} James W. Parins, \textit{John Rollin Ridge: His Life and Works} (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 2004), 96.
in spatial regimes, California’s territorial and spatial history is profoundly complex. These changes resulted in new social conflicts, identities, and communities that formed, were broken apart, and sometimes reconstituted within the cauldron of California society.

These overlapping changes, and the transformations they wrought, were certainly recorded from a myriad of vantage points. Many whites viewed the remaining Mexicans and Natives at best as a useful labor force. Similarly, many Mexicans who remained in Alta California viewed Anglo-American immigration as nothing short of an invasion. John Rollin Ridge, himself a native-born Georgian Cherokee well exposed to these sort of radical changes, entered this chaotic world in 1850, moving to California, like many other Anglo, Asian, and Latin American settlers, in order to remake what might have appeared to Ridge as a life left in tatters. Despite the hardships Ridge endured, he managed nonetheless to produce one of the most fascinating fictional histories of these spatial conflicts and the subjects who participated in these intraregional tensions in his 1854 novel, Joaquín Murieta.

In what follows, I sketch out an outline of California’s changing spatial regimes, connecting the resulting transformation of the complex ethnic and territorial cultural milieu to the spatial historiography undergirding Ridge’s Joaquín Murieta. Murieta is a curious novel in that many of its fictionalized claims to historical accuracy and legitimacy regarding the events of 1850-51, while evidently false, were nonetheless regarded by many as true. Murieta doesn’t belong to any one tradition, be it Chicano or Native America. An Editor’s Preface, most likely written by Ridge himself, identifies the

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322 Parins, John Rollin Ridge, 95.
novel as “a living romance” pertaining to the history of Murieta. Like the land on which the narrative takes place and the famous anti-hero who always seemed to be in two places at the same time, Joaquin Murieta exists within a polyphonic, and sometimes cacophonous, series of spaces. Blake Michael Hausman suggests, “The California icon is unique among the heroic subjects whose stories are sung in Anglo ballads and Mexican corridos because to sing Joaquin Murrieta’s story is to become Joaquin Murrieta.” As much as this is to suggest that anyone can inhabit Murieta, this also points to how Murieta, the novel and the anti-hero, challenges the fixed, historical locatability of the subject in place, unmaking the linear temporal narratives affixed within space that assign static being to identity and place. Further, authorities seeking a $5,000 reward for the desperado “dead or alive” returned from the Monterey area with someone’s head and (presumably) someone else’s hand, preserved in two jars of whisky, claiming them to be the head of Joaquín and the hand of his lieutenant, Three-Fingered Jack but no one has ever been able to finally conclude just whose head and hand were in those jars. Along

323 John Rollin Ridge, The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit (Norman: U of Oklahoma, 1955), 4
324 I use the term “polyphonic” here to denote the active overlapping and oftentimes-conflicting manifestation of spaces represented at play in California in this time period in the novel. This is to differentiate between conflicting claims to space and the simultaneous representations and practices associated with different ways of inhabiting the same space.
325 “Corrido” is the Spanish name for a narrative folk song usually concerning working-class heroes, revolutionaries, and like figures. For more on the corrido form and history, see Dan William Dickey, The Kennedy Corridos: A Study of the Ballads of a Mexican American Hero (Austin: U of Texas at Austin, 1978).
326 Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 80. Also, the “Three-Fingered Jack” figure has a long history tracing back to eighteenth-century Jamaica. Between 1780-1781, rebel maroon Jack Mansong led a group of escaped and former slaves in a series of raids against the British until colonial agents ambushed and killed him. During his life, local reports cast him as a murderous outlaw, intent on instigating slave rebellion. Beginning with Benjamin Moseley’s description of the character in his 1799 A Treatise on Sugar, the voluminous “Three-fingered Jack” texts produced after his death vary in representing him as an outlaw, a charlatan, and a leader of rebellions both large and small. Thus, these “Jack” variations represent a spectrum of reaction to racial revolution depending on the sympathies of the author. As I discuss, below, Ridge’s Three-Fingered Jack operates as a foil to the gallant Joaquin, relishing in murdering countless people. In this way, the two figures represent the Janus-headed figure of revolution: democratic justice and bloody vengeance. For examples of Caribbean representations of Three-Fingered Jack, see Benjamin
with the narrative, these material remnants symbolically evoke the lost histories and
subjects of California. By consolidating and redirecting the fictional accounts of Murieta
circulating within the Anglo press, Ridge intervened in the processes of constructing
California’s symbolic imaginary—permeating the imagined landscape as a seemingly
omnipresent threat who was both unlocatable and yet everywhere. Thus, *Murieta*
critically triangulates questions concerning history, representation, and space through the
novel’s unique disruption of the Californian historical “real.”

Ridge was born into an affluent, slave-owning Cherokee family just prior to the
growing conflict between the native Cherokee and the State of Georgia, a conflict that
would infamously come to a head under Andrew Jackson’s presidency. Rollin’s father,
John Ridge, was a leading member of the tribe who “had come to believe in the futility of
Cherokee resistance to removal.” As the growing threat of removal loomed, John
Ridge formed a group of Cherokee, called the “Ridge party,” who saw relocation to
government approved spaces west in present-day Arkansas and Oklahoma as their only
course of action. Indeed, by 1830, the government determined that the Cherokee land
fell under the dominion of the state of Georgia, allowing for the annexation of “large
sections of Indian land.” Under these policies, “Cherokee general council and other
gatherings were forbidden by Georgia law,” encouraging John Ridge to get out while he
still could. In 1835, the members of the Ridge party signed the Treaty of New Echota
that would see the tribe “exchange their lands in the East for 13,800,000 acres in the

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328 Ibid., 20.
329 Ibid., 19.
330 Ibid.
West, plus a payment of $45,000,000 and an annuity to support a school fund in the Nation.”331 John Ridge and his followers comprised the first group of Cherokee to settle in the appointed space, establishing businesses and clearing land for farming in 1836-37.332 This plan would end disastrously for Ridge and many of his followers after the forced removal of the remaining Cherokee to the area in 1838 along the infamous “Trail of Tears,” and the influx of tribal members who saw Ridge’s actions as self-serving.

In 1838, Jackson sent Federal troops into Georgia to forcibly remove the remaining Cherokee, sending a second wave of Cherokee diaspora west some three years after Ridge’s followers had consented to removal. Historians estimate that, suffering from starvation and disease, around “4,000 Cherokee” lost their lives on the forced march to Oklahoma territory.333 Many Cherokee of the second wave had followed the leadership of the “Ross party,” named after the Principal Chief of the Cherokee, John Ross. This party was staunchly opposed to relocation and Ross had encouraged the tribe to “ignore” the laws of Georgia, making natural enemies of the Ridge party.334 Ross and his followers held that Ridge’s party had betrayed the Cherokee in signing the 1835 treaty. Following the horror of the 1838 removal, Ross and his group “held a secret meeting and decided that the signers of the [1835] treaty were to be assassinated. The justification for this decision was a provision of Cherokee law—one John Ridge helped frame in 1829—that anyone involved in the sale of Cherokee land without the sanction of the people would be put to death.”335 At the same time, the second wave of the Cherokee diaspora arrived in

331 Ibid., 21.
332 Ibid., 26.
335 Ibid., 29.
Oklahoma bitter and poor, only to find members of the Ridge party prospering by having taken up much of the best land. Following a series of failed attempts at reconciliation, Major Ridge (Rollin’s grandfather), John Ridge, and Elias Boudinot (another tribal leader and friend of the Ridge family) were assassinated by members of the Ross party in the summer of 1839.\textsuperscript{336}

John Rollin Ridge spent the next ten years moving between Oklahoma and Arkansas, with short trips to the East coast, plotting revenge for his father and grandfather’s murders, writing poetry, and continuing his father’s cause, rallying for better education and other assimilative measures against the growing line of the Ross party.\textsuperscript{337} Then, in 1849, Ridge got into an argument with his neighbor, David Kell, a staunch pro-Ross supporter, that led to Ridge pulling his gun on the larger man and killing him.\textsuperscript{338} Ridge quickly fled to California in 1850 amidst the frantic Gold Rush migration, arriving in Placerville with the intention of building a mine not far from Sonora, the opening location of his eventual novel titled \textit{Joaquin Murieta}.\textsuperscript{339}

Mining would soon prove exhausting, expensive, and unfruitful, and Ridge and his compatriots moved to Sacramento, looking for whatever jobs they could find. Here, Ridge first became employed as a writer, working for the \textit{True Delta}, a newspaper out of New Orleans but popular in the mining camps.\textsuperscript{340} Ridge became a correspondent for the \textit{Delta}, publishing articles of local interest along with some of his poetry and soon worked his way into other gigs for general interest papers like the \textit{Golden Era} and \textit{Alta California}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[337] Parins, \textit{John Rollin Ridge}, 46-55.
\item[338] Ibid., 55.
\item[339] Ibid., 69.
\item[340] Ibid., 72.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
in addition to “higher brow” publications like the *Hesperian, Hutching’s California Magazine* sympathetic to publishing his poems.\(^{341}\)

Soon after, a widespread series of robberies and killings began up and down both Alta and to a lesser extent Baja California. For reasons discussed below, the Anglo-American press was quick to trace a number of these acts to a “Joaquín Murieta” and the state government eventually hired out a group of rangers to track the villain down—despite the fact that no one exactly knew what this man looked like or even necessarily who he was. By 1853, in the wake of the hysteria that followed, the rangers indeed came back with “evidence” that they had killed the bandit: an unidentified head preserved in a jar of whisky that matched vague reports about a mustached Mexican man in his 20’s.\(^{342}\) The rangers collected the reward, the head went on tour over the state, and the general malaise of California’s land wars continued.

Less than a year later, Ridge published *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta*, a dime novel, with the avowed hope of making enough money to begin a Native-interest newspaper.\(^{343}\) While no records exist pertaining to actual publication numbers, Ridge boasted that the publisher printed 7,000 copies, though up to this point, only one original has been found.\(^{344}\) Despite the apparently limited print run, Ridge’s *Murieta* initiated a slew of unauthorized reprints, inspirations, and plagiarized versions. For example, in his introduction to the novel, Joseph Henry Jackson identifies the next version of Murieta as a “true” narrative reported in the “*California Police Gazette,*” where “an anonymous writer coolly reworked Ridge’s text, changing names here and

\(^{341}\) Ibid., 76.
there but following Ridge in most essentials, even to some of the dialogue. This more widely circulated version changed Murieta’s wife’s name from Rosita to Carmela and inspired several Spanish-language versions such as Roberto Hyenne’s *El Bandito Chileño*, which circulated widely in both Spain and Mexico. Then came Charles Howe’s play *Joaquin Murieta de Castillo*, an anonymous “15-cent” 1865 copy titled *Joaquin: The Claude Duval of California*, subtitled “A Romance Founded on Truth,” another similar version titled *Joaquin: Or the Marauder of the Mines*, and finally Joseph Badger’s short story *Joaquin, the Saddle King*, all published within twenty years of Ridge’s original narrative. Along with Ridge’s *Murieta*, these subsequent representations of the Murieta figure engendered a truly multifaceted, mythic character, charting a series of transformations within Californian society that diachronically register the conflicting, overlapping, and ultimately productive accounts of Californian spatialization.

TELLING THE SAME STORY TWICE: HISTORICAL INTERVENTION IN THE SUBJECT-SPACE DIALECTIC

Considering the gamut of change, how to recognize the polyphony of California’s spatial history in the nineteenth century presents a fundamental question here, especially given the material and narratological differences within which exchange and transformation are recognized. Trouillot’s theorization of historicity, as act and narration,

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346 Ibid., xxxv. Also, the changing of Rosita’s name to Carmela is important because it allows scholars to track the source text for each iteration of the Murieta narrative.
347 Ibid., xxxvii.
in *Silencing the Past* is important to consider in the context of a (mostly) fictional text caught up in the imbroglio of nineteenth-century California. Trouillot begins describing the now famous (or infamous) siege of the Alamo noting, “this is a story within a story—so slippery at the edges that one wonders when and where it started and whether it will ever end.”\(^{348}\) The Alamo story is of course famous to both Americans and Mexicans. From the perspective of someone who grew up in the American education system in the western United States, I remember understanding only that some “brave” Americans fought the much larger Mexican army maybe a hundred years ago and that for this reason we should thus “remember the Alamo.” It wasn’t until much later that I understood anything more complex about the context, let alone the result of this battle. Texans might have a slightly more complex (or naïve) understanding of the meaning of these events but at any rate, the event forms something like the birth of a Texas identity and consciousness itself manifested within Texan (and then American) territorial space. Of course, soon after the battle, Mexican General “Santa Anna fell prisoner to Sam Houston, the freshly certified leader of the secessionist Republic of Texas.”\(^{349}\) Regarding the processes of how we understand the “history” of this event, Trouillot notes “Houston’s men had punctuated their victorious attack on the Mexican army with repeated shouts of ‘Remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!’ With that reference to the old mission, they doubly made history. As actors, they captured Santa Anna and neutralized his forces. As narrators, they gave the Alamo story a new meaning. The military loss of March was no longer the end point of the narrative but a necessary turn in the plot.”\(^{350}\)

\(^{349}\) Ibid., 2.
\(^{350}\) Ibid.
In reframing the beginning of the territorial meaning of Texas then, the story of the Alamo is involved in a series of what Trouillot calls “silences [which] enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance).”351 In the making of California, we of course have events, recorded in a variety of sources and narratives like Ridge’s Murieta that circulated and continue to circulate (at least in Mexican histories), but which originally existed as a product of Anglo “pulp” culture. These materials operate in relation to a series of evidentiary materials: land grants, tribal holdings and reservations, treaties, etc. In this context, the silencing of the past isn’t reflective of mere narratological opportunism, but the willful manipulation of these narratives to craft claimancy, complicated by language, time, and the blunt fact that legally, California is simply no longer a Mexican (let alone Native American) territory. Thus, the ethnoterritorial concurrence of California space to the Anglo-American settler is imagined as a convenient outcome of a history, a blunt fact yielded by the intervention of silence. To refer to an earlier example, few have forgotten the Alamo, but few (at least in mainstream America) have anything to say about it; history utters its injunction: “Remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!,” but remains silent when we find little more to converse with it. Trouillot’s concern is organized as a methodological intervention into first “why” particular histories remain silent while others shout. I deploy Trouillot here, to continue the metaphor, to understand how the whisper of the Murieta narrative offers a diachronic

351 Ibid., 26.
lesson concerning the making of space in nineteenth-century California, a process that involves pulling apart layers of space, history, and text.

Ridge’s *Murieta* traces the grey line between historical fact and generative (counter)fiction, the stakes of which play out in how the social fold recognizes itself as a part of a “place,” especially in a space like California that has once again seen the rise of a Latino majority.³⁵² This rise is interpreted in contrast to the maintenance of white privilege and its active political manifestation in the populist or even fascistic stances currently on the rise³⁵³ in American politics (particularly in border states like California and Arizona) and elsewhere around zones of exchange. Despite its patent ridiculousness, the “great wall of America” is still a running dream of many white Americans who have near unlimited access to all the historical “facts” one could ever hope to process but who nonetheless sustain their ideology on spatial imaginaries of belonging and containment even a cursory look at the historical record would problematize. Ridge’s characterization of Murieta is at least partially, if not wholly fictionalized, and the dime novel form appealed to a consumer consciousness with its vivid scenes of murder and mayhem that on the surface appears a facile part of the ideological mechanism of racist xenophobia.

Indeed, the “Joaquín” scare prior to Ridge’s treatment mythologized a faceless bandit, who, theoretically, could be “any Mexican.” Importantly, however, in Ridge’s version of the events, Joaquín is portrayed not simply as a bloodthirsty bandido (as he was imagined in the American press), but as a full-fledged revolutionary who means to “kill the Americans by ‘wholesale,’ burn their ranchos, and run off their property at one

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single swoop.” Ridge sneaks this small but important distinction in the last half of the novel, rendering the sensational bloodshed depicted in the first half of the novel quietly accountable to an imagined revolutionary telos absent from Murieta’s journalistic descriptions. However, the novel also possesses a deeper-rooted representation of subject, identity, and space that complicate the transitional narratives of statehood and Anglo occupation, serving to transform the Anglo myth of Murieta as an external threat to the state into an internal one. In dramatizing and consolidating the Murieta myth into a tangible, entertaining, and sensational text, Ridge produced a hybridized form of historical intervention wherein the occupational claims and contradictions of the Californian processes of “space-making” are rendered mythic, but in a way that challenges the mythos of Manifest Destiny.

John Carlos Rowe writes, “the weird reception-history of Ridge's novel and the even stranger history of the U.S. conquest of California teach us the futility of ever theorizing how literature functions in relation to ideology. Instead, we should begin with specific cases of ideological instability, use theory to help us select literary or other kinds of texts that respond to such a historical crisis, in order to assess the roles played by culture in ideological normalization.” In Murieta, Rowe argues that this process of normalization “resolves the conflicting and traumatic experiences of his [Ridge’s] personal history as a Cherokee, of the U.S. conquest of California in the Mexican-American War, and of the social disorder in California during the Gold Rush in a narrative organized around the myth of progressive individualism” a burgeoning Western

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354 Ridge, Joaquín Murieta, 75.
myth that ultimately establishes “its resolution of social and political problems by recourse to established cultural convention.”

As I discuss below, Ridge imagined himself as belonging to a higher-class strata, identifying artistically with an established European Romantic literary culture. Yet, he would also repeatedly recount his diasporic status as a displaced (and often materially poor) member of the Cherokee, situating himself within a cultural crossroads. It is possible that Ridge wrote the novel purely for notoriety (he had been trying to make a name for himself in the journalistic world for about two years when the novel was published), for profit (he made little), as a vehicle for his more personally esteemed poetry (several of these poems find their way into the novel, including “Mt. Shasta”), and/or as a way to explore the themes of dispossession, diaspora, and revenge. While I agree with Rowe that the novel desires to resolve the complex and contradictory tensions between different social actors through an appeal to the values of “progressive individualism,” the spatial unconscious expressed within Ridge’s work resists that absorption, straining the normalizing narrative extant at the surface. Progressive individualism functions only as the common ground for a much more complicated set of histories regarding identity and space woven into the text. These histories dialectically coalesce in a disruptive counter-spatial narrative wherein the contradictions inherent between subject and space offer a more robust historiography of the turbulent changes in California in this period. These discontinuities lead the reader to question the historical processes of assigning static value to the questions “whom” and in “what” place. Thus,

356 Ibid.
357 See Joseph Henry Jackson, introduction to Joaquin Murieta, by John Rollin Ridge (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1955) and James W. Parins, John Rollin Ridge: His Life and Works (Lincoln: Nebraska UP) for more on Ridge’s biography.
Ridge’s novel produces a series of displacements, where rather than trying to solve the complexity of shifting California spaces, he repeatedly subjects them to further assemblage.

ONE SPACE, MANY STATES: CALIFORNIA AS NATIVE, MEXICAN, AND AMERICAN TERRITORY

In California, the history of entitlement is just as significantly a history of estrangement, of territorial, regional, and local regimes intersecting, evolving, and clashing in the course of legitimization. In this section I sketch out a version of these events and the processes of space making involved in the shifting spatial regimes before returning to Ridge’s Murieta to explore how the novel organizes the relation of history to legend and land in what I describe as a polyphonic flux. The newly migrated Americans went to great measure to eradicate what they understood as an unwelcome foreign presence in their newfound Californian home. This sense of belonging and entitlement is of course nothing new. However, American ethnoterritorial concurrence was disrupted by multiple factors in California, such as the presence of multiple, as opposed to singular, cultural groups, who all exercised claim to oftentimes overlapping spaces, and the fragmentary nature of American land title after the Mexican-American War and the Gold Rush. So while the absorption of California was certainly a national project, individual and group interests upset the uniform extension of this concurrence, even as certain actors appealed to national authority to validate their claim.
As traditionally imagined, the results of the formal, territorial transformation of California into a part of the Union were a forgone conclusion within three months of the discovery of gold in Coloma in the Sierra Nevada range. Rowe writes, “the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo concluding that war not only increased the territory of the United States by one third, it also guaranteed under U.S. law the civil and property rights of those people living and working in this territory before the War.”

These rights however, were given and taken away based on the whims of a quickly ossifying racial hierarchy following the rush. According to Jackson, the Land Act of 1851, also called the “Foreign Miners’ Tax Law of 1851,” made it nearly “impossible ‘for any but native or natural born citizens of the United States’ to mine gold.” Parallel to this law, the 1853 “Act to Ascertain and Settle the Land Claims in the State of California” appointed a commission to oversee and validate land grants given by Mexico prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and to ensure that any validated property rights were justly transferred and recognized by the U.S. Government. Not all of these grants were ultimately confirmed and it is easy to see the U.S. Government trying to recant the promises consolidated in the Treaty. Clay and Troesken note that of the four grants applied for within Los Angeles County, three were granted by the state with the Federal Government appealing (ultimately unsuccessfully) all three with two of the cases making it all the way to the Supreme Court with the state trying to fight them all the way.

358 Rowe, “Highway Robbery,” 151.
359 Ibid. Rowe writes, “the legal protections of property and civil rights provided by the Treaty were generally ignored, and new territorial laws were adopted, like the Land Act of 1851, that violated specific provisions of the Treaty” (151).
360 Jackson, introduction, xv.
361 Robinson, Land in California, 99-100.
American immigrants to California wanted to seize their newly entitled spaces and to find any way to shut the door fast behind them.

This process necessarily required an evacuation of historical presence. The “discovery” of gold itself appears as an *invention* of Manifest Destiny. Gold is a transmissible medium of indirect exchange; land, conceived as sovereign property, however, is not. Nonetheless, the relationship between the two is knotted. Gold claims could be drawn from geographic coordinates, territorial boundaries, landmarks, and other terrestrial reference points, but were not always enforceable, let alone universally agreed upon. However, the exchange of gold brought a kind of *de facto* entitlement to the land it was drawn from. In this sense, conflicting territorial appeals resolve in the extraction and transference of gold into some form of exchange. In this sense, the gold “discovered” at Sutter’s Mill was an “invention” of Manifest Destiny, allowing the imagined roots of “discovery” to reset, thereby transforming the geohistorical imaginary of the landscape, now looking both forward to American immanence, and backwards, if at all, to geologic “pre-history” like Webster’s Plymouth Rock. The conflation of property and production thus “solves” the tensions between histories of occupation, claimancy, and territorial boundaries by appealing to a pre-historical “zero-point” in order to ensure an imagined, transmissible futurity. While this describes one form of the ideological processes of entitlement and dislocation, we must also understand the procedural processes contributive to the tethering and untethering of subject to space in order to then understand the novel’s disruption of these processes.

Estrangement is a useful term to explore here, suggesting the widening gap between oneself, their place, and their relationship to that place. Territorial estrangement
then is suggestive of the processes of being located within a place where one’s former relationship to that place is sundered. One can readily imagine many modern examples of subjects who, one day are told they are no longer citizens of a particular place. However, territorial estrangement suggests an evolving separation through the lived processes of disassociation contingent upon formal non-recognition—an undoing of presence through violence, disenfranchisement, misrecognition, or even gentrification rather than simply formal political belonging. Estrangement also suggests the tensions inherent to dual identification, where the minority or subaltern group within a monolithic ethnoterritory, is tenuously relocated to a place within the space the territory, usually subject to oppressive management, i.e. a ghetto, a reservation, or a neighborhood. These groups, though part of the demos, are merely “tolerated” in their place. Mob and vigilante violence directed toward Californios reflected only the most brutal forms of this dissociative process, as in turn, the Californio and Mexican treatment of the Native Americans at an earlier stage sundered the historical processes of space making by reorganizing and exploiting the Native American division of space. Despite the difficulty many land owners faced in upholding the validity of land titles granted by Mexico after the War, the rancho system organized a political and cultural unit that many of the wealthier Californios who lived within it were resistant to breaking up. These socioeconomic units operated as semi-independent fiefdoms, within which those who commanded or had a place within the power structure benefited immensely and to the detriment of those beneath them. Men like Mariano Vallejo, who controlled Northern California’s vast Rancho Petaluma, became very wealthy,
“command[ing] a virtual autocracy North of San Francisco bay.” Pitt argues that many Californios of lower-class status benefitted to a certain degree from the processes of secularization and privatization. While “all lines of dependency emanated outward from his [the ranchero] casa…the availability of ranch land even to underlings, combined with the presence of an Indian laboring class to work that land, prevented the creation of a peon class among the gente de razón of California.” By the 1830’s, the distribution of land and resources, however, was not generally extended to newly arriving emigrants from Mexico, who, despite sharing national affiliation, were nonetheless regarded as unwelcome and set apart from the growing sense of regional identity shared by the established Californios. Despite the rancho’s declining influence in the American form of private property and distribution, some of them continued well into the twentieth century.

Native Americans, or the former “mission Indians,” presented an obvious exception to this sentiment. Many “neophyte” Natives who had been, for all intents, enslaved and forced to toil on mission grounds by the Franciscan priesthood were forced into similar forms of labor with the coming of the ranchos. Even after 1826, when the governor of California granted many neophytes Mexican citizenship, many (though not all) Natives found themselves in an under-privileged position as menial laborers on the ranches.

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366 For more on both the nineteenth and twentieth century histories of the ranchos, see Marjorie Pierce, *East of the Gabilans: The Ranches, the Towns, the People—Yesterday and Today* (Fresno: Valley, 1977).
burgeoning ranchos and the few remaining missions.\textsuperscript{368} By the formal end of the mission system in 1834, many of these natives were “drawn into labor pools for the flourishing private ranchos;” others were illegally “captured and forced to work” within this structure.\textsuperscript{369} As Rowe reminds us, “In mid-nineteenth century California, [Native Californians] were collectively named "Diggers," a derogatory term referring to their hunting-and-gathering societies and homophonically linked with the racist epithet for African Americans.”\textsuperscript{370} By the time California was incorporated into the Union in 1850, “Native Americans were legally defined as subalterns, prevented from testifying against ‘a white person,’ and made virtual slaves to the capitalist economy advocated by Yankee settler.”\textsuperscript{371} The changing regimes of entitlement never failed to exploit Native Californians.

Nonetheless, Native American tribes played an active role in drawing and redrawing the maps that would eventually lead to war. Southeastern Native American tribes disturbed the tenuous borders between America and Mexico, indirectly leading to tensions that resulted in the Mexican-American War. Each country imagined the other as a buffer to the insurgent Native American tribes, with the result being that these tribes often played Mexico and the U.S. against each other. Recent scholarship has examined how Native American raids into Northern Mexico and its California territories—most often but not always correctly attributed to the Comanche—and the weakening of the Mexican government’s hold over Alta California as precipitating an influx of Anglo-

\textsuperscript{369} Silliman, \textit{Lost Laborers}, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{370} Rowe, “Highway Robbery,” 151.
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid. Also, see Douglas Monroy, \textit{Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California} (Berkeley: U of California, 1990), 185-187 for more on the 1850 “Act for the Government and Protection of the Indians” that codified Native Americans as subaltern subjects.
American whites to act as a buffer to these incursions.\(^{372}\) These acts, along with the 1836 Independence and 1844 annexation of Texas (events that followed a somewhat similar course of Anglo-American and European migration leading to social unrest), and the resulting disputes over the new territorial dimensions of each nation, led to a culture of border crossings without a definitive border. While the U.S. levied their growing territorial and military power in an attempt to consolidate these territorial zones of indeterminacy, occupation, provocation, and the interdependence of communities and labor forces stubbornly defined these zones as pluralistic spaces.

While many of the actors in this story retained some form of political affiliation (as opposed to political “nonbeing”), the spaces in which they inhabited, between the constant turnover of political regimes and evolving forms of identifying with one or another power, functioned as a (very) large zone of indeterminate political solvency, generating instability and conflict at multiple scales. To extend Trouillot’s metaphor of the historical voice, these transformations and the shifting forms of political enfranchisement given and taken away beneath them tend to “deafen” histories of the subject normally articulated through spatial belonging. A similar scene had played out in Texas that directly influenced the Mexican-American War and the policy of lawmakers on both sides of the border. Many Mexican nationals within the recently annexed Texas territory and its disputed western boundaries were caught between two different national actors operating within contradictory yet overlapping spatial regimes, including the increasing growth and state-backed power of the Anglos and Native tribes like the Comanche and Apache who had brokered what Brian Delay describes as a “workable

peace agreement” to engage in a conflict that “transformed” Northern Mexico into a vast theatre of hatred, terror, and staggering loss for independent Indians and Mexicans alike.”\(^{373}\) Delay describes these conflicts as the “War of a Thousand Deserts…from the creation of man-made-deserts where once there had been thriving Mexican settlements…to the absence of industry and improvement and of human mastery over nature.”\(^{374}\) Couched within this account however, is a narrative of progress, of civilization over barbarity that would be yet again readily deployed by immigrant whites moving within the territory and by statesmen like Presidents James Polk and later Zachary Taylor (himself the commanding General of U.S. forces in the War) advocating the territorial development of these spaces without a satisfying resolution for either Native or Mexican subject. These historical actors, having served their purpose in the stratagems of U.S. territorial development, were eventually dispossessed of not only the land, but also the self-actualizing history of presence within the amnestic annals of territorial production much like the diverse nationalities and affiliations that comprised the Californian social world.

In California, the influx of mostly non-white groups, bearing different forms of entitlement, were met with a diverse array of violence associated with race, ethnic origin, and the changing hands of territorial sovereignty. In the wake of the land crises following the 1851 Foreign Miners’ Tax law, and the subsequent rise of the Mexican bandidos, “an inordinately high number of Mexicans [were] whipped, banished, or hanged from 1849 to 1860.”\(^{375}\) Carrigan and Webb note that “from the California Gold Rush to the last

\(^{373}\) Ibid., xv. For more on Comanche politics and history in this era, see Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008).

\(^{374}\) Ibid., xv–xvi.

\(^{375}\) Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 70.
recorded instance of a Mexican lynched in public in 1928, vigilantes hanged, burned, and shot thousands of persons of Mexican descent in the United States...far exceeding the violence exacted on any other immigrant group and comparable, at least on a per capita basis, to the mob violence suffered by African Americans.\textsuperscript{376} These moments are described as “California trial[s].”\textsuperscript{377} In this context, the authors ask, “why were their deaths forgotten by so many?”\textsuperscript{378} In part, the authors argue, this is because many of the Mexican or Mexican-American victims had little or no recourse under United States law, both as foreign citizens and due to the local indifference or outright corruption of local law enforcement.\textsuperscript{379} The \textit{de facto} practice of looking the other way, if not outright legitimizing mob and vigilante violence, obscures even the formal ability of the historian to recognize the victims of crimes quietly sanctioned by the prevailing power structure. This misrecognition is written into the record of law, many times as but a snippet. As is often the curse of the archivist, what is recorded only serves to suggest what isn’t. Similarly, these records are incomplete and scattered, often lacking the ability even to identify the victim’s race unless some informal remark was recorded.\textsuperscript{380} Lacking formal recognizability within this structure, the “place” of those with Latino roots was lost within the processes of political and territorial estrangement.

This form of estrangement and disassociation would have been very familiar to John Rollin Ridge, whose own history coincided with scenes of radical transformation and displacement. Ridge’s \textit{Murieta} belies the discontinuity undergirding these changes

\textsuperscript{377} Ridge, \textit{Joaquín Murieta}, 121.
\textsuperscript{378} Carrigan and Webb, \textit{Forgotten Dead}, 2.
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid., 13.
and the intersectional spatial regimes that organized the turbulent Californian world. However, the figure of the Californian bandit remains, beyond a few newspaper reports and a specious account provided by his supposed murderer, shadowy and elusive. The gulf between historical factuality, the variety of inconclusive contemporary accounts, and Ridge’s consolidation of events within his “romance founded on truth” provides an element of variance across different recognizable histories concerning California spatial production. I now turn to discuss the intersection of these accounts, arguing that the Murieta myth, both as it is represented in the novel and within the variance afforded between sources is both a disruptive and productive source not of Californian history per se, but of Californian histories.

LOCATING MURIETA: UNMAKING CALIFORNIA SPATIAL HISTORY AND THE SUBJECT

Historically, the Murieta myth began slowly in 1850-1851. Several hi-profile highway robberies and murders were reported near Calaveras County in the Daily Alta California in the winter of 1851. Pitt notes that, “in the thirteen months from August, 1850, to October, 1851, the [Los Angeles] county experienced the astronomical number of forty-four homicides, which must have set some sort of record, considering that the entire population was below 2,300.” Bandit gangs of all shapes and sizes began appearing in Californian newspapers with names like “Solomon Pico, Pio Linares, Silvestrano Chavez, Jesus Castro, and Joaquin Lugo. But many of the accounts identified

381 Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 76-77.
382 Ibid., 149.
the leader simply as “Joaquin.” Soon, rumors and accounts regarding any banditry reprinted the name “Joaquin” and were widely circulated in the Anglo press. White and Chinese miners were particularly concerned as many of the robberies were committed against these people returning from the gold fields to unload their diggings in the larger cities. Accusations soon fell on the Mexican communities. Pitt notes that the “general alarm against Mexican badmen first sounded in 1851, about the time the foreign miners’ tax was imposed.”

Despite historical evidence for different bandido gangs operating in the years after the War, enough hysteria eventually centered on the mysterious “Joaquin” figure for the state to offer a reward of $1,000 (later raised to $5,000) for the capture of this man and his company. As Pitt notes, “Senator Pablo De Guerra [then Lieutenant Governor of California] and Assemblyman Covarrubias cited the dangers of hunting a man so vaguely identified as Joaquin, but the legislature, by a substantial majority, overrode their objections and created a special ranger company.” This company was entrusted to the leadership of a Capt. Harry S. Love, a veteran of the Mexican-American War who “may or may not have been with his men at the moment” the killing and amputations had been carried out. Love’s party was comprised of twenty deputized rangers, some of whom possessed questionable backgrounds themselves. Indeed, the rangers produced no results until almost the end of their ninety-day enlistment, after which they returned from the Monterey area with the aforementioned head and hand. The *Alta California* had perhaps

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384 Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 78-79.
385 Ibid., 76.
386 Ibid., 78.
387 Ibid., 79.
the most sober take on this dubious project: “the very act of the legislature authorizing a company to capture “the five Joaquíns was in itself a farce.” Nonetheless, Love and his men signed affidavits that affirmed the identity of the head (though none in the party had, to their knowledge, ever met or seen Murieta before), got paid, and the macabre items somehow made their way out of the governor’s possession and into the hands of a traveling show.

Why was the Joaquín figure singled out? Part of the reason seems to be due to the reported “atrocities” committed by his gang and, most importantly, the fact that no one then (and now) was able to locate or recognize him. Despite clear and present threats to American interests posed by better-recognized criminal figures like Jack Powers (an Irish immigrant) and Pio Linares (another Sonoran bandido) operating around the same time, or Tiburcio Vasquez, who just a few years later seemed to adopt a romanticized version of the Murieta persona himself, the infamy of Joaquín seems to have arisen from the randomness of his violence and the frequency and range over which he seemed to strike. Powers and Linares, it should be noted, operated within a much more specific geography. These men at one point occupied a major portion of Santa Barbara and remained entrenched there for the better part of 1853 before leaving for Los Angeles to continue organizing various illegal activities between the Mexico-U.S. border. These men though had faces, names, and importantly, places; Joaquín did not. It was only after his supposed capture that he “received” a face, or, rather, faces. It goes without saying

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390 Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 82. Pitt notes that the head went on a world tour in 1856 and “remained a popular display in a San Francisco saloon, only to vanish in the rubble of the 1906 earthquake” (Ibid.).
391 For more on Vasquez, see John Boessenecker, *Bandido: The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vasquez* (Norman: U of Oklahoma, 2010). Vasquez worked as a horse rustler but was popularly known for his “literate intellect…romantic nature…and his passion for beautiful women” (350).
392 Ibid., 106-107.
that historically, even if there were a specific Joaquin, he couldn’t have possibly committed all the crimes he was speculatively accused of. Maclean notes that, “Joaquin made his appearance in the Mother Lode Country, committing atrocities so numerous that it would have taken a dozen ordinary fiends to keep up with him.”³⁹³ In the face of an anonymous threat, it seems, one was invented.

“Joaquin” could be anywhere and yet nowhere all at the same time, from Sonoma, CA, to Sacramento to Monterrey on down to Fresno. As Parins notes, “many accounts identified the leader simply as ‘Joaquin’…and was assigned several surnames, including Murieta (or Murrieta or Murietta), Valenzuela, Carillo, Ocomorenia (spelled by ridge as O’Comorenia), and Botellier (or Botilleras).”³⁹⁴ Ridge’s narrative expands the “Joaquin problem” while solving the mystery of “who” he was. In Ridge’s narrative “it is now fully ascertained that there were only two, whose proper names were Joaquin Murieta and Joaquin Valenzuela, the latter being nothing more than a distinguished subordinate to the first, who is the Rinaldo Rinaldini of California.”³⁹⁵ Ridge expands the geographic range of “Joaquin” in verifying that only two Joaquin’s could have been identified as the perpetrator of a supposedly never-ending list of crimes all over California and Northern Mexico. Hence, Ridge’s Murieta is confirmed as a surreal presence whose movements defy the logic of time and space whose crimes are “verified” as belonging solely to his hand.

However, there is an important distinction in how space is imagined in terms of its episodic continuity between the beginning of the novel and the latter half. The beginning of the novel narrates Murieta’s movements through the bucolic Californian

³⁹³ MacLean, *California Bandidos*, 55.
³⁹⁴ Ibid.
countryside. Here, though he and his band are constantly on the move, the “Joaquin” legend has not yet formed and they are imagined as belonging to the quiet countryside, far away from Anglo-American establishments, taking refuge in the homes of fellow Mexicans and in the picturesque mountains and valleys of California. Murieta and his band begin in Calaveras County; then he is south, in Sonora, Mexico. Next we find him with “Mexican acquaintances” back in Calaveras near Mokelumne Hill on the move further south near Tulare Lake (now dried up as part of the Los Angeles “Water Wars”). Here, Murieta, his wife, and his band of followers live in a “clump of evergreen oaks…many a pleasant day found him and his still blooming companion roofed by the rich foliage of the trees and reclining upon a more luxurious carpet than ever blossomed, with its imitative flowers. The text is punctuated with romantic scenes like this one when the narrator describes the story from Murieta’s perspective, almost serving as a guide to the natural wonders of California within which Murieta clearly “belongs” to the spaces he inhabits. The narrator describes a “rich and fertile basin…half-way between the Tejon and the Pacheco pass, to the east of the Coast Range and to the west of the Tulare Lake” in what is today located within the San Joaquin Valley. Within these spaces, Murieta lives a life of near peace and tranquility and “except for a few persons, even his name was unknown, and many were personally acquainted with him and frequently saw him the different towns and villages, without having the remotest idea that he stood connected with the bloody events which were then filling the country with terror and dismay.”

396 Ridge, Joaquin Murieta, 28-32.
397 Ibid., 28.
398 Ibid.
399 Ibid., 20.
As we later learn, these spaces are spaces in transition, and the linear movements of Murieta and his band within these spaces are replaced by his appearance across spaces. Here, Murieta’s power resolves as the ability not just to be anywhere, but also to explicitly appear anywhere. This is the distinction between presence and recognizability. In one scene, Murieta is seen “sauntering out into the streets, according to his custom...visit[ing] the various drinking and gambling saloons, with which every California town and village abound.”⁴⁰⁰ He hears his name spoken by “three or four Americans” boasting how they would ‘just once in his life...come across Joaquin and that he would kill him as quick as he would a snake.⁴⁰¹” Hearing this, Murieta leaps onto the nearest table and proclaims, “I am Joaquin! If there is any shooting to do, I am in.” The bravado ceases, and Murieta quickly rides out of town. The narrator comments that “the extreme chagrin of the citizens can be imagined when they found, for the first time, that they had unwittingly tolerated in their very midst the man whom, above all others, they would have wished to get a hold of.”⁴⁰² He is familiar, but unremarkable enough to bear the notice of the Americans who desperately long to not only capture him, but also to recognize him at all. In this polyphonic space, Murieta locates himself within the interstices of these conflicting spaces, exposing himself periodically to disrupt the static maintenance of “normal life” within American occupation while extending his range of occupation.

This is reflected in the novel’s dual narrative frame, which is organized from one perspective through Murieta’s fragmented appearances across California, and from another through his movements across spaces. In a similar scene to the one above,

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 31.
⁴⁰¹ Ibid.
⁴⁰² Ibid., 31-32.
Murieta and his men are moving toward Stockton, “camped on the plain under an oak
grove, about three miles from that place. They were seen at their encampment but not
suspected”\textsuperscript{403} Alluding to the squatter phenomenon prevalent through the title wars in
California at the time, Ridge notes it was “so common a thing to see companies of men
engaged in the various occupations of packers, cattle-drovers, horse-traders, hunters, etc.,
stationed by the banks of some cool stream…the knowledge of everybody that it was the
habit among all classes to go armed and to camp out in every sort of a place materially
aided the banditti in their movements.”\textsuperscript{404} This scene would’ve been familiar in 1850s
California. Often, the only way title was recognized was at the end of a rifle and
occupation was achieved as a product of mere presence. These conflicts were not even
always confined to mining claims. As W.W. Robinson notes, “beginning in 1849 and
1850 swarms of squatters settled on every available spot in or about San Francisco,
whether claimed or not […]”\textsuperscript{405} No doubt some of these newcomers brought with them the
honest notion that this territory obtained from Mexico was inevitably public land and that
they, therefore, had the right to preempt and settle upon lands in California as freely as
they had been doing upon any part of the public domain in other states.”\textsuperscript{406} In other cases,
different authorities had conferred or transferred title to multiple parties. The breakup of
the massive ranchos into smaller units bred all manner of disagreements concerning
borders and passage.\textsuperscript{406} In this tense state, cultures of violence organized the otherwise
disruptive effects of territorial incongruences. These moments understand Murieta not as
an external threat to the tenuously constructed social order, but as an internal one, a

\textsuperscript{403} Ibid., 65.
\textsuperscript{404} Ibid., 66.
\textsuperscript{405} Robinson, \textit{Land in California}, 112-113.
\textsuperscript{406} Ibid.
marginalized thread of the social fabric who stubbornly resists the processes of territorial estrangement.

This disruption and its larger allusion to the historical processes of spatial production are expressed in one very interesting scene in the middle of the novel. Murieta and his band are pursued by a group of miners led by a “Jim Boyce” and are nearly cornered when Murieta “conceived a plan, the most brilliant and ingenious that ever entered an outlaw’s brain, by which to defeat their [the American miners] purposes and carry out his own original intention of robbing them.”

While in pursuit, Murieta’s party, having traveled in a straight line away from the miners, briefly camp:

Here they left strong indications that they had spent the night but established the contrary fact by riding on for the remainder of the day, whose close found them at another distance of twenty miles. Building fires and eating a hasty supper, they again mounted, and, having made a circle of five miles in their course, suddenly turned to the westward and encamped about three o’clock, a.m., at a spot distant another common day’s journey from the last starting point. Thus traveling and resting…they found themselves in the original trail upon which they had started.

The party thus circles round Boyce and his pursuing band, who was “unsuspecting in the remotest degree that his arch-enemy was at that moment in his rear.” Murieta and his men ambush Boyce as they sit around one of Murieta’s own rekindled campfires, “enjoying their pipes and laughing over the numerous stereotyped jokes, which had

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408 Ibid., 89.
409 Ibid.
descended, like Shakespeare, from one gentleman to another are too good ever to be worn out,” killing fifteen of them with fifteen shots.\textsuperscript{410} “Panic-stricken and bewildered, the survivors [including Boyce] fled head-long into the darkness, and, taking no time, to choose their ground, hurried madly and distractedly away from the horrible scene.”\textsuperscript{411} Boyce survives in this mad dash out of harm’s way, and in a curious anecdote, the narrator notes that, “Jim Boyce and his surviving companions…raised another company with who they went back to their rich diggings, and, in spite of their immense loss…made for themselves ample fortunes, with which they returned to the States.”\textsuperscript{412} It is of note that the narrator doesn’t identify California as a state, though of course statehood had predated the Joaquin scare by several months. What is implied here is that they returned to the Eastern states with their gold, having been intimidated by Murieta and his men. This is remarkable of a curious moment when the text associates territory with white establishment, a tenuous institution in the Californian world terrorized by Murieta. This is to imply California still remained (and remains) a zone of exchange, operating beneath the ethnoterritorial frame imagined by state transformation and subject to disruption.

I am inclined to read this scene as a parallel to the avowed goal of Murieta’s revolutionarily inspired revenge. In depicting Boyce’s party as unaware of what is behind them, the narrative parallels the historical and spatial consciousness of Americans within the forward-looking processes of Manifest Destiny. This ideology was so successful in part because it never had to look back so to speak, celebrating newness, freedom, and the absence of crisis as much as it was itself a result of those crises, be they back East, in

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{410} Ibid., 90.
\item\textsuperscript{411} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{412} Ibid., 91.
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England, or elsewhere. Murieta’s doubling back mirrors both his explicit plan to dispossess Americans of their newly acquired land and the imposition of an alternative spatial simulacrum, disrupting the forward-facing narratological positivism of Manifest Destiny. The discontinuity of Californian space and history is embodied by Murieta’s movement within a circle, suggestive of a more generative figure of diachronic spatial production than the straight line that yields contour to the map.

NARRATOLOGICAL DISSENSION: THE AVOWED AND DISAVOWED IDENTITIES OF JOAQUÍN MURIETA

The interplay of spatial vantage points in *Joaquin Murieta*, how they are understood and narrated, extends to the representations of characters and cultures within the novel. With enough attention, the reader begins to notice that many of the characters and cultures in the novel are described in contradictory terms. For example, one of the most confusing aspects of *Joaquin Murieta* is the representation of the Californian Natives to the San Joaquín Valley, the Tejóns, who are somehow represented as both lazy and industrious. On its face, Ridge’s representation of this Native group counterintuitively appears extremely negative. Ridge himself regarded the California Natives as less advanced and more passive than Eastern Tribes like the Cherokee, but nonetheless sympathized with their various conflicts with white Americans. However, within this negative representation lies a more ambivalent crosscurrent that reveals a sympathetic rendering of the Tejóns under white oppression. In 1853, the Tejón tribe was the first tribe in California removed from sovereign authority over their land and placed

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on a reservation that was soon to overlap with an American-granted rancho, Rancho El Tejón. José Antonio Aguirre, a landed Spanish Californio, and Ignacio (or Ygnacio) del Valle, who moved to Alta California in 1819, had applied for the transference of their Mexican land grant after the 1851 law, but had only received confirmation of their request in 1853, several months after the establishment of the reservation. This zone of indeterminacy undermined the Native’s ability to develop an agricultural foundation in their new home as the reservation lay within the crossroads of the Cañada de las Uvas and Tejón passes, two highly traveled routes linking Sacramento and Southern California that brought the Natives into constant contact with many other groups. Further, much of the reservation land had been used as grazing land for many years, rendering it inhospitable to agricultural effort.

Ridge wrote *Murieta* as this process was playing out and almost certainly would’ve taken note of the first Californian Native relocation project. However, the timeline in the *Murieta* narrative situates the Tejóns two years prior to relocation, leading to an interesting representational knot. The Tejóns here are represented as sovereign proprietors of their land while at the same time beholden to American interests and command. In Ridge’s account, the Tejóns are portrayed in mock seriousness; they are both made to look ridiculous, and yet at the same time are rendered in such a way as to suggest a more acute historical presence. These contradictions are generative themselves, leading us to ask from what vantage point the narrator observes and speaks, how these perspectives function within the generic landscape of the “dime novel,” and eventually

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415 Ibid., 175.
416 Ibid.
how the “excesses” of the dime novel pattern a form of spatial history more productive than any staid treatment of Californian land.

Here, we should consider that Ridge alternates between two different narrative perspectives roughly mappable to the dual structure mentioned above, varying between an omniscient third-person perspective to a “third person, limited” and at times first-person perspective that is most evident in the reportage-style moments of much of the novel. The band’s movements are narrated along the lines of the first case: “over this attractive field of enterprises Joaquin scattered his party in different directions.”

However, this perspective is frequently disrupted by the intervention of a first-person narrator. For example, in one scene, Murieta spares a group of American miners, one of whom explicitly renounces his American nationality. Murieta swears them to secrecy concerning the encounter. The narrator describes this scene: “I have never learned that the young man, or any of his party, broke their singular compact, and, indeed, it seems to me that it would have been very questionable morality in them to have done so.”

Attentive readers might wonder if this implicates the narrator as part of Murieta’s band. Conversely, Murieta’s dramatic appearance within the Anglo-American community, at bars, outside of police stations, etc., are narrated along the lines of a third-person witness to the scene. The novel’s representation of racial difference roughly traces these narratological patterns, moving at once from the vantage point of a privileged Anglo narrator, merely relating events as they could be accounted for, while then offering information concerning Joaquin’s movements and actions and the lives and politics of the Tejón from the standpoint of someone on the “inside” of these “outsider” cultures. This

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417 Ibid., 83.
418 Ibid., 70.
pattern is further supplemented by a representational dissonance, where whatever the “true” opinion of the narrator is concealed within the description of certain groups and individuals.

The narrator describes the passage of the white ranchers into Tejón space in explicitly formal terms, which in turn appear parodic. Upon fleeing the aforementioned scene in the bar, Murieta and his group raid an American owned ranch, the “Oris Timbers Rancho.” As they are pursued by the ranchers, the group flees into the “Tejón nation” unsuspecting that the owner of the ranch has struck a deal with the Tejón Chief.\(^{419}\) The ranchers “proceeded…to the seat of government of the Tejón nation [where] they soon reached the capital, which consisted of twenty or thirty very picturesque-looking bark huts scattered along the side of a hill.”\(^{420}\) The narrator then identifies the Tejóns’ as “swarthy subjects…scattered in various directions… engaged for the most part in the very arduous task of doing nothing,” and in the next sentence notes how the Tejón “women were pounding with stone pestles in stone mortars, industriously preparing their acorn bread.”\(^{421}\) The overtly racist overtones of the narrator are confirmed in another brief scene where he derisively describes a group of “Cherokee half-breeds.”\(^{422}\) Ridge himself was of course half-Cherokee and half-white. How then are the dissonant representations resolved and what do they say about the about the novel’s spatial imaginary?

This scene typifies one of the complications of the novel: namely how the people within certain spaces are imagined according to two perspectives: those looking from

\(^{419}\) Ridge, *Joaquin Murieta*, 36.
\(^{420}\) Ibid.
\(^{421}\) Ibid.
\(^{422}\) Ibid., 124.
within, without, and those looking within, from without. The constant discussion of
Murieta’s tragic fall and his romantic valor suggests that the narrator sympathizes with
Murieta, but only to an extent. Conversely, Three-Fingered Jack is made culpable for all
the horror and depredation. Yet, we are never quite sure where the narrator stands, always
offering critical commentary on the characters and their actions, but undercutting that
criticism with a subtle aside or remark that throws the conclusiveness of moral
omniscience into question. In the scene described above, where Murieta doubles back to
terrorize Jim Boyce, the narrator ends this section on a sarcastic, cutting note, addressing
Boyce personally, suggesting, “Should Jim Boyce, chance to read this humble narrative
of mine, I beg him to receive my warmest congratulations.”

As I discuss below, moments like this complicate how we read the narrator’s sympathies, pointing to a
heteroglossic complexity rarely recognized in pulp.

Producing what was at the time generically codified as a “dime novel” probably
wasn’t Ridge’s ideal mode of expression for a man who identified more with
Wordsworth and Byron than Edward Ellis. To dismiss the Murieta narrative as
sensationalist psuedo-history or just another generic example of the “penny dreadful”
misrecognizes the novel’s narrative and reception history role in producing a polyphonic
rendering of spaces within the processes of California historiography. Drawing on
Russian literary critic Valentin Voloshinov’s theory of “multiaccentual signs,” Michael
Denning has argued that dime novel stories “are best seen as a contested terrain, a field of
cultural conflict where signs with wide appeal and resonance take on contradictory

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423 Ibid., 36.
424 Edward Ellis was a one of the most popular dime novel writers of the later nineteenth century. His
works include the Deerfoot series, Seth Jones: the Captives of the Frontier, and The Steam Man of the
Prairies. For more on Ellis and the dime novel genre, see Michael Denning, Mechanic Accents: Dime
Novels and Working-Class Culture in America (London: Verso, 1987).
disguises and are spoken in contrary accents,” including variations in the “rhetoric by which people understand the divisions of the social world and situate themselves within it, the stories in which conflicting groups of people become giant characters.”

In dime novels generally, these variations “are not established and univocal.” In *Murieta*, the narrative dissensions dramatize the interplay of layers of Californian spatial histories and identities, rendering the polyphony of living, reactive space within the “accents” of the characters and the shifting narrator. As demonstrated both within the framed narrative of the text and in his own words, Ridge believed that his version of Joaquin and his life should be considered “part of the most valuable history of the state,” and in a strange way, it is. The misrecognition of the novel as a “true” account further introduces dissension into consolidated rendering of California space as specifically one kind of space.

Considering the tropes of the dime novel, Ridge’s statement should be recognized exactly for the bombastic overload it suggests. Along with the violence, romance, and journalistic excesses, the entwining narratological perspectives constitute a shifting set of ideological signs, traced over the landscape itself and subject to radically different modes of interpretation. In this sense, the “dime novel” frame offers a generative, as opposed to flat, way of recognizing spatial history and the alternative strands of claimancy and occupation at work within the Californian social world of the 1850s.

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426 Ibid., 82.
THE REAL CALIFORNIAN FAKE: THE DIME NOVEL AS SPATIAL METAFICTION

These narrative dissensions complicate how readers approach the novel, fragmenting the ideological vantage point by which historical narratives are obtained. Joaquín Murieta himself encapsulates these tensions and his representation in the form of the dime novel integrates him into the metafictional history of California. The confluence of the “sensational elements” of the novel, including the hyperbolic statements, over-the-top sadism and violence, and heroic pathos, have a unique function in this dime novel turned Californian legend. As discussed previously, prior to the novel’s publication, the Murieta narrative existed in a series of disparate and fragmented accounts, primarily produced by Anglo writers and published throughout Californian newspapers in piecemeal form. Ridge’s novel, in its over-the-top incredulity, collected these narratives while adding impossible-to-know, intimate detail, throwing the earlier “true” accounts into even greater question. By presuming to be a “true” historical account of Murieta’s doings, Murieta initiated a series of wide-ranging representations, some that claimed to be true accounts, others that presumed to be derived from the true account, and still others that claimed to be merely romance. For example, in 1915, George Tinkham recounted a scene described in Ridge’s Murieta as reported fact: “Upon a house there was tacked a large poser: $5,000 for the body of Joaquín Murieta DEAD OR ALIVE. While a number of persons were standing reading the poster a Mexican rode up. Dismounting, he wrote beneath, ‘I will give $10,000 myself’—Joaquín Murieta.”428 As a powerful progenitor of a myth whose historicity assumes the dimension of the real, Ridge’s

428 George H. Tinkham, California Men and Events: Time 1769-1890 (Stockton: Record, 1915), 133.
Murieta dislocated the Americanized accounts of the bandit(s) by consolidating a figure too powerful, widespread, and bloody in his vengeance to have actually lived, yet who nonetheless held salience as an icon of a group whose recognizability within the social fold was withering away beneath their feet. Thus, Murieta represents a “knot” in a series of representations concerning Mexican and Latino presence, redirecting patterns of estrangement toward a necessarily fictive, but nonetheless generative spatial history. From that point on, the Murieta narrative existed in a state of what one might, following Jean Baudrillard, describe as “hyperreality.”

Baudrillard’s oft-maligned concept concerns representations, not the reality they would depict, thus offering a theory of understanding history Trouillot would describe as radical “constructivism.” Trouillot notes that constructivism’s dilemma is that while it can point to hundred of stories that illustrate its general claim that narratives are produced, it cannot give a full account of the production of any single narrative. Trouillot goes on to suggest that to understand this “is to admit that as ambiguous and contingent as it is, the boundary between what happened and that which is said to have happened is necessary.” Yet, no matter how one “sides” with either Baudrillard’s radical stance or Trouillot’s skepticism, it remains that this disconnection between event and its representation and simulation forms a fundamentally political nexus out of which the past is organized, land and history are claimed, and the present is made continuous with both. Baudrillard’s appraisal of modernity as a “simulated generation of differences” too blithely dismisses the political generative capabilities and questions surrounding

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431 Ibid.
432 Ibid.
Trouillot’s “ambiguous” play between not only the real and simulation, but between simulations themselves. These differences themselves are productive iterations of spatial historiography.

*Murieta* the novel restructures the “real” reports, transporting the most likely (though never affirmable) accounts circulating in different newspapers across the state, into a frame of single reference: *Murieta*’s narrative itself. *Murieta* becomes the ur-text for an event or series of events that are believable but lack certitude as validated history in the Anglo-American press (as well as current historical research thus far). However, we see, not exactly as Baudrillard claims, “the map that precedes the territory,” but rather a series of territorial referents engendered by another estrangement: namely the loss of the Anglo-American press to “locate” Murieta, to conclusively identify “who,” “when,” and “where.” Ridge’s Murieta consolidates the figure’s different dimensions, but leaves him in an unlocatable space; he is everywhere dispersed, ready to appear yet again. This figure becomes symbolic of the repressed history of displacement, haunting the land not as an avenging angel, but as a disavowed spirit that refuses the concretization of California solely as American land and the consolidation of all possible histories into a master narrative. The conflicting histories of Californian space remain in tension.

In this context, the severed head and hand that once again went missing after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake may well be Murieta’s (or someone named Murieta) or may not; this is no longer the point. Hollywood and plastic surgery aside, the head and the hand become part of the serial production of California space by threatening the stability and locatability of its consolidated meaning, existing as the literally fragmented,

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lost parts of the body of history. In dramatizing and consolidating the Murieta myth into a tangible, entertaining, and sensational text, Ridge produced a hybridized form of historical intervention wherein the occupational claims and contradictions of the Californian processes of “space making” are rendered in mythic proportion, a hyperreal critical representation of the American Californian simulacra. Ridge’s text is certainly not a “full” history itself. For example, the narrative stories of enslaved and free African Americans who accompanied first Spanish and then Anglo-American settlers play no part in the text, despite the overlapping history of enslaved Californian Natives and African Americans within Californian slavocracy. However, in destabilizing the vector of Californian historiography and space making, these histories are rendered recognizable as of a series of dislocations, rather than “silent.” What is revealed when we triangulate Ridge’s representation of the Murieta myth, the circulation of odd stories and rumors in Californian newspapers (narrated primarily from the perspective of distraught Anglo-Americans), and the historical processes of transformation in California is the production of a skeptical historical perspective where the tensions between title, territory and occupation remain in flux. Read this way, the novel’s ambiguities and contradictions contour a historicized landscape that refuses to banish Murieta to a ghostly past, deferring the “finality” of his story.

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