Chapter 1: Integrating the Old Northwest through Utopian, Regionalist, Feminist, and Local Colour Discourse

Will you tell me when you find out
How to conquer all this fear
I've been spending too much time out
On the fading frontier Deerhunter[1]

Zooming in on the Old Northwest as one of the earliest hotbeds of western expansionism, this chapter investigates spatial vectors of the so-called Old Northwest through various literary lenses. The findings of the chapter demonstrate that the apparently organic transition to and consolidation of the nation-state in the West was accompanied by a wide range of disruptive counter-discourses. These reconciled regionalism and nationalism by viewing the Old Northwest as a utopian microcosm whose eminently "American" characteristics signified the future of the nation by shifting its discursive centre from East to West. The spatialization strategies of the examined texts differ greatly and rely on utopianism, transcendentalism, and local colour poetry to format the region as a model for the future nation, yet also its inbuilt potential for conflicts, injustices, and irreversible change. The local and regional orders of the Old Northwest, it becomes apparent, played vital roles for nation-building processes, while at the same time regularly resisting overarching systems of power and knowledge production. Using the framework of spatialization processes, the examined sources in this chapter reveal the Old Northwest as a flexible toolkit designed to address these tensions and transcend hierarchical and hegemonic oppositions between the regional/local and national/global.

In trying to pinpoint the extent of the Old Northwest as "a region whose identity has faded over time" and that nowadays is often conflated with the Northwest Territory, Bev Hogue notes that "[u]nlike some other American regions, the Old Northwest is not particularly difficult to define".[2] After the Revolutionary War, the former British possessions north of the Ohio River and below the Great Lakes, together with parts of French Canada and the Illinois

1 B. Cox and L. Pundt, "Living My Life", *Fading Frontier*, 2015, https://open.spotify.com/track/33yMYketIcAicQ9bEgryw1.

2 Crow, "Introduction", p. 3; B. Hogue, "Forgotten Frontier: Literature of the Old Northwest", in: C. L. Crow (ed.), *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 231–246, at 232.

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Country were organized into the Northwest Territory by degree of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The resulting vast territorial entity comprised the area of the future states Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and the northeastern part of Minnesota. Several decades prior, the region had been at the centre of global politics when France and Great Britain both claimed it for their empires. These tensions, together with local skirmishes culminated in the French and Indian War at the northwestern peripheries that sparked the Seven Years' War (1754–1763) in Europe and thus an international conflict that has been described as "the real first World War" as it also involved the imperial powers Spain, Russia, Portugal, Prussia, and Habsburg.[3] Fighting in the woodlands of the Old Northwest, the colonists of New France were vastly outnumbered and depended on a system of tribal alliances to resist the superior contingents of British redcoats.

After several atrocities and massacres, British troops captured the forts at Nova Scotia and Quebec. The inhabitants of Acadia were summarily deported in what became known as *Le Grand Dérangement* (the Great Expulsion). The Treaty of Paris ended the war in 1763 and decreed one of the largest redistributions of land in modern history. Many New World territories changed owners, but the British Empire made the largest gains by far. France, which had already ceded the western part of Louisiana to Spain in the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau, now had to cede Louisiana's eastern part (except New Orleans) to Great Britain, which spanned from the Mississippi River to the Appalachian Mountains, in addition to handing over possessions in Canada, Grenada, Dominica, Saint Vincent, Tobago, and the Grenadines. Supposedly, Voltaire sneered at his colonies in French Canada, describing them as "*quelques arpents de neige*" (a few acres of snow). In the Southeast, Spanish Florida also fell to Britain, which offered Spanish settlers right of residence and freedom to exercise their Catholic traditions. Still, most Spaniards followed their king's orders and removed themselves to the remaining Spanish possession in Cuba and Mexico after selling off their properties to English land speculators.[4] In the Old Northwest, the defeat of France had profound consequences for Native American communities which were not represented in the peace negotiations and were shocked to learn about the end of their longstanding spatial order based on interethnic trade and ceremonial gift-giving practices. This order comprised of what Richard White called "the middle ground", namely a "place where many of the North American subjects and allies

3 F. Anderson, "The Real First World War and the Making of America", *American Heritage* 56 (2005) 6, https://www.americanheritage.com/real-first-world-war-and-making-america.
4 Tindall and Shi, *America*, pp. 168–169.

of empires lived. It is the area between the historical foreground of European invasion and occupation and the background of Indian defeat and retreat".[5] This regional order was built upon the common histories, cultural overlaps, and shared economic interests of an ethnically diverse society made up of indigenous communities, French-Canadian subsistence farmers, and independent trappers and traders called *coureurs des bois* (runners of the woods) and their *métis* (i.e. mixed-race Euroamerican-Indian) descendants. Centuries of coexistence in the harsh northwestern environment had thoroughly dismantled racial prejudices that viewed natives as *sauvages* and French settlers as *manitous*,[6] formatting the *pays d'en haut* (Great Lakes) into an ethnically and economically integrated space in which

> the older worlds of the Algonquians and of various Europeans overlapped, and their mixture created new systems of meaning and of exchange. [...] The middle ground is the place in between [acculturation and accommodation]: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages. [...] On the middle ground diverse peoples adjust their differences through what amounts to a process of creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings. People try to persuade others who are different from themselves by appealing to what they perceive to be the values and practices of those others. They often misinterpret and distort both the values and the practices of those they deal with, but from these misunderstandings arise new meanings and through them new practices – the shared meanings and practices of the middle ground.[7]

This unique spatial order differed markedly from the English and Spanish colonies that were structured by more uncompromising racial hierarchies. After the French and Indian War ended, it was about to perish as a result of decisions made by European policymakers in Paris who had additionally decreed the transfer of native lands into the proprietorship of the British crown. This respatialization had twofold consequences: First, it upended the balance of colonial power and undermined the complex system of alliances that undergirded the spatial agency of Native American policymakers. And second, the unilateral political ordering of the trans-Appalachian West bolstered the confidence of inhabitants in the thirteen colonies who began to see the West as attractive for agriculture, resource extraction, and settlement. Daniel Boone and others opened access to the trans-Appalachian West around 1775 by clearing the Cumberland Gap which

5 R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. xxvi.

6 R. White, "The Louisiana Purchase and the Fictions of Empire", in: P. J. Kastor and F. Weil (eds.), *Empires of the Imagination: Transatlantic Histories of the Louisiana Purchase*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009, pp. 37–61, at 51.

7 White, *The Middle Ground*, p. xxvi.

would later become the gateway to these, for the time being, chiefly imaginary western territories. Disregarding the post-war Royal Proclamation by King George III that forbade settlement west of the Appalachians in what was supposed to become an Indian reservation, colonial subjects began to encroach on what they deemed *terra nullius*, threatening native communities in the continent's interior that had asserted their sovereignty in the past by outmanoeuvring competing colonial powers through alliances and diplomacy.

As a reaction to these alarming developments as well as to general Amherst's refusal to withdraw his troops from the Ohio and Allegheny valleys, a loose confederacy of tribes from the *pays d'en haut* region under the leadership of Ottawa chief Pontiac began raiding military forts and settlements in the Northwest. Although they achieved their goals and drove out most white settlers from their lands, their violent methods confirmed the resentments of many Americans. Thousands of soldiers and civilians were killed, including the execution of prisoners and other atrocities, thus prompting a white exodus from the Northwest. Some British officers retaliated with an early form of biological warfare by distributing blankets after exposing them to the smallpox virus. During the siege of Fort Pitt, colonel Henry Bouquet reported to Amherst:

> I will try to inocculate the Indians by means of Blankets that may fall in their hands, taking care however not to get the disease myself. As it is pity to oppose good men against them, I wish we could make use of the Spaniard's Method, and hunt them with English Dogs. Supported by Rangers, and some Light Horse, who would I think effectively extirpate or remove that Vermine.[8]

While the impact of these measures remains debated, the fact that hundreds of thousands of natives succumbed to smallpox epidemics during and after Pontiac's rebellion is clearly established.[9] During the Revolutionary War, the virus reached most of the continent, afflicting soldiers and civilians alike before English scientists discovered a vaccine that worked through the morally controversial exposure to cowpox. The consolidation of the 13 British colonies in North America laid the foundation for the territorial cohesiveness and political agency of their independent "successor state". The United States' sense of space or "territorial consciousness" proved vital not only for the country's

8 P. d'Errico, "Jeffery Amherst and Smallpox Blankets", *University of Massachusetts*, 2017, http://people.umass.edu/derrico/amherst/lord_jeff.html. Allegedly, Amherst replied to Bouquet: "You will Do well to try to Innoculate the Indians by means of Blankets, as well as to try Every other method that can serve to Extirpate this Execrable Race. I should be very glad your Scheme for Hunting them Down by Dogs could take Effect, but England is at too great a Distance to think of that at present" (ibid.).

9 P. Ranlet, "The British, the Indians, and Smallpox: What Actually Happened at Fort Pitt in 1763?", *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 67 (2000) 3, pp. 427–441, at 427.

physical differentiations from its adjacent others in the South, West, and North but also for its subsequent expansionist projects – all undergirded and stabilized through spatial discourses in literature and elsewhere. These developments, in tandem with the gradual abolition of territorial privileges held by indigenous peoples formed the historical point of departure for westward expansion during the nineteenth century.

After the independence of the United States, the Northwest Territories fell to the nation via the Treaty of Paris of 1783. The Congress of the Confederation ratified the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 to regulate the administration of the territories and establish rules for their admission into the Union. Amidst the economic boom and patriotic optimism that marked the so-called Era of Good Feelings after 1812, American policymakers began to transform and expand the young republic. Local and regional economies evolved into national markets while a steady flow of emigrants streamed westwards. Squatters moved in through wilderness trails, waterways, and quickly developing wagon roads, using trading posts along the way to restock provisions. While the new Union members in the Southwest (i.e. Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) embraced the thriving plantation slavery and the spatial format of the "cotton kingdom", "a dynamic urban middle class began to emerge and grow in towns and cities" of the Old Northwest.[10] The Cumberland Narrows and Mohawk Valley in New York State became the gateways that connected them to the eastern seaboard via toll roads and the streams that fed the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, providing a welcome alternative to travel on foot or horseback. In 1842, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty resolved several border disputes with the British colonies that later became Canada. The resolution established the northern border line between Lake Superior and the Lake of the Woods at the 49th parallel, as well as the shared use of the Great Lakes and action against the illegal cross-border slave trade.[11]

During the second half of the century, next to the old French settlement of Detroit, Chicago established itself as the commercial and intellectual hub of the Northwest. It was the place where Turner first presented his influential thesis proclaiming "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893). Later important literary works set in Chicago include Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1904) that exposed the plight of immigrant workers in the meat-packing district and Floyd Dell's *Moon-Calf* (1920) that described the journey of a young man trying

10 Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 358.

11 US Department of State, "Webster-Ashburton Treaty, 1842", *Milestones: 1830–1860*, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/webster-treaty (accessed 22 April 2020).

to escape provincial life in southern Illinois.[12] Renewed interest in the region's historiography and literary spatialization was generated by Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977) which follows the life of Macon "Milkman" Dead III, an African-American man living in an unnamed city in Michigan. Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) depicts the region as an important point of the Underground Railroad that channelled the movement of runaway slaves alongside a network of clandestine nodes towards the free states and Canada. During the twentieth century and until today, the spatial designator of the "Old Northwest" fell out of common use and the region is now seen as either a part of the Midwest or the Northeast.[13] Frederick Jackson Turner was among the first to try and clear up the confusing nomenclature of the American West as a "term [that] has hopelessly lost its definiteness".[14] In a 1901 essay, he suggested re-designating the region as "Middle West" because, as Carl Ubbelohde explains, "the 'Old West' no longer was 'the' West because to the west of it there were other wests – a Mountain West, a Pacific West – and so a new name for the 'Old West' was needed".[15] For Turner, the new geographic entity of the Middle West was located around "[t]he Great Lakes and the Mississippi, with Ohio and the Missouri as laterals, [which] constitute the vast water system that binds the Middle West together".[16]

Engaging with well-documented regional themes and adding new ones to the discursive structure of the region alongside the terms of spatialization processes, the main takeaway of the following considerations is that the spatial themes and tropes reflected in the works of James Hall, Margaret Fuller, and Paul Laurence Dunbar format the Old Northwest as a prototypically utopian region, albeit by using vastly different narratological and aesthetic strategies. These include themes like utopian backwoods revivalism, nostalgia, violence, tourism, transcendentalism, and feminism. Together, they form a discursive assemblage that reveals a surprising degree of complexity in the spatial dynamics between empires, western regionalism, and early nineteenth-century nationalism. The examined sources allocate flexible toolkits that enable them to symbolically address and renegotiate conventional dynamics and hierarchies between region, nation, and empire.

12 Hogue, "Forgotten Frontier", p. 239.

13 Ibid., p. 232; see T. A. Barnhart, "'A Common Feeling': Regional Identity and Historical Consciousness in the Old Northwest, 1820–1860", *Michigan Historical Review* 29 (2003) 1, pp. 39–70.

14 Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 126.

15 C. Ubbelohde, "History and the Midwest as a Region", *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 78 (1994) 1, pp. 35–47, at 37.

16 Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 127.

Examining these texts through a spatial lens underlines that the seemingly organic transitions to territorial integration and nationhood were accompanied by complex discourses among themes and genres that aimed to reconcile regionalism and nationalism by formatting the Old Northwest as a utopian microcosm whose spatial narratives signified the future direction of the nation by relocating its discursive power into the West. Spatial imaginations excavated from the diaries of emigrants and travellers in the Old Northwest further substantiate but also complicate these spatialization processes.

"A New View of Society": The Utopian Formatting of (New) Harmony, Indiana

Johann Rapp was born in the small village of Iptingen, Germany in 1757. Following his own religious ideas, his refusal to attend church services and take communion did not bode well with authorities in Württemberg. As an adolescent, Rapp had rallied hundreds of disciples around him who convened secretly at undisclosed locations and whose pietist beliefs opposed and undercut local power structures.[17] The separatists did not baptize their children, arguing that the decision of religious affiliation was for them to make at a more mature age. The so-called Rappites also refused to do military service and swear the oath of allegiance to the secular government, "for according to the Gospel not oath is allowed him who gives evidence of a righteous life as an upright man".[18] By the 1790s, the so-called Harmony Society counted well over 10,000 members, making them a supraregional movement and evoking serious concerns from authorities and dignitaries of the church, which began to implement legal measures to curb the sect's growing influence. Feeling the pressure of persecution, Rapp decided to lead his followers towards a place he envisioned as less restrictive and where he hoped to realize the millennial aspirations of creating an earthly paradise through piety and hard work in anticipation of the Rapture and Second Coming of Christ. Together with a small vanguard, he left Iptingen in 1803 and several months later arrived at the American East Coast. In the following year, Rapp managed to buy a large tract of land in Butler County, Pennsylvania where he founded the Harmony Society's first communal enclave, aptly named Harmonie. The settlement, however, became home

17 K. J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785–1847*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965, pp. 17–18.
18 Ibid., p. 39.

to only a few hundred people as many followers had either shrunk from the idea of leaving behind their German homes or were scattered during their taxing travels to the New World.[19]

When the Second Coming did not seem to happen despite the community's economic success and pious sexual abstinence, Rapp again turned to the Bible and concluded that they needed to move further west to find the promised land. After arriving in southwestern Indiana in 1814, they founded a new town, again named Harmonie. Once again, they built it directly in the wilderness, toiling "tirelessly, turning trees into lumber and clay from the banks of the Wabash River into bricks [and establishing] a commune of nearly 800 devoutly religious souls".[20] Despite the new settlement's even greater economic prosperity history repeated itself and in 1824 the Harmony Society opted to return to Pennsylvania and establish their third and final settlement they christened Economy. This time, however, instead of simply leaving their old homes behind, the Rappites took heed of their next town's name.

Determined to sell Harmonie (i.e. the second one) to the highest bidder, they respatialized a former place of spirituality and worship into a commodity. Rapp commissioned an agent from a neighbouring English settlement on the opposite side of the Wabash river "to sell their village, [together with] its manufactories, farms, and buildings".[21] Of all the possible buyers he may have had in mind, Rapp was surprised to receive an offer from Robert Owen. Of Welsh origin, the famously rich and progressive industrialist had recently acquired a textile mill operation in Scotland's New Lanark that employed over 2,000 workers, a quarter of them children aged 5 to 6 whom he recruited from the poorhouses of Glasgow and Edinburgh.[22] Shocked by the appalling health and safety conditions at the mill, Owen began to implement pioneering measures that imposed limits to workers' alcohol consumption, raised wages, implemented childcare and education programmes, and even introduced the eight-hour workday in 1810. These almost futuristic labour reforms earned him much attention and respect from international capitalists and statesmen who visited New Lanark to inspect Owen's model factory, one of the visitors being the future

19 Ibid., pp. 71–72.

20 J. Jones, "Indiana's Attempt at Utopia: New Harmony", *Chicago Tribune*, 27 June 2014, https://www.chicagotribune.com/travel/ct-trav-0629-new-harmony-indiana-20140627-22-story.html.

21 D. F. Carmony and J. M. Elliott, "New Harmony, Indiana: Robert Owen's Seedbed for Utopia", *Indiana Magazine of History* 76 (1980) 3, pp. 161–261, at 163.

22 D. E. Pitzer (ed.), *Robert Owen's American Legacy: Proceedings of the Robert Owen Bicentennial Conference*, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1972, p. 34.

Russian Tsar Nicholas I.[23] While he initially gravitated towards the liberal utilitarian philosophy of his philosopher-friend Jeremy Bentham, Owen later developed his own proto-Socialist dogma which he termed a "New View of Society". According to the industrialist's vision, this utopian model society would consist of geographically isolated, self-sufficient agrarian communities of no more than a few thousand inhabitants.[24] After he signed the buying contract with Rapp's agent in 1825, New Harmony, as Owen had renamed it rather unoriginally, was intended to become the model town supposed to demonstrate the practicality of his vision of "a New Moral World".[25] Elevated 116 metres above sea level, it was a literal City Upon a Hill – albeit a miniature-sized one – from John Winthrop's Puritan imagination of America, intended to set a shining example for the rest of the world to marvel at and emulate. As a proto-Socialist and self-proclaimed deist, Owen was highly sceptical of organized religion and replaced the Puritan's and Rappites' scripture-based spatial imaginations with his own idiosyncratic assemblage of patriarchal utopianism.

After inspecting his empty town, Owen realized that he needed volunteers who were willing to partake in the experiment. He thus invited "any and all" to make their way to his *phalanstère* (i.e. a self-contained utopian community), free from external regulations and social pressures that came with the spatial order of the East Coast's class society. But extending his invitation to "any and all" also attracted a worrisome amount of "crackpots, free-loaders, and adventurers whose presence in the town made success unlikely".[26] Returning from one of his recruitment trips to the East in the spring of 1825, Owen found the town overcrowded and lacking skilled workers and farmers as "the time for planting crops and vegetables had in part passed, threatening a shortage of food during the summer and fall".[27] Refusing to admit defeat, Owen fathomed that he had to regain control over his experimental township. He sold his shares of the Scottish mill and convinced several US scientists and educators to help him improve the community. In January 1826, Thomas Say, William Maclure, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, and other intellectuals landed on the shores of New Harmony onboard

23 K. Schuette, "New Harmony, Indiana: Three Great Community Experiments", *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 26 (2014) 2, p. 45.

24 J. F. C. Harrison, "Robert Owen's American Legacy; Proceedings", in: D. E. Pitzer (ed.), *Robert Owen's American Legacy: Proceedings of the Robert Owen Bicentennial Conference*, Indiana Historical Society, 1972.

25 D. E. Pitzer, "The Original Boatload of Knowledge Down the Ohio River", *Ohio Journal of Science* 89 (1989) 5, pp. 128–142, at 128.

26 W. E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent: the Story of New Harmony*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967, p. 116.

27 Carmony and Elliott, "New Harmony", p. 168.

the *Philanthropist* as what became known as the "boatload of knowledge".[28] Shortly after, they drafted the town's new constitution entitled "The New Harmony Community of Equality" that strictly regulated the daily lives and duties of citizens according to age ranges. In addition, the constitution introduced progressive, exemplary dictums that would take many decades to find their way into national policies and federal law: equal voting and property rights for women, educational reform, and the abolition of physical punishment of children.[29] Mainly due to persisting economic pressures, the Owenite community split up into smaller units in 1827 until the land was eventually re-parcelled into private properties two years later. Despite New Harmony's repeated respatialization – this time under the aegis of capitalism – most residents adapted to the new order and purchased their now privately owned parcels.

Today, the town still exists with a population of 834 souls.[30] Tourism and guided tours are important parts of the local economy. In an interview, council member and tour guide Linda Warrum relates that many visitors experience a sense of ambiguity when first entering the place which served as the geographical reference point for two vastly different utopias that nonetheless both viewed the isolated small-town community as a model for a larger, either religious or socialist, communal order. "They say the veil between heaven and earth is very thin here", Warrum relates in the interview: "You can't see it and you can't touch it, but you can feel it".[31] One of New Harmony's main attractions is a hedge maze modelled after a similar one planted by the Rappites two centuries prior. It takes visitors almost an hour to reach a stone temple situated exactly at its centre that invites flaneurs to sit down and quietly reflect about the place and the meaning connected to its contradictory role for utopian imaginations at the old northwestern peripheries of the nation. Today, New Harmony remains an intriguing case study of opposing but simultaneously overlapping spatial imaginations that can be traced back to the early nineteenth century and whose philosophical and literary themes formatted the Old Northwest as a downscaled site for experimental utopias that could be emulated on a national or even global level. Finally, for those who are too impatient to traverse

28 See C. Burgess, "The Boatload of Trouble: William Maclure and Robert Owen Revisited", *Indiana Magazine of History* 94 (1998) 2, pp. 138–150.

29 Ibid., p. 186.

30 US Census Bureau, "New Harmony Town, Indiana", https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?g=1600000US1852974&tid=ACSDP5Y2016.DP05&q=DP05 (accessed 22 April 2020). In 2016, the ethnic makeup of New Harmony was 89.9 per cent white, 2.8 per cent African-American, 7.1 per cent Asian, and 0.2 per cent multiple or other (ibid.).

31 Jones, "Indiana's Attempt".

the meandering paths and are eager to reach the centre in a more straightforward fashion, small wooden doors are built into the labyrinth that lead directly to the core of the maze.[32] If there is indeed a discursive centre of the Old Northwest's cultural geography that could be reached, taking such shortcuts is a luxury that the subsequent engagements with nineteenth-century northwestern literature cannot afford.

Locating the Western Heart in James Hall's "The Backwoodsman"

> *[W]e should foster western genius, encourage western writers, patronize western publishers, augment the number of western readers, and create a western heart.* D. Drake[33]

Born in Philadelphia, James Hall (1793–1868) was one of four sons that were "reared in a literary atmosphere" by their parents.[34] After entering a career in law, he served in the War of 1812 and later accompanied Commodore Stephen Decatur to Algiers during the Second Barbary War in a 1815 military campaign meant to put an end to the raids of North African pirates that targeted the American commercial fleet in the Mediterranean. Returning to his law studies after his adventure abroad, Hall served as a state attorney in the district of Shawneetown, Illinois "which included an area overrun by desperadoes and fugitives from justice. Hall's vigorous persecution of these criminals [...] earned for him the election in 1825 as judge of the same circuit".[35] As a frontier judge on horseback, Hall had to be highly mobile and was constantly on the move, often depending on the hospitality of farmers at night or having to camp in the woods. In his own words, "the want of an *inn* obliging him [i.e. the frontier judge] to camp *out*".[36] Hall's work was modelled after the Methodist invention of the circuit rider, a travelling preacher about whom Peter Cartwright wrote in

32 Ibid.

33 D. Drake, "Remarks on the Importance of Promoting Literary and Social Concert, in the Valley of the Mississippi: as a Means of Elevating Its Character and Perpetuating the Union: Delivered in the Chapel of Transylvania University, to the Literary Convention of Kentucky, November 8, 1833", *Louisville Herald*, 1833, pp. 7–26, at 26.

34 T. L. McKenney and J. Hall, *Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Ninety-Five of 120 Principal Chiefs from the Indian Tribes of North America*, Washington: US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1967 [1838], p. xv.

35 Ibid.

36 J. Hall, "Preface", *Legends of the West*, New York: T. L. Magagnos and Company, 1854, pp. vii–xiv, at x.

The Backwoods Preacher: "The great mass of our Western people wanted a preacher who could mount a stump, a block, or old log, or stand in the bed of a wagon, and without note or manuscript, quote, expound, and apply the word of God to the hearts and consciences of the people".[37] Similar public performances were expected of Hall with regard to dispensing justice on the old northwestern peripheries. In his writings, the peripheral courts turn into an example of the egalitarianism that formatted these hinterlands as a space unaffected by the hierarchical ballast and corrupting class distinctions that permeated the judicial system in the East Coast's conurbations:

> The seats of justice were small villages, mostly mere hamlets, composed of a few log-houses, into which the judge and bar were crowded, with the grand and petit jurors, litigants, witnesses, and, in short, the whole body of the county – for in new counties every body goes to court. Here was no respect to persons; they ate together, slept together, congregated together in the crowded court-house, and assembled together around the stump to hear the bursts of patriotic eloquence from the candidates for office.[38]

Retiring from this taxing occupation, Hall moved to Vandalia, the then-capital of Illinois in Fayette County, some 110 kilometres northeast of St. Louis, to work as editor of the *Illinois Intelligencer* newspaper. Soon after, he was elected State Treasurer and together with the State Printer, a man named Blackwell, began publishing the *Illinois Monthly Magazine* "in octavo form, the first periodical of literary character issued in the State", and perhaps in the trans-Appalachian West overall. The journal later evolved into the *Western Monthly Magazine* published from Hall's new home in Cincinnati, containing "accounts of western travels, biographies, historical sketches, elaborations of western character, and informational pieces on the natural resources and institutions of the West".[39] During his time in Vandalia on the westernmost fringes of the American nation, Hall became a fierce advocate for a new regional northwestern identity. He saw it as the duty of both authors and audiences to advance "[t]he literature of the West [which] is still in its infancy, and we trust that we are not unconscious of the responsibility which rests on those who attempt to direct it".[40] At the centre of this new identity, he insisted in front of members of the Antiquarian and Historical Society of Illinois, had to be "a

37 P. Cartwright, *The Backwoods Preacher: An Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, London: Alexander Heylin, 1858, p. 208.

38 Hall, "Preface" to *Legends of the West*, pp. x–xi.

39 McKenney and Hall, *Biographical Sketches*, p. xv; see Barnhart, "'A Common Feeling'", p. 43.

40 J. Hall, "To the Reader", *The Western Monthly Magazine* 1 (1833), pp. 1–5, at 1.

common feeling".[41] Historical societies like this proved a fitting audience for such arguments as their goals were also geared towards the recovery and preservation of local traditions and legends in the form of heroic feats of early pioneers and settlers. These stories, they argued, could engender a regional metanarrative and provide inhabitants with a stable social identity in the coordinate system of the accelerating formatting of the West within the sociocultural and legal frameworks of the United States.

In this manner, regional literature for Hall becomes a place and identity-making tool that prefigured the later workings of an American national literature that, as Annette Kolodny explains was "[o]bsessed with its own myth of origins [and] seeking some defining beginning (usually Puritan New England, sometimes the Virginia Plantation, in rare instances the European voyages of discovery) in whose texts may be discerned something peculiarly or characteristically 'American'".[42] In contrast to these desires to historicize the nation through its spatial unfolding on a regional micro-scale, Hall and other members of the old northwestern intelligentsia were interested in literary spatialization processes that formatted the region and particularly the unstoried condition of the Old Northwest as a unique space whose historical peculiarities existed independent from the domineering discourses of the nation, in which regions were either deemed peripheral and insignificant or staging posts for colonial expansionism. Hall's invocation of "a common feeling" then runs counter to widespread beliefs of regional subsidiarity. In fact, his viewing the region as a shared affective network of sentiments, instinctive knowledges, and a sort of visceral "gut feeling" directly challenges the accepted workings of nation-building processes that rely on abstract and deliberate performances such as the drafting of maps, determining and policing of borders, infrastructural convergence, and installation of hierarchical bureaucracies. Hall's appeal to sentiment in contrast calls into question the ways in which regions in general and the West in particular were imagined, formatted, and ordered.

In 1991, New Western historian Walter Nugent devised an ambitious project designed to answer these questions. In a survey titled "Where is the American West?" he asked the "simple question of where other people began to sense westernness as they travelled from east to west across the country (or where they no longer felt 'western' if they were leaving the region)".[43] To Nugent's surprise, the answers of respondents differed considerably. Some provided

41 Barnhart, "'A Common Feeling'", p. 40.

42 Kolodny, "Letting Go", p. 12.

43 W. Nugent, "Where Is the American West? Report on a Survey", *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 42 (1992) 3, pp. 2–23, at 4. Nugent sent about 500 questionnaires to "members

highly specific definitions and drew exact geometrical outlines, claiming for instance that "[t]he West begins at the Gateway Arch on the western banks of the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri. No where else".[44] Merle Wells of the Idaho State History Society was even more deterministic in defining the West from multiple angles:

> East ... from a point just west of Mackenzie river delta, proceed along Yukon's district boundary and an irregular line past Fort McMurray, Saskatoon, Regina, Williston, Rapid City, Chadron, Scotts Bluff, Sterling, Clovis, Fort Stockton, and a point directly south (approximately 80 miles into Coahuila); South through Coahuila and Chihuahua to a point south of Colonia Juarez; continue northwest across Sonora below Oaxaca to a Pacific coast terminal west of Enseñada. West: a Pacific coastal boundary (including islands) along California as far as all of Alaska. North: along Alaska's coast past Port Hope almost to Mackenzie delta.[45]

Another respondent connected his or her gut feeling with climatic conditions to pinpoint the exact junction between East and West, explaining that "[a]s I drive West from the East, wherever my discomfort from humidity ends, that's where the West begins. On I-80, it happens at Kearney, Nebraska – zingo! without fail".[46] For Charles Peterson, the West appears as a purely subjective location when he paraphrases "Mark Twain's happy phrase, 'Wheresoever Eve was, there was Eden' [and] wheresoever I am [...] there is the West".[47] Finally, Jean Luttrell of Boulder City, Nevada embraces the Turnerian notion that "'[t]he West' is not a place. It is a spirit, a feeling, an ideal".[48] Could he have participated in Nugent's survey, James Hall would probably have agreed enthusiastically with the latter two statements, although his ideas of the West were, given the limits of its physical and epistemic extent in the 1820s, even more firmly anchored in the idiosyncrasies of old northwestern regional histories. Still, the markedly subjective tone that reverberates in Nugent's experiment clearly speaks to Hall's dictum of "a common feeling" that connects spatial actors to imagined geographies, even though the commonality of this feeling – provided that it ever existed – was very much fragmented by the 1990s, perhaps as a result of the inflationary territorial and semantic growth and complexity of the West. Katherine Morrissey's concept of "mental territories" helps to further elucidate and theorize the notion of affective, visceral forces

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of the Western History Association, a list of editors and publishers of newspapers and magazines from Colorado to California, and members of the Western Writers of America" (ibid.).

44 Ibid., p. 18.

45 Ibid., p. 13.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., p. 12.

48 Ibid., p. 18.

as the placemaking mechanisms that energize regional (or, in the case of the West, supraregional) spatialization processes. According to Morrissey, mental regions are mostly not envisaged in a top-down manner that runs parallel to their political ordering as parts of the nation-state. Instead, they are discursively stratified by decidedly local semantics that

> defined their diverse environment as a single unit [and] perceived the peoples within the region [...] as a harmonious community of like-minded settlers, working together to create a future home. [...] [T]he region-focused rhetoric rarely counted the area's native inhabitants [...] as residents. Eager to sustain their own vision of place, they equally ignored conflicts and confrontations between and among class, cultural, and racial groups. This rhetoric of unity [...] reflects the hegemonic nature of [spatial] discourse.[49]

In this manner and similar to the Harmonist and Owenite utopias, Hall imagines regional orders not as peripheral and subsidiary but as exemplary and scalable models whose universal emulation could improve not only the national but also the global order. By presenting national publics and readers in the eastern states with "specimens of western talent, enterprise, and intelligence", he proposed an epistemic reversal of the national/global and the regional by shifting the discursive focus from the eastern centres of political and economic power to the western hinterlands, thus concomitantly building the groundwork of Turner's arguments about a national character shaped at the frontier.[50] Blessed with an overabundance of natural resources and overall favourable conditions to feed and share its bliss with the millions crowding together in the industrializing eastern metropoles, it thus becomes the historical mission and destiny of the West to reform the encrusted colonial order of the former Thirteen Colonies. Yet not through cataclysmic change and revolution as Rapp and Owen tried in their utopian attempts of reformatting the nation, but rather by gradual refinements and reforms that started with the literary depiction and, for those drawn in by these prospects, lived realities of a purer, more resilient and authentic figuration of American democracy located in the Old Northwest. In its vast stretches of seemingly uninhabited wilderness, the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers appeared alive and ready to release its creative and transcendental potential in an unspoiled and redemptive environment, invigorated by the technological and scientific advancements of American civilization. In this imagination, the peripheral turns into the authentic centre of national discourse and power because it already encapsulates and anticipates the

49 K. G. Morrissey, *Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, pp. 6–7.

50 J. Hall, "Preface", *Illinois Monthly Magazine* 1 (1830), pp. 1–4, at 3.

upcoming spatial order of America, which would never stop looking westwards in search of its foundational myths and cultural archetypes.

While most of the continental West was not yet incorporated into the Union during Hall's time, he and other western intellectuals already viewed it as metaphorically superior to the nation, describing the West as "a strong and generous parent, whose arms are spread to extend protection, happiness, and life to throngs who seek them from other and less favored climes".[51] Of course, as Barnhart notes, highly idealistic and utopian visions like these were rarely touched by the fact that "[s]ocial realities in the Old Northwest meant that American Indians and African-Americans were excluded from Hall's 'asylum for mankind'".[52] Writing from a Canadian and indigenous perspective, George Copway in contrast describes his native Ojibway woodlands as "dense forests which no man has entered, which have never waked an echo to the woodman's axe, or sounded with the sharp report of a sportsman's rifle".[53] In Copway's counter-imagination to Hall's "Americanizing forests", these forests are neither vacant nor rehearsal rooms for national reformation but simply "a home for Nature's children".[54] Some western authors were even more upfront than Hall in their promotion of peripheral and regional literatures as harbingers of a reconfiguration between centre and periphery. William Turner Coggeshall, the publisher of *The Poets and Poetry of the West* (1860) and *Genius of the West* magazine, transferred the colonial society's revolutionary demands of equal political participation to the categories of regionalism and literature by postulating: "It is required of a nation, which combines wide differences of characteristics, that each shall have its own representation. A Republic of letters may be a confederacy of individualities, as well as that a Republic in politics may be a confederacy of States".[55] It could be argued that people like Hall, Farnham, and

51 E. W. Farnham, *Life in Prairie Land*, New York: Harper, 1846, pp. iii–iv.

52 Barnhart, "'A Common Feeling'", p. 48.

53 G. Copway, *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation*, Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey and Company, 1851, pp. 13–14.

54 Ibid., p. 14.

55 W. T. Coggeshall, *The Protective Policy in Literature: a Discourse on the Social and Moral Advantages of the Cultivation of Local Literature*, Columbus: Follett, Foster and Co., 1859, p. 4. In need of money, Coggeshall later left the publishing business and through his contacts secured the position of State Librarian of Ohio in 1856 (W. H. Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*, Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Company, 1891, p. 109). In a dual function as representative of the state and reporter for the *Ohio State Journal* he met president elect Abraham Lincoln in 1861. Coggeshall offered his services as Lincoln's bodyguard and protected him during the following years. After Lincoln's assassination, he accompanied the funeral train and subsequently wrote *Lincoln Memorial: The Journeys of Abraham Lincoln* (1865). Suffering from tuberculosis and putting his hopes in the cleaner mountain air, Coggeshall was

Coggeshall were afflicted by a kind of spatial inferiority complex and were merely grandstanding in order to impress their eastern peers, most of whom showed little interest in the regional journals and local histories that slowly trickled eastwards from the far-flung western peripheries during the first decades of the nineteenth century. What seems evident, however, is Hall's conviction that an emerging (north)western literature would become key to heaving the West onto the stage of national relevance. At the same time, other northwestern authors were careful not to enter in an antagonistic relationship with other regions or the nation-state that would position their writing as subversive acts, or even calls for secession, pointing to a complex issue that soon turned into a pressing matter for writers of the antebellum South.

Loyalty to the Union was rarely a matter of debate in the Old Northwest, however. William Gallagher, senior editor of *The Hesperian* magazine, on the one hand criticized the watering-down of local traditions by "that flood of mammoth newspapers and be-pictured magazines, which rolls over the Allegheny mountains and inundates the broad plains of the West", but also felt the need to clarify immediately afterwards that "[w]e acknowledge ourselves 'American System' men".[56] Being a prospective part of the nation-state, however, did not mean that regional writers accepted an inferior role, neither geographically nor literarily. A common sentiment throughout the century's first decades maintained that the democratic-individualistic utopia of the Old Northwest was actually the *most* American part of the Union and therefore – in a seeming oxymoron – concurrently its centre and periphery. Daniel Drake of Cincinnati, a pioneering western physician and member of the American Antiquarian Society, expressed this idea in an address given in front of members of the Literary Convention of Kentucky, in which he prompted them to "foster western genius, encourage western writers, patronize western publishers, augment the number of western readers, and create a western heart".[57] Almost 70 years later, Turner would join this same chorus of northwestern (or, in his own terminology, "Middle Western") exceptionalism by writing: "It is the economic and political center of the Republic. At one edge is the Populism of the prairies; at the other, the capitalism that is typified in Pittsburgh".[58]

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later appointed ambassador to Ecuador and died in Quito in 1867 (A. Hall, "William T. Coggeshall – State Librarian and Lincoln Bodyguard", *State Library of Ohio*, http://web.archive.org/web/20110627185333/http:/www.library.ohio.gov/marketing/Newsletters/TheNews/2011/February/CoggeshallLibrarianBodyguard).

56 W. Gallagher, "On the Western Press", *The Hesperian* 1 (1838) 1, pp. 90–94, at 92. The journal's name stems from Greek *Hesperia*, meaning land of the West.

57 Drake, "Remarks on the Importance", pp. 25–26.

58 Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 127.

A collection of short stories first published in 1828, *Legends of the West* represents one of Hall's first serious literary attempts of illustrating and discursively locating the "western heart" of the nation. In the introduction, he outlines the sociocultural environment of the Old Northwest as he experienced it during his time as a circuit-riding frontier judge and prior to the influx of large-scale immigration from the East and its transforming influences on society and environment. In these good old days, he muses, the region was a densely wooded, pastoral landscape in which human activity adapted to and resonated with the influences of nature and where "[t]he panther and the wolf still lurked in the forests, the marshes and pools were alive with water-fowl, and the broad plains, covered with unbroken carpets of verdure and wild-flowers, were tenanted by myriads of prairie fowl".[59] For Hall, the Euroamerican settlers in the region "were the pioneers, and the immediate offspring of the pioneers, who had crossed the mountains, and fighting their way through an incredible series of hardships, privations, and dangers, had subdued the beautiful valley of the Ohio to the dominion of the white man". In this imagination, they lived in harmony and almost symbiotic unison with their environment, finely adjusted to its harsh conditions and already "accustomed in childhood to the alarms and vicissitudes of border warfare, reared in the log-hut, familiar only with sylvan occupations and sports".[60] Parallel to the Harmonist and Owenite philosophies, the absence of distinct social hierarchies and the classless society here too becomes a prerequisite for the condensation of unordered, "raw" space into a utopian canvas:

> They were all farmers, but their character was rather pastoral than agricultural; commerce had scarcely reached them – there was no market for the products of the soil; they raised a little grain and vegetable for food, but depended chiefly on herds of cattle and hogs that roamed at large in the common pasturage afforded by the boundless wilderness. They were all hunters, expert in the use of the rifle, skilled in woodcraft, and familiar with the haunts and habits of every wild creature.[61]

But the people living in the Old Northwest according to Hall's romanticized depiction were also no simple peasants and sufficiency farmers without higher ambitions as this would have made them more similar to Native Americans than to their peers in the "civilized" East, at least in the mindset of the period. In contrast, the farmers' and hunters' spatial order was formatted by exercising basic Constitutional rights in their purest form, meaning unclouded by the corruptions of economic inequalities and class struggle. Building upon this

59 Hall, "Preface" to *Legends of the West*, p. viii.
60 Ibid., p. viii.
61 Ibid., pp. viii–ix.

dynamic, Hall continues to convey to his readers a concept of picturesque innocence, whose geographic isolation engendered the embryonic model of a culturally unsophisticated yet intuitively progressive social order that could serve to reform the future nation by reminding it of its primordial traditions and values. For example, Hall focalizes a notion of "pure Americanness" through the practice of public speaking that he sees as unique to the Northwest. He describes the "stump-oratory [as] an art which was greatly admired and cultivated [...]. [A]t their public assemblages, at courts, election, vendues, and the like occupations, [people] betted freely, drank hard, and uttered compound oaths, with extraordinary copiousness of language and vehemence of elocution".[62] This both liberal and liberating exchange of ideas, performed against the backdrop of an unspoiled natural landscape solidifies a mental dynamism that uncouples the epistemology of the Old Northwest from the peripheral vision of regional imagination, instead positioning it as the epicentre of American core values such as freedom of speech and individual expression. In this manner, the supposedly less civilized backwoods society – "[h]onest and simple [...] in their ways, brave and hospitable in their deeds" – is reformatted through the lens of literature as what Drake called the "western heart" of the nation.[63] The central figure (i.e. spatial entrepreneur) that emerges on the stage of this American heartland Hall calls the "backwoodsman". He is the unknowing bearer of said heart and custodian of said values, impregnated by his coarseness and lack of education from the "flood of mammoth newspapers and be-pictured magazines" that perpetually threatens to corrupt his innocence through the eastern vices of avarice and hedonism:

> [H]e knows nothing of the influence of the magic term *business*, which sways and excites the mind and the energy of the great mass of our nation. He is the only American who is never in a hurry – never too busy to enjoy the sweets of sleep and the refreshment of social intercourse. Brave and hardy, he does not shrink from any privation or danger. For days, and even weeks together, he will live in the woods, hunting all day, sleeping on the ground, eating game only, and drinking from the running stream, enduring exposure to all extremes of weather, and practising abstinence with the patience of the Indian.[64]

In this vision of the backwoods and its inhabitants, time and space become sedimented and interlocked. The region's primal history, represented by its untouched wilderness and the static and unchanging "patience of the Indian" provides the performative stage for the backwoodsman as an archetypical American Adam. It

62 Ibid., p. ix.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., pp. xi–xii.

is merely a background because he participates in nature only so far as he must adapt to it to survive, contrary to the actual natives who are a part of nature itself or, at best, remnants of the primitive origins of humankind. Since his primitive environment does not allow for much distinctiveness of character, the backwoodsman is reduced to his primordial being, emphasizing authenticity and straightforwardness as vital character traits that are being subdued by the rules of the East's polite society. "His language", Hall writes, "is commonly brief, sententious, and abrupt, [but] becomes, when excited by the interest of the subject or by passion, highly expletive, and redundant with exaggerated forms and figures of comparison".[65] Hall's characterization of the backwoodsman as an uncouth champion of rough, uncut egalitarianism is notable as it deviates from other writers' depictions of this character as a negative and destructive force. Visiting Connecticut in 1794, the Englishman William Strickland may have been impressed by the democratic values of American society, but nonetheless excoriated its "barbarous backwoodsmen" for their wanton felling of trees and "utter abhorrence for the works of creation".[66] Ten years later, another traveller recorded hearing "[a]xes [...] resounding and the trees literally [...] falling about us as we passed".[67] Crèvecœur also cradled a sceptical opinion about the lifestyle of the independent and mobile backwoodsman who seemed to defy the disciplined and sedentary husbandry that the French-American writer praised in agrarian yeoman farmers. Instead, Crèvecœur advocated "for paced settlements that develop through organic communal growth [and] expresse[d] a cynical estimation of men that homestead independently and of those outside the boundaries of a community deeply invested in robust, socially responsible agriculture".[68]

In the wake of the backwoodsmen's ultimately unsustainable environmental practices and already at an early stage of western expansion, melancholy and romanticizing of untouched nature – which was not long before dismissed as a howling wilderness and threat to civilization – congealed into a literary trope of American romanticism. In the writings of Thoreau and Emerson or the

65 Ibid., p. xii.

66 E. J. Nygren and B. Robertson, *Views and Visions: American Landscape Before 1830*, Washington: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986, p. 21; see P. Larkin, "Landscape Sailing to a New World: British Romantic Poetry and the Unsettling of America", *Coleridge Bulletin* 17 (2001), pp. 39–57, at 54.

67 Nygren and Robertson, Views and Visions, p. 37.

68 J. D. Sullivan, "'Nothing of Ourselves': Agriculture and Community in St. John de Crèvecoeur, Susan Fenimore Cooper, and Henry Beston", Master thesis, Iowa State University, 2012, p. 22.

landscape paintings of the Hudson River School, the search for differentiation from and rejection of Europe's imported naturalistic traditions engendered a new, transcendental grasp of the seemingly uniquely American sensibilities for nature, space, and landscape. The celebration of landscapes as natural expressions or temples of democracy regularly went hand in hand with lamentations about an original integrity lost under the westward-directed wheels of progress. Whereas the backwoodsman appears ignorant of the environmental consequences of his deforestation and native ownership of "his forests", he shares a sensibility for the transcendental properties of nature with Thoreau and Emerson, although embedded in a rough-cut and biblical instead of a refined aesthetic. In addition to the political entertainment of stump-oratories, so-called sing-sing camp meetings took place in the backwoods, putting further emphasis on the primordial environment's purpose as a conveyor of timelessness, religious transcendence, and universality. The meetings became a central element of the Second Great Awakening as a revivalist movement that started around the turn of the eighteenth century, made up mostly of Methodists and Baptists. Besides local farmers and backwoodsmen and their families, participants of these meetings often travelled long distances in order to listen to day-long sermons and partake in communal activities. These included not only prayer and song but also more visceral outbursts of collective ecstasy, for instance dancing and the "fall[ing] like a log on the floor, earth, or mud, and appear as dead", people getting "the jerks" or "twisting their heads from side to side and rapidly nodding and snapping their heads back. Then they would hurl themselves to the ground and begin rolling over and over in the mud and dirt like dogs".[69] While these meetings pushed the boundaries of conventional religious practice, they fulfilled a socially cathartic purpose and represented attempts of transcending the participants' fixation in a present space they saw as confined, morally depraved, and far-removed from the pious world of their ancestors. Attempting to spiritually reconnect to a period of unquestioned faith, the timeless sylvan setting was collectively envisioned as a time capsule that could transport them into the hidden groves of the Palestinian wilderness where Jesus had preached the coming of a new spiritual era and Christian order to his disciples.

While describing these practises, in terms of genre "The Backwoodsman" could be considered a neo or revivalist rendition of one of the earliest examples of the American colonial imagination, namely the Puritan captivity narrative. These stories typically describe the kidnapping of women and children by

69 L. Sandlin, *Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild*, New York: Vintage Books, 2011, p. 94.

Native Americans who displaced them into a hostile wilderness they equated to hell. Widely read accounts such as the seventeenth-century bestseller *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* shaped the imagination of generations of Americans regarding space and particularly the Manichean division between wilderness and civilization at the frontier as their contact zone. Ethnic encounters between rugged white frontiersmen and natives in the works of James Fenimore Cooper, Robert Montgomery Bird, and William Gilmore Simms gave birth to tropes of "noble savage" and characters like Natty Bumppo that (similar to the tragic mulatto of the South) became liminal figures who could access both cultures but regularly got caught between the grindstones of their adversarial spatio-cultural ideologies. As mentioned above, Hall had personal history with a more recent and non-fictional instance of captivity during his participation in the Second Barbary War in North Africa. The outcome of this conflict was, apart from ending the hijacking of American merchant vessels and restitution of ransom payments, the liberation of a British Consul and 1,083 white Christians that had been captured and enslaved in Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoli.[70] In "The Backwoodsman", Ellen Singleton, the daughter of an old northwestern emigrant, shares a similar fate, although not brought about by Oriental but Native American captors. Prior to her capture and the subsequent actions taken by her father and her fiancé Edward Overton, Hall uses the engaged couple's attendance of a camp meeting to characterize the environment in which the story takes place by depicting the spatiotemporal assemblage engendered by the sing-sing meeting:

> It was thus our first parents worshipped their Creator in Paradise, thus the early Christians assembled in groves and secluded places; and so close is the union between good taste and religious feeling, that while civilized nations have set apart the most splendid edifices of worship, ruder communities [...] assemble for the same purpose at the most genial hour and the most picturesque spot.[71]

Mentioning the rudeness of these sylvan congregations, Hall also highlights their historical continuity with the spatial origins and practices of early Christianity in what he calls "the pure fountains of religion".[72] In contrast, "the most splendid edifices of worship" (i.e. churches and cathedrals) which "civilized nations" have

70 Between 1785 and 1815, around 700 American nationals were captured and enslaved in North Africa, 40 of whom described their experiences in full-length captivity narratives after their liberation (C. H. Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Barbary Captive*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 [1816], p. xlvi).

71 J. Hall, "The Backwoodsman", *Legends of the West*, New York: T. L. Magagnos and Company, 1854, pp. 237–266, at 244.

72 Ibid., p. 247.

erected might actually contribute more to the walling-off of believers from the primordial sites of their faith or their imaginative projection into the peripheral frontier forests, respectively. The backwoods of the Old Northwest then are not primarily virgin land or *terra nullius* in the Puritan sense, destined to be transformed and civilized through economy and industry.[73] They can, in turn, be deemed *terra tempus nullius*: a "space of empty time" in which the founding myths of Christianity are re-enacted through an imagined historical continuity made palpable by the prelapsarian virginity of the northwestern woods, which implicitly extends to its female participants like Ellen Singleton. As Hall expounds, "this was the paradise of the brute creation. [...] Even the bowels of the earth exhibited stupendous evidence of the master hand of creation".[74] In an Edenic vision of abundance and fertility, the old northwestern hinterlands turn into a Cockaigne-like space where "[t]he grape-vines were loaded with purple clusters. The persimmon, the paw-paw, and the crab-apple hung thick upon the trees, while the ground was strewed with nuts".[75] Although better-known for his depiction of a Dutch-American's time travels in "Rip van Winkle" (1819), Washington Irving records a similar imagination in *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.* (1837). Travelling through today's Idaho, Bonneville's exploration party encounter a geyser they christen "Beer Springs". While this natural fountain spouts carbonated water, their imagination transforms the place into an outdoor saloon:

> In a few moments every spring had its jovial knot of hard drinkers, with tin cup in hand, indulging in a mock carouse; quaffing, pledging, toasting, bandying jokes, singing drinking songs, and uttering peals of laughter, until it seemed as if their imagination had given potency to the beverage, and cheated them into a fit of intoxication. [...] It was a singular and fantastic scene; suited to a region where everything is strong and peculiar.[76]

Writers operating below Hall's ambition of locating the "western heart" of the nation in the Old Northwest, were less convinced of the backwoods being a stage of chaste spirituality and rejuvenation of faith. Western emigrant Esther Belle Hanna, for instance, relates a rather different perception of the northwestern wilderness she traversed together with her new husband and a band of

73 The vesting of space with metaphysical qualities prompts connections to the Mormon spatialization of Utah and its inbuilt conflicts between the economic utilization of land and spiritual dimension of work and industry. These subjects are explored in greater detail below in the discussion of Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*.

74 Hall, "The Backwoodsman", p. 238.

75 Ibid., p. 249.

76 W. Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.*, New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1904 [1837], p. 272.

other emigrants on their way to the Pacific Northwest.[77] Disturbed by the presence of snakes and threatened by "the cry of the panther", Hanna develops a deep aversion towards her surroundings.[78] In spite of her attempts "to be calm and trust in an overruling Providence", her "foolish fears often arise" nevertheless.[79] The western woods in her mind hence are no timeless space able to reconnect her to the roots of her faith, but in stark contrast the equivalent of a faithless and desolate realm where "[w]e have no Sabbath bell, nor have we a sanctuary to worship in".[80] For Hanna and her husband, gospel singing becomes a key spatialization strategy in formatting the wilderness into a Christian space, enabling them to "enjoy the Sabbath even in the wilderness" and in spite of "the Indians [who] watched us closely & listened intently to the singing poor mortals – they are buried in ignorance [and] know nothing of Christ or the way of salvation".[81] As she confides to her diary, there was "no doubt it was the first time these woods & streams resounded with a song of praise to God, here where naught has been heard but the cry of the savage and howl of the wild beast".[82] Hanna's journals in this manner provide an insight of how time and space were renegotiated within religious coordinate systems on the westward journey. "I am sorry to see", she writes, "that some of our company are disposed to travel on the Sabbath. Six wagons started this morning. We will not have any further dealing with them. The road is literally lined with wagons and cattle: no regard is paid to the Lord's day".[83] Throughout her travels, similar incidents occur on almost every Sunday, spreading tensions among emigrant groups whose individual degree of mobility is increased or curtailed by their respective wagon leader's adherence to

77 In a letter attached to the diary, Hanna's husband notes: "I married a young and handsome lady in Pittsburgh, Pa. in February, 1852 at 6 o'clock A.M. and started west at 7 o'clock of the same day".

78 Hanna, "Diary", pp. 5–6.

79 Ibid., p. 1.

80 Ibid., p. 3.

81 Ibid., p. 10.

82 Ibid., p. 6. Others looked at the backwoods not as a wilderness populated by savages and beasts, but as a time capsule or chronotopical space that preserved classical virtues. George Catlin, one of the first whites to interact with the native tribes beyond the Mississippi in the 1830s, pondered that "I have for a long time been of [the] opinion, that the wilderness of our country afforded models equal to those from which the Grecian sculptors transferred to the marble such inimitable grace and beauty; and I am now more confirmed in this opinion, since I have immersed myself in the midst of thousands and tens of thousands of these knights of the forest; whose lives are lives of chivalry, and whose daily feats, with their naked limbs, might vie with those of the Grecian youths in the beautiful rivalry of the Olympian games" (Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, p. 35).

83 Hanna, "Diary", pp. 3–4.

the Sabbath as a resting day. This dynamic between religious faith – arguably the pre-Nietzschean epicentre of most personal and communal imaginative activity – and physical mobility was not merely theoretical. In reality, it had severe consequences for the survival of western travellers as they left the woodlands behind to make their way across the Great Plains. There, stragglers who got separated from the wagon train were "to be food for wolves as has been the case in many instances".[84]

The biography of François "Francis" Xavier Matthieu, in contrast, signifies a notion of anarchic mobility and contempt for static borders. In his youth, the Canadian smuggled guns for the *Société des Fils de la Liberté* (Society of the Sons of Liberty), a paramilitary group in rebellion against British rule in lower Canada. "After my days labor war performed", he recalls, "I would go to the hardware stores and buy guns and powder [...] and ship it to where [the rebels] wanted it".[85] Suspecting his nearing arrest, Matthieu planned his flight to the US with a forged passport, but a British emigration officer immediately recognized the forgery: "Well says he, all the better. We will get rid of a damned rascal anyway. I came to Albany New York, and from there I worked my way to St. Louis Missouri: Then I started for the mountains".[86] After crossing the mountains, the interloper travelled to Santa Fe, worked as a carpenter and fur trader. Matthieu eventually settled down in the Oregon Country, where his spatial agency increased from a subaltern Canadian refugee to his influencing the destiny of the nation on a geopolitical level, as will be seen in the second chapter.

Other examples demonstrate how the conscious (non)exercise of certain belief systems could either enhance or inhibit personal mobility. White captives taken on the Barbary Coast, for instance, were presented with the option of converting to Islam and in this way end their enslavement as the most extreme form of personal immobility. However, they knew that doing so would also mean making Africa their future home because western diplomats would only negotiate for the release of Christian captives, not Islamic converts.[87] Drawing from his own experiences in the Orient and his days of serving justice to outlaws seeking refuge in the hinterlands, Hall's "Backwoodsman" depicts the Old Northwest as an epistemic laboratory in whose static temporality the viability of the American system could be stress-tested and resynchronized with the unadulterated archetypes of religious beliefs, democratic practices, and egalitarian social ordering. In Hall's

84 Ibid., p. 9.

85 F. X. Matthieu, "Refugee, Trapper and Settler", Salem, 1878, P-A 49, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 1.

86 Ibid., p. 3.

87 B. Gardner, *The Quest for Timbuctoo*, Newton Abbot: Readers International, 1969, p. 27.

decidedly utopian imagination of the region, transplanting Americanness into the primordial "empty time" of the woods and lakes makes it possible to observe the untarnished and often unconscious practices of in vitro American placemaking, unspoiled by the historical ballast of both colonial and immigrant histories and their sociocultural entanglements. The backwoodsman as the prime spatial entrepreneur behind these processes is himself neither an immigrant nor a recent arrival from the East; he has deep roots in the region and a genealogy as historical "offspring of the pioneers, who had crossed the mountains [and] had subdued the beautiful valley of the Ohio to the dominion of the white man".[88]

For Hall and other insiders of the Old Northwest, it becomes the duty of literate westerners to reveal to the world the archetypal spatial dynamics that play out hidden under the canopy of the woodlands, stylistically accoutring them with nostalgic themes and romantic aesthetics. In this manner, they formatted the region through what they believed to be its pivotal function for the nation-state, namely its metaphorical function as its "beating heart". Because region exemplified an untainted version of America, they argued that it should become the template for its development into a spatial order whose "arteries" reached all of its future continental "extremities". This also included the belief that the Old Northwest's forests functioned as a salubrious place where the fissures between regional and national placemaking could be healed as "those who had been for years accustomed to the solitude of the forest, to alarm, toil, and privation, felt their hearts elevated with a new species of joy and gratitude, when they found themselves surrounded by their countrymen, and united with them in social and sacred duties [...] as if they were reunited with the great human family".[89] Peripheral hermitism and cultural obstinacy are thus reconciled with the popular tastes that dominated the national stage of politics and culture. In contrast to this culturally integrating function of camp meetings, the isolated exercise of individual and familial devoutness at the frontier could only be

> heard ascending through the gloom of the forest, mingled with the fiendish sound of the war-whoop and the dissonant yell of the beasts of prey, and they had seen days of moral darkness, of bodily anguish, of almost utter despair, when it seemed as if their prayers were not heard, and that God had abandoned that land to the blackness of darkness for ever.[90]

In "The Backwoodsman", this very helplessness and abandonment in the face of a hostile nature eventually culminates in the abduction of Ellen Singleton by a band of renegade Indians. As she is ambushed and dragged through the undergrowth

88 Hall, "Preface" to *Legends of the West*, p. viii.
89 Hall, "The Backwoodsman", p. 247.
90 Ibid., p. 248.

on her way home, she thinks fast and immediately develops a strategy designed to alert rescuers to her location. Imbued with the shrewdness and practicality of the backwoods, she starts "tearing off small pieces of her dress, and dropping such articles as she could dispense with in places where they would be likely to attract attention".[91] In contrast (or in addition) to the above-mentioned commonality of feelings, Ellen's clever ruse makes for an example of individual spatial formatting: On the one hand through a display of northwestern callousness and improvisation. On the other hand by "populating" the untouched wilderness as a native space in which she finds herself discursively uprooted and thus powerless. Leaving behind a trail of artefacts of Euroamerican civilization like "her reticule, handkerchief, &c." integrates her individual history with the native historicity of the Northwest by materially telling the story of a crime committed to a white American woman.[92] Endowing her with spatial agency, Ellen hence becomes the author of her own captivity metanarrative, not least because she anticipates the generic expectations held by its prospective "readers".

Although not a captive, Esther Belle Hanna in her own diary records an incident of what might be called "authorial spatialization". As her wagon band reaches Independence Rock, an important landmark in present-day Wyoming on their way to Oregon, she notices that "[t]here are thousands of names on it, nearly all who pass leave their names".[93] Inscribing one's name in stone or leaving personal items on the ground represents micro-historical and micro-textual exercises that both expand and transcend the scope of this study as an investigation occupied mainly with spatial imaginations in literary texts. What Singleton and Hanna perform and report respectively is not merely the production of space *by* textuality but also the production of textuality *on* space. Hanna's description of palimpsestic surfaces, their telling of stories, recording of histories, and artistic functions relate to one of the oldest known techniques by which humans have relayed narratives through time. It is also a central element of Native American narrative traditions in the form of pictographs and petroglyphs, many of which still exist in today's southwestern US.[94]

91 Ibid., p. 250.

92 Ibid., p. 251.

93 Hanna, "Diary", p. 13. The author leaves open the question if she too carved her name into the rock's surface. This could only be answered by visiting Independence Rock and looking for it.

94 The notion of the West as a historical palimpsest also informs Charles Crow's demand for a more inclusive historiography in which "both geography and chronology must be viewed as fluid and ongoing, or as a continuously unfolding palimpsest that requires us to include Old Norse, Papago, Nahuatl, Quechua, Spanish, Yaqui, Tewa, Gullah, French, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, German, Yiddish, and so on – as well as English – within our textual canon. Hybridized forms and tropes constitute the focus of textual analysis, and the

In Hall's narrative, following the events of Ellen's abduction, the titular backwoodsman takes centre stage. Under the cover of darkness and masterfully hidden in his makeshift camp situated near the Indian path, he observes the procession of Ellen and her captors. Introducing his unnamed protagonist, Hall goes to great lengths in fleshing out the character, bodily features, and mindset of his protagonist who

> was a man of middle height, not remarkably stout, but with a round built, compact form, happily combining strength with activity. His countenance was mild and placid, showing an amiable and contented disposition; and his eye was of a quiet, contemplative kind. The muscles of his face were rigid and strongly developed, and his complexion darkened by long exposure to the weather; but there was no lines indicating violent or selfish passions. It was a bold, manly countenance, but the prevailing expressions were those of benevolence and thought. There was an archness, too, about the eye, which showed that its possessor was not deficient in humour. He was evidently a man of strong mind, of amiable propensities, and of great simplicity of character. The quiet courage of his glance, the self-possession and calm vigilance of his manner, together with a certain carelessness and independence of mien, would have pointed him out as a genuine pioneer, who loved the woods, and was most happy when roaming in pursuit of game, or reclining in his solitary retreat, with no companion but his faithful dog. [...] Though unacquainted with books, he had perused certain parts of the great volume of nature with diligent attention. The changes of seasons, the atmospherical phenomena, the growth of plants, the habits of animals, had for years engaged his observing powers; and without having any knowledge of the philosophy of schools, he had formed for himself a system which had the merit of being often true, and always original.[95]

The several-pages-long characterization reads like a phrenological study with its minute attention to detail and deduction of character traits from physiognomy. It deserves attention not just because the backwoodsman as Hall's place-making hero figure unsurprisingly succeeds in tracking down the rogue Indians and (assisted by Ellen's fiancé) rescues the spatially empowered damsel in distress "who had thus far sustained herself with a noble courage [...] dictated by an elevated principle of religious confidence [and] had won the admiration of her savage captors".[96] What is more, Hall's simple-yet-sophisticated protagonist represents a new and prototypical breed of Americans shaped at the northwestern peripheries. In Turnerian fashion, the traits of his character are no longer results of a (post)colonial mentality but something more "true" and "original" that "he

resultant attentiveness to 'code switching' radically alters our understanding of style and aesthetics" (Crow, "Introduction", p. 48). In a multilingual utopia or pre-Babylonian human geography, these goals may in fact be attainable.

95 Hall, "The Backwoodsman", pp. 253–254.

96 Ibid., p. 263.

had formed for himself" by perusing "the great volume of nature" at the peripheries of the Old Northwest.[97] In a textbook example of environmental determinism, the backwards forests have formed his character such as to create their neological contraction: the back-woods-man, hence mirroring Crèvecœur's assertion that "[m]en are like plants: the goodness and flavour of the fruit proceeds from the peculiar soil and exposition in which they grow".[98]

Hall's protagonist thus evolves into an archetypal template, destined to propel forward the nation's westward movement and concomitantly project a greater vision of the region as shaped by his liminal practices and subconscious spatial imaginations. Through his extraordinary relationship with the environment, the backwoodsman brings to the fore the placemaking dynamics that underlie Heidegger's concept of "worlding". First discussed in *Being and Time* (1927), worlding describes the active properties of a person as "being-in-the-world" and thus an act of "signifying something ongoing and generative, which could not be reduced to either a philosophical state or a scientific materiality".[99] One's being-here (*Dasein*) is neither solely grounded in (western) philosophy or ideology, nor does it completely operate through class or ethnic hierarchies. *Dasein* in contrast emerges from the individual's relationship with his or her surroundings: People "world" themselves by attaching meaning to spaces, resulting in what Heidegger calls the "authenticity" of existence.[100] For spatialization processes, worlding denotes acts of (inter)personal psychosocial (b)ordering and their manifestations in spatial discourses and identities. Some instances of personal placemaking turn out to be more sustainable and "authentic" than others, thus becoming part of mainstream culture, regularly assisted by opinion-forming mediums such as literature. At the onset of a more aggressive continental expansionism, the backwoodsman's frugal but militant lifestyle represents an example of worlding that catered to the needs and desires of its time. It ensured audiences that western nature and Others were knowable and controllable. Exceptional yet ordinary people, willing to blaze trails and carve out precarious existences at the peripheries then turn into templates for the nation's overarching worlding through westward expansion. Like Daniel Boone or Natty Bumppo, the backwoodsman is both a marginal figure and central character in his brokering between antagonistic

97 Ibid., pp. 253–254.

98 J. H. de Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904 [1782], p. 56.

99 D. Trend, "Worlding: Identity, Media, and Imagination in a Digital Age", 30 November 2012, https://davidtrend.com/?p=140.

100 R. Hornsby, "What Heidegger Means by *Being-in-the-World*", http://royby.com/philosophy/pages/dasein.html.

spatial orders. His mediating is not performed consciously but happens as a consequence of his being-in-the-world of the Old Northwest, which turns into a performative *entr'acte* (i.e. existing in-between representational acts and spaces) formatted by regional tradition and national expansion, respectively.

Hall's emphasis on the backwoodsman's naivety and lack of "any knowledge of the philosophy of schools" moreover hints at his intuitive capacity to imagine a new "system which had the merit of being often true, and always original" and hence a universally accepted spatial epistemology.[101] For Hall, this system required less critical scrutiny because it operated through common sense and "unreflective knowledge not reliant on specialized training or deliberative thought".[102] Such a viewpoint incentivized boldness, optimism, and a just-do-it attitude that continues to inform present-day entrepreneurial culture in the US. But it also implies a populist and utilitarian view of space. Through his subsistence and survival in the wilderness, the backwoodsman transcends the space of original nature to arrive at a Nietzschean state of "second nature", similar to Donna Haraway's notion that "[t]hrough labour, we make ourselves individually and collectively in a constant interaction with all that has not yet been humanized. [...] What we experience and theorize as nature and as culture are transformed by our work".[103] Creating archetypes of extraordinary individuals, stories like "The Backwoodsman" incentivized the real-life influx of eastern immigrants by suggesting that any ensuing problems could be solved with hard work and common sense, which often became synonymous to embracing violent and Social Darwinist strategies as population pressure engulfed the peripheries and its native inhabitants.

This grassroots paradigm of placemaking also differed markedly from more clearly structured, top-down imaginations of western expansion, notably Jefferson's ideal of agrarianism and the decentralized agricultural republic that would bloom into an empire of liberty.[104] In reality, such ideas had already turned into a nostalgic exercise as "[t]he decentralized agrarian republic of 1776, nestled along the Atlantic

101 Hall, "The Backwoodsman", p. 253.

102 T. A. Maroney, "Emotional Common Sense as Constitutional Law", *Vanderbilt Law Review* 62 (2009), pp. 851–917, at 851.

103 D. J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 10.

104 A. Koenen, "Little Maison on the Prairie", *aspeers* 10 (2017), pp. 93–103, at 94–95. Agrarianism as an influential ideology in the post-revolutionary US comprises the idea that individual and social wealth results from agriculture, based on the natural rights to the ownership of tilled land (C. E. Eisinger, "The Influence of Natural Rights and Physiocratic Doctrines on American Agrarian Thought during the Revolutionary Period", *Agricultural History* 21 [1947] 1, pp. 13–23, at 13).

seaboard, had become by 1830 a sprawling commercial nation connected by networks of roads and canals and cemented by economic relationships – all animated by a restless spirit of enterprise, experimentation, and expansion".[105] As a central but unwitting agent of this "spirit of enterprise, experimentation, and expansion", the backwoodsman exudes a distinct lack of foresight "together with a certain carelessness" for the human and ecological consequences of his and the practices of those who aimed to emulate his example.[106] Native peoples in turn viewed their forested homes not as being on the backside of something more central, but as epicentres of their culture and belief systems – a dimension in the Old Northwest's epistemic repertoire that remains vacant in Hall's renditions of native villainy.

Ultimately, the backwoodsman becomes more than an unwitting figure whose example reformed the East's outdated and corrupted spatial imaginations. Supported by performative placemaking processes like the stump-oratory and camp meeting, he embodies the twofold symbolic function of cultural catharsis and spiritual revival. Dwelling in the timeless landscape of the woodlands detaches him from the nation's historical ballast, empowering him to point to the past and future at the same time and fold them together into a meaningful present. By pointing to the past, he refers to allegedly unadulterated forms of democracy practiced by frontier societies, secured by a militant attitude towards ethnic Others and draconian measures (i.e. so-called frontier justice) that ensured the stability of this spatial order. As Hall's unnamed and thus implicitly universal protagonist states: "Blood for blood is the backwoodsman's rule".[107] Asked about his opinion of natives, he declares that "they ought to be essentially, and particularly, and *tee-totally obflisticated* off of the face of the whole *yeath*".[108] In turn, his symbolic pointing to the future invites the nation to emulate his attitudes regarding western space. Of course, this does

105 Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 322.

106 Hall, "The Backwoodsman", p. 253. Logging and removing vegetation for agriculture led to deforestation and a decrease in western biodiversity: "In 1630, the estimated area of U.S. forest land was 1,023 million acres or about 46 percent of the total land area. [...] By 1910, the area of forest land had declined to an estimated 754 million acres, or 34 percent of the total land area" (S. Oswalt, "The United States in a Global Context", US Department of Agriculture, 2014, p. 7). Inland navigation also played a key role in the ecocide of northwestern old-growth forests, particularly on the Mississippi where "the increasing demand for steamboat fuel resulted in widespread deforestation of river banks" (F. T. Norris, "Where Did the Villages Go? Steamboats, Deforestation, and Archeological Loss in the Mississippi Valley", in: A. Hurley [ed.], *Common Fields: An Environmental History of St. Louis*, St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1997, pp. 73–89, at 73–74).

107 Hall, "The Backwoodsman", p. 260.

108 Ibid., pp. 264–265.

mean creating a nation of backwoodsmen, but rather presents an invitation to follow in his tracks and thereby acknowledge the location of the nation's heart in the West. The actualization of this appeal, however, would not only change the nation but also the region as waves of immigrants imported their own customs, diluting local traditions, going so far that the Old Northwest's name itself became redundant. As for the backwoodsman, Hall laments that he

> has vanished from the valley of the Ohio; the crack of his rife and the baying of his dog are heard no more; his cabin must be sought on the great plains far to the west. [...] [T]owns, villages, and steamboats give evidence that art and commerce have taken possession of the land. Troops of laborious Germans and light-hearted Irish are scattered broadcast over the land; and the universal Yankee nation is here, teaching school and driving bargains, making railroads, running steamboats, and going ahead generally in every path where industry and perseverance may find emolument, however novel the enterprise or difficult the achievement. That peculiar phraseology which marked the conversation of the Western people thirty years ago, is seldom heard. For some of it the schoolmaster has substituted a purer, though not a more significant language; while the mongrel vulgarisms of various tongues and people have flowed in and corrupted the whole mass. The tourists who have pretended to describe the colloquial peculiarities of the West, have in some instances indulged freely their own inventive powers, and in others have been misled into the grossest absurdities, so that, to use the figure of an old writer, one would suppose they had been at a feast of languages, and carried away the scraps.[109]

The Old Northwest shared its self-afflicted fate of assimilation with other regions of "old Wests", adding a layer of melancholy to its history, especially for those who witnessed the supposed purity of its primordial ontology. In the second half of the century, this geographical nostalgia manifested itself in the local colour and regionalist literary genres. The air of lamentation that pervades their writings as well as Hall's above-cited obituary of the Old Northwest imparts a view of rapidly vanishing regional cultures which are inevitably co-opted by overarching spatial formats, reminiscent of present-day globalization discourses. The absorption of regional idiosyncrasies into national metanarratives (e.g. of the frontier and manifest destiny) for Hall commenced in a melancholy irreversibility, as if to say with Goethe's *Sorcerer's Apprentice*: "Spirits that I've cited / My commands ignore".[110] After the "spirits" of eastern immigration had reached a critical mass

109 Hall, "Preface" to *Legends of the West*, pp. xiii–xiv.

110 E. Neureuther, *Randzeichnung um Dichtungen der deutschen Classiker*, vol. 1, 1835, https://haab-digital.klassik-stiftung.de/viewer/resolver?urn=urn:nbn:de:gbv:32-1-10014521852. A Marxist reading of the backwoodsman could be based on similar arguments made in "The Communist Manifesto", suggesting that the "bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the

in the Old Northwest, they were supposed to – but through their sheer numbers could not realistically – emulate the philosophy of the backwoodsman as a revolutionary recluse and spatial entrepreneur of American nation-building, spiritually attuned to his environment. For Hall, emigrants often lacked this sensory alignment with nature as they "flowed in and corrupted the whole mass", quickly delegating the backwoodsman to an anthropomorphic relict that suddenly stood on the brink of extinction.[111] Shedding his role as a figurehead of the nation's westering, he returned to the discursive and geographical fringes of society as an outcast or, in his contemporary manifestations, as self-sufficient but antisocial hillbilly or "white trash".[112] After the Old Northwest became the stepping stone to more remote western territories and resources, demographic and commercial needs called for a more productive and resource-oriented epistemology of actors and environments. Crèvecœur's critique of hunters and forest dwellers already encapsulated this paradigm change:

> By living in or near the woods, their actions are regulated by the wildness of their neighborhood. [...] This surrounding hostility immediately puts the gun into their hands; [...] once hunters, farewell to the plough. The chase renders them ferocious, gloomy, and unsocial; [...] their success in the woods makes them neglect their tillage. They trust to the natural fecundity of the earth and therefore do little.[113]

The emerging spatial order of federated statehood and capitalism had less room for reclusive hunter-gatherer personalities like the backwoodsman's. In the age of industrial progress, the axioms of American space no longer centred around individual performances of mavericks but postulated

> the creation of a farm from forest and swamp. It is this transformative labor – clearing forests and draining swamps – that makes the American farmer the ideal citizen: active, hardworking, and independent. The corrupting influence of the feminine landscape is continuously countered by work that assures the pioneer farmer that his relationship to the land is one of dominance, not dependence.[114]

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nether world whom he has called up by his spells" (K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Communist Manifesto", in: M. Eastman [ed.], *Capital, The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings of Karl Marx*, New York: Carlton House, 1932, pp. 315–355, at 326–327).

111 Hall, "Preface" to *Legends of the West*, p. xiv.

112 In contemporary culture, the dominant tropes and clichés connected to backwoods or mountain man characters show themselves most vividly in the horror movie genre, depicting socially tabooed and sexually aberrant practices such as incest and cannibalism in *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977) or *Wrong Turn* (2003).

113 Crèvecœur, *Letters*, pp. 66–67.

114 A. Carew-Miller, "The Language of Domesticity in Crèvecoeur's 'Letters from an American Farmer'", *American Literature* 28 (1993) 3, pp. 242–254, at 244.

Through what could be described as the "postmodern" dynamics of spatial imaginations, the backwoodsman was relegated to becoming his own simulacrum in theatrical performances and re-enactments tailored at fulfilling the preconceived expectations of audiences. Like Sitting Bull in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show or the characters of the television show *Westworld*, he has become a simulation of old western "authenticity". One example of this spatialization dynamic includes the famous backwoodsman William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody. He was mythologized in Ned Buntline's over 1,500 dime novels and even played himself in the eponymous show that toured the United States and Europe during the late 1800s, accompanied by Annie Oakley as the tantalizing frontier gal and a large contingent of Native Americans instructed to act as their own caricatures.[115] Arguably, these simulated performances can be traced back even further, namely to the early-nineteenth-century tradition of trade meetings that brought together trappers, fur traders, and natives. Until their decline during the 1840s, these large congregations increasingly turned into spectacles that celebrated declining regional cultures.[116]

To conclude, the socio-spatial order depicted in James Hall's "The Backwoodsman" simultaneously contradicts and confirms the presumed existence of nationalist metanarratives in nineteenth-century US literature. On the one hand, history and culture of the Old Northwest are absorbed by the nation-state as "the universal Yankee nation is here".[117] In terms of discursive power, the region is however no subaltern of the nation, which it beforehand reformatted via examples of "purer" philosophies and practices.[118] The national and regional

115 The spectacle aimed to embody "the inevitable law of the survival of the fittest" as formatting an Old West, which in the 1880s was already becoming a matter of nostalgia (Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 201). Those who wish to see its contemporary iteration must travel to Disneyland Paris, where comic book characters perform a child-friendly version in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show … with Mickey & Friends*.

116 An active scene of social clubs and gatherings still exists in the US and Canada. They celebrate the backwoodsman's frontier lifestyle by ways of shooting, knife and tomahawk throwing, traditional songs, dances, and recipes. These historical re-enactments range from supranational gatherings at the Pacific Primitive Rendezvous to local events like the Fort Bridger Mountain Man Rendezvous. The latter's rules determine that "[a]ll visible clothing must pre-date 1840" and "[w]omen must be wearing period dresses, or a blouse and skirt" (Fort Bridger Rendezvous, 2020, https://fortbridgerrendezvous.net [accessed 30 April 2020]).

117 Hall, "Preface" to *Legends of the West*, p. xiii.

118 Hall's vision of the Old Northwest is permeated by a similarly utopian and optimistic spirit that informed the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Media studies scholar Andrew Wood explains that "[a]n inescapable utopian impulse energized the WCE. The belief that science, discipline, and rational planning could build organized and happy cities emerged most clearly in the 1888 publication of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* – the most widely

then turn into symbiotic, reciprocal formats whose spatial discourses energize each other, while benevolently competing for the accolade of being the most "authentic" or most "American" space. As seen above, Hall's story envisions the region as a laboratory that produces archetypal, embryonic templates for the future nation. The Old Northwest thus emerges as a miniaturized puppet theatre of nation-building, whose dress rehearsal is being performed vis-à-vis the gaze of the outside world through literature. In the ensuing discursive synthesis, both region and nation must sacrifice parts of their previously imagined self. Regions lose their distinguishing characteristics as the influx of immigrants banishes their spatial orders almost entirely to the realms of memories, archives, and affective networks of local colour and melancholy. In turn, the nation emerges as the more flexible and epistemically mobile format: It is undetermined by fixed geographies or static and historically "authentic" identities such as the backwoodsman's. Because it functions as an imagined community, the nation's trajectory can be readily realigned, for instance via the opportunistic assimilation of beneficial regional characteristics. This ideological live-cell therapy then enables the nation to reformat itself by switching the lenses through which it focalizes itself internally to its own constituents and externally to the outside world.

Transcending His-Story in Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*

> *Hard luck is the fortune of all womenkind*
> *They're always controlled, they're always confined*
> *Controlled by their parents until they are wives*
> *Then slaves to their husbands the rest of their lives.* J. C. Baez[119]

In Hall's rendition, the Old Northwest emerges as utopian not only based on the interplay between region and nation but also via the backwoodsman's

read utopian novel of the nineteenth century. Bellamy's depiction of a post-capitalist Boston, in which the 'civilization' of the nineteenth century was revealed for its hypocrisy, inspired millions of Americans to imagine emancipation from the crises of the day through the betterment of their communities through the eyes of the novel's protagonist: 'At my feet lay a great city. [...] Public buildings of a colossal size and architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles on every side. Sure I had never seen this city nor one comparable to it before'" (A. F. Wood, "1893 World's Columbian Exposition: Romancing the City", *Wood Valley*, 2005, https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/wce.html; see E. Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000 to 1887*, London: Icon Books, 2005, p. 26).

119 J. C. Baez, "The Wagoner's Lad", *House of the Rising Sun*, 2017 [1961], https://open.spotify.com/track/7Ev33ukFRmyEf53iN3cPCY.

reinvigoration of archaic gender roles. He embodies a decidedly masculine type of placemaking symbolized by his mastery of feminized nature and inimical Others. His lowbrow virility and utilitarian attitude make him a paragon of the nation's spiritual renaissance, whose eastern centres of power are seen as effeminate. Nineteenth-century peripheral regions were almost exclusively male societies that expectedly produced phallogocentric narratives which privileged the masculine in the generation of meaning and bristled with nationalistic overtones, chauvinism, and repressed or frustrated sexuality.

In many respects, the "king of the wild frontier" Davy Crockett serves as personification and cliché of this kind of full-frontal western masculinity. His biography as a backwoodsman, soldier, and congressional representative of Tennessee ended with his sacrificial death at the Alamo. Crockett's seemingly superhuman feats were exaggerated in tall tales, pulp fiction, and comic strips to a point where reality and legend could no longer effectively be separated. Accounts of him wrestling bears (he claimed to have shot over 100 in 1 year), surfing on alligators (see fig. 1), and shooting "Injuns" and Mexicans became benchmarks of a reinvigorated image of American masculinity that thrived on the subjugation of nature and racial Others. This becomes transparent when perusing the transcript of one of his alleged speeches held in front of Congress and originally reprinted in *Davy Crockett's Almanac of Wild Sports in the West, Life in the Backwoods, & Sketches from Texas* (1837).[120] Here, Crockett managed to compress the most formulaic elements of western masculinity into a single sentence by claiming: "I can walk like an ox, run like a fox, swim like an eel, yell like an Indian, fight like a devil, and spout like an earthquake, make love like a mad bull, and swallow a nigger whole without choking if you butter his head and pin his ears back".[121] The formatting of the West as

120 Walsh notes that "Crockett was also a character in the dime novels or romantic pulp fiction published initially in the 1840s, but which littered the country by the ton load after the Civil War. He along with other real westerners, such as Kit Carson, Billy the Kid, Calamity Jane and William F. Cody, better known as Buffalo Bill, sat alongside fictional creations such as Deadwood Dick, Rattlesnake Ned and the Black Avenger. These novels, together with their romantic illustrations early glamorised western individuals into some kind of fantasy icons. Here were 'creation stories' in the making" (Walsh, *The American West*, pp. 11–12). As they turned into fantasy icons, their real-life roles in dominating hostile space were substituted with different role models of masculinity that embodied what Theodore Roosevelt termed "the great virile virtues" (T. Roosevelt, "The Duties of American Citizenship", Speech, Yale University, Buffalo, 26 January 1883, https://glc.yale.edu/duties-american-citizenship).

121 Qtd. in B. A. Botkin (ed.), *A Treasury of American Folklore: Stories, Ballads, and Traditions of the People*, New York: Crown, 1944, p. 28.

"hisland", as Mary Murphy explains, "portrayed an overwhelmingly masculine world – a world in which Anglo-American men blazed trails, fought Indians, trapped beaver, herded cattle, plowed fields, drank, gambled, and whored. Then – if they survived at all – they settled down with good women and fathered a bunch of native westerners".[122] Davy Crockett's semi-fictional character is perhaps the most influential example of masculine fiction and myth-making in the literary spatialization of the American West, namely one that overtly promotes frontier violence, manifest destiny, as well as the machismo and racism of territorial subjugation.[123] Expansionism and settlement in this conception are no longer merely prerequisites that format the West as a playground for chauvinistic performances, but themselves manifestations of masculinity on a policy level.[124]

Engaging with more reliable sources such as the reports of emigrants and travellers uncovers visions of western masculinity that differ significantly from the primordial vigour of backwoodsmen and Davy Crockett's sophomoric antics. James Cardwell, an emigrant to Oregon and California, confides to his diary stark scenes of emasculation and curtailed mobility. "I saw", he writes, "stout strong men walking along through the hot dessert sands crying like children with fatigue and hunger".[125] Other less than glorious performances of manhood can be found in the journals of Edmund Botsford Calvin Park who, travelling with an all-male company to California, relates the chores of washing dishes. "You would be tickled", Park writes to his wife back East, "to hear some of our discussions around the fire in relation to the right mode of cooking an

122 M. Murphy, "Making Men in the West: The Coming of Age of Miles Cavanaugh and Martin Frank Dunham", in: Matsumoto and Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge*, pp. 133–147, at 133.

123 See C. Becker, "'Every New Land Demands Blood': 'Nature' and the Justification of Frontier Violence in Hell on Wheels", *aspeers* 10 (2017), pp. 21–37, at 31.

124 Crockett's influences in formatting the West as a playground for masculine regeneration and juvenile rites of passage extend well into the twentieth century. In 1986, historian Paul Hutton wrote about "[t]he Davy Crockett generation, those of us who once sported coonskin caps and fringed leather jackets, who endlessly wailed 'Born on a mountaintop in Tennessee' [...] have now grown up and gone our adult ways. But few of us have forgotten that idyllic summer of 1955, when Davy's life and death were endlessly replayed in countless back yards. Our teenage sisters may have swooned over Elvis, but we were transfixed by Fess Parker, who played Davy in Walt Disney's *Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier*" (P. A. Hutton, "Davy Crockett, Still King of the Wild Frontier", *Texas Monthly*, November 1986, https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/davy-crockett-still-king-of-the-wild-frontier/).

125 J. A. Cardwell, "Emigrant Company", Jackson, 1878, P-A 15, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 2.

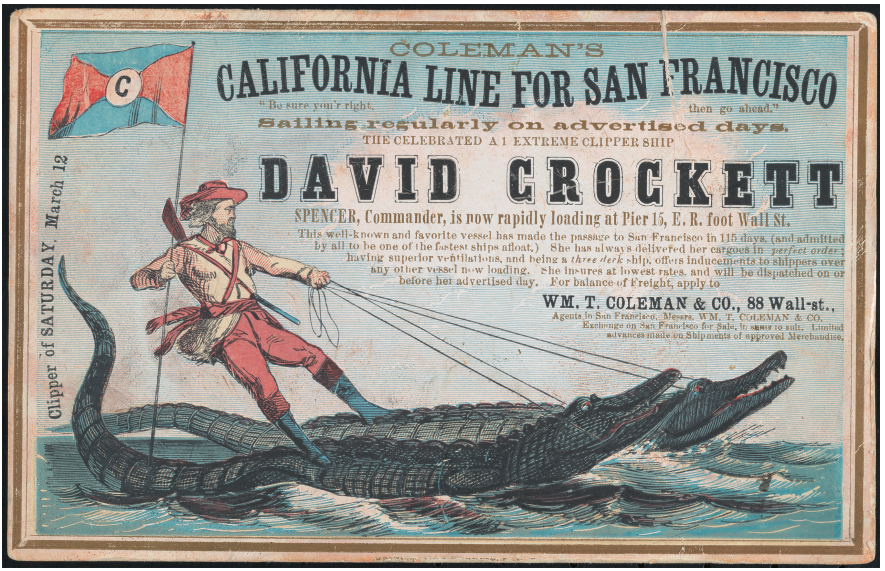

Fig. 1: Clipper card advertising passage to San Francisco on the *David Crockett*, circa 1858.

article".[126] Blake Allmendinger mentions similarly atypical gender performances in western mining camps, whose members "were predominately men [who] performed not only the strenuous labor of mining but the domestic tasks that were traditionally considered 'female' activity. What it meant to be 'masculine' was therefore a concept that miners tested and sometimes revised".[127] George Tufly, a German emigrant on the Oregon Trail amended his homeward letters with a newspaper cut-out of "The Honest Miner's Song" that laments the adoption of conventionally female duties:

> I'm thinking of the better days,
> Before I left my home;
> Before my brain with gold was crazed,
> And I began to roam.
> Those were the days, no more are seen,
> When all the girls loved me;

126 E. B. C. Park, "Letters to His Wife", 1849, P-W 26, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 1.
127 Allmendinger and Matsumoto, "Introduction", p. 8.

When I did dress in linen clean,
They washed and cooked for me.
But awful change is this to tell,
I wash and cook myself;
I never more shall cut a swell,
But here must dig for pelf.
I ne'er shall lie in clean white sheets,
But in my blanket roll;
An oh! the girls I thought so sweet,
They think me but a fool.[128]

The experiences of Francis Matthieu also strongly hint at the prevalence of non-traditional gender and family configurations in the Old Northwest, relating that "they all had Indian ~~children~~ women. [original redaction] – never more than one bec[ause] Dr. McLaughl[i]n would hang them if they had more than one. I do not know how many they had unlawfully but they only had one lawful woman".[129] Additionally, Matthieu relates that in a "pinch" – a threatening situation for an emigrant wagon train – "the women could carry arms".[130] Esther Belle Hanna's diary also provides glimpses at the Louisiana Territory as a space of gender reconfigurations, recording that after she "made some tea, Mr. H. [i.e. her husband] and I [were] drinking out of the same cup".[131]

Against the background of these and many other possible examples, it could well be argued that "exposing" the western peripheries as a stereotypically masculine space today has itself become a cliché that minimizes the complexity of western gender landscapes. As the century took its course, the utopian romance and nationalistic triumphalism of the Old Northwest's frontier lifestyle depicted by Cooper, Hall, and their peers was supplemented by an emergent women's literature that formatted this space alongside different thematic trajectories. Works such as Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home – Who'll Follow?* (1839), Catherine

128 G. Tufly, "Correspondence", 1855, P-G 263, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley. Tufly later became State Treasurer of Nevada and owner of a bank and hotel in Carson City.

129 Matthieu, "Refugee", p. 15.

130 Ibid., p. 11.

131 Hanna, "Diary", p. 31. Among social elites, the separation of gendered spaces was upheld much more vigorously. Anne Abernethy, the wife of Oregon's first governor, notes in her memoirs: "The ladies of the Hudson Bay Co had their table set just as we had ours [but] did not eat with the gentlemen neither were the gentlemen allowed to eat with their families because they said it would occupy their time too much" (A. P. Abernethy, "The Mission Family and Governor Abernethy the Mission Steward", Portland, 1878, P-A 1, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley).

Stewart's *New Homes in the West* (1843), and Eliza Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land* (1846) added more personal and believable dimensions to largely male-dominated and fictionalized discourses by emphasizing, for instance, the problems that coincided with traveling and settlement. Many examples for these hardships can be observed in accounts like that of Esther Belle Hanna who portrays the prairies as an unforgiving and deadly environment. "Have suffered a good deal from the cold today", she writes and goes on to assert that

> the winds are so high that we cannot keep fire enough out of doors to warm us. If I were in the States now I would be sitting in a comfortable house beside a fire [but] our house is the open air. [...] Travelled 15 miles today over the most tortuous road I ever could have imagined, nothing but rock after rock. The country all along presents the most barren appearance nothing but sage. Hundred and thousands of acres with no vestage of anything but this hateful weed. [...] The sun has been oppressively hot all day and I am wearied & suffering from jolting over rocks which has given me a severe headache. [...] [Dead cattle] are so numerous that we can scarcely get a pure breath of air any more, the heat is so intense that putrefaction takes places immediately, rendering the air loathsome nearly all the time.[132]

While some women engaged in biographical and travel writing, others expressed their disappointment with a space they had imagined differently, attempting to present a more "realistic picture of the difficulties of frontier life, admitting that her initial attempts to view the dense forests and swamps through a lens of romance had been crushed by the harsh realities of the region".[133] Among the early arrivals in the trans-Appalachian West were women who had to come to terms with this more "realistic picture", often in the form of physical and mental abuse, backbreaking labour, and social isolation in sparsely inhabited regions and within the domestic sphere of their new homes. Addressing the oppressive conditions of female settlers on the prairies, Eliza Farnham draws parallels to the industrial and dehumanizing exploitation of African-Americans in the South: "There was no hope for [the woman] but to settle into her slavery, and wear the shackles [...] without chafing under them. She had not character enough to redeem herself, and the brutal treatment to which she was doomed would tend every day to diminish the little that she had, and reduce her to the condition of a mere machine".[134] More than 70 years later, the periphery's isolating properties were still felt by authors like Willa Cather. In *My Ántonia* (1918), she expresses that living in the solitude of the Nebraskan prairies imparted a feeling of powerlessness and social alienation since "there was nothing but land: not a country at

132 Hanna, "Diary", pp. 5; 19–21.
133 Hogue, "Forgotten Frontier", p. 233.
134 Farnham, *Prairie Land*, p. 23.

all, but the materials out of which countries were made [...]. Between that earth and that sky I felt erased, blotted out".[135] Being "blotted out" by an overwhelming extent of empty space marks a distinct counter-imagination to the masculine ideal of greater empowerment through more space. Despite seeing herself reduced to "a mere machine", Farnham nevertheless embraced the responsibility of improving conditions at the western peripheries as a central task and distinct accomplishment of female emigrants. In her book, she denounces the immoral practices of frontier farmers who drank excessively, engaged in shady business practices, swindled gullible travellers, and likened their wives to "horses and oxen, the biggest can do the most work".[136] The challenge for frontierswomen then seemed to be demystifying and domesticating the West's brutality together with its unkempt male inhabitants, thereby creating a more humane and affect-driven space by introducing the virtues of the "fair sex". Subduing the western landscape was not to be accomplished through male violence but through the classical virtues associated with the cult of domesticity.[137] In her ecofeminist study *The Land Before Her*, Annette Kolodny proposes that agency in western placemaking did not necessary hinge on gender because

> like the men, women also dreamed of transforming the wilderness. But the emphases were different. [...] [In contrast to] male assertions of a rediscovered Eden, women claimed the frontier as a potential sanctuary for an idealized domesticity. Massive exploitation and alteration of the continent do not seem to have been a part of women's fantasies. They dreamed, more modestly, of locating a home and a familial human community within a cultivated garden.[138]

135 W. Cather, *My Ántonia*, Boston: Mariner Books, 1995, p. 8.

136 Farnham, *Prairie Land*, p. 20. Farnham still closes her book with an optimistic outlook for future generations living on the prairies: "Thy free plains and far-reaching streams shall be the theatre of a power and intelligence never yet witnessed! Thy countless acres shall glow with checkered beauty and hum with busy life, when the generations of those who love thee now, sleep in thy peaceful bosom! Land of the silent past and stirring future, farewell!" (ibid., p. 269).

137 The cult(ure) of domesticity (or cult of true womanhood) was the prevailing gender paradigm in the nineteenth-century United States and Great Britain. To fulfil this ideal, "true women" were expected to become the "light of the home" by embodying the cardinal virtues of purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness.

138 A. Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984, pp. xii–xiii. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed women for the first time to acquire land under similar conditions as men, yet required them to be at least 21, unmarried, widowed or divorced. Before the turn of the century, between 5 and 15 per cent of homesteaders were "[w]omen [who] proved their claims at a similar or better rate than men" (Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 139).

For authors like Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), this utopia could be cultivated by emphasizing the importance of women's and minority's rights, brought about by a mental realignment of the West. Her travelogue *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* (1844) was inspired by her own experiences and impressions of the Great Lakes region. In the book, she envisions the Old Northwest as a counter-space to the East in which progressive, emancipatory ideals could be realized – however not by exceptional yet destructive individuals like the backwoodsman, but by a more affective and inclusive mental respatialization of emigrants' and travellers' relationship with nature and indigenous peoples. Although the ensuing feminist formatting of the region is troubled by its inner strife between anti-colonial advocacy and its own colonizing gaze, it represents a powerful example of the destabilization of dominant, male-centric spatial formats like settler colonialism and the predestined westward movement of the nation.

At the beginning of the 1840s, Fuller had made a name for herself in the intellectual circles of Boston and New England. For two years, she had edited Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalist journal *The Dial*. She also organized communal meetings she called "Conversations" that addressed the lack of educational opportunities for local women. In these sessions, participants discussed a wide array of topics, including literature, fine arts, and gender relations guided by the "commitment to changing people's lives by changing their minds".[139] In 1843, Fuller's ground-breaking feminist manifesto "The Great Lawsuit. Man versus Men. Woman versus Women" was serialized in *The Dial*.[140] Soon after completing the essay, Fuller found herself financially strained as her editorial work for the journal remained uncompensated despite Emerson's promise of an annual salary of USD 200.[141] In May 1843, Fuller together with two close friends, the siblings Sarah Anne and James Freeman Clarke, left Boston for a summer-long tour to the Great Lakes region as well as the Wisconsin and Illinois territories. Travelling by wagon, steamboat, and canoe, the trio visited Chicago, Milwaukee, the Niagara Falls, and Buffalo in today's upstate New York. Traversing these peripheral places, Fuller tried making contact with Native Americans, including members of the Chippewa

139 C. Capper, "Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer: The Conversations in Boston", *American Quarterly* 39 (1987) 4, pp. 509–528, at 509.

140 In the essay, Fuller argues that social injustices are connected to the economic interests of men, inherited from European colonization practices. Improving the situation of exploited subalterns such as women, Native Americans, and African-Americans thus depends on society's moral and spiritual improvement regarding these issues. Publisher Horace Greeley was so impressed with the essay that he convinced Fuller to publish expanded version in book form that appeared in 1845 with the title *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.

141 D. Dickenson, *Margaret Fuller: Writing a Woman's Life*, New York: St. Martin's, 1993, p. 101.

and Ottawa tribes. After returning to Boston, she completed *Summer on the Lakes* in the following year after doing further research about native history at Harvard University and being the first woman granted permission to use its library's collections. Disrupting this gender-exclusive realm of higher learning raised some eyebrows within the academic community. The author and abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson, for example, later remembered "Miss Fuller sitting, day after day, under the covert gaze of the undergraduates who had never before looked upon a woman reading within those sacred precincts".[142] Regarding her invading "those sacred precincts", literary scholar Nicole Tonkovich elucidates that Fuller

> both contested and reproduced the power arrangements that the library represented: resisting the hierarchies of written texts enshrined in the library, she nevertheless privileged writing and textual preservation over the oral Indian cultures she wrote about. Attempting to correct the erroneous written interpretations she had read about them, she proposed a museum in which their "authenticity" would be displayed, but which was premised on their continued estrangement from "civilized" activities.[143]

The book that resulted from Fuller's travels and her equally subversive and conformist spatial performance in Harvard library was a nonfiction text penned in a semi-romantic tone that offers a collection of anecdotes and contemplations about the problematic conditions and lack of social justice at the western peripheries. Fuller's view of Native Americans was indeed progressive: Like Thoreau, she used abolitionist, scripture-based arguments and spatial analogies to sensitize her audiences to the situation of natives, for instance by exclaiming: "Yes! slave-drivers and Indian traders are called Christians, and the Indian is to be deemed less like the Son of Mary than they! Wonderful is the deceit of man's heart!"[144] At a relatively early point in the history of western expansion, Fuller recognized and criticized the epistemological binary that structured dominant narratives about the native West, underlining that eastern commentators and policymakers "either exalt the Red man into a Demigod or degrade him into a beast".[145] This dichotomy becomes a key aspect of her experiences in the Old Northwest, which she attempts to transcend through empathy for the plight of indigenous peoples and by becoming "acquainted with the soul of this race".[146] Throughout the book, Fuller finds

142 Qtd. in N. Tonkovich, "Traveling in the West, Writing in the Library: Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*", *Legacy* 10 (1993) 2, pp. 79–102, at 79.
143 Ibid.
144 M. Fuller, *A Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1844, p. 185.
145 Ibid., p. 175.
146 Ibid., p. 251.

herself subconsciously mired in personal struggles as she is confronted with her own prejudices that exist as pre-formatted spatial imaginations grounded in Native American Otherness, as well as her own contradictory identity that oscillates between postcolonial American and American colonizer. This inner strife surfaces during Fuller's visit of the Niagara Falls, which ends in disappointment:

> I expected to be overwhelmed, to retire trembling from this giddy eminence, and gaze with unlimited wonder and awe upon the immense mass rolling on and on, but, somehow or other, I thought only of comparing the effects on my mind with what I had read and heard. [...] Happy were the first discoverers of Niagara, those who could come unawares upon this view and upon that, whose feelings were entirely their own.[147]

In this anticlimactic moment, Fuller realizes that the falls' visual language has long-since been colonized and semantically fixated in the spatial imaginations and literary performances of her male peers, making it almost impossible for her to experience nature outside the confines of pre-formatted images. As a result, she cannot help but experience the Niagara Falls in their normative purview as a natural wonder and spectacular celebration of expansionism. Baudrillard's concepts of simulacra and the hyperreality of simulated spaces theorize these mental dynamics, proposing that cognitive mappings (i.e. processes of imagining space) and physical space can no longer be brought into a meaningful relationship. The impossibility of unbiased, objective place and mapmaking then culminates in the comical absurdity of the "mad project of an ideal coextensivity between the map and the territory".[148] This coexistence implies that the only (mental) map that could exist outside of prefabricated visions and thus does not "lie by omission" would be an actual true-scale representation of the earth's surface. Such a map, however, would – for lack of physical or mental capacity – cover the entire globe. Baudrillard uses the examples of Disneyland and the Grand Canyon to demonstrate how the power of representations, performances, and imaginations can overtake personal experiences of the "real thing". The result of this "Disneyfication", Baudrillard argues, is that

> Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which *is* Disneyland [...]. Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation.[149]

147 Ibid., pp. 12–13.

148 J. Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations", in: M. Poster (ed.), *Selected Writings*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988, pp. 166–184, at 166.

149 Baudrillard, "Simulacra", p. 172. A more recent example of the amalgamation of real and imagined places presents itself in the Croatian town of Dubrovnik, a popular destination of

As demonstrated by Fuller's reaction to the Niagara Falls, the notion of mental maps outperforming reality is by no means a new or distinctly "postmodern" phenomenon. About ten years prior, Washington Irving recorded similar observations in *A Tour on the Prairies* (1832), noting that "the Indian of poetical fiction is like the shepherd of pastoral romance, a mere personification of imaginary attributes".[150] Limerick points out that as early as

> 1900, a place like Yellowstone had already been the scene of so much published scribbling and emotion that it was extremely difficult for anyone to have an immediate, direct response to the landscape, without a chorus of quotations going off in the head. Before the eye could take in the walls of Yosemite, the mind had already provided the caption: soaring, sublime, uplifting; grandeur, glory, and spirit. With the script of response already written, one's only remaining task was to try to feel what one already knew one was *supposed* to feel.[151]

Fuller's background as an avid reader, public intellectual, and critical thinker made her especially susceptible to and aware of the psychological effects of simulated or "scripted" spaces.[152] In her thirties, she had already earned a

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film tourists. Energized by media-induced imaginations, a growing number of international visitors travel there to visit the filming locations of *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019). Indulging in their fantasies, some tourists allegedly forget their being in an actual town and re-enact violent or nude scenes from "King's Landing", causing complaints from less enthusiastic locals (A. Escher, E. Sommerlad, and M. Karner, "'King's Landing gibt es wirklich!' – filminduzierte Reisen in imaginierte Welten", *Jahrbuch 2016*, Marburger Geographische Gesellschaft, 2017, pp. 157–163, at 157).

150 W. Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies*, London: John Murray, 1832, p. 54.

151 P. N. Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West", in: Matsumoto and Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge*, pp. 15–31, at 20. Foucault introduces heterotopias as counter-spaces that exist outside the visible material order as a "simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live" (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces", p. 25). Using examples that range from prisons to holiday resorts and phone calls, he maintains that heterotopias expose "every real space [...] as still more illusory" (ibid., p. 27).

152 Hal Rothman introduced "scripted space" to describe phenomena that make "the replica more seductive than the original. Using experience to script space in another way, to design artificial controls that seem natural and ordinary as they highlight the activity by subtly persuading visitors that the activity is their own, this postmodern form shatters historical distinctions between the real and the unreal by producing faux replicas of experience independent of the activity from which they derive" (H. K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998, p. 13). An example that satirizes the simulated nature of space is "the most photographed barn in America" in DeLillo's *White Noise*. By itself, this barn is entirely unremarkable and draws its representational power solely from its constant reproduction through tourist photographs. As a character states: "'Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see

reputation as the best-read person – male or female – in all of New England.[153] Complemented by her research at Harvard, *Summer on the Lakes* turned into a decidedly intertextual work, containing a multitude of references to accounts of other peripheral travellers. Fuller mentions or quotes passages from influential books by Irving, Cooper, and Catlin, explaining that "I read all the books I could find about the new region, which now began to become real to me".[154] Her familiarity with the narrative tropes used to signify the Niagara Falls as a symbolic landmark for the subliminal grandeur of the West made Fuller realize her own entrapment within larger systems of spatial formatting that colonized unfamiliarity and Otherness via more readily recognizable discourses. Standing atop the falls, she envies "the first discoverers of Niagara [...] whose feelings were entirely their own". Now, she writes, there is even "a 'guide to the falls,' who wears his title labeled on his hat; otherwise, indeed, one might as soon think of asking for a gentleman usher to point out the moon".[155] Reacting to this prefigured artificiality she finds at Niagara, Fuller tries to transcend these spatialization dynamics through affect and its expressions in writing. Unsuccessfully attempting to position herself outside of these dynamics causes her disappointment and discomfort, but also leads to her acknowledging that these processes could not be challenged by rationality alone but hinge on more complex interplays between spatiality and psyche.

Overcoming the Old Northwest's Pavlovian colonization as a scripted space for Fuller means detaching her own psyche from the confines of simulated space, while affect becomes a mediator between prefiguration and personal experience. Exposing her subconsciousness in this manner, however, turns out to be a daunting and oftentimes painful process. During the same trip to the Niagara Falls, Fuller juxtaposes the violent forces of the rushing torrent with pre-simulated stereotypes of Native American violence, which many of her contemporaries believed to be part of the same ruthless nature that animated

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the barn.' [...] 'We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura'" (D. DeLillo, *White Noise*, New York: Penguin, 1986, p. 12).

153 A. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977, p. 263.

154 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 30; see L. L. Mielke, *Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008, p. 100. About Cooper's character Uncas in T*he Last of the Mohicans* Fuller notes: "It is a white man's view of a savage hero, who would be far finer in his natural proportions; still, through a masquerade figure, it implies the truth" (Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 32). Washington Irving's books, on the other hand, "with the exception of the Tour to the Prairies [sic] [...] have a stereotype, second-hand air. [...] His scenery is only fit to be glanced at from dioramic distance; his Indians are academic figures only" (ibid., p. 33).

155 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, pp. 13; 9–10.

the waterfalls. Almost hallucinating and unable to escape, she becomes entangled in a prefabricated space of threatening unfamiliarity as she feels apparitions of bloodthirsty natives sneaking up behind her back:

> I realized the identity of that mood of nature in which these waters were poured down with such absorbing force, with that in which the Indian was shaped on the same soil. For continually upon my mind came, unsought and unwelcome, images, such as never haunted it before, of naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks; again and again this illusion recurred, and even after I had thought it over, and tried to shake it off, I could not help starting and looking behind me.[156]

Fuller's frustration regarding the impossibility of truly independent spatial experience alludes to her limitations of emancipating herself from overarching processes of literary spatialization. Realizing her views of western nature and inhabitants as prefabricated underscores the importance of spiritual reformation and affective approximation as strategies to transcend the overpowering influence of spatial metanarratives. For Fuller, spiritual transcendence of the individual alone can dissolve the ideated continuity and narrative boundedness of the West: "I say, that what is limitless is alone divine, that there was neither wall nor road in Eden".[157] After recovering from her troubling visions at the waterfalls, Fuller witnesses another visitor's more straightforward strategy at making the place his own. She describes seeing "a man [who] came to take his first look. He walked close up to the fall, and, after looking at it a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use, he spat into it".[158] For Fuller, such primitive rituals are exemplary for the masculine excesses of expansionism that at once sequester physical space and contaminate the spiritual purity of the West's cultural geography.

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156 Ibid., p. 5. Fuller was among the first to describe and personally confront these psychospatial processes. In later centuries, similar notions perpetually re-entered the consciousness of American authors and publics, in which the strangeness and violence associated with the Native American West violently break through contemporary imaginations of space. In Bret Easton Ellis' *Less Than Zero*, the narrator for instance mentions reading "an article in *Los Angeles Magazine* about a street called Sierra Bonita in Hollywood. A street I'd driven along many times. The article said that there were people who drove on the street and saw ghosts; apparitions of the Wild West. I read that Indians dressed in nothing but loincloths and on horseback were spotted, and that one man had a tomahawk, which disappeared seconds later, thrown through his open window. One elderly couple said that an Indian appeared in their living room on Sierra Bonita, moaning incantations. A man had crashed into a palm tree because he had seen a covered wagon in his path and it forced him to swerve" (B. E. Ellis, *Less Than Zero*, New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1985, p. 265).

157 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 65.

158 Ibid., p. 6.

The book's subversive spatialization strategies embrace the transcendence of both extremes by inverting the prefigured roles of natives and settlers, thus thwarting the triumphalism of expansionism. Across the text, Fuller shuns the moral repulsiveness of spitting, uncultivated men that lack any sense for natural beauty and contrasts their colonizing performances with native modes of living in harmony with environments. The latter, she suggests, are in fact more civilized than "the white man [who] is a half-tamed pirate, and avails himself, as much as ever, of the maxim, 'Might makes right'".[159] For Fuller, what could be termed settler barbarism became palpable "when you came near [and saw] the slovenliness of the dwelling and the rude way in which objects around it were treated. [...] Their progress is Gothic, not Roman, and their mode of cultivation will, in the course of twenty, perhaps ten, years, obliterate the natural expression of the country". This debauchery is counterpointed by "the Indians, who chose the most beautiful sites for their dwellings, and whose habits do not break in on that aspect of nature under which they were born [...]. But most of the settlers do not see it at all; it breathes, it speaks in vain to those who are rushing into its sphere".[160] Through this disentanglement of the East as a nexus and emanating point of civilization, Fuller undermines the era's dominant spatial formats that hinged upon the predestined East-West trajectory of the American nation.

In these utopian counter-geographies, the movement of ideas and peoples no longer commences alongside unilateral directions as "the life-blood rushes from east to west, and back again from west to east".[161] Unlike Hall's discursive permutation of this dynamic that placed the backwoodsman at the centre of the nation's reformation, Fuller thoroughly inverts the thematic allocations of American geography and its principal direction. "[T]he whole country", she writes, "reminds me perpetually of one that has been carefully cultivated by a civilized people, who had been suddenly removed from the earth [...]. The solitudes are not savage; they have not that dreary, stony loneliness that used to affect me in our own country".[162] The "stony loneliness" of the eastern cities here turns into a metaphor for the alienation of civilized society from nature as the only space in which true convergence with the self and god seems possible. As argued by other radical Bostonian transcendentalists, commerce was the prime factor that transmitted the pathologies of supposedly civilized Euroamerican bourgeoisie, tainting the

159 Ibid., p. 195.
160 Ibid., pp. 46–47.
161 Ibid., p. 30.
162 Ibid., p. 75.

primordial purity of nature. In response, transcendentalists "envisioned nature as a definitively non-commercial space wherein spiritual truths were embodied in physical facts and scenes. The activities appropriate to that space extracted aesthetic or moral value, as opposed to use or exchange value".[163] For Fuller, continental expansion aligned itself with capitalistically corrupted politics because it was driven not by the vision of a progressive society in the West but by more profane, economic motives. "It grieved me to hear", she laments, "these immigrants who were to be the fathers of a new race, all, from the old man down to the little girl, talking not of what they should do, but of what they should get in the new scene. It was to them a prospect, not of the unfolding nobler energies, but of more ease, and larger accumulation".[164] The means through which Fuller envisages the improvement of these spaces of "larger accumulation" are education and a heightened consciousness about these issues. Still, she remains doubtful about the frequently hailed domestic power of women to affect change at a grassroots level within the familial structures of western homes. For Fuller, "this power is good for nothing, unless the woman be wise to use it aright. [...] It is not so much a question of power, as of privilege".[165] Like Farnham, she understands the lack of female placemaking privilege as a result of labour conditions, immobility, and domestic isolation that together culminate in

> the unfitness of women for their new lot. It has generally been the choice of the men, and the women follow [...] The women can rarely find any aid in domestic labor. All its various and careful tasks must often be performed, sick or well, by the mother and daughters, to whom a city education has imparted neither the strength nor skill now demanded. [...] When they can leave the housework, they have not learnt to ride, to drive, to row, alone. Their culture has too generally been that given to women to make them "the ornaments of society."[166]

On his way from Canada to the Oregon Country, Francis Matthieu provides another perspective on the sometimes fatal consequences of the immobility and ornamental minimization of women in the West. When his emigrant band reach

163 L. Newman, "Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843* and the Condition of America", *Romanticism on the Net* (2005) 38/39, https://doi.org/10.7202/011668ar. Fuller's critique of capitalism is likely connected to her western tour taking place after the Panic of 1837. This crisis resulted from speculation and bursting land bubbles in the trans-Appalachian West and was blamed on president Jackson's rash expansionist policies. In this historical moment, many American intellectuals "felt that the world had been badly deformed by the rise to dominance of what they called 'the spirit of commerce'" (ibid.).

164 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 18.

165 Ibid., p. 182.

166 Ibid., pp. 61–62.

the steep embankment of a river, they realize that "[t]here is a jump there, about 75-ft high [that] was a very rough place [for] the women to go around", mainly because of the impractical cloths and shoes they were expected to wear even in the wilderness. After they decide to "let the canoe down with ropes, the rope broke and three or four women, missionary ladies, got drowned", either because they could not swim or because they were immobilized and pulled underwater by their heavy cotton dresses, or as a combination of both.[167] Stifled by these and other limitations, Carmen Birkle suggests that women were prevented "from participating in the freedom gained in the new multicultural communities that characterize the American Midwest and West".[168] But Fuller did not content herself with revealing the gender dynamics that structured the fate of female emigrants; she also attempted to understand and contextualize the position of native women in the Old Northwest. In praxis, however, this undertaking was fraught with many difficulties. Fuller's lacking command of native languages meant that she had to communicate via hand gestures. Unable to articulate herself effectively, she tried to affectively infer the meaning of her dialogue partners' statements by ways of metathesis through their body language, facial expressions, and even their general physical appearances.

While these attempts represented early forays into sociological fieldwork and participant observation, some of Fuller's deductions appear unexpectedly reductive. "They are almost invariable coarse and ugly", she writes about native women, "with the exception of their eyes [they had a] peculiarly awkward gait, and forms bent by burthens. This gait, so different from the steady and noble step of the men, marks the inferior position they occupy".[169] Fuller appeared to be aware of her methods' tendencies of viewing native women through the dehumanizing gaze of the Easterner. To overcome these limitations, she resorted to the few English sources written by natives. Drawing on the works of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, she acknowledges that the coarseness of "the Indian woman [results from her being subjected] to many hardships of a peculiar nature, yet her position, compared with that of the man, is higher and freer than that of the white woman".[170] Entering these critical discourses that contrast social and

167 Matthieu, "Refugee", p. 12.

168 C. Birkle, "Travelogues of Independence: Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau", *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 48 (2003) 4, pp. 497–512, at 507.

169 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 175.

170 Ibid. Schoolcraft (1800–1842), also known as O-bah-bahm-wawa-ge-zhe-go-qua (The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky), was of Ojibwa and Scots-Irish ancestry and "the first known American Indian literary writer, the first known Indian woman writer, the first known Indian poet, the first known poet to write poems in a Native American language,

aesthetic standards among East and West, Fuller allocates agency to the body of native women which were regularly objectified in US literature and sexualized in paintings like Alfred Jacob Miller's *Snake Girl Swinging* (1837). Apart from these progressive yet contradictory approximations of the socio-spatial dimensions of native womanhood, Fuller faced a second layer of resistance. Her desire of getting into contact with natives was met with the thinly veiled contempt of her travel companions and Sarah Anne Clarke:

> How I could endure the dirt, the peculiar smell of the Indians, and their dwellings, was a great marvel in the eyes of my lady acquaintance; indeed, I wonder why they did not quite give me up, as they certainly looked on me with a great distaste for it. "Get you gone, you Indian dog," was the felt, if not the breathed, expression towards the hapless owners of the soil.[171]

Clarke's disgust for "the dirt" and "peculiar smell of the Indians" points to the beginnings of debates about colonial whitewashing. Subduing nature and "wild" peoples, many assumed, could be accomplished by virtue of their sanitization. Geographically and racially deviant philosophies and practices could simply be washed away and "cleaner" spaces be engendered by tidying up colonies and colonial subjects alike (see fig. 2 below). Anne McClintock examined the placemaking functions of commercial culture and their role for the stabilization of empires around the fin de siècle. In *Imperial Leather*, she sees this function exemplified in advertisement slogans for Unilever and Pears' Soap, one of which outright declares: "Soap is Civilization".[172] Investigating how the "politics of smell" became a pivot point in the ordering of empires based on race and economy, British sociologist John Urry adds that

> [s]oap advertising had two main effects. First, it reinforced the British cult of domesticity and made this definitive of national identity [...]. And second, the advertising generated notions of cleanliness and hygiene which would civilise the unwashed natives who had

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and the first known American Indian to write out traditional Indian stories" (R. D. Parker, "Jane Johnston Schoolcraft", *Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Bamewawagezhikaquay, 1800–1842*, https://thesoundthestarsmake.com). In 1823, she married the Indian agent, geographer, and ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. He would later become known for his peculiar naming schemes of Michigan counties and towns, in which he replaced native terms with his own creations spliced together from Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Native American terms. One example of these semantic respatializations is Alpena County, whose name is assembled from Arabic *al* (the) and *penaisee*, an Ojibway word for bird (V. J. Vogel, *Indian Names in Michigan*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986, p. 84).

171 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 183.

172 A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 207.

> still to learn that smelling of Imperial Leather was the mark of the civilised world. Pears advertising in particular was characterised by ideas of hygiene and purification (in which white is presumed to be hygienic). So the politics of smell did not only enable the production of new commodities for the mass market. It also helped to construct the nature of the colonial encounter between the colonists and those colonised, to domesticate and purify it, and to invest the complex relations with intimate distinctions of bodily smell.[173]

With the rise of American imperialism at the end of the century, placemaking-by-sanitizing was intertwined with the so-called White Man's Burden. Popularized by Rudyard Kipling's eponymous poem, the concept presumed a responsibility of the United States to uplift the inhabitants of "savage" spaces towards the virtues of western civilization. The mindset of Fuller's friends hence already prefigures the popularization of colonial whitewashing and its seemingly benevolent interventionalist credos. But Clarke's disgust of natives also points to the cult of domesticity's function for imperial discourse, namely that female placemaking power could be augmented by assuming the responsibility (in what could be called the White Women's Burden) of purifying non-white spaces through feminine virtues. As Amy Kaplan suggests, female domesticity and male-centric conquest were not necessarily mutually exclusive but sometimes complementary spatialization processes. Instead of viewing "domesticity [...] as an anchor, a feminine counterforce to the male activity of territorial conquest", Kaplan elucidates that "to the contrary [...] domesticity is more mobile and less stabilizing; it travels in contradictory circuits both to expand and contract the boundaries of home and nation and to produce shifting conceptions of the foreign".[174] Fuller seems aware of this and tries to deconstruct the imagined contrast between the supposed cleanliness of colonizers/domesticators and dirtiness of colonized/domesticated. In *Summer on the Lakes*, she subverts this logic by describing the imported vices from the East as contaminants that pollute the erstwhile purity of the Native American West, for instance by noting that "the slovenliness of the [settlers'] dwelling and the rude way in which objects around it were treated were very repulsive".[175]

173 J. Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge, 2001, p. 98.

174 A. Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity", in: R. Wiegman and D. E. Pease (eds.), *The Futures of American Studies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 111–134, at 113.

175 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 46.

Fig. 2: Advertisement for B. T. Babbitt's Best Soap proclaiming "Cleanliness is the Scale of Civilization", circa 1883.

In the resulting gender landscape of the Old Northwest, Native American women only appear unsightly and oppressed when seen through the colonizing gaze of eastern observers. Affect and female solidarity, Fuller argues, unveil their unstoried dignity that is rooted in more intuitive spatial philosophies "whose habits do not break in on that aspect of nature under which they were born".[176] As this dignity is corrupted during the region's settlement and commercial development, both native and white women become victims of this forceful respatialization. In both cultures, Fuller implies, men as the holders of material power are debauched by the temptations of colonialism and capitalism. This in turn corrupts the West's emancipatory potential and culminates in the oppression and objectivization of women.[177] The path to alleviating these grievances then is to attain a heightened consciousness about these dynamics and consequently

176 Ibid.

177 About native men, Fuller reports that "now accustomed to drunkenness and every way degraded [they] bear but a faint impress of the lost grandeur of the race. They are no longer

envisage the American West as a space of female solidarity between Native American and Euroamerican societies. A plethora of historical examples highlight how the West's potential for female solidarity and resistance could be translated into praxis. Historian Susan Lee Johnson reports how during the early 1850s the conscious creation of affective spaces economically empowered subaltern Mexican women in the Californian gold mines. After meeting a group of American gold diggers, the women produce instruments to entertain the prospectors. Opening with upbeat Mexican serenades,

> [a]s the night wore on, the music's tempo slowed, until finally the women started strumming the chords of "Home, Sweet Home." They did not intone the lyrics; these women had watched Anglo miners long enough to know that the familiar tune alone would evoke the desired reaction. The men responded apace: "Suddenly a sob was heard, followed by another, and yet another, and tears flowed freely down the cheeks of the gold diggers." The musicians walked away, their tambourine filled with gold pieces.[178]

Besides Fuller's powerful socioeconomic critiques and undermining of discursive trajectories of masculine spatiality, her provocative reversal of dominant paradigms is not without its blind spots. For instance, she sometimes regresses to imagining Native Americans as parts of a decaying natural order. "I read", she notes, the "nobler thought [of the native soul] in their defaced figures. There *was* a greatness, unique and precious, which he who does not feel will never duly appreciate the majesty of nature in this American continent".[179] In other passages, Fuller cites examples of "real" or "noble" Indians such as King "Philip, Pontiac, Tecumseh and Red Jacket, [who] would suffice to give the ages a glimpse at what was great in Indian life and Indian character".[180] Regarding the issue of miscegenation, she concedes that "[a]malgamation would afford the

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strong, tall, or finely proportioned. Yet as you see them stealing along a height, or striding boldly forward, they remind you of what *was* majestic in the red man" (ibid., p. 182).

178 S. L. Johnson, "'Domestic' Life in the Diggings: The Southern Mines in the California Gold Rush", in: Matsumoto and Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge*, pp. 107–132, at 126; see E. Christman and F. M. Christman, *One Man's Gold; the Letters & Journal of a Forty-Niner*, New York: Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill, 1930, https://www.loc.gov/item/30030332/.

179 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 251.

180 Ibid., p. 231. Fuller was criticized for validating pseudo-sciences like phrenology and giving "credence to racial scientists' study of remains, and more specifically to Samuel George Morton's collection of Indian skulls on which he based his 1839 work *Crania Americana* and his conclusion that American Indians, with their comparatively small cranial capacity, stand at the bottom of the racial hierarchy" (Mielke, *Moving Encounters*, p. 103). For example, Fuller mentions a painting of a native woman about which "a keen observer said, 'If you cover the forehead, you would think the fact that of a Madonna, but the forehead is still savage [...].' This is very true" (Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 228).

only true and profound means of civilization. But nature seems [...] to declare, that this race is fated to perish. Those of mixed blood fade early, and are not generally a fine race".[181] Her admiration for the West's forlorn purity and grief about its decay even go so far as to blame its victims, whose supposed lack of resilience allegedly prevented Fuller from witnessing the West in its original splendour. This shines through in her mentioning an incident during the group's travels. After getting lost on their way to the prairies, the friends decide to take a shortcut which they believe would lead them onto Black Hawk's trail.[182] Fuller describes her feelings as they walk in the imaginative footsteps of the famous resistance leader whom she indirectly blames for the collapse of a bygone spatial order: "How fair the scene through which it led! How could they let themselves be conquered, with such a country to fight for!"[183]

The text also indulges in spatial analogies that envisage the Old Northwest as an epistemic extension of European civilizations, for instance when Fuller writes "I do believe Rome and Florence are suburbs compared to this capital of nature's art", and on the same page goes on to revel that "[t]he whole scene suggested to me a Greek splendor, a Greek sweetness, and I can believe that an Indian brave, accustomed to ramble in such paths, and be bathed by such sunbeams, might be mistaken for Apollo, as Apollo was for him by West".[184] To be sure, spatial allegories like these pervade the literature of the Early Republic. German romanticism and Mediterranean antiquity in particular were considered paragons of democratic ideals and moral virtues by American writers.[185] Fuller draws these parallels in order to create affective assemblages that juxtapose the founding legends of "pure" native culture with the virtues of classical

181 Ibid., p. 195.

182 The Saukie chief Black Hawk (1767–1838) fought on the British side in the War of 1812 to push American settlers out of tribal territories. In 1832, he led a pan-tribal force known as the "British Band" across the Mississippi to settle land disputes. Upon their arrival, the delegation was attacked by US frontier militias. After his capture, Black Hawk was taken on a tour to several eastern cities and later published his *Autobiography of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, or Black Hawk* (1833), which became a bestseller in the United States.

183 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 50.

184 Ibid., p. 53.

185 In *Over the Edge*, Limerick explains that analogies to Europe became useful in opening the West for tourism by formatting it through themes that were easily recognizable for contemporaries: "The West had to be cast as tame and safe, with no features that would seriously scare tourists. At the same time, it could not be so tame and safe that it went over the edge and became dull and familiar. This pressure, by the turn of the century, brought a withdrawal of many of the European analogies and a move toward a greater accent on more interesting and distinctive elements of westernness" (Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen", p. 21).

European lore. She collates for instance the tale of a fasting native's temptations to the myth of the Lorelei:

> As with the Greeks, beautiful legends grow up which express the aspects of various localities. From the distant sand-banks in the lakes, glittering in the sun, come stories of enchantresses combing, on the shore, the long golden hair of a beautiful daughter. The Lorelei of the Rhine, with her siren song, and the sad events that follow, is found on the lonely rocks of Lake Superior. The Indian knows well that to break the fast [...] by turning his attention from seeking the Great Spirit, to any lower object, will [...] probably call down the severest punishment. But the temptation is too strong for him; like the victims of the Lorelei, he looks, like them beholds a maiden of unearthly beauty, to him the harbinger of earthly wo[e].[186]

In drawing these connections, the text on the one hand idealizes the Old Northwest as a bygone utopia populated by noble savages who unconsciously emulated the romantic virtues of Europe. By choosing Europe as her geographic reference, Fuller on the other hand feminizes the continent's spatial discourse and thus undermines dominant literary trends that framed the West's subjugation as a decidedly masculine process. What F. O. Matthiessen called the American Renaissance tried to emancipate literature from European traditions and in this way "make the effort to repossess [...] literature for our democracy".[187] In many of the resulting narratives, this Americanization of literature coincided with the introduction of masculine subjects that forcefully took possession of the West's textual and physical landscape and thus counterpointed European romanticism, which was regarded as effeminate and regressive. By referring to Europe and female figures like the Lorelei, Fuller's formatting of the West therefore undercuts the equation of American literature with masculine placemaking performances.[188]

Although she embraces this retroactive respatialization of the native West alongside transatlantic and female themes, Fuller remains doubtful about its real-life manifestation in the guises of immigration and acculturation by expressing that "the fatal spirit of imitation, of reference to European standards, penetrates, and threatens to blight whatever of original growth might adorn the soil".[189] Commenting on the cultural landscape at the western peripheries, she notes "I wish I could see in such places the guitar rather than the piano [...]. The piano many carry with them, because it is the fashionable instrument in the

186 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, pp. 206–207.

187 F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957, p. xv.

188 Europa is, of course, herself a female character from Greek mythology.

189 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 62.

eastern cities. Even there, it is so merely from the habit of imitating Europe".[190] The result is a divergence between Fuller's affect-driven decolonizing of the West through transatlantic comparisons and her concomitant opposition to European influences in the West's actual colonial ordering. In "Travelogues of Independence", Carmen Birkle traces these contradictions to the ambiguous spatial identity of the Early Republic, whose anti-colonial struggle against the British Empire destabilized its identity as a colonial nation. Birkle explicates that authors such as

> Fuller and Thoreau attempt a representation of America and American landscape from a "native" and decolonized perspective. At the same time, however, although they declare their (political and cultural) independence from Europe, they view America with a gaze that is marked by the colonial and colonizing experience of the early settlements. Although they reject the used pretexts as colonizing, they themselves write in the language of colonization and thus appropriate the position of the conqueror. Therefore, their texts are torn between decolonization and colonization.[191]

At times, Fuller seems clearly aware of these contradictions, while at other times she appears oblivious of them. While the reason behind this remains a matter of speculation, it is at least partially explainable by the book's experimental composition and anecdotal, quasi-stream-of-consciousness ductus. Fuller eludes that her goal was never to propose a coherent vision of the West, but rather to scrutinize and transcend its existing axioms and in this manner "establish truth through error", by "trust[ing] to the interpreting spirit to bring me out all right at last".[192] Although she likely refers to god as "the interpreting spirit", this trust could also be seen as being put in following generations of readers and scholars whom she invites to interpret her literary spatialization actions that at the time of their recording were "caught in the contradictions between the struggle for independence and the desire for imperial power" and thus had to remain opaque to the author herself.[193]

In 1850, Margaret Fuller's life was cut short during her return journey from Tuscany when the *Elizabeth* suffered shipwreck during a storm near Fire Island, New York. After her death, *Summer on the Lakes* was reprinted three times and was continually available until today.[194] For her and her female

190 Ibid., pp. 63–64.
191 Birkle, "Travelogues of Independence", p. 499.
192 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 132.
193 Birkle, "Travelogues of Independence", p. 497.
194 D. Z. Baker, "Excising the Text, Excising the Author: Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*", in: S. L. Linkon (ed.), *In Her Own Voice: Nineteenth-Century American Women Essayists*, New York: Garland, 1997, pp. 97–112, at 97.

peers, imagining the West was no less fascinating and desirable as it was for their male colleagues. Controlling and synthesizing the thematic complexity they encountered beyond the epistemologies of the East became pivotal for female writers like Fuller, although the strategies and subjects with which they approached them remained diverse and oftentimes contradictory. The uncharted literary arena of the West presented new possibilities for women to question conventional gender roles and entrenched injustices. Facing the challenges in physically and discursively (un)settling the West provided new opportunities of interweaving new spatial semantics with ubiquitous literary transliterations of westernness as maleness. Rather than synthesizing the West into grand, coherent narratives like Hall, Copper, and many others did, Fuller's formatting emerges as more subtle, affect-driven, and theoretically complex.[195] "I had no guidebook", she writes, and "do not know how many miles we travelled each day, nor how many in all. What I got from the journey was the poetic impression of the country at large; it is all I have aimed to communicate".[196] Despite (or precisely because) its internal struggles and contradictions, this strategy of spatializing the American West through personal reflection and scrutiny of one's own consciousness today remains equally important. Fuller's travelogue lends credence to discourses that question the ordering of spaces as part of linear processes, justified by exceptionalist myths of backwoodsmen or hyper-masculine performances and their uncritical emulation by society.

The text raises central questions about the human costs of expansion and their atonement with the individual's conscience. Another central accomplishment that warrants the book's enduring significance lies in its treatment of two key dynamics of nineteenth-century placemaking. First, the importance of individual spatial imaginations whose complexity and diversity cannot easily be synthesized into coherent metanarratives. In Fuller's travelogue, the mutability, creativity, and mobility of mental landscapes unfolds organically through metaphors, allegories, and parabolic language that resist straightforward interpretation and call for their spatially literate approximation. And second, that individual imaginations of space are themselves structured by intersecting vectors of identity, including race, class, and gender. Even at the threat of psychological repercussions like Fuller

195 After its publication, some critics emphasized this very lack of cohesiveness. Caleb Stetson, a Massachusetts politician and commentator for the *Christian Examiner*, found fault in Fuller's depiction of "things connected by no apparent link of association with the objects which seem to fill her eye and mind [...] except for the fact that they occurred in the course of her reading or were called up from the depths by some mysterious association" (qtd. J. Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2012, p. 237).
196 Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 67.

faced at the Niagara Falls, transcendentalist and feminist spatialization strategies impart a heightened sensibility towards these dynamics. "I had rather walk myself through all kinds of places", Fuller poetically accoutres this notion, "even at the risk of being robbed in the forest, half drowned in the ford, and covered with dust in the street. I would beat with the living heart of the world, and understand all the moods, even the fancies or fantasies, of nature".[197]

"No Goin' Back": Space, Race, and Nostalgia in Paul Laurence Dunbar's Local Colour Poetry

America is a poem in our eyes;
its ample geography dazzles the imagination,
and it will not wait long for metres. R. W. Emerson[198]

After the Civil War and during the Reconstruction Era, the Old Northwest passed through its final phases of respatialization alongside the parameters of nationalization, urbanization, and racial discrimination. Following a period of rapid industrialization, nostalgia for the region's history crystallized in the popularity of local colour writings. As audiences projected themselves into the simpler times of bygone spatial orders, racial tensions were growing between whites living in rural communities and the urban centres of Chicago and Detroit, which were seeing an influx of freed slaves from the postbellum South in search of work and opportunity during the Great Migration. Paul Laurence Dunbar's (1872–1906) poetic depictions of ongoing spatial and racial tensions in *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896) and *The Fanatics* (1901) impart visions of a region firmly embedded in discourses of nationalism and manifest destiny. But they also expose the remnants of a fractured interracial and interspatial order, seen through the eyes of a freeborn son of former slaves from Kentucky, partially composed as a linguistic assemblage of standard English and African-American vernacular. Dunbar's *The Fanatics* explores the racial and economic divide between North and South that persisted well after the Civil War and throughout the period of national reconstruction. The novel describes white communities in the supposedly emancipated North that were especially fearful of an "invasion of the black horde" that threatened to upend their ethnically homogenous idyll.[199] *The*

197 Ibid., p. 132.
198 R. W. Emerson, "The Poet", *Essays and Lectures*, New York: Library of America, 1983 [1844], pp. 445–468, at 465.
199 P. L. Dunbar, *The Fanatics*, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1902, p. 160.

Fanatics plays out in such a small-town setting, inhabited by the descendants of Euroamerican frontiersmen. Here, the anticipation of an imagined African-American invasion sparks paranoia and racial violence, eventually making it "an act of patriotism to push a black woman from the sidewalks".[200] The outcome, however, is conciliatory as "the community chooses unity over racial division, suggesting that it might be possible for North and South, white and black to co-exist on contested ground".[201]

In 1888, the 16-year-old Dunbar had already published his first set of two poems ("Our Martyred Soldiers" and "On The River") in *The Herald* newspaper of his hometown Dayton, Ohio.[202] His poems attracted the attention of William Dean Howells, an editor for *Harper's Weekly*, with whose help and influence Dunbar became one of the first African-Americans to enter the stages of national and international literature. Dunbar's benefactor specifically praised the verses penned in black dialect and suggested the fledgling poet write exclusively in black vernacular, arguing that it represented his "true voice".[203] Racializing and exoticizing from today's perspective, Howells' attitude was by no means unusual in an increasingly interconnected and unified nation whose former local diversity was rapidly atomized between the macro-cultural grindstones of popular culture, mass tastes, an emerging national literary scene, and the tourism industry. Howell called for "authenticity" in a rapidly transforming spatial order where continental transportation by railroad and shipping channels brought citizens and localities closer together, accelerating agricultural output and connecting previously isolated regions.

In the emerging western tourist industries, geographic references and spatial "selling points" were oftentimes not centred around the nation-state but transatlantic assemblages: "California was the Mediterranean, a transplanted Italy; Colorado was Switzerland, with replicas of the Alps. Western resort hotels had [...] to match European luxury; for this elite and well-financed type of tourist, European-like scenery had to be accompanied by European-like buildings and services".[204] This merger of American and European regions sometimes

200 Ibid., pp. 184–185.

201 Hogue, "Forgotten Frontier", p. 235.

202 Dunbar's father Joshua escaped slavery before the end of the war and volunteered for the 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, an all-black unit deployed against Confederate forces (B. J. McRae, Jr., "Fifty-Fifth Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (African Descent) Regimental History", *Lest We Forget*, Hampton University, 1995, http://lestweforget.hamptonu.edu/page.cfm?uuid=9FEC3C7C-A7DD-67A1-63FD70E5E1203C02).

203 Hogue, "Forgotten Frontier", p. 234; E. Nettels, *Language, Race, and Social Class in Howells's America*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988, pp. 80–81.

204 Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen", p. 20.

bordered on the absurd. In Colorado Springs, upper class Americans imitated the lifestyles of British aristocrats with suppers, dances, and polo games, although the absence of foxes meant that these elites chased coyotes on horseback.[205] Limerick also mentions the lesser known, more recent example of Kellogg, Idaho. After the collapse of its mining and logging industries, the town received a federal grant to help establish itself as a ski resort, leaving the town council with the difficult task of picking a thematic focus. Because many competitors had already adopted "western Americana",

> Kellogg settled on "Old Bavarian" as its image of choice. Not everyone was enthusiastic. "I have," said one resident in a wonderful and memorable line, "some real reservations about going Bavarian." [...] "So you have some reservations about going Bavarian," one wants to say to the speaker from Kellogg. "Would you have any reservations about going back to mining? Isn't a bit of Alpine bric-a-brac a small price to pay compared to those earlier prices of acid rain, pollution, deforestation, and cyclical economic collapse?" [...] [T]he residents of Kellogg, Idaho, may feel a little goofy in their pinafores and lederhosen, but wearing silly clothes is a small price to pay for the escape from environmental injury and economic instability represented in the town's old smelter.[206]

In the nineteenth century and prior to the sometimes comical fusions of regional and global cultures, heightened mobility and shorter travel times incentivized the search for and conservation of genuine kernels of vanishing regional cultures that were previously inaccessible to outsiders. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, writers and intellectuals in the United States began looking back at a time when quixotic frontier towns and sublime landscapes of the West could not be experienced through something as mundane as the purchase of a train ticket. For some, the commodification of space in the service of individual mobility together with nationally distributed magazines, picture postcards, and photographs seemed to profane regional idiosyncrasies and their unique configurations of culture, history, and language. As a result of this increasingly felt melancholia for the region, folk culture – explicitly including local African-American traditions – gained prominence in trends towards so-called local colour that encapsulated the nostalgia of writers and readers alike. Those who had lived through the transition from rural to urban culture began searching for regions where rich cultures and thick traditions still existed undisturbed from the corrupting influences of industrialization and popular culture.

It was, however, not only the railroad as the epitome of augmented individual and economic mobility that reshaped (north)western regions as the nation's

205 Ibid., pp. 25–26.
206 Ibid., pp. 27–28.

formerly bona fide peripheries. The passengers travelling on these trains also experienced a new, more abstract relationship to their surroundings as "for the first time, people passed through a landscape yet did not necessarily engage it [...]. They became observers, not participants, willing or otherwise, in all that rolled by outside their train window".[207] The ensuing cognitive dissonance between landscape, space, and psyche by the introduction of moving machines into the "western garden" became key in local colour literature and poetry like Dunbar's. If actual participation in a space that zoomed by a train window was impossible, the performances and existential experiences promised by this transitory space could still be emulated within the realms of spatial imaginations and through the avatars of fictional protagonists.

The turn towards regional themes and differences (sometimes called American literary regionalism) was not only the swan song of the expanding nation's colonial small-town origins but also the marriage of fiction writing with a growing sensibility for the affective dimensions of spatiality, and therefore an early hotbed of cultural geography in the United States. Place-specific customs, histories, landscapes, and dialects became the thematic focal points of works by regional authors such as Kate Chopin ("Désirée's Baby", 1893) and Charles W. Chesnutt (*The Conjure Woman*, 1899) that explored local subjects like miscegenation and Creole culture that played a pivotal role for the consolidation (or lack thereof) of postbellum relations between North and South, as well as their extension and implementation in the newly organized western territories. On the East Coast, Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) portrayed the waning clipper ship culture of her native Maine. Undoubtedly the most prominent regional writer was Samuel Longhorn Clemens, better known as Mark Twain (*Huckleberry Finn*, 1884) who was "the first great American writer born and raised west of the Appalachians".[208] Twain's renditions of southern and western regions with their local eccentricities, dialects, and sense of humour transported an aura of adolescent escapism and youthful bearing towards space and mobility that shape spatial imaginations, particularly of the Mississippi region, to this day. Approaching the subject of literary regionalism from a more theoretical perspective by using the metaphor of the fold, Gilles Deleuze and Neil Campbell propose that it involves

> a series of discourses "tucked inside" the United States as local color, regional interest, and mythic wonderland that "spills onto the outside," overflowing beyond these limits in

207 Rothman, *Devil's Bargains*, p. 39.
208 Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 808.

> multiple ways. From within the Americas westness is folded into the lives and cultural politics of "people in motion": races, migrants, minorities who traverse its established "surface" and inscribe alternative stories upon it, enfolding them within the existing folds: "It radiates everywhere, at all times, in the thousand folds of garments that tend to become one with their respective wearers, to exceed their attitudes, to overcome their bodily contradictions," "flow *out of the frame* … it does not suffice to contain the mass that spills over and passes up above."[209]

Commenting on the epistemological results of these processes, Deleuze determines that regionalist placemaking by way of "abstraction is not a negation of form: it posits form as folded, existing only as a 'mental landscape' in the soul or in the mind, in upper altitudes: hence it also includes immaterial folds".[210] As Amy Kaplan points out, this logic can also be inverted so that "regions painted with 'local color' are traversed by the forgotten history of racial conflict with regional inhabitants, and are ultimately produced and engulfed by the centralized capitalist economy that generates the desire for retreat".[211] During her journey from Pittsburgh to Oregon, Esther Belle Hanna describes a practical instance of a racialized encounter connected to the "capitalist economy that generate[d]" Hanna's "desire for retreat". Travelling on the Oregon Trail, her party "[m]et a train of fur traders [...] on their way to the states. The men were savage looking creatures, part of them Spaniards, one or two Indians and the rest what were once white men, but a season[']s exposure to all kin[d]s of weather had so tanned them that I scarcely recognized them as such".[212] In contrast to the above-cited theorizations of regionalist spatialization, common critiques hold "that regional writing was inherently minor, an art of the miniature, the commonplace, the local, and often the feminine. The term 'local color' was used dismissively, as a diminutive, in contrast to works embodying the big slam-bang national themes of exploration, adventure, and conquest".[213] The contrasting of supposedly minor discursive themes and patterns against the nation's all-encompassing narrative regimes, however, is not an isolated, genre-specific issue but indicative of a more central conflict of spatial ordering during the nineteenth century. This conflict relates to opposing ideas of scale and scalability that already occupied the mindsets of the founding fathers who gauged the antithetical trajectories of an expanding westward movement

209 Campbell, *Rhizomatic West*, p. 36.
210 G. Deleuze, *Le Pli: Leibnitz et le Baroque* [*The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*], T. Conley (trans.), London: Athlone Press, 1993, p. 35.
211 Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity", p. 256.
212 Hanna, "Diary", p. 6.
213 Crow, "Introduction", p. 1.

versus a clearly delimited, ideologically and ethnically cohesive agrarian state in the East and South, as was favoured by Crèvecœur and Jefferson.

Doubts about the stability of the expanding nation surfaced with regularity each time the western vanguards of explorers, trappers, and mountain men faced seemingly unsurmountable natural barriers like the Appalachians, Great Plains, Rocky Mountains, the swamplands of Louisiana and Florida, or the arid deserts of the Southwest; in addition, of course, to the resistance of indigenous or other non-white people who inhabited and traversed these, from an eastern perspective, peripheral spaces.[214] By the end of the century, when the Census Bureau and Turner agreed on the "closure" of the continental frontier, the problem of regional resistance to nationalization seemed settled. From the perspective of federal policymakers and beneficiaries of the politically unified and economically prospering "centralized capitalist economy" of the US, the regional and local frameworks appeared superfluous at best and as unneeded ballast at worst. In any case, they represented a liability that could put into question or even undermine the stability of national ordering. Threats and actual instances of regional revolts, subversive movements, or outright secession were by no means hypothetical imaginations but recurring realities in the relatively young history of the Union. Apart from the ravages of the Civil War, regional independence movements emerged in Vermont, South Carolina, Texas, Oregon, California, and elsewhere, some of which continue today and operate with renewed vigour and growing ranks after Donald Trump's election, as will be discussed in more detail in the second chapter.

Movements of unruly local populations regularly attached themselves to specific regional identities, hence furthering views of the country as a loose spatial order of divergent cultures with assorted interests and goals, ineffectively governed by a weak, understaffed, and unwitting federal government. Its centre of power in Washington, D.C. lay far to the East, thousands of miles and weeks of dangerous travel removed from some of its subjects, which seemed

214 Native peoples and authors such as David Cusick and George Copway regularly exceeded victim narratives by envisaging spaces of empowerment that "engaged Western power in complex patterns of collaboration and resistance, accommodation and cooptation, as [natives] tried [...] to reproduce and renew local worlds, using imperialists to shore up or to create positions of power, using sites of indigenous power to make deals, using the European and American positions as interlopers in order to selectively appropriate the ways of the conquerors to local ends" (M. Geyer and C. Bright, "World History in a Global Age", *The American Historical Review* 100 [1995] 4, pp. 1034–1060, at 1049). The Comanches and Lakotas maintained "kinetic empires" whose success was based on mobility and hemispheric alliances that successfully resisted their colonization for centuries (P. Hämäläinen, "What's in a Concept? The Kinetic Empire of the Comanches", *History and Theory* 52 [2013], pp. 81–90, at 85).

like a fitting metaphor for the government's profound detachment from regional discourses. This seemed particularly true for the far western peripheries, where federal authority mainly consisted of a conglomerate of widely scattered military forts and trading posts. A key function of these spatial nodes or "anchors" was the symbolic display of federal power, for example by flying the star-spangled banner, brandishing impressive uniforms, and occasionally dealing with unruly elements both indigenous and American. In the decades after the Civil War, the last throes of the Indian Wars had died off together with the pan-tribal Ghost Dance movement whose members, including many civilians, were killed in 1890 by government troops during the massacre at Wounded Knee in a South Carolina Lakota reservation. In what Mark Twain ironically termed the "Gilded Age", large waves of European immigration, advancements in technologies and industrialization, and the mushroom growth of the farming, ranching, and mining industries in the West completed the Americanization of regional cultures. Nationalist, nativist, and racist sentiments became a political imperative as the country was about to forego its first president's advice. In "Warning From a Parting Friend", George Washington had catalogued the most critical political mistakes he thought might spell the end of the American experiment, among them excessive debt, hyper-partisanship, and military involvement abroad. The latter, however, was about to take place both in the circum-Caribbean and transpacific hemispheres in battles against the crumbling Spanish Empire, whose most profitable colonies Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines became the prized colonial possessions of a new, self-assertive US geopolitics starting with the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In the biography of Paul Laurence Dunbar, the interplay between abstract-external (i.e. national and global) and concrete-internal (i.e. regional and personal) spatial formats and pressure points reflects itself in the division between his ancestral roots in Africa and the American slave empire in the South. This led to the distribution of his identity alongside different scales of spatial discourse, namely as a local Ohioan writer, a regional poet of the Old Northwest, and finally a nationally and globally celebrated African-American wunderkind. In Dunbar's life and work, space, race, and their performativity constantly shifted, intermingled, and collided with one another. Dunbar entitled the first published collection of his poetry *Oak and Ivy*, many copies of which he personally sold to passengers during his day-job as an elevator operator in 1893.[215]

215 E. C. Alexander, *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow: The Tragic Courtship and Marriage of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Alice Ruth Moore*, New York: New York University Press, 2001, p. 38.

Interestingly, Dunbar made the decision to split up the collection into two distinct parts. The larger section ("Oak") consists of poems written in traditional meter such as "On the River", while he reserved the shorter section ("Ivy") for verses written in black dialect, for instance "Goin' Back". For one thing, this move highlights the dissociation of the black cultural space from a standardized, universal, and dominant national discourse as expressed in the collection's "segregated" vernacular section. At the same time, the mere inclusion of such a section and its metaphorical conjunction in the collection's title seem noteworthy and represent a metaphor by themselves: The sprawling vines of evergreen ivy winding around the venerable oak tree of English literary traditions, careful not to choke it. It then becomes the work of the regional poet to maintain the growth of both plants as only he or she is aware of a twofold dynamic happening between them: First, vertically and stylistically with regard to the supposed lack of intellectual gravitas of lowbrow regional dialect versus the distinguished aesthetics of eminent, highbrow poetry on a national level. And second, horizontally and in terms of spatiality, this tension pits the regional and national against each other in an almost antagonistic relationship with a clear-cut distribution of power.

The overarching spatial format of the nation-state thus was necessarily dominated by poets such as Whitman and Dickinson because their subjects and themes proved most conducive in their consolidation of divergent discourses into the coherent metanarratives favoured by nationalism. Dunbar's poetry was firmly wedged between the poles of its regionalist form and nationalist contents, both of which entailed memories and traumas in connection to his own biography and ambiguous positionality as a black poet and citizen of a country that was equal only on paper. Of all people, Friedrich Nietzsche perhaps came closest to approximating this conflictive interplay between content, form, and identity. "The price of being an artist", he pondered, "is to experience that which all non-artists call form, as content, as 'the real thing.' Then however one belongs to an inverted world; because now the content, our own life included, becomes something merely formal".[216] Dunbar, it becomes clear, paid the price for living in this "inverted world" through his poetic channelling of a melancholy that flowed directly from the painfully uneven intersections and fault lines of his own liminal racial and spatial positionality.

The naturalistic metaphor visible in the titular *Oak and Ivy* moreover hints at an alternative way of thinking about identity and space, namely by envisioning

216 M. Brosseau, "The City in Textual Form: *Manhattan Transfer's* New York", *Cultural Geographies* 2 (1995) 1, pp. 89–114, at 104.

the national and regional as existing in a symbiotic relationship. Even though it does not yet allow for their blending-together into a single chapter or even a hybridization of African-American and Euroamerican syntax and meter, this notion at least supposes the possibility of their discursive coexistence. The regional and national are placed in juxtaposition while, of course, still subjugated by an overarching hierarchical system dominated by the stylistic conventions of Fireside or Household Poets such as Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Whittier, whose works were less interested in peripheral spaces and minority cultures but in the intellectual intricacies of New England's social elites on the East Coast.[217] In June 1892, one year before the publication of *Oak and Ivy*, Dunbar was presented with the opportunity of giving a welcome address to fellow authors at a conference in Warsaw, Indiana. Yet, instead of thematizing his regional identity, he opened his speech by quoting Berkeley's famous line "Westward the course of empire takes its way" and continued to poetically depict the American West as a realm of national pride, progress, and optimism:

> The glowing West, with bounteous hand,
> Bestows her gifts throughout the land,
> And smiles to see at her command
> Art, science, and the industries, –
> New fruits of new Hesperides.
> So, proud are you who claim the West
> As home land; doubly are you blest
> To live where liberty and health
> Go hand in hand with brains and wealth.[218]

Addressing his (presumably all-white) audience in the second person plural, Dunbar's syntax explicitly excludes himself from the lineage of these "proud" men "who claim the West" for themselves. In addition, analogous to the failure of Reconstruction in alleviating racial and economic subalternity of African-Americans on a national scale, it also excludes him from joining the ranks of those who economically and discursively dominate the new spatial order of the transcontinental nation. What remains for Dunbar – who later accepted a desk

217 At the same time, fiction writers worked at "[t]he gradual creation of a national literary landscape of specific places (Faulkner's Mississippi, Twain's Hannibal, Steinbeck's Salinas, and so on) [...] largely [as] a response to a more general belief that the landscape Americans inhabited was, as Turner says, 'an ahistorical landscape, one without spirit and without life'" (M. Kowalewski, "Contemporary Regionalism", in: C. L. Crow [ed.], *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 7–24, at 7).
218 P. L. Dunbar, *Oak and Ivy*, Dayton: United Brethren, 1893, p. 25.

job at the Library of Congress and died at the age of 33 in his Dayton home of tuberculosis – is the creation of and participation in mentally formatted landscapes of remembrance and nostalgia, where he actually possessed placemaking agency. Like the old Negro in Dunbar's vernacular poem "Goin' Back" who, asked for the reasons for his being at the train station, responds:

> I've lived in this town fur thirty years [...]
> But now I'm a goin' back agin
> To the blue grass medders an' fiel's o' co'n
> In the dear ol' State whar I was bo'n.[219]

In light of the domineering national and increasingly globalized spatial framework, however, "goin' back agin" to regionalism in praxis seems all the more unattainable, hence emphasizing once more the cultural function of local colour writing, yet not only in aesthetically conserving bygone spatial orders as a semi-archival task, to be studied and remembered by future generations; the pivotal legacy of regional authors such as Dunbar and Chopin is their ability to heal and reconnect through spatial discourse the fragmented vestiges of local cultures – with all their positive and negative aspects – ruptured by the Civil War and the breathless proliferation of the nation-state. Regional literatures thus assemble a lost or fragmented sense of identity by reconnecting a physically unattainable past with audiences of the present, therefore engendering idiosyncratic assemblages of time-space that bridge the contradictions and lose threads of contemporary identities.

The West through its utopian potential may have changed the spatial imaginations of the American nation, but being the new epistemic core of this nation has in turn also transformed the West. Like the old man in "Goin' Back" who believes he can simply transport himself back in time by returning to the greener pastures of his youth, albeit without realizing the irony that the train as the emblem of this very order's downfall is what actually brings him there. For those who remember the peripheral regions of the Old Northwest as the pastoral idylls of their childhood, there is no going back, neither in time nor ultimately to a place that is no longer recognizable and thus is no longer "there". As exemplified by Heraclitus' dictum that one cannot step into the same river twice, time, people, and environments are in constant flux, never stopping for us to take in the view and thus allow for their definite description and ordering. Highlighting this

219 Ibid., p. 58.

melancholy realization and also acknowledging its subtle critique of universalist spatial narratives and the monolithic ideologies of nationalism, Dunbar writes in "Ione" that even though the "long fight was fought and won [...] life became a different story".[220]

In Dunbar's vision of the Old Northwest, space and time emerge as reciprocal agents that appear malleable in their deceptively stable actuality, yet in turn engender a subjective ideology that is consistent only in its perpetual transformations and ongoing removal from a fixed reality. Literature and poetic abstraction hence become powerful tools for channelling access, reliving, and temporally fixating the imaginary and distorted compound of a perpetually forlorn space-time, albeit at the cost of enduring melancholia. A sense of bittersweet nostalgia shared between author, text, and reader then manifests itself as "the subject's *Imaginary* relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence'".[221] Dunbar's poems relay this relationship by imparting the insight that the spatial order of the Old Northwest is not just forever lost but also, more importantly, that it only ever existed int the guise of ex post facto formulated imaginations. In contrast to Hall's attempts of locating their "heart", Dunbar's writings suggest that the "true" kernels of spatial configurations are ultimately unattainable except through their poetic channelling.

Re-appraising Dunbar's poems in the context of spatialization processes then means acknowledging a fundamental aspect of the human condition, namely the slow-paced drifting apart of temporality and spatiality in the face of a changing future ignorant of our acquired sensibilities and ideas of how the world around us *should* look and function, and how it has supposedly looked and functioned in the past. Zygmunt Bauman expressed this notion in the concept of "retrotopia", maintaining that "the stupefying pace of change [...] has redirected the utopian impulse towards the 'space of collective memory'. We take refuge in the past because it can be 'remodelled at will', thus providing the 'blissful omnipotence lost in the present'".[222] Melancholy and the heightened mental and affective mobilities of "retrotopian" placemaking are the sentimental exercises that surface in Dunbar's poems as the "experience of [...] locating

220 P. L. Dunbar, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1913, p. 34.

221 F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991, p. 90.

222 A. Gallix, "Retrotopia Review: A Heavyweight Thinker's Flawed last Work", review of *Retrotopia*, by Z. Bauman, *The Irish Times*, 13 May 2017, https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/retrotopia-review-a-heavyweight-thinker-s-flawed-last-work-1.3075548.

oneself in relation to others, of orientation in space and in time, of charting a course, of placement and displacement, and of movements though an array of geographical and historical phenomena".[223] Growing up and living, first at the peripheries and later in the West as a central part of a nation with global ambitions hence informs Dunbar's attempts of mapping and navigating social space through time.

These performances of mapping and navigating time-space become attempts of "organizing the data of life into recognizable patterns with it understood that the result is a fiction, a mere representation of space and place, whose function is to help the viewer or mapmaker, like the reader or writer, make sense of the world".[224] Through these means, processes of mental placemaking in what Fredric Jameson called "cognitive mapping" create relational frameworks that enable "a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole".[225] Using metaphors, metonymies, and allegories, Dunbar's poems therefore engage in what could be termed "spatio-cognitive dissonance". For the subjects of in this dissonance, it does however not produce new ways of cognitive mapping or a breakup of real and present versus fictional and remembered spaces because the subject's relationship to his or her real-life spatial parameters is largely imaginary in the first place. Instead, Dunbar's elegy for the vanished Old Northwest produces an assemblage of a space that does not attempt to dissolve or rearrange the status quo, but through symbolic abstraction communicates the psycho-social interdependencies between spatiality and imagination. One of Dunbar's best-known verses in "We Wear the Mask" stands as an allegorical epiphany of this notion:

> Why should the world be otherwise,
> In counting all our tears and sighs?
> Nay, let them only see us, while
> We wear the mask.[226]

The mask here exceeds its symbolic value as a reference to the black individual's passing and expresses the formatting of the region in the service of the nation-

223 R. T. Tally Jr., "On Literary Cartography: Narrative as a Spatially Symbolic Act", *New American Notes Online*, New York City College of Technology, 2011, https://nanocrit.com/issues/issue1/literary-cartography-narrative-spatially-symbolic-act.
224 Ibid.
225 Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp. 51–54.
226 Dunbar, *Complete Poems*, p. 71.

state's spatiotemporal narratives. Regions and territories can in this manner pass as loyal constituents of the nation-state by wearing the masks of the frontier thesis, manifest destiny, exceptionalism, and Jim Crow. In turn, this also means that metaphors like this can be unmasked through spatially literate readings of Paul Laurence Dunbar's regionally and ethnically liminal poetry.