

Steffen Wöll

The West and the Word

Dialectics of the Global

Edited by
Matthias Middel

Volume 13

Steffen Wöll

The West and the Word



Imagining, Formatting, and Ordering the American
West in Nineteenth-Century Cultural Discourse

DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

Funded with help of the DFG, a product of SFB 1199.

The electronic edition of this publication was made available in open access in October 2023.

ISBN 978-3-11-069000-2

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-069013-2

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-069024-8

ISSN 2570-2289

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110690132>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License. For details go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) not original to the Open Access publication and further permission may be required from the rights holder. The obligation to research and clear permission lies solely with the party re-using the material.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020940531

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2020 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston

Cover image: Mural by Emanuel Leutze (1816–1868), “Westward the Course of Empires Takes Its Way” (6.1 x 9.1 m), 1862. U.S. Capitol, House Wing, west stairway.

Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

On the Series

Ever since the 1990s, “globalization” has been a dominant idea and, indeed, ideology. The metanarratives of Cold War victory by the West, the expansion of the market economy, and the boost in productivity through internationalization, digitization and the increasing dominance of the finance industry became associated with the promise of a global trickle-down effect that would lead to greater prosperity for ever more people worldwide. Any criticism of this viewpoint was countered with the argument that there was no alternative; globalization was too powerful and thus irreversible. Today, the ideology of “globalization” meets with growing scepticism. An era of exaggerated optimism for global integration has been replaced by an era of doubt and a quest for a return to particularistic sovereignty. However, processes of global integration have not dissipated and the rejection of “globalization” as ideology has not diminished the need to make sense both of the actually existing high level of interdependence and the ideology that gave meaning and justification to it.

The following three dialectics of the global are in the focus of this series:

Multiplicity and Co-Presence: “Globalization” is neither a natural occurrence nor a singular process; on the contrary, there are competing projects of globalization, which must be explained in their own right and compared in order to examine their layering and their interactive composition.

Integration and Fragmentation: Global processes result in de- as well as reterritorialization.

They go hand in hand with the dissolution of boundaries, while also producing a respatialization of the world.

Universalism and Particularism: Globalization projects are justified and legitimized through universal claims of validity; however, at the same time they reflect the worldview and/or interests of particular actors.

For my sisters.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) whose generous support made this book possible. My deep gratitude goes to Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez and Alexandra Ganser-Blumenau, as well as to Matthias Middell for their guidance and encouragement throughout the writing process. I would also like to thank Amelie Rieß, Deniz Bozkurt as well as all colleagues, friends, and administrators at SFB 1199. I would like to acknowledge the Institute for American Studies at Leipzig University whose academic excellence has put me in the position to complete this book. The friendly staff at UC Berkeley was instrumental in unearthing the spatial imaginations of western travellers and emigrants that added tremendous value and a human dimension to this engagement with the American West, its literatures, cultures, histories, and peoples. This book is dedicated and greatly indebted to the late Crister Stephen Garrett whom I was fortunate to have as a teacher during my graduate studies in Leipzig. His life and work remain an enduring inspiration and remain unforgotten. Finally, I am grateful for the support and patience I received from my friends and family.

Throughout the last three or so years, researching spatial imaginations of the American West became more than a academic exercise. Navigating the interplays of space and discourse has also brightened my own sensibilities for the real and imagined spaces we navigate on a daily basis. The mental and physical planes and borders that confront us there are not always easily understood or put into writing. Delving into the unexplored realms of spatialization processes often meant questioning familiar ideas of space and time and their roles in the construction of individual and collective identities and performances. Life, it seems, is firmly bound by temporality and finiteness; often, we feel appointments, conferences, looming deadlines, or inconvenient opening hours conspire to form various stressful and life-shortening combinations. Adding spatial variables for example in terms of movement and (im)mobility further complicates the picture. But it also offers new potentialities of understanding and negotiating literature and culture as vital expressions of the human condition. Hopefully, the results of these negotiations make for worthwhile reading and will generate further interest in the emergent and rich topic of spatialization processes.

Contents

On the Series — V

Acknowledgements — IX

Abstract — XIII

Introduction: Imagining the American West — 1

Historical Background: The West and the World — 19

The West and the F-Word: Americanizing Space — 30

Old Western History: Expanding the Frontier — 35

New Western History: Expatriating the Frontier — 41

Methods and Theories: Doing Over Geography — 47

The Spatial Dialectics of the American West — 51

Spatialization Processes: Towards a New Language of Space in Literary and Cultural Studies — 57

Spatial Formats and Spatial Orders — 59

Spatial Imaginations — 63

Chapter 1: Integrating the Old Northwest through Utopian, Regionalist, Feminist, and Local Colour Discourse — 67

“A New View of Society”: The Utopian Formatting of (New) Harmony, Indiana — 73

Locating the Western Heart in James Hall’s “The Backwoodsman” — 77

Transcending His-Story in Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes* — 101

“No Goin’ Back”: Space, Race, and Nostalgia in Paul Laurence Dunbar’s Local Colour Poetry — 125

Chapter 2: The Incommensurable West between Integration and Separation — 139

Colliding Visions of the Louisiana Territory — 139

Assembling the Western Frankenstein in James Hall’s

“The French Village” — 152

Violence Through Empathy: George Catlin’s Native American West — 168

**Precarious Destinies: Integrating and Separating the Oregon
Country — 183**

Leaving the Course of Empire in Francis Parkman's *The Oregon
Trail* — **195**

Confronting the Limits of Empire in Washington Irving's
Astoria — **217**

Defiance and Disorder: Bioregionalism, Separatism,
and Constitutional Safe Spaces — **241**

Conclusion: Reimagining the American West — 261

List of Abbreviations — 267

List of Figures — 269

Bibliography — 271

Index — 291

Abstract

In the field of US historiography, western expansion has regularly been understood as either a linear sequence of nation-building processes at a moving frontier or in terms of settler colonialism, exploitation of resources, and displacement of non-white peoples. The present book suggests that shifting the focus towards space in nineteenth-century cultural discourse opens new perspectives on the placemaking dynamics of the American West. Introducing a semantics of spatialization processes makes visible an imaginative diversity that subverts the unidirectional interpretive patterns that structure traditional approaches. Authors of western fiction and other spatial actors, the book argues, negotiated the scope of the American West through a plethora of spatial themes, tropes, metaphors, and agendas. Some of these processes solidified into spatial metanarratives like the character-shaping clash of civilizations at the frontier or the nation's manifest destiny to overspread the entire continent. However, juxtaposed to and beneath canonized and self-reproducing narratives, it becomes clear, exist(ed) multiscalar, alternative spatial imaginations, which largely remain hidden under ideologically authoritative axioms.

Utilizing a wide selection of sources to access these spatialization processes, this book explores the parameters that informed the creation, affirmation, or subversion of spatial imaginations regarding the American West. In doing so, it introduces a spatial semantics that enables the systematic and interdisciplinary evaluation of its findings. The examined sources include works of literature, poetry, paintings, newspapers, speeches, photography, and other cultural performances that reveal the West as a discursive assemblage whose dynamics become accessible by scrutinizing the imagining, formatting, and ordering of spaces. While key discourses about the West surfaced in the nineteenth century, their comprehension also becomes crucial for the understanding of contemporary debates that take place at regional, national, and global levels and under such ambiguous terms as globalization. Introducing spatial literacy into the humanities highlights the epistemic fracture points of traditional analytical categories by offering a disruptive and interdisciplinary addition to literary and cultural studies.

I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom cave to now. I spell it large because it comes large here. Large, and without mercy. It is geography at bottom, a hell of wide land from the beginning.

C. Olson¹

It does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined; the manner of making sense of it is the same.

H. White²

The world can only be found in the word.

Unknown

¹ C. Olson, *Call me Ishmael*, New York: Grove, 1947, p. 11.

² H. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 98.

Introduction: Imagining the American West

*There shall be sung another golden Age,
The rise of Empire and of Arts,
The Good and Great inspiring epic Rage,
The wisest Heads and noblest Hearts.
Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly Flame did animate her Clay,
By future Poets shall be sung.
Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way*

G. Berkeley¹

George Berkeley's famed expression "Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way" exemplifies America's tense and contradictory relationship between self-conception and spatial imaginations. The poem enticed the College of California to change its name to the University of California, Berkeley in 1866. A carefully groomed myth relates that when a group of college officials "stood at the rock outcropping looking west towards San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate, trustee Frederick Billings recalled a poem written in 1726 by George Berkeley [who] had unsuccessfully endeavoured to create a missionary college for both British colonists and Native Americans in the American colonies".² In 1878, Berkeley's name was adopted for the small community that bordered on the campus and that would later become the birthplace of the Civil Rights movement. The philosopher-poet's stipulation of the inevitable direction of empire moreover inspired the exceptionalist and expansionist themes of Emanuel Leutze's eponymous mural that still adorns the western staircase of the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.³ But neither Berkeley nor Leutze were native-born Americans: While the poet

1 G. Berkeley, "Verses by the Author, on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America", in: G. Berkeley (ed.), *Miscellany, Containing Several Tracts on Various Subjects*, Dublin: George Faulkner, 1752, pp. 185–186.

2 Berkeley Historical Society, "Why is Berkeley Called Berkeley?", <http://berkeleyhistoricalsociety.org/history-notes/bishop-george-berkeley.html> (accessed 21 April 2020).

3 Leutze is also known for *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851) that shows the future president leading a surprise attack against Hessian mercenaries (G. B. Tindall and D. E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 7th edn, vol. 1, New York: W. W. Norton, 2007, p. 217). "Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way" has a notable (and somewhat ironic) transnational history that unfolds between the US, Great Britain, and Germany. After Leutze finished the original, the canvas was damaged in a studio fire and, after being restored, was acquired by the Bremer Kunsthalle. It remained there for almost a century before being destroyed again during a RAF raid in 1942 (J. K. Howat, "Washington Crossing the Delaware", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 26 [1968] 7, pp. 289–299, at 291).

hailed from Ireland's County Kilkenny, the history painter was born in the southern German town of Schwäbisch Gmünd. Through writing and painting, they projected their personal imaginations of America as an allegory of mobility that always commenced alongside a distinct geographic trajectory: westward. For Berkeley, this mobility expressed the departure of art and philosophy from the timeworn and corrupt epistemes that "Europe breeds in her decay" and their subsequent reorientation towards the New World as a newfound muse that inspires "[t]he wisest heads and noblest hearts". This realignment of intellectual activity towards "spatial thinking" suggested by these verses was, of course, closely linked to the colonization of North America and the British Empire's global projection of power.⁴

At first glance, the themes and composition of Leutze's six by nine metre mural seem to convey a similar, albeit less poetically abstracted message: A trek of emigrants on foot, on horseback, and in covered wagons make their way to the top of a rugged passage. There, trappers and frontiersmen point them to an untouched wilderness, romantically illuminated by the setting sun as the grand western vista opens before their eyes. Portraits of Daniel Boone and William Clark, the pioneers who blazed trails through the Appalachians and Oregon, decorate the painting's margins. Beneath the central composition is a vignette of the Golden Gate that marks the entrance to the San Francisco Bay as the endpoint of westwards movement and gateway to the Pacific.⁵ Struggling towards the light of their future homes, the eastern sky behind the pioneers is overcast with symbolic gloom as they claim and transform the western landscape, grazing their oxen, felling trees, and planting a flag on the highest point. The flag, of course, is the Stars and Stripes and not the Union Jack, hence symbolically supplanting British imperialism with American nationalism as the ascendant ideology that would bring order to the incommensurable and unfamiliar West.

On their surface, the spatial allegories presented by Berkeley's and Leutze's works appear mutually exclusive and, concerning their real-life backgrounds of military and diplomatic conflicts, even antagonistic. The British Empire not

⁴ In an eighteenth-century German collection of his poems, Berkeley's famous line is translated as *Gen Westen geht Britanniens Weg* [Westward the Course of Britain takes its Way] (B. Russell, *Philosophie des Abendlandes: Ihr Zusammenhang mit der politischen und sozialen Entwicklung*, Darmstadt: Holle, 1954, p. 536; see W. Breidert, "On the Early Reception of Berkeley in Germany", in: E. Sosa [ed.], *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley*, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012, pp. 231–241, at 238).

⁵ The vignette shows almost the same view that Frederick Billings admired when he allegedly remembered the line of Berkeley's poem, inspiring him to change his university's name accordingly.

only stood in the way of American independence but also of the nation's political ambitions directed at Canada in the North, Mexico (New Spain) in the South, Florida and Cuba to the Southeast, in addition to the natural resources of the western landmass. Despite differing imaginations, the latter was anything but empty and home to diverse Native American communities. Under British rule, a system of treaties between mostly sovereign actors restricted settlement and land acquisition beyond the Thirteen Colonies. In 1763, Pontiac's Rebellion shattered confidence in the stability of this spatial order after a pan-tribal uprising in the Great Lakes region had left thousands of white soldiers and colonists dead.⁶ This led King George III to amend the Royal Proclamation with a clause "which set aside the trans-Appalachian region [...] as 'Indian country' and required the specific authorization of the crown before the purchase of these protected Indian lands on the other side of what was called the Proclamation Line".⁷ Angering aspiring settlers, traders, and land speculators in the East, the policy added fuel to an already tense social climate in the colonies. Its impact as a contributing factor to the American Revolution remains contested among historians in a debate that is linked to the ideological and revolutionary conjunctions between the "inseparable nature of the ideals of Land and Liberty".⁸ These highly flexible "ideals" proved pivotal for an American land politics of the Early Republic that culminated in the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the settlement of the trans-Appalachian West, border conflicts with Mexico and British Canada, and finally New Imperialism of the late nineteenth century.

Against the background of the close-knit but conflicting connection between emancipatory ideals and imperial policies, some have described the United States as an empire ab initio: "To George Washington the United States was a 'nascent empire,' later an 'infant empire'" Neil Ferguson notes. "Thomas Jefferson told James Madison he was 'persuaded no constitution was ever before as well calculated as ours for extending extensive empire and self-government.' The initial 'confederacy' of thirteen would be 'the nest from which all America, North and South [would] be peopled'".⁹ During a 2008 lecture titled "Modern-Day American

⁶ Native leaders felt betrayed by General Amherst's decision to – in spite of opposite agreements – uphold a British military and civilian presence in the newly acquired territories after Great Britain's victory in the French and Indian War (Tindall and Shi, *America*, pp. 177–180).

⁷ R. V. Hine and J. M. Faragher, *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 34.

⁸ N. Inman, "'A Dark and Bloody Ground': American Indian Responses to Expansion during the American Revolution", *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 70 (2011) 4, pp. 258–275, at 272.

⁹ N. Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, New York: Penguin, 2005, p. 34.

Imperialism”, Noam Chomsky claimed that the “United States is the one country [...] that was founded as an empire explicitly”.¹⁰ Joel Barlow in turn envisaged the republic as “the first great asylum and infant empire of liberty”.¹¹ While the stability of these categories must ultimately be judged by political historians, the fundamental difference between empire and nation-state, as it is understood here, lies in the former’s function “of stabilizing inequality or, perhaps more precisely, reconciling some rituals and forms of equality with the preservation of vast inequality”.¹² The nation-state in turn regularly “proclaims the commonality of its people [...] while the empire-state declares the non-equivalence of multiple populations”.¹³

Leutze’s artistic rendition seems to simultaneously confirm and contradict the concept of an “automatic” American Empire. On the one hand, the painting was commissioned by the government and thus represents an authoritative expression of western expansion as both a national and imperial policy. On the other hand, the mural’s thematic composition points to the definite completion of empire but also retains traces of its processual, conflictive, and ambiguous unfolding: Among Leutze’s imperial iconography, hidden between the elated faces of Euroamerican emigrants, an African-American boy can be seen in the lower centre whose future and freedom in the upcoming empire appears anything but definite. In the rolling hills that stretch towards the ocean, smoke curls up from hilltops, leaving it to the viewer’s imagination to be interpreted as fires lit by the vanguards of conquest or warning signs sent out by indigenous peoples. While there was little doubt about the direction of either nation-state or empire, the way of getting there, physically and mentally, was less straightforward than many historical narratives recognize. “Westward the course of empire takes its way” therefore becomes more than a line in an Englishman’s poem or the title of a German-American’s painting. It not only hints at the seemingly fixed direction of empire or nation-state but also at key characteristics of the American space: Simultaneously as an invitation to perpetual mobility and as a cultural performance that aestheticized and authorized the appropriation of territory,

¹⁰ N. Chomsky, “Modern-Day American Imperialism: Middle East and Beyond”, Lecture, Boston University, 24 April 2008, <https://chomsky.info/20080424> (accessed 21 April 2020); see R. Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*, Boston: Beacon, 2014, p. 3.

¹¹ J. Barlow, *The Columbiad: A Poem*, Philadelphia: Fry and Kammerer, 1807, p. 134.

¹² C. S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 23.

¹³ J. Burbank and F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 8.

hence discursively propelling forward both British imperialism and American nation-building. For the purposes of this book, this may serve as a first, albeit cursory example of how spatial discourses can work alongside various real-and-imagined scales.

Exploring the workings and interplays across these scales, the following engages a wide array of nineteenth-century sources, ranging from canonical literature to adventure stories, poems, newspaper articles, paintings, to previously unstudied journals and diaries of western emigrants and travellers. It traces their (inter)textual dynamics as they create, argue, or act out spatial visions. Many of these visions, it will become clear, did not confine themselves to fictional or imaginative exercises but had far-reaching social, cultural, political, and economic consequences that continue to pervade present-day issues. The book's two-tiered structure accounts for its overarching comprehension regarding the outcomes of these processes. The first chapter approximates the Old Northwest through its utopian formatting as a stage of national revitalization in James Hall's "The Backwoodsman", arena for the reconfigurations of gender roles in Margaret Fuller's *A Summer on the Lakes*, and as a racially charged site of local colour nostalgia in Paul Laurence Dunbar's poems. Analysing these sources demonstrates that the region's formatting as part of the nation-state took place more intricately than assumed by traditional frontier narratives, but also by more recent schools of history. The second chapter probes colliding views of the Louisiana Territory. First, it highlights how the region's diverse cultural landscapes are Americanized in Hall's "The French Village". Subsequently, George Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Customs and Manners of the North American Indians*, together with his artistic renditions and collecting of artefacts, highlight the complex interplays between philanthropy and exploitation in western discourses. Finally, the book shifts its focus to clashing viewpoints between Oregon's national integration and its hemispheric connectedness to Asian-Pacific networks. The inner workings of and alternatives to these views come to the fore in spatially sensitive re-readings of Francis Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, Washington Irving's *Astoria*, an anonymous proposal for an independent "Pacific Republic", as well as bioregional and other contemporary separatist movements.

Although spatial discourses in both chapters are occupied with negotiating the West as an incommensurable space and canvas for various visions and agendas, they reveal two fundamentally different conceptualizations of the West in relation to national and global contexts. The first, historically "victorious" concept proposes the opening of western spaces in the service of the nation-state. Integrating these spaces, however, was not merely a matter of political and economic conquest but – as demonstrated by the Old Northwest – involved negotiations at the intersections of race, class, and gender. The second chapter therefore

reflects alternative proposals to the transcontinental expansion of the US, which include a partitioning among colonial powers or the emergence of independent ecoregions on the West Coast. Illuminating these conflicting ideas together with their fault lines and overlaps, the book asks questions that aim at the heart of the country's self-conception, for example: What role do these alternatives and their cultural memories play today and how were (and are) they reflected in literary and cultural discourses? How do nineteenth-century arguments concerning integration or separation stabilize or undermine the United States' national identity and global projection of power? And finally, how stable are the discursive foundations of the country's socio-spatial unity and what might be the consequences of its collapse? The efforts of this book – without providing definite answers to these questions – are dedicated to fostering their renewed and critical debate from a more spatially informed and interdisciplinary perspective.¹⁴ Prefixed to the analytical chapters are two additional sections, the first of which gives an overview of the West's historiographical schools of thought, while the second accounts for the need of building a robust theoretical foundation that includes the introduction of spatialization processes as a new way of approaching the study of space in literary studies and elsewhere.

On the outset, the results of the following investigations might seem as fixed as the location of Leutze's painting in the House of Representatives' western staircase: Over the course of the nineteenth century, it is generally agreed, western history congealed into the hegemonic narratives of the frontier and manifest destiny that in turn supported the doctrine of American exceptionalism and undergirded the nation's imperial geopolitics starting at the turn of the century. The sequence of western – and therefore national – history emerges as linear, coherent, and unchanging.¹⁵ Presently, it has turned into something that scholars embellish by adding previously unknown or obscure details, hence enriching but also endorsing the West's historical functions. As the example above indicates, however, the story is less clear, resulting in a contradictory geographic identity that oscillates between inward-looking nationalism and outwardly

¹⁴ Similar questions could be raised (either separately or in a comparable manner) regarding other geographic and postcolonial contexts, e.g. the emancipation of China and Russia from the Mongol Empire and their subsequent nation-building processes.

¹⁵ In 1959, John Caughey related a similar impression of western historiography: "Being in motion in time and space, through discrete time zones and contrasting environments, the West came to have a neatly stratified history. It is a convenient and remarkable feature, but no more noteworthy than the continuities that unite all the Wests, early and late, Atlantic seaboard, midcontinent, and Pacific slope" (J. W. Caughey, "The American West: Frontier and Region", *Arizona and the West* 1 [1959], pp. 7–12, at 9).

directed imperialist projects. This antithesis today persists in interventionism abroad and the fostering of distinctly anti-imperial traditions within the margins of a continentally defined homeland. On the one hand, the core values of American democracy are understood as direct results of revolutionary struggle against foreign rule. Admonishing its own emancipatory history, the US supported independence movements by discursively co-opting revolutions abroad, for instance in Cuba and the Philippines. At same time, increasingly aggressive geopolitics transformed the nation into a de facto colonial power that however strongly resists the integration of this role into its national identity, instead viewing itself as an exception from historical precedents of “non-democratic empires”. Walter Lippmann recognized these conflicting epistemologies already during the interwar period:

All the world thinks of the United States today as an empire, except the people of the United States. We shrink from the word ‘empire,’ and insist that it should not be used to describe the dominion we exercise from Alaska to the Philippines, from Cuba to Panama, and beyond. We feel that there ought to be some other name for the civilizing work which we do so reluctantly in these backward countries. [...] We do not feel ourselves to be imperialists as we understand that word. We are not conscious of any such desire for expansion as the Fascists, for example, proclaim every day. We have learned to think of empires as troublesome and as immoral, and to admit that we have an empire still seems to most Americans like admitting that they have gone out into a wicked world and there lost their political chastity.¹⁶

This nationalist-imperialist double-consciousness culminated in spatial discourses that perpetually switch codes by foregrounding either the exceptionality or universality of the American space. Conversely, the concurrent weakness of the US as either continentally-defined nation-state or limitless empire frequently enables peripheral and subaltern actors to carve out counter-geographies and alternative imaginative regimes. Nonetheless, the economic, military, and technological dominance of the country in the twentieth century and until today continues to feed from the strength of metanarratives that celebrate western expansion, even though they have come under more critical scrutiny in recent decades.

Proceeding from these considerations, a basic question imposes itself: How can we define the American West? After all, it is the book’s central object of investigation. At first, it seems intuitive to define the West as a strictly geographic location with certain features that differentiate it from other, ipso facto “nonwestern” regions. Such features could be a generally warmer climate, rugged mountain ranges, or inhospitable deserts. In terms of its demographic structure, the West has a less-than-average population density with large distances between urban centres. Through these distances, the West can alter everyday perceptions of

16 W. Lippmann, *Men of Destiny*, Piscataway: Transaction, 2003 [1927], pp. 215–216.

space and time as travellers who were taken aback by its expanses occasionally reported. Some emigrants even described feelings of placelessness that distorted their sense of scale. In her *Diary of a Journey from Pittsburgh to Oregon City* (1852) Esther Belle Hanna relates that the Great Plains to her became “the most desolate and barren region on our whole route, & extends 150 or a thousand miles”.¹⁷ Despite its thin population density, the West is by no means rural. According to the 2010 Census, “[o]f the 10 most densely settled urban areas, nine are in the West, with seven of those in California”.¹⁸ A considerable percentage of western acreage consists of public land protected by federal law and designated as National Parks like Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone, which a Missouri senator in 1872 envisioned as the “great breathing-place for the national lungs”.¹⁹ Most of the country’s Native American territories are also situated in the West, adding up to around six per cent of its total acreage. Finally, immense stretches of mostly intact wilderness still exist in Alaska as the country’s least populated state and America’s “final frontier”.²⁰

These “exceptional” climatic, topographic, and demographic features paint the West as an idiosyncratic ecoregion distinct from eastern states and other world regions. For many, its diverse sociocultural composition as well as the movements of people into the West have held the temptation of equating environmental with ideological exceptionalism. “In these nearly universal images, the West seems grandly conceived and easily explained”, Clyde Milner summarizes this notion: “It

17 E. B. Hanna, “Diary of a Journey from Pittsburgh to Oregon City”, Oregon City, 1878, P-A 313, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 21.

18 US Census Bureau, “Growth in Urban Population Outpaces Rest of Nation, Census Bureau Reports”, [census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html) (accessed 21 April 2020).

19 Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 179.

20 In lieu of a consensual definition, the following understands the western United States as the trans-Mississippi states. These include in alphabetic order: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Of course, this does not mean that the West simply “ends” at the borders of some of these states. Instead, as William Riebsame writes, “the ‘West’ keeps moving around in time and space. At moments in American history it was everything beyond the Alleghenies, then all lands west of the Mississippi, and, finally, a coastal West of dynamic Pacific cities” (W. E. Riebsame and J. J. Robb, *Atlas of the New West: Portrait of a Changing Nation*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997, p. 46). In history and elsewhere, the West ends wherever and whenever the limits of its imaginational capacity are exceeded. Or, in the words of George Catlin: “Few people even know the true definition of the Term ‘West;’ and where is its location? – phantom-like it flies before us as we travel, and on our way is continually gilded, before us, as we approach the setting sun” (G. Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. 1, Philadelphia: Willis P. Hazard, 1857 [1841], pp. 109–110).

is the West that serves as popular myth and national symbol”.²¹ Patricia Nelson Limerick notes that the West thus presented a convenient “way to find, quite literally, common ground in seemingly detached and separate narratives”.²² Through its effort to shake up and dig into this supposedly common ground, this book works in the opposite direction. It aims to break through the hardened crust of homogenizing narratives and reappraise western discourses through the lens of spatialization processes using “a poetics of interpretation that draws from literature and literary criticism to represent a real world that is always simultaneously real-and-imagined”.²³ Approaching the West in this manner prompts questions about defining America (or the Americas) as its epistemic superstructure.²⁴ Here, similar dynamics are at play that produce these spaces as

effect[s] of a dialectic between the practice and the knowledge production of the colonized, the colonizers, and the imaginaries of European intellectuals. What America and the Americas actually are and for what they were taken are the products of both the social practices in as well as beyond the Americas and of the epistemological assumptions, foundational mythmaking, and narrations on and about the continent and the regions, countries, and people on it.²⁵

The American West always presented a mental canvas for diverse imaginations, experiences, and performances that differ greatly from person to person. In the introduction to *Over the Edge* (1999), Blake Allmendinger relates his own relationship with the West that highlights the tensions between the cyclical historicity and linear geographies entrenched in dominant narratives and the West’s unfettered spectrum of cultural diversity:

As a gay man who grew up on a ranch where [...] I had few role models and no alternative culture to draw inspiration from. Feeling alienated by or bored with the West as I found

²¹ C. A. Milner, “America Only More So”, in: C. A. Milner, A. M. Butler, and D. R. Lewis (eds.), *Major Problems in the History of the American West: Documents and Essays*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989, pp. 33–41, at 33.

²² P. N. Limerick, “Region and Reason”, in: E. L. Ayers et al. (eds.), *All over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 83–104, at 95.

²³ E. W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996, p. 174.

²⁴ For the sake of readability, the following simplifies the Americas’ complex terminologies according to common usage. America hence becomes a shorthand for the North American colonies and, after 1776, the United States. Unless stated otherwise, West refers to the American West as opposed to the so-called western world or western culture.

²⁵ H. Warnecke-Berger and G. Pisarz-Ramirez (eds.), *Processes of Spatialization in the Americas: Configurations and Narratives*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2018, p. 11.

it, I made up a West that was more appealing and personally relevant. It was the West of my imagination, one that questioned western ideals, mythic archetypes, tradition, and received information; one which glorified the marginal and fetishized things that were transgressive, outrageous, or camp. All of us recognize the West whose history is represented by certain dates and hard facts; whose literary heritage is embodied by a canon of literature; whose images are communally recognized, shared, and experienced; whose geographic identity is sketched as a series of immobile boundary lines. But at the same time, each of us makes up the West for ourselves. We interpret historical facts, individually experience works of fiction and film, and transgress those seemingly immobile boundary lines in peculiar, often quite profound ways. To argue that there is one West, one frontier, or one borderland – that we know where it is and how to make sense of it – is to claim the fragile authority of the Wonderful Wizard of Oz.²⁶

Allmendinger's personal experience of the West points to dimensions of spatiality not readily captured in linear yet, as seen above, already highly ambiguous spatial narratives. The analyses that follow, even though not as intimately as Allmendinger, enter in a scrutiny (or better, a dialogue) with a diverse body of sources with the goal to tease out the dynamics of their placemaking trajectories and real-and-imagined interactions with different places and on different scales from the regional to the global. On the one hand, entering this dialogue risks losing the reassurances that undergird streamlined concepts and terminologies. On the other hand – as demonstrated by the achievements of interdisciplinary research at Leipzig University's SFB 1199 "Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition" – reappraising how we think and therefore talk about space opens immense opportunities.

Entering this dialog becomes a prerequisite of observing and understanding spatial configurations such as the hybridizations of nation-state and empire (or "nation-cum-empire") not only in the United States but also as a part of the nineteenth century's global condition in France, Great Britain, or Japan.²⁷ This task might be considered revisionist in its desire to "implode myths of national innocence and cultural purity by exposing such myths to the unruly bodies of others".²⁸ Here, these "unruly bodies" are here not only understood as interactive parameters in the form of literary imaginations, aesthetic strategies, and

²⁶ B. Allmendinger and V. J. Matsumoto, "Introduction", in: B. Allmendinger and V. J. Matsumoto (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 1–14, at 2.

²⁷ A. Dietze and M. Middell, "Methods in Transregional Studies: Intercultural Transfers", in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2019, pp. 58–66, at 65.

²⁸ V. M. Kutzinski, "Borders and Bodies: The United States, America, and the Caribbean", *CR: The New Centennial Review* 1 (2001) 2, pp. 55–88, at 61.

political ideologies but explicitly include the experiences and stories of people like Allmendinger, albeit in different configurations of time and space. Approaching the “mythical bodies” of the West first demands a closer look at the historiographies that have traditionally framed American writings about space. Prefixed to the analytical chapters are therefore a literature review that outlines various academic approaches of theorizing the West, a discussion of relevant methods and theories, and finally the introduction of a new typology of spatialization processes.²⁹

A main objective of this study is to uncover the heterogeneity and multiplicity of geographic imaginations by analysing their manifestations in a wide selection of literary and other sources from that period. The results illustrate that the American West – while acting as a venue for nation-building, conquest, and exploitation – functioned (and continues to function) as a mental template through which knowledges and performances of nation and region, home and away, native and foreign, mobility and inertia, access and ownership are perpetually imagined, formatted, and ordered. At the western peripheries, these processes commenced alongside, behind, and in front of oftentimes vaguely defined territories that simultaneously connected and separated a diverse cast of actors or “spatial entrepreneurs”, among them the authors, audiences, and textual performances of western literature. Their ideas of the places that they physically or literarily traversed regularly overlapped, collided, and assembled with metanarratives such as the frontier thesis and manifest destiny.

In these real-and-imaginative encounters, western authors, travellers, emigrants, and tourists argued for certain ways of space-related thinking and acting, some of which asserted themselves while others were forgotten, suppressed, or replaced by concepts that appealed to a broader sociocultural spectrum or prevailing political, economic, and racial ideologies. The relationships and interactions between dominant and alternative (meta)narratives, this book suggests, can be

²⁹ The present book came into being as part of Collaborative Research Centre 1199 “Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition” and a project titled “Raum-Fiktionen. (Re)Imaginationen des Nationalen an den südlichen und westlichen Peripherien der USA im 19. Jahrhundert” under the aegis of Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez. Her research elucidates the role of Florida as a transitory realm for runaway slaves and other “unruly” spatial entrepreneurs. The book at hand is accompanied by a sister thesis written by my friend and colleague Deniz Bozkurt (to be published as volume 14 of the *Dialectics of the Global* series under the title *Imagining Southern Spaces: Hemispheric and Transatlantic Souths in Antebellum US Writings*) who traces spatial imaginations of the American South through the lens of manifold national, (trans)regional, and global connections. Together, these efforts make visible the complexities of a nation entangled between continental expansionism, regional and global networks, and the search for a spatial identity that culminated in the rise of such metanarratives as manifest destiny and the frontier mythos.

made visible through the lens and expressed through the language of spatialization processes, consisting of spatial formats (i.e. patterns of thinking and acting “spatially” that assist in the visualization and communication of spaces that exist subconsciously or metaphorically), spatial orders (i.e. the products of spatialization processes that are scalable from local to global orders), and spatial imaginations as the creative and aesthetic mechanisms that engender, perform, negotiate, affirm, or subvert spatial formats and orders.³⁰ Cultural discourses provide tool-sets that enable actors to attach experiential forms to abstract concepts of space. Recognizing these expressions or speech acts, for instance in the form of spatial metaphors, allegories, identities, or intertextual networks, is the task of literary and cultural studies. Using this analytical approach thus enables a critical re-evaluation and revision of placemaking dynamics within an equally coherent and disruptive theoretical framework.

While some of the envisioned spatial configurations eventually resulted in today’s western states as political constituents of the US, the examined literary accounts were by no means only preoccupied with ideas of the nation-state as an axiomatic generator of an American identity that celebrated frontier violence and settler colonialism. Instead, some sources reveal complex regional re-configurations, while others expand their discursive trajectories to the Caribbean and archipelagic networks of the Pacific hemisphere. As a result, the “spatially literate” analysis of these sources complicates views that perceive national, regional, or global identities either as prerequisites or outcomes of historical (spatialization) processes by asking:

1. What spatial imaginations, formats, and orders reveal themselves in an analytical sample of nineteenth-century US literature and personal accounts and how do they speak to each other intertextually?
2. What strategies do they use to convey, confirm, or challenge canonized spatial narratives such as the frontier thesis, manifest destiny, errand into wilderness, agrarian empire, or settler colonialism and what alternatives do they suggest?
3. How do spatial discourses scale the relationship of imaginations of space and how do they negotiate the tensions between the sociocultural identities connected to them?
4. How do literary and cultural discourses function regarding the ordering of the American nation-state and empire during the nineteenth century and how do they continue to inform contemporary discourses on different scales?

³⁰ The terminology of spatialization processes will be explained in more detail in the methodological chapter below.

In asking these questions, the book proposes an epistemological reconceptualization of the American West alongside literary, cultural, historical, social, geographical, philosophical, political, and economic vectors. It understands itself as working within the interdisciplinary and intertextual frameworks of new historicism, critical regionalism, and cultural geography as its main supporting pillars. Together, these approaches conceptualize a West that works alongside many “multiscalar trajectories”.³¹ This means that rather than attempting to arrive at a coherent definition – for instance as a fictive, “authentic”, or empirically observable space – the following views the discursive interplays of literary or sociocultural performances and (underlying or overarching) epistemic trajectories as the locality of spatialization processes that (de)construct, transform, and (de)stabilize imaginations of the West and in this manner produce a multilayered and often contradictory spectrum of “westernness”. In terms of narratology, this means going beyond the discourses that emanate from singular textualities and instead exploring “how the social discourse represented in cumulative texts constructs an overall narrative”.³² Such a nonlinear engagement stands in contrast to approaches that operate alongside more clear-cut categories, for example Richard Etulain’s proposed tripartite epistemology of going “to-the-West” (i.e. the frontier period until 1890), being “in-the-West” (i.e. the regional period until World War 2), and moving “beyond-the-West” (i.e. the post-regional period until today). Literary scholar Thomas Lyon attempted to discern the “real West” from the “mythic West” according to parameters such as “seriousness” or “maturity” of western authors and texts.³³ To be sure, the present book does not mark an attempt to minimize the usefulness – and to a degree, the necessity – of periodization and categorization; nor does it make the relativistic suggestion that the West exists only in our minds. Conversely, it aims to lay bare the discourses that contributed to or resisted the mental structuring of the American West into unequivocal categories, periods, or narratives.

In doing so, the following does not simply look for spatial “breadcrumbs” inside the boundaries of American Studies’ familiar analytical triangle of race, class, and gender. In contrast, it accesses and re-approximates these categories from a radically new perspective by placing space and spatialization processes

31 N. Glick Schiller and A. Çağlar, “Displacement, Emplacement and Migrant Newcomers: Rethinking Urban Sociabilities within Multiscalar Power”, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 23 (2016) 1, pp. 17–34, at 19.

32 F. Usbeck, *Ceremonial Storytelling: Ritual and Narrative in Post-9/11 US Wars*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2019, p. 20.

33 See D. M. Wrobel, “The Literary West and the Twentieth Century”, in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 460–480, at 463–464.

at the analytical centre of the triangle. In the following chapters, detaching spatiality from its status as a trendy but exotic side activity yields numerous advantages. First, it reveals previously hidden patterns, for instance of political resistance and cultural dissent. Second, it adds a new dimension to the representations, experiences, and performances of spatial actors like economic subalterns, minorities, and women concerning their positioning inside or outside of dominant geographical identity vectors from “Americanness” or local colour. This enables the present study to address complex questions, for instance how racial minorities and social outsiders gain potentialities to subvert or transform spatial narratives that hail western expansionism as the nucleus of American identity.

Compiling an analytical corpus that speaks to these issues, however, can leave one feeling “like Krylov’s Inquisitive Man, who didn’t notice the elephant in the museum”.³⁴ This proverbial animal materializes in the questions: Why select these texts instead of others and what (if anything) makes them so special (or “spatial”) to warrants their exemplary study in the context of spatialization processes? Finally, why implicitly purport a literary canon of nineteenth-century spatiality? At their core, these questions lead back to issues of American exceptionalism and nagging suspicions that Americanists in particular “work through a deep-rooted and inextricable exceptionalism” because, as Evan Rhodes asks provocatively, “how does one *do* American studies without ‘America’ as the object of study?”³⁵ This quasi-solipsistic conundrum seems all the more problematic from the perspective of European Americanists who tend to engage in exceptionalist discourses through an “objective” gaze of seemingly detached, innocuous observers. Responding to this self-enhancing circle of exceptionalism, this book proposes an open-ended re-examination of various primary sources, not as uniquely spatial, American, or western but as discursive nodes in larger, interconnected networks of spatial imaginations.

Such an approach is not free of risks, particularly regarding anything-goes approaches that see space everywhere. Quite literally, this issue comes with the “spatial territory” and is linked to the general impossibility of “escaping space” as a universal facet of the human condition that leaves “none of us [...] outside or beyond geography”.³⁶ The holistic nature of anything spatial and its omnipresence

34 F. Dostoyevsky, *Bésy* [*Demons*], R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 2006 [1871], p. 38.

35 E. Rhodes, “Beyond the Exceptionalist Thesis, a Global American Studies 2.0”, *American Quarterly* 64 (2012) 4, pp. 899–912, at 900; see F. Kelleter, “Transnationalism: The American Challenge”, *Review of International American Studies* 2 (2007) 3, pp. 29–33, at 29.

36 E. W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994, p. 7.

in all aspects of life imprint themselves in manifold instances, making those who look for them susceptible to finding anything anywhere. “The problem is”, Henri Lefebvre ponders, “that any search for space in literary texts will find it everywhere and in every guise: enclosed, described, projected, dreamt of, speculated about. What texts are special enough to provide the basis for a ‘textual’ analysis?”³⁷ Lefebvre circumnavigates the dilemma by appealing to the “universal notions” of Hegelian and Marxist philosophy that promise to shed light on “the concepts of *production* and of the act of *producing*” space.³⁸ For the purpose of this book, however, the issue of canonical or selective western literariness, or what might be deemed the “spatial literacy” of western texts, cannot be answered conclusively, not even through Lefebvrian rhetoric. Instead, the examined texts here are understood not as canonical but as samples taken from a deep, wide, and interconnected ocean of American literatures and cultures, allowing for a litmus test and tangential approximation of western spatiality. The following takes samples from the topmost and most visible layers, yet also probes deeper into a tangle of journals, diaries, letters, interviews, newspapers, memoirs, and paintings, some of which over time have sunken beyond our sight and populate the deeper strata of these imaginary waters.

The present effort thus accepts Annette Kolodny’s invitation to let go of the “Grand Obsessions” of American Studies and “not decide *beforehand* what constitutes literariness but rather expose ourselves to different kinds and contexts so as to recover the ways they variously inscribe the stories of first contact”.³⁹ This is attempted by retracing and interweaving the movements of people and narratives throughout the American West, thereby emphasizing the specific modes of expression that undergird(ed) or resist(ed) the construction of western identities via spatialization processes. Lastly, it also invites comparisons with similar or contrasting developments in the spatial histories of other places.

The book does not proceed chronologically because the continent’s westering also did not happen evenly through time and space but rather in trickles, flows, waves, and on a variety of scales. Nonetheless, it follows a general sequence of conquest and thus cannot stand unquestioned. In fact, this very structure might hint at underlying preoccupations concerning “the West” and the purview of spatial imaginations itself. It moreover calls into question perspectives of the West that already imply a Eurocentric, colonizing viewpoint and bias towards a

37 H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2005, pp. 14–15.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

39 A. Kolodny, “Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of the American Frontiers”, *American Literature* 64 (1992) 1, pp. 1–18, at 14.

“pioneering, male ‘American’ spirit always under threat from races and cultures beyond the border”.⁴⁰ After all, for most Native Americans the West was no periphery but the centre of existence. For Mexican-Americans, the West was (and still is) the North, and for those in the former British and French colonies of today’s Canada, it is the South.⁴¹ Contemporary identity politics might furthermore understand the act of looking at the West through the works of mostly white authors as appropriating their views and agendas, including those considered racist or misogynistic today. Acknowledging these concerns, it seems important to realize that every perspective alignment represents an exercise in reduction. All examinations, no matter how critical, consolidate dominant axioms since discussing them as being dominant substantiates the very core of their authority. As will be seen, the West’s diversity, complexity, and fuzziness profoundly demonstrates the limitations of today’s seemingly clear-cut (moral) categories, thus asking us to reconsider the presumptions under which we as “global citizens” partake in today’s domineering discourses.

In response to these challenges and based on a concept laid out in Brent Hayes Edwards’ *The Practice of Diaspora*, the book enters a dialogue with the American West in an effort of bridging historical difference through what Edwards terms *décalage*, namely “the reestablishment of a prior unevenness or diversity [by] the taking away of something that was added in the first place, something artificial”.⁴² *Décalage* refers to the uneven patterns in time or space that are hidden under seemingly clear-cut, homogenous discourses.⁴³ Connecting with and making sense of these patterns necessitates “a process of linking or connecting across gaps – a practice we might term *articulation*”.⁴⁴ The notion of articulatory practice

⁴⁰ H. K. Bhabha, “The Other Question ...: Homi K. Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse”, *Screen* 24 (1983) 6, pp. 18–36, at 22.

⁴¹ From a Mexican perspective, the American West is often imagined as “*el norte*, the temporary or permanent destination for millions of Mexicans who have been forced to cross the northern border into the United States, at times searching for political stability and refuge, but generally seeking better economic opportunities than those found in the nation of origin, *la patria*” (J. Martínez-Saldaña, “La Frontera Del Norte”, in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger [eds.], *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 370–384, at 376).

⁴² B. H. Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 14.

⁴³ K. K. Robinson, “My Journey From Louisiana to Havana, and Back Again”, *The Nation*, 15 July 2016, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/my-journey-from-louisiana-to-havana-and-back-again/>.

⁴⁴ The book discusses members of the black diaspora who encounter similar regimes of oppression but gravitate towards opposite ends of the political spectrum, for example “black

as a link between structural/spatial and textual/discursive parameters then becomes central for the work of this book. This is based on the notion that the subjects of literary spatialization processes in general, and that of the American West as a generator of ideologies and identities, are characterized by uncertainties, differences, and diversities. To navigate the seemingly distant yet deceptively familiar dynamics between text and space, practicing articulation means finding one's own voice by hearing that of others. "Articulation", Edwards suggests, "functions as a concept-metaphor that allows us to consider relations of 'difference within unity' [and] non-naturalizable patterns of linkage between disparate [...] elements".⁴⁵ In his essay "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance", Stuart Hall adds that articulation

is always, necessarily, a 'complex structure': a structure in which things are related, as much through their differences as through their similarities. This requires that the mechanisms which connect dissimilar features must be shown – since no 'necessary correspondence' or expressive homology can be assumed as given. It also means – since the combination is a structure (an articulated combination) and not a random association – that there will be structured relations between its parts, i.e. relations of dominance and subordination.⁴⁶

Building upon these definitions, the book recognizes that spatially and temporally disparate locations and people may become shared sites and actors of knowledge and cultural productions. The spatially literate excavation of these sites becomes possible through *décalage*, while the language of spatialization processes provides the means to articulate findings. In this manner, spatial literacy turns into one of "the mechanisms which connect dissimilar features" via the production and negotiation of (potentially new or unstudied) spatial epistemologies of the American West and their enunciation on different scales from the local to the global. These interactions form the "complex structures" that become visible first by assuming the existence of a semantic dimension through which texts articulate spatial subjects, and second by developing a typology that can access and unravel these articulations. Entering a productive dialogue with nineteenth-century sources in this manner requires a heightened sense of openness and innovation on both sides of history, lest it not turn into a

writers seeking solace from Jim Crow in Paris, while simultaneously Africans were struggling against French colonialism" (Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, p. 11).

⁴⁵ Ibid.; see T. M. Davis, *Southscapes: Geographies of Race, Region, & Literature*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011, p. 150.

⁴⁶ S. Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance", in: UNESCO (ed.), *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, Paris: UNESCO, 1980, pp. 305–345, at 325.

presentist soliloquy that deals in the codification of self-fulfilling “spatial prophecies”. Framing this endeavour as part of an unbiased or “objective” exercise seems like an equally distant possibility as it means entering dialogue from a position of historical hindsight and moral authority. This, however, would obscure the very access to a wealth of spatial imaginations by piling even more layers on top of the encrusted surface of western metanarratives and their “correct” interpretations, hence defeating the very purpose of this book.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Such an approach would run the additional risk of producing “whiggish histories” that interpret the past with the goal to validate current belief systems (J. A. Hijiya, “Why the West is Lost”, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51 [1994] 2, pp. 276–292, at 284). The term was first introduced by British historian Herbert Butterfield, although its application and use remain matters of debate since “[o]ne person’s whig history is another’s revisionism” (P. J. Bowler, “The Whig Interpretation of Geology”, *Biology and Philosophy* 3 (1988), pp. 99–103, at 100).

Historical Background: The West and the World

In American colonial and national literature, the importance of the unknown lands that almost always seemed to lay to the West manifested itself in a multitude of discourses. Starting from Puritan visions of a wilderness with both heavenly and demonic potentialities¹ to the subsequent errand into said wilderness, the captivity narrative genre, and to literature that juxtaposed the domestic confinement of women with performances of masculinity and mobility on the western peripheries. Geographic imaginations assumed a central function in slave narratives that regularly drew analogies to scriptural or fantastical places and sometimes equated escape to the North and Canada with the arrival in the mythical Canaan, for instance in Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* (1789). In contrast, being sold "down the river" became synonymous with descending into the living hell of the Deep South, hence correlating individual mobility or uprootedness, freedom or enslavement with one's positionality in a specific region.² Through its treatment as a subject of and setting for literary works, the West emerged as a particularly powerful imaginative nexus that inspired authors and readers to engage new configurations of region, nation, and empire as well as the sociocultural, ethnic, and gender configurations they encountered either through personal experiences, oral histories, or the tales of western settlers, prospectors, and travellers.³

In the US, the heightened significance of spatial imaginations and general proclivity for geographic matters were no new phenomena but date back to the Early Republic. The importance of space and its representations hence predates much of the territorial conquest of the West during the second half of the nineteenth century and the ideological ossifications of spatial imaginations

1 Human geographer James Kunstler explains that "America in the minds of the earliest settlers was therefore a place fraught with paradox. Viewed as a wilderness, it was possibly wicked, possibly holy. If it was the Garden of Eden, then it was a place to which sinful man really had no rightful claim" (J. H. Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 18).

2 Based on the work of Tim Cresswell, mobility here is understood as "socially produced motion" that is characterized "through three relational moments": empirically observable (migratory) movement, representational strategies of cultural productions, as well as the "embodied experience" of mobility (T. Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp. 3–4).

3 Regarding the nation's cultural sensibilities for geography, Brian Jarvis coined the term "textualized spatiality" that highlights the importance of key concepts like wilderness, frontier, Wild West, small town, and open road for the imaginative construction of identity (B. Jarvis, *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, p. 7).

into nation-building practices. During the colonial era, the doctrine of *terra nullius* (nobody's land) had undergirded the Puritan relationship to the western peripheries.⁴ The concept served not only to uphold binaries of orthodoxy and heathenism but also as a justification to arrogate native land and resources, often justified by their supposed legal incapability of ownership. *Terra nullius* went hand in hand with John Winthrop's vision of the New World colonies as a shining City Upon a Hill that served as an example of righteousness for the sclerotic monarchies of Europe. Morally elevating the colonial society in this manner also meant an epistemic abjection of America's indigenous owners, whose resources and lands represented the building blocks of the Puritan utopia.

After the Revolutionary War, when the Appalachian Mountains were still the barrier to the western parts of the continent, atlases and gazetteers experienced a surge in popularity. In contrast to the mainly decorative function of traditional copper-plated maps, they represented a desire to quantify and precisely pinpoint topographies, infrastructures, and economic productions of regions in tandem with the overarching unfolding of industrialization, utilitarian thinking, and increasing commodification of nature.⁵ Ever heavier geography tomes, travelogues, and gazetteers like Jedidiah Morse's *Geography Made Easy* (1784) became bestsellers that rivalled the impact of imported (or pirated) British highbrow literature. The display of ever more detailed maps in private homes turned into a symbol of social status, while school curriculums allotted more time to geography than they did to teaching the young republic's colonial history.⁶ As a result, Susan Schulten explains that while *Webster's Dictionary* may have laid the groundwork for an American linguistic identity, Morse's books did the same for geography by "creating a common territorial and topographic basis for nationhood".⁷ In this manner, the study and knowledge of American geography turned into a performance of patriotism.⁸

⁴ In *Der Nomos der Erde* (1950), Carl Schmitt coined the term *herrenloses Land* (unclaimed land) to describe the concept of a vacant or "masterless" space, which was utilized to warrant the legitimacy of colonial expansionism in the North American colonies (B. Korf and C. Schetter, "Räume des Ausnahmezustands: Carl Schmitts Raumphilosophie, *Frontiers und Ungoverned Territories*", *Peripherie* 32 [2012] 126/127, pp. 147–170, at 157).

⁵ S. Schulten, "Maps for the Masses: 1880–1900", in: S. Schulten (ed.), *The Geographical Imagination in America: 1880–1950*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, pp. 17–44, at 18.

⁶ M. Brückner and H. L. Hsu (eds.), *American Literary Geographies: Spatial Practice and Cultural Production, 1500–1900*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007, pp. 12–13.

⁷ S. Schulten, "Maps for the Masses", p. 19.

⁸ This makes for a noteworthy historical contrast to the state of geographical (il)literacy among Americans today. Jen Kennings dedicated a chapter of *Maphead* (2011) to this subject, noting that in a "1942 *Times* interview, Howard Wilson bemoaned the fact that the average American didn't 'comprehend the significance' of places such as Dakar and the Caucasus.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, literary historians like Samuel Knapp and Moses Coit Tyler further curtailed the hegemony of European publications. They “Americanized” literature by emphasizing its intimate connection with space, highlighting the importance of texts such as Thomas Harriot’s *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588) and the expedition journals of Lewis and Clark. Others emphasized supposedly unparalleled properties of the country’s landscape, proposing, for instance, that “America is remarkable for three things: it has the largest lakes, the longest rivers, and the longest chain of mountains to be found in the world”.⁹ Western expansionism was celebrated and naturalized by atlases that colourfully illustrated the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the annexation of Texas in 1845, the expulsion of British subjects from the Pacific Northwest, and the Alaskan purchase of 1867. Constant territorial aggrandizements appeared like stepping stones in the progressing flow of the

Forget the ‘significance’ – I doubt that many Americans today could even tell you what continent they’re on. Indiana University’s Rick Bein recently performed a fifteenth-anniversary follow-up to his massive 1987 study on the spatial literacy of Indiana college freshmen. Indiana had put major efforts into improving geography education in the interim, so Bein was anticipating a big bounce in his results. Instead, scores declined by 2 percent. [...] In recent National Geographic polls, one in ten American college students can’t find California or Texas on a map, ten times worse than the same numbers in [a] 1950 study” (J. Kennings, *Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks*, New York: Scribner, 2012, p. 71; see M. W. Lewis, “American Geographical Illiteracy and (Perhaps) the World’s Worst Atlas”, *GeoCurrents*, 30 April 2014, <http://www.geocurrents.info/geographical-thought/american-geographical-illiteracy-perhaps-worlds-worst-atlas>).

⁹ S. G. Goodrich, *Peter Parley’s Universal History, on the Basis of Geography*, New York: Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, & Company, 1876, p. 564. The following understands landscape as working through an objective-subjective dualism. As geographer John Wylie explains: “On the one hand we have landscape as a ‘portion of land’; on the other, landscape is registered in terms of a ‘viewing eye’. [...] Defined thus, landscape is articulated in complex fashion; it shuttles between objective fact and subjective perception, between material substance and symbolic form, between the tangible and the intangible, reality and appearance. Putting this another way, the landscape concept hinges, right from the start, between outer worlds (the material, external world) and inner worlds (the internal world of human meaning, symbolism and imagination)” (J. Wylie, “Landscape”, in: J. A. Agnew and D. N. Livingstone [eds.], *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011, pp. 300–315, at 302). But these parameters can also intersect with each other. The landscape of “the internal world” can hence turn into an object of representation, as demonstrated for instance by Hong Kong artist Chan Dick whose photo series “The Trek 探” transforms the internal anatomy of preserved human specimen into similes of external landscapes, stating that “[i]nside the human body is a hidden landscape, an incredible sight to behold” (C. Dick, “The Trek 探”, <https://www.chandick.hk> [accessed 22 April 2020]).

nation's history, retained by official statistics and "the social life of maps".¹⁰ In the imaginations of avid readers and collectors of atlases that grew thicker and more detailed, expansion seemed like the preordained sequence of the nation's manifest destiny and a geographical puzzle that begged observers to fill in the remaining white spaces across the continent. This self-enhancing interplay between spatial imaginations and colonizing practices marked an ideology that some have referred to as "continentalism".¹¹

Marc Augé refers to the resulting dual function of literature and placemaking when he distinguishes between "narratives that 'traverse' and 'organize' places [...] and the place that is constituted by the writing of the narrative".¹² Following this insight, the former represents the functional, illustrative function of maps and atlases to objectivize and codify space by giving it authority and discursive power that increase with the splendour of its presentation (e.g. through expensive gilt edgings) and function as a status symbol.¹³ Their second function, however, lies not only in their content and aesthetics but also in their performativity within the realms of fantasy and imagination. Or, in other words, the audiences' expectations of what potentially rich and exotic lands might in upcoming publications be editorialized as future constituents of the nation-state. Empirical "hard facts" or anecdotes about ecosystems, resources, and foreign peoples inhabiting these new acquisitions consequently became authoritative supplements to the (semi)fictional stories and grand landscapes composed in literature,

10 M. Brückner, *The Social Life of Maps in America, 1750–1860*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017, p. 3.

11 C. Vevier, "American Continentalism: An Idea of Expansion, 1845–1910", *The American Historical Review* 65 (1960) 2, pp. 323–335; D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History Vol. 2: Continental America, 1800–1867*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993; J. D. Drake, *The Nation's Nature. How Continental Presumptions Gave Rise to the United States of America*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011.

12 M. Augé, *Non-lieux: Introduction à une Anthropologie de la Surmodernité* [Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity], J. Howe (trans.), Brooklyn: Verso Books, 1995, p. 84.

13 Discourse here refers to its Foucauldian, i.e. anti-foundationalist and constructivist understanding as a basic function in the production of knowledge and meaning. More precisely, "the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation [like] clinical discourse, economic discourse, the discourse of natural history, psychiatric discourse. [...] Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form that also possesses a history; [...] it is, from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history, a unity and discontinuity in history itself, posing the problem of its own limits, its divisions, its transformations" (M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du Savoir* [The Archaeology of Knowledge], A. M. Sheridan Smith [trans.], Abingdon: Routledge, 2002 [1969], pp. 121–131).

paintings, or musical compositions. Popular books like S. G. Goodrich's *Peter Parley's Universal History on the Basis of Geography* (1876) simultaneously educated and entertained their young readers by telling world histories that folded factual and fictional elements into a triumphal narrative of the United States as a nexus of global progress:

Look at the steam-cars, hurrying along like birds upon the wing look at our sea-ports, and see the forest of shipping that is crowded into their harbors. Look at our lines of telegraph, conveying messages and news more rapidly than if they were borne upon the wings of the wind. Visit the city of New York, a busy, buzzing hive of men, containing nearly a million of people. [...] Enter the shops, and notice the beautiful articles of merchandise brought from China, from Java, from Hindostan, from Arabia, from all the shores of the Mediterranean sea, from England, France, Holland, and the borders of the Baltic. Go to the top of Trinity Church, where you can have a view of the surrounding waters [...]. See there the flag of every commercial country under heaven. See there, too, ships, sloops, schooners, and steamboats, coming and going like bees in a summer morning, all bringing their burden to the hive. What a beautiful sight is this, and in a country, too, which has been settled but little more than two hundred years [...] Go to Cincinnati, Louisville, Chicago, St. Louis, and proceed on the great Pacific Railroad to San Francisco on the Pacific.¹⁴

Popularized during the Civil War, newspaper maps visualized important battles and tracked military progress. The territorial consolidation after the end of the war and the political merger of the northern and southern states coincided with an intensifying infrastructural East-West integration enabled by the railroad and telegraph. The Early Republic's regional patchwork gradually made way for a sense of national unity and territorial coherence based on new experiential practices such as tourism, landscape photography, and local colour literature.¹⁵ Schulten notes that, unlike European maps that focused mainly on topographical features and

¹⁴ Goodrich, *Peter Parley's Universal History*, pp. 644–646. Instead of revising obvious misspellings in the following quotations, “[sic]” is inserted to mark them. The goal is to keep intact historical sources, not to retroactively “lecture” authors or indicate disapproval of their statements. In the case of previously unpublicized writings of settlers and travellers, this is also meant to preserve voice and context as these texts were often penned under difficult circumstances. Preserving original tone as far as possible is important because these texts present “a species of composition free alike to the illiterate and the learned, requiring no peculiar and appropriate style. [...] Men of the most common acquirements are not excluded, or thought presumptuous in attempting it, for it may be the fortune of such only, to have witnessed facts of the highest interest, or to have passed through countries not likely to be visited by the learned” (H. M. Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana; Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Mississippi River, in 1811*, Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear, and Eichbaum, 1814, p. 6).

¹⁵ P. Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, p. 9.

larger settlements, their US counterparts showed greater levels of details, often down to the smallest hinterland settlements, and in this manner emphasized the democratic dimension of mapmaking as a universal and non-hierarchical, albeit distinctly self-referential exercise. These features already hinted at trends towards inward reflection, exceptionalism, and unilateral thinking: On average, American atlases reserved around 80 per cent of their pages for depictions of “their” continent, whereas German publications of the same period allotted only 6 per cent to national territories.¹⁶ On the one hand, this seems to corroborate the pivotal role of spatial imaginations in American nation-building during the long nineteenth century. On the other hand, it demonstrates a marked epistemic contrast to an under-researched aspect of transatlantic histories, namely how their European peers of comparably bourgeois background reflected on their spatial identity more through world histories and networks of geographic societies than through nationalistic mapmaking.¹⁷

In the field of literature, the American Renaissance movement transcended the conventional function of geography as an empirical science that produced maps primarily to aid navigation and exploration. In their literary discourses, spatial representations no longer remained limited to artistic or functional renditions of real-world geographies.¹⁸ Instead, literary experiments with and subversions of the Enlightenment’s homogenous understanding of space manifested themselves in descriptions of aberrant or purely psychological spaces. Formerly obscure and seemingly unknowable relations of individuals to their surroundings came under scrutiny and were mapped out in the works of Cooper, Thoreau, and Hawthorne, often within a distinctly American nexus of space-related themes that sought to emancipate itself from European styles and traditions. Melville’s captain Ahab appears to point to these changing sensitivities in American literature when he

¹⁶ Schulten, “Maps for the Masses”, pp. 29–31.

¹⁷ H. Bergenthum, *Weltgeschichten im Zeitalter der Weltpolitik. Zur populären Geschichtsschreibung im Wilhelminischen Deutschland*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004; N. Steinbach-Hüther et al., *Geographiegeschichtsschreibung und Digital Humanities. Neue Methoden für Zeitschriftenanalysen*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019.

¹⁸ The ensuing entanglement of spatial representations with imperialist policies lead to Edward Said’s critique of Euroamerican imaginations regarding the Orient. Said expressed this in the concept of “imaginative geography” and the normative exercise of (discursive) power that accompany seemingly value-neutral, objective practices such as mapmaking, hence emphasizing “how geography and conquest go together” (E. W. Said, “Invention, Memory, and Place”, *Landscape and Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp. 241–259, at 247; see D. Gregory, “Imaginative Geographies”, *Progress in Human Geography* 19 [1995] 4, pp. 447–485, at 447).

refuses to use a quadrant to assist him in the *Pequot's* navigation, lamenting that “thou tellest me truly where I *am* – but canst thou cast the least hint where I *shall* be?”¹⁹

In an emerging postbellum middle class, domestic maps, compasses, and other space-related objects served as decorative home furnishings, signifying an increasing intermingling of spatial, social, and psychological dimensions. Textbooks like Rand McNally's *Pictorial Atlas* (1898) became deeply invested in bio-spatial determinism, illustrating racial hierarchies of nations according to their industrial development and supposed character traits. War atlases recorded military gains and directly incorporated narratives of empire and expansionism. Public interest in detailed maps of Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii reflected a paradigm change in foreign policy and departure from George Washington's warnings against “foreign entanglement”.²⁰ Mapmaking now became “strongly linked to imperialism and colonies and to attempts to extend the power of particular states and organizations. Maps were a means of depicting claims to territory and demarcating growing spheres of influence”.²¹ But racial-colonial mapping also assured and justified the supposed superiority of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants within a continental homeland. Schulten makes clear that “race and nation – sometimes race and continent – became conflated” while geographical spatiality turned into ethnic spatiality as part of “a metageography where continents correlate to race and physiography”.²²

At the close of the nineteenth century, the popular genres of the western adventure story and tall tale addressed a largely male and adolescent readership. Published episodically in dime novel format, these stories informed the spatial imaginations of an entire generation of readers. Often, they revolved

¹⁹ H. Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851, p. 410.

²⁰ S. F. Bemis, “Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence”, *American Historical Review* vol. 39 (1934) 2, pp. 250–268, at 268; Schulten, “Maps for the Masses”, p. 39.

²¹ J. A. Matthews and D. T. Herbert, *Geography: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 5.

²² Schulten, “Maps for the Masses”, pp. 33–35. This correlation, however, was not unique to the US and can already be observed in early eighteenth-century works such as the *Völkertafel*. Created by an unknown Styrian artist, the painting illustrates the alleged characteristics of ten European peoples and is emblematic for the essentialized nationalism that gripped Europe during the nineteenth century. The table, for instance, defines the demeanour of Russians as “*boshhaft*” (vicious) and the traditional attire of Greek and Turkish people as “*weibisch*” (effeminate). Rather fittingly in the light of the above considerations, the artist describes the scientific specialty of the English as “*Geographie*” (F. K. Stanzel, *Europäischer Völkerspigel: Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1999, p. 21).

around heroic experiences and feats of former generations at the western frontier (i.e. the moving border between civilization and savagery) and inferred a “melodramatic prototype of ‘American Manhood’”.²³ In Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* (1903) or Zane Grey’s *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912) the wilderness no longer appears as a pagan, forbidden domain as it did in the captivity narratives of Puritan settler societies. In contrast, the untamed environments and unruly peoples of the West now formed an exciting antithesis to urban overcrowding and civil conveniences in the eastern cities. Western nature thus became a semi-real space where “real” masculinity and moral integrity could be performed unrestrained from societal restraints. Dime novels regularly featured extreme situations that had become rare in most people’s everyday lives as urbanization and technological progress for the first time promised relative security and predictability.²⁴ Over time, every facet of the nation’s past at the western peripheries solidified into discourses that construed the crossgenerational frontier experience as a source of commonly shared national and gender identities. The country’s peripheral past came to be seen as the prime generator of a distinctively American character that reformed the ethnic and religious patchwork of colonial settler and immigrant societies into a new people connected by their shared imaginations of (western) space.²⁵ These spatialization processes laid the groundwork for an aggressive nationalism that heralded the end of inward-oriented and protectionist policies. In their place, more self-conscious geopolitics began to occupy policymakers and opinion leaders, which also included a stronger sense of mission. In the late century, missionary work undergirded the consolidation of continental territories into federal states as well as the nation’s outreach into the Asian-Pacific and circum-Atlantic spaces, often against the resistance of native societies. According to Stuart Hall, America was no longer

simply a political entity. It was always also a symbolic formation – a ‘system of representation’ – which produced an ‘idea’ of the nation as an ‘imagined community’, with whose

²³ E. Senaha, “Manhood and American Literary History: An Overview with Selected Bibliography of Masculinities and Men’s Studies”, *The Annual Report on Cultural Science* 118 (2006), pp. 95–118, p. 98.

²⁴ In *The Americans*, Daniel Boorstin suggests that through new genres such as sports reporting, weather forecasts, and yellow press journalism, citizens “hoped to find a residual stock of the unrepeatable and the unpredictable” in order to compensate for “lives of increasingly repeatable packaged experience” (D. J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, New York: Random House, 1973, pp. 402–407).

²⁵ J. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2009, p. 469.

meanings we could identify and which, through this imaginary identification, constituted its citizens as 'subjects' (in both of Foucault's sense of 'subjection' – subject of and subjected to the nation). [...] it is important to acknowledge that the drive to nationhood [...] can often take the form of trying to construct ethnically (or culturally, religiously or racially) closed or 'pure' formations in the place of the older, corporate nation-states or imperial formations; [...] of gathering *one* people, *one* ethnicity, gathered under *one* political roof.²⁶

A growing wave of imperialism engendered a Machiavellian realpolitik in the form of an Open Door Policy in China and acquisition of Hawaii, Alaska, Samoa, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, and others. These comprehensive colonial undertakings commenced soon after the territorial consolidation of the North American continent was completed, most notably by the Louisiana Purchase in the West, Adams-Onís Treaty in the Southeast, British-American 49th-meridian boundary in the Northwest, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and Gadsden Purchase after the Mexican-American War in Texas and the Southwest. Intensifying contacts with non-white peoples in newly acquired territories spurred the implementation of Darwinist theory of evolution in the emerging natural sciences, while Ernst Haeckel's and Herbert Spencer's application of Darwin's laws to the sociocultural and political spheres epitomized natural selection and the survival of the fittest. In terms of spatiality, these ideas stressed the dynamics between supposedly uncivilized people and their civilizing and reformation by Americans. At the wild peripheries, the laws of nature seemed to show themselves in the most obvious fashion, while at the same time conveniently serving to rationalize, naturalize, and exculpate the displacement and slow-moving ethnocide of natives. Their un-American relationship with space in the guise of nomadic practices, alleged mis- or disuse of natural resources, and non-capitalist, non-industrial, and non-individualist lifestyles seemed to make their equal participation in the United States' spatial dialectics impossible. Strictly enforced racial hierarchies as well as pseudo-sciences like phrenology and eugenics converged with one another in their rationalization of the westward movement of white settlers, which they justified as the manifest destiny of the American nation.

Instead of ancestry, class, or gender, Social Darwinism put biology and race at the centre of personal and social identity. The peoples and worldviews encountered by Americans in "exotic" regions seemed to confirm to (pseudo)scientists that race was firmly connected to climate and environment. The conjunctions between "blood and soil" and the germ theory – the central tenets of European agrarian romanticism that were later appropriated by fascist ideologies – gained

26 S. Hall, "Culture, Community, Nation", *Cultural Studies* 7 (1993) 3, pp. 349–363, at 355–356.

popularity through Hippolyte Taine's concept of "race, milieu, et moment".²⁷ Soon after the American Empire's rise at the fin de siècle, however, US policy-makers faced insurgencies, causing the deployment of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders in Cuba 1898 and the massacres of the Philippine-American War between 1899 and 1902. During the latter, the South Carolinian Senator Benjamin Tillman and others opted to forfeit control of the far-away archipelago, fearing that annexation or further warfare would force Filipinos to seek refuge in the continental US. Here, a rising wave of non-white and, even more unsettling for some, Catholic and Jewish immigration from southern and eastern Europe already added fuel to the ideological flames of exceptionalism, populism, racialism, and nativism, igniting fears about the "decline of the West" as expressed in the title of Oswald Spengler's eponymous bestseller.

This and other popular works played a key role in the re-negotiation of ethnicity during the period. Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman* (1905) prepared the groundwork that inspired the refoundation of the Ku Klux Klan in the reconstructed South. In the early days of cinema, D. W. Griffith's blockbuster *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) buttressed the historical revision of the Civil War by romanticizing the antebellum slave economy as a forlorn spatial order structured by medieval chivalry and heroic resistance against Yankee invaders from the North. Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) warned against miscegenation and championed racial hygiene, eugenics, and Nordic theory, carrying to extremes some of the gloomiest malapropisms of race and space of the so-called Progressive Era. These authors no longer viewed the tenets of civilization as results of moral self-control but as outcomes of genetic dispositions and racial hierarchies.

Understanding what processes led to this amalgamation of space, race, and empire at the end of the nineteenth century demands a return to the western peripheries and their textual representations in contemporary sources. This also means returning to a point in time when empire and nation-state were just two of many trajectories alongside which individual and collective concepts of space were imagined, performed, formatted, and ordered – hence a period in history when works of literature provided readers with a wide spectrum of possible "Wests" and "Americas".²⁸ American literature in fact produced an abundance of literary landscapes that seem confined solely to the realms of fantasy and imagination but that nonetheless deeply permeated popular consciousness as well as many aspects of material culture and social reality. In the decades

²⁷ H. Zapf, *Amerikanische Literaturgeschichte*, Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2010, p. 205.

²⁸ Of course, this spectrum also includes later works such as L. Frank Baum's *Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Alurista's spiritual nation of Aztlán, or H. P. Lovecraft's impossible geographies.

after the American Revolution, the West became such a compound of reality and imagination, known mainly through fiction and newspaper reports to citizens and immigrants arriving in New York or Boston. Like El Dorado in the sixteenth-century fever dreams of Spanish conquistadores, some (e.g. participants of the gold rushes and other runs on western resources) envisioned the West as a Cockaigne of free resources, personal enrichment, and other opportunities of economic mobility. For others, the West became a transcendental space defined by more intangible goods in the form of spiritual, ideological, regionalist, or nationalist worldviews.²⁹ Again others believed the West to be a space whose attainment necessitated certain character traits to take part in its allegorical geographies, for instance the hardships of the western journey and its need for heightened resilience and ingenuity.

Robert Athearn describes these multifaceted beliefs as “the West of the mind, of the spirit, a concept that for generations had reassured Americans of a future, a place to go, that often was one more of imagery than of substance, yet dreamers thought of it as being real”.³⁰ The results were individual and collective visions of the West in which clear boundaries between reality and imagination seemed to matter less in the decades after the nation’s independence. Until about the middle of the nineteenth century, most Americans would perhaps have agreed that their country, like the English colonies before, did not border on empty land but rather on various Native American nations. After the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), the Homestead Act of 1862, and several rushes on western resources, however, most time-honoured boundaries (both imagined and real) between East and West, North and South became more fluid and subject to re-negotiation.³¹ Myth-making became a vital strategy to stabilize the newly acquired western territories in the context of their integration into the nation-state. In the words of Richard Slotkin, “the raw material of [western] history was immediately processed, conflated with ideology and legendry, and transformed into myth”.³² If anything,

29 Aztlán is such a spiritual space in the southwestern US and northern Mexico where the Chicano movement located the sociocultural nexus of a Mesoamerican identity for which national borders have become meaningless. In this view, the Mexican-American borderlands – often viewed as an epitome of peripherality – are reimagined as the centre of the “Nation of Aztlán” (G. Pisarz-Ramirez and S. Wöll, *Periphere Räume in der Amerikanistik* [= *Dialektik des Globalen. Kernbegriffe*, 3], Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019, p. 31).

30 R. G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986, p. 10.

31 K. L. Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word, or Being and Becoming Postwestern”, *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (1996) 2, pp. 179–215, at 183–184.

32 R. Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800–1890*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, p. xvi.

the semantic leverage and imaginative scope of the West, from whichever angle one may apprehend it, has only increased over time, continuously asserting its influence over all aspects of social and cultural life.

The West and the F-Word: Americanizing Space

In 1882, the US Census Bureau defined the nation's western border as marked by a certain population density of settlers "beyond which the country must be considered as unsettled".³³ This demarcation simultaneously commodified and dehumanized the peripheries, foreshadowing the rise of the frontier as the axiomatic spatial paradigm that would order the imaginations of generations to come. What Athearn poetically called "the West of the mind" together with the desire to carve out a uniquely American cultural and literary geography alongside the discursive patterns of western conquest culminated in the presentation of Frederick Jackson Turner's (1861–1932) frontier thesis at the 1893 Chicago World Fair.³⁴ Among the fair's attractions and technological innovations from 46 countries were the first fully electrified kitchen and first Ferris wheel, neo-classical White City architecture, and Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Few of the 27 million visitors however took the time to listen to the history lectures held by the young professor from the University of Wisconsin. In his lectures, Turner sketched out his own vision of the American West, which he imagined not as a geographical region or territory but as an umbrella term and meta-concept for

33 J. T. Juricek, "American Usage of the Word 'Frontier' from Colonial Times to Frederick Jackson Turner", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110 (1966) 1, pp. 10–34, at 28. More precisely, maps in the attachment census' attachments defined the frontier as the line beyond which the population density was less than two inhabitants per square mile, or less than .8 inhabitants per square kilometre (US Census Bureau, "11th Census 1890 Overview", *Through the Decades*, 18 July 2017, https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1890.html [accessed 30 April 2020]).

34 The Chicago expo's official title was "World's Fair: Columbian Exposition", meant to commemorate the fourth centennial of Columbus' arrival in the New World, albeit one year late and although Columbus never actually set foot on the American continent. As Astrid Böger explains, "[t]he guiding idea behind The World's Columbian Exposition was to build an harmonious and orderly model city, in many ways the exact opposite of the urban space that was the day-to-day reality Chicagoans negotiated at the time, and which they frequently experienced as chaotic, overcrowded, full of vice, and therefore dangerous" (A. Böger, "Envisioning Progress at Chicago's White City", in: K. Benesch and K. Schmidt [eds.], *Space in America: Theory, History, Culture*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005, pp. 265–284, at 268).

the sociocultural dynamics that commenced alongside a contact zone between civilization and wilderness.³⁵ Ever since the arrival of the first European colonists on the North American continent, the frontier concept had been a powerful force in the public imagination of space. Often seen as lawless hinterlands, it called into question the stability of bordered regimes as well as the nation's and empire's projection of power in peripheral regions. The Census Report of 1890 provided a definition of the frontier while simultaneously declaring its end since almost all the continent's formerly unorganized territories had been organized as either states or territories of the United States. The official "closure" of the frontier, however, inspired the historian Turner to formulate his famous thesis, which he based on demographic data from the *Statistical Atlas*, derived from the Census Report.³⁶

At this sparsely inhabited and moving periphery, Turner argued, century-long spatialization processes resulted in the creation of a common American identity that eventually transcended the oppositions of the (post)colonial immigrant societies. The western frontier thus became an epochal catalyst that translated the sequences of warfare and conquest into democratic structures and a meaningful national identity shaped by an exceptional relationship with space in general and the West in particular. The European and British influences and institutions that pervaded the 13 colonies were gradually reformed by the westward movement of both true-born Americans and newly arrived immigrants as they adapted to the harsh conditions at the peripheries and transformed the western landscape: "The buffalo trail became the Indian trail, and this became the trader's 'trace;' the trails widened into roads, and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads".³⁷ The frontier thesis thus

35 The term frontier in the American context exceeds its European etymology stemming from *frowntere* as the "front line of an army" and Old French *frontière* as "boundary-line of a country" (D. Harper, "Frontier", *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2019, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/frontier>). In Europe, these meanings reach well into the twentieth century, visible for instance in the Battle of the Frontiers at the onset of the First World War.

36 M. Walsh, *The American West: Visions and Revisions*, Cambridge: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 2; see H. Gannett (ed.), *Statistical Atlas of the United States, Based Upon the Results of the Eleventh Census*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898, <https://loc.gov/item/07019233>.

37 F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920, p. 14. Discussing the metamorphose of the later state of Wisconsin, Mark Wyman notes that "[t]he steam engine that brought about this revolution – driving lake boats, railroads, and saw mills – became the major engine of change in transforming the frontier of Wisconsin and the Upper Lakes into a settled part of the nation, integrated into its economy and government. In fact, most of the changes noted by Turner for his palimpsest rested on modes of

assumed the hierarchical succession of archetypal civilizations as part of a natural, almost evolutionary and pseudo-Darwinist sequence: First came the traders' and trappers' frontier, followed by the miners' and the farmers' frontier, before its end was heralded by the mobility revolution brought about by the railroad.³⁸ This transformation, Turner suggested, commenced along the lines of a moving contact zone, rendered accessible by the discovery of passageways across the Appalachian Mountains that opened the West for waves of emigration that would not stop until they reached the shores of the Pacific. Along the way, western settlements and communities had to negotiate the gradients between primitivism and civilization and develop new technologies, business models, morals, and means of democratic cooperation. Scarcity led to the fusion of formerly incompatible traditions and a uniquely American recombination of various cultures, consisting for instance of Swedish log cabin construction, German engineering, English laws and mapmaking, Mexican irrigation and cattle breeding, and Native American farming and food preparation methods.³⁹ For Turner, a new breed of people emerged

as the pioneers on the Atlantic seaboard learned the local techniques of food production, as the hunters who first entered Kentucky and Tennessee dressed like Indians and copied their woodsmanship, and as the Rocky Mountain fur men burrowed even more of Indian ways. In the Pueblo area Spanish colonists incorporated many Indian culture elements and passed them on to their successors. The American fur trade, as its vocabulary reminds, owed much to the methods that the French had worked out. The American cowboy had greater indebtedness to Spanish experience [...]. The Spanish land system, mining law, and water law had partial adoption into the procedures of the American West. The log cabin is credited as a Swedish introduction, and other elements of wide diversity can be traced to other foreign or minority participants.⁴⁰

Influenced by Turner's thesis, other scholars reimagined the spatio-cultural dynamics at the western peripheries. During the 1930s, a group of ethnographers reframed frontier ideology in terms of acculturation processes that

required a meeting of two distinct cultures, and in most situations one found a socially "superior" and "inferior" culture side by side. In such cases, assimilation was almost certain,

transportation: the Indians' birchark canoe, ideally suited for the network of streams and rivers, was quickly adopted by European traders; then came oxen, horses, the opening of the Erie Canal, the arrival of steamboats and railroads. All brought new groups to the frontier who in turn left their marks, both as tangible objects and as institutions and beliefs" (M. Wyman, *The Wisconsin Frontier*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998, p. 296).

³⁸ Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 12.

³⁹ The log cabin design was not only imitated by other European colonists but also adopted by Native American communities that helped to spread it across the continent.

⁴⁰ Caughey, "The American West", p. 11.

since inferior cultures would normally adapt by voluntarily borrowing from the superior culture, and superior cultures commonly imposed themselves on inferiors. [...] [Ralph] Linton saw the end product as a “cultural fusion” in which elements of each culture combined. This was the most common outcome of Native and white interaction, the melding of both in an overarching Euro-American society with some limited Native elements.⁴¹

Approaching the subject from the perspective of Postcolonial Studies, Mary Louise Pratt envisioned a clash of civilizations through the concept of transculturation as “the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict. ‘Contact zone’ in my discussion is often synonymous with ‘colonial frontier’”.⁴² Turner concluded that the unique spatial interactions between the country’s eastern centres of power and its dynamic western peripheries created an exceptional American character as an entirely new society emerged through its members’ relationship to the peripheral spaces they settled and subjugated:

The West [...] is a form of society, rather than an area. It is the term applied to the region whose social conditions result from the application of older institutions and ideas to *the transforming influences of free land*. By this application, a new environment is suddenly entered, freedom of opportunity is opened, the cake of custom is broken, and new activities, new lines of growth, new institutions and new ideals, are brought into existence.⁴³

Shifting the focus from the coastal and colonial to the continental and national, this view “created a national historical interpretation. At some point then in the American past the whole nation was part of the west”.⁴⁴ The West thus became more than a physical space, a region, or a territory; it became a socio-spatial order that (environmentally) determined a coherent national character that replaced the fragmented mosaic of (white) immigrant identities, which Turner and his contemporaries feared could otherwise result in a similarly fragmented

⁴¹ Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word”, p. 193.

⁴² M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Abingdon: Routledge, 1992, p. 6. In his provocative essay “The Clash of Civilizations?” (1993), Samuel Huntington transferred a similar hypothesis to the stage of global politics, suggesting that the post-Cold War order would be structured not so much by economic and ideological factors but by conflicts between cultural and religious identities (S. P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”, *Foreign Affairs* 72 [1993] 3, pp. 22–49, at 22).

⁴³ F. J. Turner, “The Problem of the West”, *The Atlantic Monthly* 78 (1896) 367, pp. 289–297, at 289 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ Walsh, *The American West*, p. 2.

and tense geopolitical situation as in fin de siècle Europe. Instead of an English East Coast, German-Scandinavian Midwest, African-American and Creole South, French-British-Russian Northwest, and Hispanic Southwest, all with their own antagonistic cultures and agendas, Turner imagined a common ground between them in the form of an “American spirit” carved out at the frontier: “[A]t the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs”.⁴⁵ At the time of Turner’s proposition, so-called germ theory was a dominant historical theorem. It suggested that the nation’s character stemmed from Germanic sprigs transmitted to the New World.⁴⁶ Discounting this notion, Turner focused on “historical explanations that turned on an axis of the more recent past – explanations more area specific to their own experience than the forests of medieval Europe, the fens of England, or even the English colonial plantations”.⁴⁷

He concluded “that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American”.⁴⁸ Becoming “more American” aligned itself with the era’s political desires of constructing a more cohesive national historiography “that spoke to all Americans [and] explained the process of Americanization which created a nation out of diverse peoples and geographic fragments [...] in terms equal to those propounded by Europe’s national historians”.⁴⁹ Conversely, the idea of frontier history as universal history also put doubts on the relevance of local and regional spaces, not so much regarding their relevance for the nation but in terms of their cultural distinctness.

⁴⁵ Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Germ theory merged two separate epistemes as “a burst of German nationalism and a growing European interest in the history of German peoples inspire[d] the English and Americans to celebrate Anglo-Saxons as superior people competent to create institutions capable of ruling the world. In this view, high-minded, freedom-loving German people had migrated from their simple, pure life in the forests to infuse France and England with their excellent characteristics. [...] From these origins in German Romanticism, the English, and eventually, Americans were to combine race, nation, and language” (M. L. Meyer, “American Indian Blood Quantum Requirements: Blood Is Thicker than Family”, in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger [eds.], *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 231–249, at 237).

⁴⁷ M. Ridge, “The American West: Frontier to Region”, *New Mexico Historical Review* 64 (1989) 2, pp. 125–141, at 128.

⁴⁸ Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Ridge, “The American West”, p. 128.

Despite its shortcomings, the frontier thesis opened a more comprehensive historiography that no longer limited itself to writing narrative histories, chronologies of political events, and biographies of “exceptional” personalities. It also created impulses to extend the range of space-related sources and approach the West in a more comparative and interdisciplinary manner. Turner asked basic questions and often gave equally basic answers that are still of interest for cultural geography and historical studies. Over time, his epochal spatial doctrine – combined with the errand into wilderness, manifest destiny, American Adam, and John Winthrop’s notion of the City Upon a Hill – was mythologized and naturalized as a bedrock of US historiographies and policies. Identifying the frontier and auxiliary concepts as centrepieces of a particularly US spatial semantics thus represents an interim result of this book but also a connecting point for other disciplines to compare this American configuration with that of other nations or empires. Finally, the frontier thesis was successful because it conveniently explained expansionism and the appropriation of territories as natural processes that resulted not from exploitation and conquest but from the collision and “convergence of two chunks of history, the past and the future”.⁵⁰ At the turn of century, Turner’s thesis proved useful in undergirding an American exceptionalism that, bolstered by pseudo-scientific racialism and “muscular Christianity”, became a driving force behind the United States’ imperial policies. Today, discursive extensions and refinements of the frontier mythos continue to inform political agendas that, for instance, identify Middle Eastern regions as peripheries or counter-spaces to American-style democracy.

Old Western History: Expanding the Frontier

After his death in 1932, Turner left behind a strong academic following that continued his work. This group of so-called “old western historians” (sometimes called progressives) expanded and complicated the frontier thesis by including economic, ethnic, and environmental factors. Walter Prescott Webb’s textbook *The Great Plains* (1931) stressed the role of regional differences in climate and aridity by contrasting life in the East to the struggles of pioneers on the Great Plains, or what he called “the Great American Desert”.⁵¹ Webb understood the

⁵⁰ Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word”, p. 186.

⁵¹ D. Worster, *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 137. Worster quotes an emigrant named Daniels who used the term “Great American Desert”. Although he described the region as “uninhabited and uninhabitable”, Daniels acknowledged that “the country is not worthless. It is destined to be the great pasture

plains' extreme climate and topographies as the fault-line that separated East and West:

As one contrasts the civilization of the Great Plains with that of the American eastern timberland, one sees what may be called an institutional *fault* (comparable to a geological fault) running from the middle Texas to Illinois or Dakota, roughly following the ninety-eighth meridian. At this *fault* the ways of life and of living changed. Practically every institution that was carried across it was either broken and remade or else greatly altered. The ways of travel, the weapons, the method of tilling the soil, the plows and other agricultural implements, and even the laws themselves were modified.⁵²

Webb's concerns regarding the fragility of the prairies' ecosystems and water supplies were confirmed by severe droughts during the 1930s and the western exodus of farmers during the Dust Bowl, powerfully illustrated by John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* (1939). The Great Depression made the West appear less than exceptional during the 1930s and curtailed the enthusiasm and triumphalism connected to the frontier thesis. Ray Allen Billington was another doctoral student and biographer of Turner, as well as the founding president of the still-influential Western Historical Association (WHA). In the optimistic climate after World War 2 that once again favoured American exceptionalism and inspired by his mentor Arthur Schlesinger's pioneering studies of social and urban history, Billington revitalized the frontier thesis in the national and international arenas, albeit in a modified form that stressed material causes and actors (i.e. "users and subduers") over ideological constructs.⁵³ Based on causes and agents, Billington ordered western history as a processual sequence of historical frontiers formatted by different political, geographic, and economic factors:

of the nation" (ibid.). In contrast, Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail* imagines the region as a desolate, almost apocalyptic space: "If a curse had been pronounced upon the land", he writes, "it could not have worn an aspect of more dreary and forlorn barrenness. There were abrupt broken hills, deep hollows, and wide plains; but all alike glared with an insupportable whiteness under the burning sun" (F. Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*, New York: Charles E. Merrill Company, 1910, p. 246).

⁵² W. P. Webb, *The Great Plains*. Waltham: Blaisdell, 1939, pp. 8–9.

⁵³ Viewing the West through an economic lens, Billington suggested that the "frontier process can be roughly visualized in terms of two loosely defined groups. One – made up of fur trappers, missionaries, herdsmen, and others whose enterprise depended on preserving the wilderness – was interested in using nature. The other – comprised of farmers, speculators, town-planters, merchants, millers, and a host more whose profits depended on an expanding economy – was bent on subduing nature. Usually the Users preceded the Subduers" (R. A. Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage*, Kolkata: Scientific Book Agency, 1960, pp. 7–8).

The Spanish-Mexican Frontier, 1540–1776
 The Traders' Frontier, 1776–1840
 The Mississippi Valley Frontier, 1803–1840
 The Great Basin Frontier, 1830–1846
 The Miners' Frontier, 1858–1875
 The Transportation Frontier, 1858–1884
 The Ranchers' Frontier, 1865–1887
 The Farmers' Frontier, 1870–1890
 The Urban Frontier⁵⁴

Using the frontier thesis as a starting point, Billington and other old western historians connected analytical parameters of race, class, and gender to the placemaking equation of the West, hence laying the groundwork for more critical scholarship that followed in their wake. In the conclusion to *America's Frontier Heritage* (1960), Billington acknowledges the inbuilt flaws of Turner's thesis, while ultimately seeing it as the process that formatted the nation's historical and sociocultural identity. Concretely, he suggests that

relics of the pioneer heritage remain to distinguish Americans from their contemporaries beyond the seas. Their faith in democratic institutions, their belief in equality, their insistence that class lines shall never hinder social mobility, their wasteful economy, [...] their lack of attachment to place, their eagerness to experiment and to favor the new over the old, all mark the people of the United States as unique. To say that these characteristics and attitudes were solely the result of a pioneering past is to ignore many other forces that have helped shape the American character. But to deny that three centuries of frontiership endowed the people with some of their most distinctive traits is to neglect a basic molding force that has been the source of the nation's greatest strength – and some of its most regrettable weaknesses.⁵⁵

Apart from the frontier, nineteenth-century American literature engendered another angle of spatiality that put emphasis on the concepts of “original” or “first nature”. Mostly ignoring its native owners and millennia of cultural history, the untouched wilderness became an ensign for innocence and purity that

⁵⁴ The list reflects the sequence of chapters in Billington and Ridge's *Westward Expansion* (2001). The urban frontier refers to the metropolitan bridgeheads that energized the settler economy in the West, most notably Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Santa Fe.

⁵⁵ Billington, *Frontier Heritage*, p. 235. Billington was also known for his quirky limericks. Responding to Robert Dykstra's revisionist history *The Cattle Towns* (1968), he versified: “In story and film old Dodge City / Was a center of sin and tough titty. / But historians have shown / That imagine was overblown / It was moral and quiet (a pity)” (R. A. Billington, *Limericks: Historical and Hysterical*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1981, p. 34).

culminated in the “categorical opposition between things attributable to nature and those attributable to human society [which results in] a spatial purification, in which nature is understood as a pristine wilderness – a space-time outside or before the presence (or taint) of human settlement or activity”.⁵⁶ This idealization of nature and reflection of timeless, transcendent values surfaces in the work of Thoreau, Wordsworth, and Whitman, the conservationist agendas of John Muir and the Sierra Club, as well as the oeuvre of Hudson River School painters like Frederic Church and Asher Durand in which “America’s landscapes [turn into] ‘secular cathedrals,’ meant to inspire awe and reflection”.⁵⁷ As part of the Myth and Symbol school in the emerging field of American Studies, Henry Nash Smith’s *Virgin Land* (1950) re-examined the West through concepts like the American Adam, the myth of the garden, and agrarian utopianism, stressing the role of nature and mythical properties of the American landscape for the country’s identity.⁵⁸ In *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), Leo Marx identified tensions between pastoralism and industrialization as a central theme of nineteenth-century literary discourses. Not unlike the present effort, Marx looked at established narratives by Thoreau, Hawthorne, Twain, and Melville but also included dime novels and paintings in his analyses. Industrialization’s sweeping introduction of machines into the cathedrals of nature, he inferred, became key in revising the nation’s relationship to space and expressed itself through various myths and symbols. Similar transformations occur, for instance, in the utilitarian exploitation of pastoral landscapes to which Thoreau alludes in *Walden* (1854)

56 D. Gregory et al. (eds.), *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2009, p. 492. In the 1990s, an experiment in the Arizonan desert attempted to build a self-contained “natural” environment within a massive glass dome called Biosphere 2. Valerie Matsumoto recounts that the dome was “peopled by scientists and funded by Ed Bass, the famed Texas billionaire” but soon was “dealing with penetrable boundaries and the contamination of its pristine environment. The [...] experimental edenic utopia came to grief when alleged saboteurs ‘breached four of the five sealed doors to the dome ... and smashed several glass panes.’ The project, which had attempted to demonstrate that scientists could create and live in a state of pure nature, was based on what now seems like naive idealism” (Allmendinger and Matsumoto, “Introduction”, pp. 4–5).

57 R. Andersen, “Nature Has Lost Its Meaning”, *The Atlantic*, 30 November 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2015/11/nature-has-lost-its-meaning/417918/>.

58 Neil Smith points out that this vision of “[e]xternal nature is pristine, God-given, autonomous; it is the raw material from which society is built, the frontier which industrial capitalism continually pushes back. As trees and rocks, rivers and rainstorms, it is external nature waiting to be internalized in the process of social production” (N. Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008, p. 11).

when he complains about the noise of passing trains that disturb his idyll at Walden Pond.⁵⁹

This longing for natural harmony and transcendental qualities laments its contamination by human activities, marking a rejection of western expansionism and its uncritical celebration. Today, the Anthropocene represents the hypernym for the progressing “human dominance of the environment”.⁶⁰ This includes what naturalist William Vogt called “the cornucopian faith”, namely the naive belief in the abundance and inexhaustibility of natural resources.⁶¹ As a result of human dominance over environments, the space of first nature is being degraded to Potemkin villages, becoming a mere stage for its own simulations.⁶² In this spatial imagination, original nature has – like the postlapsarian Garden Eden – been “tainted” and can no longer be accessed through “authentic” experiences. What remains then is its aesthetic exemplification, for instance by landscape paintings that depict an untouched West.⁶³ For others, original nature turns into transcendental space accessible only for worthy

59 Thoreau writes: “The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer’s yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town, or adventurous country traders from the other side. As they come under one horizon, they shout their warning to get off the track to the other, heard sometimes through the circles of two towns. Here come your groceries, country; your rations, countrymen! Nor is there any man so independent on his farm that he can say them nay. And here’s your pay for them! screams the countryman’s whistle; [...] All the Indian huckleberry hills are stripped, all the cranberry meadows are raked into the city. Up comes the cotton, down goes the woven cloth; up comes the silk, down goes the woollen; up come the books, but down goes the wit that writes them” (H. D. Thoreau, *Walden*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989 [1854], pp. 115–116).

60 L. E. Edwards, “What is the Anthropocene?”, *Eos*, 30 November 2015, <http://eos.org/opinions/what-is-the-anthropocene>; see M. Ronda, “Mourning and Melancholia in the Anthropocene”, *Post45*, 10 June 2013, <http://post45.org/2013/06/mourning-and-melancholia-in-the-anthropocene>.

61 Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 178.

62 The idea of an unspoiled first nature informed works such as Guyot’s *The Earth and Man* (1849) where the spatial destiny of mankind plays out in nature’s “vast extents, its fruitful plains, its numberless rivers, the prodigious facility of communication, nowhere impeded by serious obstacles, its oceanic position [that] is made [...] to furnish forth for man, whose education the Old World has completed, the most magnificent theatre, the scene most worthy of his activity” (A. H. Guyot, *Earth and Man, Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography, in Its Relation to the History of Mankind*, C. C. Felton (trans.), Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1853 [1849], p. 297).

63 Andrew Wood explains that “[t]he transition from experience to simulation emerges in a tripartite process borrowed from William Cronon: first, second, and third nature. First nature is the world of the garden; it contains human beings living in the world, organically related to its natural cycles. Second nature is the world of the machine; it is the production of things. Third nature is best illustrated by Disney’s California Adventure; it is the postmodern

participants, analogous to conceptions of paradise shared by Abrahamic faiths. This viewpoint introduces hierarchies by assigning moral values to actors as either participating in or being “outside” of nature, advancing generalizations and reductive binaries of noble savages and violent settlers. In *The Myths That Made America*, Heike Paul points to the contradictions of this epistemology: “Since the Myth and Symbol scholars did not thoroughly reflect their own positionality, their ideological presuppositions to a certain degree predetermined their findings, and their scholarly endeavors mainly produced an affirmation (rather than any precise definition or critique) of those American myths, symbols, and images on which the field imaginary of American studies relied so strongly”.⁶⁴ Partially acknowledging these issues, Leo Marx concludes his analysis by conceding that “[t]he machine’s sudden entrance into the garden presents a problem that ultimately belongs not to art but to politics”.⁶⁵ This assessment proved almost prophetic in its anticipation of the next wave of western scholarship. As area studies programmes went overseas at the onset of the Cold War, the concepts outlined above began to be discussed in increasingly global and comparative contexts. In its various academic guises, the frontier thesis consolidated its influence in both American and transatlantic discourses, becoming a metaphor for progress and the overcoming of boundaries. Actual and fictional frontiers were exceeded by science, technology, and space travel, for instance by *Star Trek*’s famous invocation of space as “the final frontier”, thus framing the malleable limits of “liberal-democratic capitalism in the terms of an ‘American Century’”.⁶⁶ As part of his acceptance speech to the Democratic nomination, John F. Kennedy proclaimed that “we stand today on the edge of a New

consumption of images” (A. F. Wood, “Communication in the Age of Mobility”, *Wood Valley*, 2005, <https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/195/syllabus5rothman.html>).

⁶⁴ H. Paul, *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2014, p. 20.

⁶⁵ L. Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 365. This statement also mirrors David Harvey’s insight that “[a]ttachment to a certain conception of space and time is a political decision, and the historical geography of space and time reveals it so to be. What kind of space and time do we, as professional geographers, seek to promote? To what processes of social reproduction do those concepts subtly but persistently allude?” (D. Harvey, “Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 [1990] 3, pp. 418–434, at 432).

⁶⁶ Gregory et al., *Human Geography*, p. 26. The term American Century was first coined in 1941 by Henry Luce, the cofounder of *Time* magazine, describing “US global dominance [...] as the natural outcome of historical progress. [...] Insofar it was beyond geography, the American Century was beyond empire and beyond reproof” (D. Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 51).

Frontier – the frontier of the 1960's – a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils – a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats [...] beyond that frontier are the uncharted areas of science and space".⁶⁷ Since the late 1980s, the frontier has also turned into a metaphor for the uncharted depths of cyberspace. Organizations like the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) envisaged the early internet not only as a virtual extension of civil liberties but also as an egalitarian space with the transformative potential of mitigating real-life issues such as access to information, physical disability, social anxiety, and racial discrimination.⁶⁸

New Western History: Expatriating the Frontier

*I know your language, but I wish it were silence
The seeds are sown in all the small acts of violence
I was just so tired, too tired to say a thing
Kept my head down, eyes closed, and let freedom ring
We let freedom ring
But whose freedom?*

tUnE-yArDs⁶⁹

At the end of the 1980s, Turner's chiefly white and male-centric conception of the American West was challenged by a new generation of scholars that focused on the understudied experiences of minorities and women and their position in a nation steering towards its manifest destiny to span from Atlantic to Pacific and along the way transform the continent into an agrarian utopia as envisioned by Franklin, Jefferson, Emerson, or Thoreau.⁷⁰ The validity of the

⁶⁷ Qtd. in J. M. Logsdon, *John F. Kennedy and the Race to the Moon*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 8.

⁶⁸ B. Sterling, "A Statement of Principle", *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, 30 September 1992, <https://www.eff.org/effector/3/6>. Others populate cyberspace with stereotypical images of the West, imagining "an unfenced range of computer technology, inhabited by cowboys called hackers who rustle information from forms of artificial intelligence. [Cyberspace] offers the advantage of bodiless anonymity and conceptual freedom of movement while raising fears about the lawlessness that exists in a world of vigilante information-acquisition and piracy" (Allmendinger and Matsumoto, "Introduction", p. 5).

⁶⁹ M. Garbus and N. Brenner, "Coast to Coast", *I can feel you creep into my private life*, 2018, <https://open.spotify.com/track/4yX5P4BUapVsFjbMEKtJrB>.

⁷⁰ The movement also received attention outside of academia. *The Milwaukee Journal* reported on 11 October 1989 that "a corps of academic Young Turks has mounted a full scale war against one of the most influential intellectual concepts in American history: Frederick Jackson Turner's famous 'frontier thesis'. The scholars promoting what they call the 'new Western history' are

frontier's monolithic spatial order began to be scrutinized by New Western History, spearheaded by publications such as Patricia Nelson Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (1987) and Richard White's *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (1991).⁷¹ These and other revisionist histories rejected the frontier as a prime generator of character and nation-building and instead viewed the West as an arena of conquest and settler colonialism, proposing that "the term 'frontier' is nationalistic and often racist (in essence, the area where white people get scarce)".⁷² Instead of a state of mind and national triumph, the West in this conception turns into a space shaped by "invasion, conquest, colonization, exploitation, development, [and] expansion of the world market colliding identities" but also a multicultural "meeting ground, the point where Indian America, Latin America, Anglo-America, Afro-America, and Asia intersected".⁷³ Highlighting social realities and individual experiences of this "meeting ground", Limerick and her academic peers outlined a western patchwork of regions, each with their own and oftentimes traumatic histories. These histories were shaped by Euroamerican exploitation internal colonialism, and the continual struggle – both physical and discursive – over resources and ownership:⁷⁴

Happily or not, minorities and majorities occupied a common ground. Conquest basically involved the drawing of lines on a map, the allocation of ownership (personal, tribal,

teaching [...] that Turner's powerful idea [...] is racist, sexist, wrong, irrelevant – or all of the above" (qtd. in Walsh, *The American West*, pp. 10–11). Like other contemporaneous revisionist projects such as the controversial Enola Gay Exhibition in 1995, New Western History was viewed very critically by conservative observers.

71 See P. N. Limerick, C. A. Milner, and C. E. Rankin (eds.), *Trails: Toward a New Western History*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991. Walsh suggested that the movement's critical stance could be explained by "insecurity in the wake of the Vietnam War [that] had shaken Americans' confidence in their world superiority and their imperial ventures [...]". The dark side of western history was not only revealed, but became its dominant face" (Walsh, *The American West*, p. 7). Another key publication was *Under an Open Sky*, whose opening paragraph asks provocatively: "Does the western past have a future?" (W. Cronon, G. A. Miles, and J. Gitlin [eds.], *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1992, p. 3).

72 P. N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1987, p. 85.

73 Ibid., p. 86.

74 Stephen Howe defines internal colonialism as "the distinct separation of the dominant core, from the periphery in an empire. The term was created to describe the 'blurred' lines between geographically close locations that are clearly different in terms of culture. [...] Factors that might separate the core from the periphery can be: language, religion, physical appearance, types and levels of technology, and sexual behavior" (S. Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 18–19).

corporate, state, federal, and international), and the evolution of land from matter to property. [...] Western history has been an ongoing competition for legitimacy – for the right to claim for oneself and sometimes for one's group the status of legitimate beneficiary of Western resources. This intersection of ethnic diversity with property allocation unifies Western history.⁷⁵

Based on these new paradigms, scholars from various backgrounds set out to deconstruct more ossified truisms of the West, suggesting alternative spatial conceptualizations that imagined the West through formats such as borderlands,⁷⁶ thirdspaces,⁷⁷ rhizomes,⁷⁸ or as site of transnational flows.⁷⁹ Others embedded the “New West” in Marxist critiques of disparate economic practices, for instance William Robbins’ *Colony & Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (1994) that “echoed the negativism of the New Western Historians in [its] findings. The west, its resources and its laborers were exploited as part of a

75 Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, p. 9. In one of the first articles about the New Western Historians, Richard Bernstein commented that “the stuff we were taught in elementary schools and universities alike, the narrative that Limerick sometimes calls ‘the old hat frontier history’ in which ‘heroic pioneers brought civilization to a savage wilderness,’ is distorted, misleading, exclusive, chauvinistic and, in the words of some more rhetorically radical historians, even ‘racist’ and ‘sexist.’ [...] The new historians question the very idea of a Western – and thus an American – success story. They represent a tipping of the moral scales to that unhappy point where national faults and imperfections seem to balance national virtues. [...] The new history of the American West incorporates the post-Vietnam mood. It reflects the willingness of the 60’s generation to find the invisible worm eating away at the once blushing rose of the American self-image” (R. Bernstein, “Unsettling the Old West”, *The New York Times*, 18 March 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/03/18/magazine/unsettling-the-old-west.html>).

76 G. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987.

77 Soja, *Thirdspace*.

78 N. Campbell, *The Rhizomatic West: Representing the American West in a Transnational, Global, Media Age*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

79 Giles, *Global Remapping*; H. Paul, “Critical Regionalism and Post-Exceptionalist American Studies”, in: W. Fluck and D. E. Pease (eds.), *Towards a Post-Exceptionalist American Studies*, Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2014, pp. 397–423. Herbert Eugene Bolton, one of Turner’s renegade doctoral students who later worked as director of Berkeley’s Bancroft Library, proposed similarly holistic approaches in his *Colonization of North America* (1920) and *The Spanish Borderlands* (1921). There, he disagreed with the frontier thesis and suggested that US history could not be properly understood without taking into account the transnational influences in the ordering of the United States (K. E. Chamberlain, “Bolton, Herbert E.”, in: K. Boyd [ed.], *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, vol. 1, Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 1999, pp. 105–106). Digital tools can also help to visualize the historical distribution of spatial key concepts. Looking at the American English language corpus between 1800 and 2008 in Google’s Ngram Viewer, for instance, shows a decline of the term “frontier” after World War 2 and a resurgence of “border” and “borderlands” during the 1980s.

continually changing and expansive global market system”.⁸⁰ In the ecocritical tradition of Webb’s warnings about the fragility of western resources, Donald Worster’s *Dust Bowl* (1979) and *Rivers of Empire* (1985) illustrate the human costs of increasingly sensitive western irrigation projects. Aridity combined with creed, he argues, created an exploitative spatial order similar to what Wittfogel termed “hydraulic society”.⁸¹ As an anonymous commentator in the *American Phrenological Journal* already noted in the middle of the nineteenth century: “[T]he Western farmer wastes more in a year than the Eastern farmer saves”.⁸² Still other concepts have yet to be applied to the West, for example its view as a “state of exception” or realm of “necropolitics”.⁸³

Reflected in these partly conflicting and partly overlapping ideas, the West today has become a highly contested entity around which local, regional, national, and transnational explanations from various disciplinary perspectives intermingle and claim the prerogative of interpretation. Connecting threads between the above approaches are their critical stance towards nationalism, colonial history, and view of the US as an outcome of forceful bordering of a highly diverse transcontinental space. Although they implicitly or explicitly reject the frontier as a driving force behind national development, they nonetheless take part in a discourse of the exceptional West, albeit in reverse by emphasizing not dominant but marginalized histories and peoples as central for the nation-state and their own critique of it. This goes to show that any attempts (including those of the following analyses) of detaching western regions from the leviathan formats of frontier and manifest destiny also lead to their discursive strengthening and implicit confirmation as they are perpetually repeated, decoded, and re-encoded – even if being ultimately rejected. The New Western Historians’ revisionary histories have also not stood uncriticized. Kerwin Klein concedes that “[a]lthough the ritual flagellation of Frederick Jackson Turner has become a popular scholarly pastime, we need a more careful conceptual history” and goes on to argue:

The old, frontier-style western history, so the argument goes, has so closely identified itself with celebratory accounts of what a good thing it was for Europeans to have slaughtered their way across the continent that the only way to introduce non-male, non-white

⁸⁰ Walsh, *The American West*, p. 13.

⁸¹ D. M. Kennedy, “We Enjoy Pushing Rivers Around”, *The New York Times*, 23 February 1986 sec. 7, p. 7, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/02/23/books/we-enjoy-pushing-rivers-around.html>.

⁸² Qtd. in L. U. Reavis, *A Change of National Empire; or Arguments in Favor of the Removal of the National Capital from Washington City to the Mississippi Valley*, St. Louis: J. F. Torrey, 1869, p. vii.

⁸³ G. Agamben, *Stato di Eccezione [State of Exception]*, K. Attell (trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 [2003]; A. Mbembe, “Necropolitics”, *Political Culture* 15 (2003) 1, pp. 11–40.

voices to our public memory is to renounce frontier history, give up talking about western history in continental terms, and concentrate on the West as region. [...] Worse, [New Western Historians] would separate the West from the imperial processes that placed it at the center of national memory and joined it to transnational global histories. And they propose that replacing “frontier” with “West,” historically the key word of Orientalism, will eliminate ethnocentrism from our scholarly discourse!⁸⁴

Considering its constant writing, subversion, and rewriting, it thus seems evident that no single concept to the American West can penetrate its multiscalar complexity and provide access to its every aspect. Now, well over a century after Turner’s lectures in Chicago, the frontier has by no means forfeited its impact as a governing historical and cultural paradigm. Conversely, it continues to inform the narratives of history textbooks and western iconography in popular culture.⁸⁵ As Matsumoto notes, “the mixed legacies of the past come with us, as warning ghosts, burrowed strength, weapons, tools, and toys. Sifting through and scrutinizing them [...] provides a useful point at which to consider where we are and where we may be going”.⁸⁶ Turner’s original proclamations of an exceptional space proved useful in whitewashing centuries of conflict at the western peripheries after the end of the Civil War and thus during a time when American policy-makers sought to put past wrongs behind and rally public support for the nation’s imperial enterprises around the globe.

Figuratively speaking, the West therefore has been scattered in all directions, at least with regards to its academic understandings. Its powerful myths and metaphors, however, constantly return to influence contemporary spatial imaginations, flexibly and effortlessly attaching themselves to spatial subjects, debates, and controversies. Examples can readily be discovered in discursive strategies used on the stage of national politics. During the 2016 presidential campaign, both Democratic and Republican candidates relied on tensions between periphery and centre as rhetorical tools to discredit their opposition. Democrats regularly characterized supporters of Donald Trump as located on the economic fringes and culturally barred hinterlands of the country. Hillary Clinton’s dictum of a “basket of deplorables” referred to their lack of morals (in the form of racism, sexism etc.) and

⁸⁴ Klein, “Reclaiming the ‘F’ Word”, pp. 181–183.

⁸⁵ *True West Magazine*, a popular print and online resource for western history, asked in January 2019: “What myth? The frontier was as real as a sawed-off shotgun and wilder than anyone could make up. The same goes for the [western] towns where our unique American story unfolded” (L. W. Banks, “Too Tough to Die! From Arkansas to Washington, Western Towns Welcome the World to their Historic Downtowns to Immerse in and Celebrate the Glories of the American West”, *True West Magazine*, 4 January 2019, <https://truewestmagazine.com/too-tough-to-die-towns/>).

⁸⁶ Allmendinger and Matsumoto, “Introduction”, p. 12.

hence their imagined remoteness from the centres of ethical standards.⁸⁷ In turn, Donald Trump's rhetorical strategy took cues from nineteenth-century revivalist movements that often centered around the peripheries. In his speeches, he praised the midwestern enclaves of small-town USA as the morally intact heartland of traditional values. He then contrasted this imagined archive of a purer (and implicitly whiter) version of America with the liberal metropolises at the coasts, which he excoriated as corrupt peripheries and "swamps" that could only be "drained" by an injection of conserved and conservative values from the heartland.⁸⁸ Similar dynamics are found in popular culture as part of comic books or folk and country songs that envision the rural West as a conservatory of the nation's true spirit, for example in the folk ballads of Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Johnny Cash. Different versions of Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" close with their lyrics either stating "This land was made for you and me" or asking: "Is this land made for you and me?" They hence point to basic issues of placemaking, ownership, and identity, as well as leading to the song's reading either as an "alternative national anthem [or] Marxist response to 'God Bless America'".⁸⁹ In their sum, these examples underscore the real-world impact and disruptive effects of literary and cultural geographies as key agents that continually permeate US and global discourses, consequently highlighting their ongoing relevance as matters that exceed purely historical or theoretical interests.

⁸⁷ See A. D. Holan, "In Context: Hillary Clinton and the 'Basket of Deplorables'", *Politifact*, 11 September 2016, <https://www.politifact.com/article/2016/sep/11/context-hillary-clinton-basket-deplorables/>.

⁸⁸ See T. Widmer, "Draining the Swamp", *The New Yorker*, 19 January 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/draining-the-swamp>.

⁸⁹ N. Spitzer, "The Story Of Woody Guthrie's 'This Land Is Your Land'", *National Public Radio*, 15 February 2012, <https://www.npr.org/2000/07/03/1076186/this-land-is-your-land>.

Methods and Theories: Doing Over Geography

John Dee got it wrong; the geography has to be done over.

We live inside a hollow earth, enclosed by the terrestrial surface.

Umberto Eco¹

Much of the work in the fields of literary and cultural geography has been subsumed under the “spatial turn” in the humanities and social sciences. During the later decades of the twentieth century, this turn denoted a break with an epistemology of space that, with little exceptions, was a product of the Enlightenment and early capitalism and that approximated spatiality largely in physical or territorial terms.² Interested in the social construction of space, critical geography produced a wide array of (post)structuralist approaches, among them Lefebvre’s *La production de l’espace* (1974) whose English translation sparked renewed interest in the study of space. In the following decades, a new appreciation of spatial paradigms was “encouraged by the importation of French theory, in particular the work of Foucault, Lefebvre, de Certeau, and Virilio, which newly emphasized the power relations implicit in landscape under general headings like ‘abstract space,’ place, and ‘symbolic place,’ interpreted through new spatial metaphors like ‘panopticism’”.³ Edward Soja suggested that many of these ideas represented “a radical postmodernist perspective” which entails a “restructuring of long-established modes of knowledge formation [...] such as feminism and the struggle against racism and colonialism”.⁴

For the purposes of this book, Lefebvre’s and Soja’s merits lie in the liberation of space-related thinking from its internment in the natural sciences and the subsequent development of methodologies that allow for “the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical rebalancing of spatiality, historicity [sic], and sociality as all-embracing dimensions of human life”.⁵ Or, in the words of

1 U. Eco, *Foucault’s Pendulum*, New York: Random House, 2014 [1988], p. 509.

2 U. Engel, *Regionalismen*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018, p. 3; S. Günzel, “Raum – Topographie – Topologie”, in: S. Günzel (ed.), *Topologie. Zur Raumbeschreibung in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2007, pp. 13–29.

3 J. Guldi, “What is the Spatial Turn?”, *Spatial Humanities: A Project of the Institute for Enabling Geospatial Scholarship*, 2011, <http://spatial.scholarslab.org/spatial-turn/what-is-the-spatial-turn/>.

4 Soja, *Thirdspace*, p. 3.

5 Ibid., p. 10. The historical background of the spatial turn is much more complex, going back to the notion that “[t]he great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis, and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its preponderance of dead men [...] the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of

Benno Werlen: “*Das Räumliche ist das Produkt des Tuns*” (spatiality is the outcome of action).⁶ Consequently, places and cultural regions have come to be seen as de-essentialized and socially produced “spaces which people have made meaningful”, thus creating “the basic coordinates of human life. When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it [...] it becomes a place”.⁷ This adds to Tim Cresswell’s insight that thinking in spatial terms gives access to new “way[s] of seeing, knowing and understanding the world” but can also result in “reactionary and exclusionary xenophobia, racism and bigotry. ‘Our place’ is threatened and others have to be excluded”.⁸

In her 2004 presidential address to the American Studies Association (ASA), Shelley Fisher-Fishkin endorsed the “transnational turn” that positioned the US “as part of a world system [and] pay[s] increasing attention to the historical roots of multidirectional flows of people, ideas, and goods and the social, political, linguistic, cultural, and economic crossroads generated in the process”.⁹ This approach benefited from newfound perspectives on seemingly closed-off topics and aimed at the “worlding of American Studies”, namely the study of “U.S. culture within the context of the Americas and larger world systems”.¹⁰ As a result, the nation-state forfeited its status as an exceptional and monolithic entity, only to be increasingly imagined as an “imagined community”.¹¹ The transnational scrutiny of the nation has shifted focus away from the centres of territorial power and towards peripheries and liminal regimes, most notably the Mexican-American borderlands, as well as spatial practices and conditions like

juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein” (M. Foucault, “*Des Espace Autres*” [“Of Other Spaces”], J. Miskowiec (trans.), *Diacritics* 16 (1986) 1 [1967], pp. 22–27, at 22).

6 B. Werlen, “Festvortrag”, Leipzig, 25 May 2016. According to Werlen, the construction of geographic realities commences through three different strategies and within three categories: trading in economy, legitimizing in politics and law, and symbolizing through cultural signification (ibid.).

7 T. Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, p. 7.

8 Ibid., pp. 8–11.

9 S. F. Fishkin, “Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies”, *American Quarterly* 57 (2005) 1, pp. 17–57, at 21–22.

10 R. Adams, “The Worlding of American Studies”, *American Quarterly* 53 (2001) 4, pp. 720–732, at 730.

11 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Brooklyn: Verso Books, 1983, p. 1.

migration and diaspora.¹² These concepts prove highly productive for the deconstructive attitude of this book regarding spatial (meta)narratives. This goal, however, cannot be achieved by ignoring or dismissing the pivotal role of national(ist) discourses about the American West. The objective thus is “not to overcome national perspectives but to explore the multiplicity and diversity of spatial imaginations in the early national period”.¹³

In recent years, Brian Russell Roberts’ and Michelle Ann Stephens’ *Archipelagic American Studies* suggested a departure from continental perspectives by envisioning the United States as a fragmented entity whose incorporated territories and exclusive economic zones engender hemispheric networks. This “decontinentalizing” includes “archipelagic imaginaries and reading practices that foreground the Americas’ embeddedness within a planetary archipelago that holds in tension the supraregional and the microregional”.¹⁴ Hester Blum’s *The News at the Ends of the Earth* (2019) describes the US as an “Arctic nation” embedded in a colonial history of polar exploration and colonization that engendered spatial tropes which informed key texts like *Moby-Dick*. The nation’s future, Blum suggests is closely linked to Arctic ecosystems, climate change, and melting glaciers, whose thawing causes spatial imaginations of the past (e.g. in the form of bottled messages freed from melting ice sheets) to return into the present consciousness. Looking to the North instead of following a westward trajectory, Blum’s study shares common ground with this book by implicitly translating Edwards’ concept of *décalage* into the uncovering of spatial discourses that are exposed not by “the taking away of something [...] artificial” but by the addition of something artificial, namely global warming.¹⁵

12 Revising western history along these lines reveals a historical continuity that posits American borderlands as the destination of sixteenth-century European conquerors, nineteenth-century manifest destiny, and modern-day migrants and refugees. As Clyde Milner puts it: “The American West began as an international borderland between native peoples, the Spanish, Russians, French, and British. Today the international borderlands are even more significant with connections directly to Canada in the north, Mexico to the south, and numerous Asian nations via the Pacific” (Milner, “America Only More So”, p. 39).

13 G. Pizarz-Ramirez, S. Wöll, and D. Bozkurt, *Spatial Fictions: Imagining (Trans)national Space in the Southern and Western Peripheries of the Nineteenth Century United States*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2018, p. 7.

14 B. R. Roberts and M. A. Stephens (eds.), *Archipelagic American Studies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, p. 11.

15 Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, p. 14. An entry on the White House website posted under Barack Obama’s presidency titled “America Is an Arctic Nation” states: “Melting glaciers and land-based ice sheets are contributing to rising sea levels. The future of America is inextricably linked to the future of the Arctic”. Fittingly, a disclaimer above the archived article informs readers that “[t]his is historical material ‘frozen in time’” (R. J. Papp, Jr., “America Is an

These approaches to American, global, and transnational spaces increasingly subvert and displace established epistemologies of centredness and peripherality, upending and distorting imaginations of the US rooted in colonial histories and modernist literary canons. But their disruptive attitudes also ask if an investigation that engages traditional concepts like frontier and manifest destiny can appear anachronistic or even regressive. While some might think this to be the case, it does not affect the objective at hand, namely to examine the discursive roots of spatialization processes. In today's political climate that is shaped by growing conflicts over global migration and perceived threats to the stability of national borders and identities in the US and Europe, taking a step back and looking at the emergence of mental trajectories that energize these conflicts and fears seems more relevant than ever. The challenge of dealing with nineteenth-century sources lies in the need of carefully ungluing texts from their historical embeddedness within linear timelines that seem to inevitably culminate in the emergence of nation-state and empire. The present book reveals the latter as only two of many spatial formats and aims to recover those that existed in juxtaposition or below dominant narratives, crisscrossing and defying the parochialisms of traditional epistemologies of local, regional, (inter/trans)national, and global formats.

Re-acknowledging space in nineteenth-century texts means unpacking the historical caveats and interplays of spatial representations and in this manner contributing to the understanding of processes that inform(ed) American identities by "revisiting founding, if not foundational, notions and ideologies of space".¹⁶ Oftentimes, these "notions and ideologies" appear most forcefully in the works of authors that found themselves caught between the grindstones of the nation's ostensible spatiotemporal destiny, the socially disparate allocation of resources, and liminal configurations of ethnicity and gender. In light of Said's demand for "a geographical inquiry into historical experience" and assertion that "most cultural historians, and certainly all literary scholars, have failed to remark the geographical notation, the theoretical mapping and charting of territory that underlies Western fiction" certainly seems ripe.¹⁷ Such a "theoretical mapping" must be guided by theoretical awareness of the spatial dimensions of textuality and thus be able to locate these dimensions in theoretical and real-life contexts.

Arctic Nation", *The White House: President Barack Obama*, 2 December 2014, <https://obama.whitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2014/12/02/america-arctic-nation>).

¹⁶ S. Blair, "Cultural Geography and the Place of the Literary", *American Literary History* 10 (1998) 3, pp. 544–567, at 550.

¹⁷ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 7; *ibid.* p. 58.

Achieving these goals produces spatial literacy by demonstrating how cultural discourse functions within the framework of spatialization processes.

The Spatial Dialectics of the American West

Only a dialogue with the past can produce originality.

Wilson Harris¹⁸

American Studies with its broad theoretical and methodological repertoire supplies a productive basis from which to recover and evaluate the complexity of spatial imaginations in nineteenth-century literature.¹⁹ Conceptualized by architectural theorist Alexander Tzonis and historian Kenneth Frampton as a critique of the anonymity and uniformity of postmodern architecture – and perhaps best summarized in the notion that “Americans do not need piazzas, since they should be at home watching television” – the critical regionalist method has been appropriated, modified, and refined in the service of various disciplines.²⁰ It is often contrasted to traditional regionalism with its archival studies and more specialized subjects. Accused of parochialism and provincialism, regionalism for some has turned into an almost pejorative term that seems to stand in the way of more inclusive perspectives that emphasize transnational and global connections. Limerick expresses this idea by stating that “to many scholars, regional history is where one goes for a nap”.²¹ Joseph Crespino and Matthew Lassiter proposed a redefinition of regionalism that might be able to wake up these “napping scholars”. Concretely, they suggested that “[r]egions are culturally constructed spaces of the collective imagination and not simply coherent entities

¹⁸ Qtd. in V. Dindyal, *Guyanese Achievers, USA & Canada: A Celebration*, Bloomington: Trafford, 2011, p. 577.

¹⁹ Sarah Blair points out that “[f]ictive texts, with all their tricks of resistance to the imperatives of the temporal and the teleological, are a far richer resource than literary geographers have thus far recognized for charting the ‘strange effects’ of space – its simultaneity, its encryptions, its dynamism and repressions” (Blair, “Cultural Geography”, p. 556).

²⁰ K. Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance”, in: H. Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1983, pp. 16–30, at 25.

²¹ Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, p. 84. As much as he was a proponent of a nationalized western history, Turner also stressed the importance of regional histories, albeit only in the framework of the nation. Martin Ridge relates that “each year [Turner] asked his seminar students to write two papers – the first on a narrow [regional] frontier subject and the second on why it was important in the nation’s history” (Ridge, “The American West”, p. 140).

located inside clear lines on a map”.²² According to Heike Paul, this way of imagining regions for cultural and literary studies becomes productive because it “interrogates the discursive ‘production’ and the role of regions in large geopolitical constellations – often under the conditions of colonialism/empire and/or modernism, neo-liberalism, and globalization. Thus, it critically reflects, first, on a traditional paradigm of regionalism that was often invested in essentialist, at times romanticized and nostalgic notions of regional formations and identities”.²³

Critical regionalism in this way enables scholars to take heed of regional connectedness and representational macro-structures that simultaneously construct and deconstruct regions as imagined spaces. Such an approach demands a heightened sense of self-awareness since getting involved in the study of literary placemaking also means becoming “a part of the larger creation of place itself”.²⁴ In addition, as already noted, decoding and re-encoding go hand in hand and scholars are by no means non-participants but transformative actors in this process.²⁵ To conclude, critical regionalism helps revealing how layers of meaning accumulate around and attach themselves to realities or imaginations of certain (regional) spaces.

Emphasizing the role of historicity in literary theory, new historicism precipitated a paradigm change during the 1980s in reaction to the more inflexible formalisms of New Criticism, structuralism, and poststructuralist deconstruction. Duncan Salkeld compares this approach to a flexible toolset that brings together “related materialist, Marxist and feminist critical practices as they seek to interpret literary works amid the complexities of their own historical moment”.²⁶ In its analytical chapters, the present book builds upon this notion by adopting what anthropologist Clifford Geertz in *The Interpretation of Cultures* calls a “thick description”, namely the discernment that human behaviour (including that of fictional characters) cannot be meaningfully explained outside of its sociocultural context.²⁷

²² M. D. Lassiter and J. Crespino (eds.), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 11.

²³ Paul, “Critical Regionalism”, p. 398.

²⁴ D. R. Powell, *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007, p. 26.

²⁵ K. Struve, “Third Space”, in: D. Götsche, A. Dunker, and G. Dürbeck (eds.), *Handbuch Postkolonialismus und Literatur*, 2017, pp. 226–229, at 226.

²⁶ D. Salkeld, “New Historicism”, in: C. Knellwolf and C. Norris, *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 59–70, at 59.

²⁷ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 27. Geertz adopts the term “thick description” from British philosopher Gilbert Ryle and goes on to argue that “[i]t is not against a body of uninterpreted data, radically thinned descriptions, that we must

He proposed that such a strategy necessitates believing like “Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun [and taking] culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning”.²⁸ According to Harold Aram Veenser, the basic assumptions of new historicism include:

1. that every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices;
2. that every act of unmasking, critique and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes;
3. that literary and non-literary “texts” circulate inseparably;
4. that no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths, nor expresses inalterable human nature;
5. that a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe.²⁹

Against this background, Foucault’s concept of power-knowledge becomes a vital instrument to correlate the production and reproduction of texts to their function within prevalent discourses of race, class, and gender and relating to agendas of dominant or “correct” interpretive governances.³⁰ The following analyses include a variety of sources both historical and contemporary with the goal to initiate a “thick”, namely intertextual and interdisciplinary debate among them. This approach is moreover indebted to “crossmapping” as a “reading strategy that engages and connects ‘visual imagery’ and ‘figures of thought’ in different ‘texts’ that are not in any narrow sense intertextually connected but can be brought into play to productively signify on each other”.³¹

Of course, all above-mentioned methods emerged long after the primary sources discussed below came into being. In dialectical terms, the present study thus faces the dilemma of being caught between two hermeneutic extremes: The first option would be to tacitly assume a position of historical “objectivity”. Notwithstanding the well-known problems concerning objectivism itself, this position would mean discarding many so-called (post)structuralist approaches and

measure the cogeny of our explications, but against the power of the scientific imagination to bring us into touch with the lives of strangers” (ibid., p. 16).

28 Ibid., p. 5.

29 H. A. Veenser, “Introduction”, in: H. A. Veenser (ed.), *The New Historicism*, Abingdon: Routledge, 1989, pp. ix–xvi, at xi.

30 M. Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison* [*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*], A. M. S. Smith (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 1995 [1975], p. 27.

31 Paul, “Critical Regionalism”, p. 399.

their fundamental critiques of modernist epistemologies that cannot be transplanted back in time without the introduction of severe biases. Being “objective” would mean parting with any and all opinions and be unfeasible since writing always represents a reflexive and constructive process that involves the cumbersome exercise of retrodiction as the interpretation of past events inferred from the laws assumed to have informed them. In other words, reasoning from effect to cause and thus “starting with the ‘dénouement’ and then retracing forward what had already been traced backward”.³²

The alternative would be to write from a perspective of universalism. From this point of view, history appears as a coherent and meaningful unit that is equally valid for all participants at any point of a linear timeline. Assuming such a “totalizing history”, however, suffocates complexity as it leaves no room for contradictions and ambiguity as vital components of any discourse. As a third option, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s concept of dialectical horizons aims at reconciling the inherent flaws of both approaches. It involves the assumption that reading and interpreting always means entering a dialogue. The participants of this dialogue, however, regularly do not share the same historical “horizon”: They are separated by time, space, and the sociocultural structures that surround and influence them. The best approximation to an equal dialogue and hence the most “organic” hermeneutic strategy would be to engage in what Gadamer calls the “fusion of horizons”.³³ As Jeff Malpas explains,

all understanding involves a process of mediation and dialogue between what is familiar and what is alien in which neither remains unaffected. This process of horizontal engagement is an ongoing one that never achieves any final completion or complete elucidation – moreover, inasmuch as our own history and tradition is itself constitutive of our own hermeneutic situation as well as being itself constantly taken up in the process of understanding, so our historical and hermeneutic situation can never be made completely transparent to us.³⁴

³² Giles, *Global Remapping*, p. 3. Regarding the contradictions that come with writing “objectively” about literature and history, Hayden White cautions that this “would entail surrender by the Marxist theorists of their claim to see ‘objectively’ the ‘reality’ which their opponents always apprehend in a ‘distorted’ way. For we would recognize that it is not a matter of choosing between objectivity and distortion, but rather between different strategies for constituting ‘reality’ in thought so as to deal with it in different ways, each of which has its own ethical implications” (White, *Tropics of Discourse*, p. 22).

³³ H. G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* [*Truth and Method*], W. Glen-Doepel (trans.), London: Continuum, 2004 [1960], p. 305.

³⁴ J. Malpas, “Hans-Georg Gadamer”, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 3 March 2003, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/>.

Adopting this perspective means that the subsequent examinations cannot content themselves with the analytical conveniences of moralistic hindsight, ahistorical *nunc pro tunc* presentism, and the resulting self-fulfilling prophecies.³⁵ By taking into account its own “historically-effected consciousness”, the efforts of this book thus acknowledge their own status as not being “above” its subjects, but rather being themselves an “effect of [their] history”.³⁶ To be sure, the examined sources by no means all originate from the same horizon. Much of their interest in fact results precisely from their perspective variance that creates antithetic and complex spatial imaginations. In their “horizontally fused” readings these texts regularly exceed their traditionally assigned generic conventions. In terms of dialectics and hermeneutics, a two-tiered horizontal dynamic is therefore at work in this book. First, via the conscious historical interaction between text/author and reader/critic, and second in the juxtaposition of the texts’ own discursive horizons regarding western spatiality. In this way, the synthesis of both dimensions under the methodological umbrella of critical regionalism and new historicism makes visible the asymmetrical unfolding of the American West on diverse regional, national, and global scales as a diverse and multiscale assemblage of “sites where individuals negotiate [...] social relations immigrant and native, regional and global, dominant and other”.³⁷ Finally, the following takes cues from Raymond Williams’ concept of cultural materialism. On the one hand, this means going

35 In 2003, Charles Crow observed growing presentist tendencies in literary studies: “Obsessed with its own myth of origins, the scholarship that comprises most literary histories is always 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’ – American by current criteria, of course. [...] [T]he works produced are patently ahistorical, tacitly reading some version of the present back into the past” (C. L. Crow, “Introduction”, in: C. L. Crow [ed.], *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003, p. 51).

36 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 335.

37 Blair, “Cultural Geography”, pp. 544–545. The term assemblage is used either to describe processes of governance or as a conceptual critique to implement new understandings of social entities and relations between exteriority, materialities, and enunciations. Here, it is understood in a more descriptive manner that stresses “[t]he relationship among the elements in an assemblage is not stable; nor is their configuration reducible to a single logic. Rather, an assemblage is structured through critical reflection, debate, and contest” (S. J. Collier, “Global Assemblages”, *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 [2006] 2/3, pp. 399–401, at 400; see S. Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 5). The products of assembling space or spatial imaginations can range from landscapes to nation-states to entirely unique spatial configurations such as folded, striated, or crumpled geographies (see G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 73).

beyond merely aesthetic and formal criteria of analysis based on the “recognition of ‘literature’ as a specializing social and historical category”.³⁸ Texts and authors are both understood as spatial actors that assert agency by aligning themselves with or resisting dominant discourses within their particular historical moment, again stressing the value of “thick descriptions”. Ascribing this agentive function to literary and cultural discourse, on the other hand, stresses the correlations between textual productions and political, economic, and ideological power structures.

38 R. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 53.

Spatialization Processes: Towards a New Language of Space in Literary and Cultural Studies

*Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography,
none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography.*

E. Said¹

Having access to this cornucopia of methods and theories then becomes vital for unravelling the dynamics that play out between space and literature. At the same time, it does not justify an anything-goes-approach that would warrant doubts regarding the theoretical soundness of the subsequent examinations. An independent and critical reading of primary sources should not be overtaken by a constructivist tour de force with the goal to arrive at a definite catalogue of spatiality in nineteenth-century western literature.² While some trends, for instance archipelagic or transhemispheric approaches, are discernible, current space-centric research can appear isolated and cavalier in their usage of spatial terminologies. A common point of reference seems to be Doreen Massey's *For Space* (2005) that influenced cultural geography by approaching space as an inherently political and relational concept, rather than a vessel for action that either contains or is constructed by society. To be sure, Massey's deliberations are profound and indeed read like a manifesto for the significance of space by maintaining:

First, [...] we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. [...] Second, [...] we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity [and] the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore coexisting heterogeneity. Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. [...] Third, [...] we recognise space as always under construction. Precisely because space on this reading

¹ In *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 7.

² Donald Pizer cautions against an inflation of constructivist impulses, noting that “[t]he critic brings to a reading of the text a set of assumptions about a specific area of late nineteenth-century ideas, economics, class, social life, or gender. The critic then either openly or (more often) silently ignores the plain meaning of the text as a whole and instead constructs by means of forced readings of specific narrow elements of the text a cultural or ideological meaning related to his or her cultural or ideological preoccupation” (D. Pizer, “Jack London’s ‘To Build a Fire’: How Not to Read Naturalist Fiction”, *Philosophy and Literature* 34 (2010) 1, pp. 218–227, at 226). This warning aligns with Said’s and Lefebvre’s inference that space can be found everywhere if looked for hard enough, which at its core is also an effect of the spatial turn’s proclivity for the social constructedness of space.

[sic] is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed.³

While this and other conceptualizations of space proved fruitful for previous scholarship, the present book reflects an underlying need for a more accessible and transparent typology. Answering this need is a heuristic triangle consisting of spatial imaginations (*Raumvorstellungen*), spatial formats (*Raumformate*), and spatial orders (*Raumordnungen*), subsumed under the hypernym spatialization processes (*Verräumlichungsprozesse*). This conceptualization proceeds from the basic assumptions of the spatial turn, namely that space is a central dimension of social interaction and is constantly (re)produced by human activity. Studying the outcomes of these activities, spatialization processes examine their workings under global conditions, which are here understood not as unidirectional (e.g. America or Eurocentric) or hierarchical (e.g. northern versus southern hemisphere) but as assembled discourses that unfold on different scales. The goal then is to explore and visualize spatialization processes and the actors (i.e. spatial entrepreneurs) that are engaged in or affected by them. Spatial formats represent the results of these processes on different scales such as regions, nations, empires, enclaves, corridors, or transnational networks. Spatial orders in turn are the meta-products of spatialization processes that suggest a more stable and meaningful aggregation of certain formats.

Spatialization processes describe the base mechanism underlying the production of spatial formats and orders. They produce stability by reducing complexity, for instance through the aestheticized containment and essentialization of complex discourses that revolve around certain spaces, as seen above in Berkeley's imperial and Leutze's different figurations of "Westward the course of empire takes its way". They moreover rationalize, categorize, and thus make space less abstract and more readily graspable and performable. In praxis, this means that spatialization processes identify certain actors as belonging to certain spaces, construct and perform accepted practices of space-related thinking, and establish categories and binaries such as here/there, near/far, central/peripheral, or regional/national. For the purposes of this book, their central interest lies in the question of what happens if differential practices and epistemologies (e.g. French, Creole, Indian, and American in the Louisiana Territory) interact, collide, or blend together. To make sense of these interactions, the mechanisms of spatialization processes must not only be understood but also retraced and "reverse-

3 D. Massey, *For Space*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008, p. 9.

engineered”, in this manner unearthing the discursive layers produced by historical and literary spatialization processes and reconnecting them with concepts like Campbell’s “rhizomatic West” or Edwards’ *décalage*. The typology of spatialization can therefore be understood as a non-exclusive analytical metalanguage whose clear advantage lies in its ability to address aspects of spatiality that resist their easy incorporation into oftentimes opaque typologies such as nation-state, region, empire, or globalization.

Spatial Formats and Spatial Orders

Spatial formats are perhaps the most dynamic components of this spatial semantics. They function as the methodological interface between spatialization processes, which produce them and spatial orders, which they produce. Spatial formats themselves are not readily observable in “objective” reality and cannot readily be extracted and described with the help of empirical tools, although their sociocultural, political, or economic outcomes can certainly be observed. In turn, spatial formats denote patterns, templates, models, memories, or ideal types which actors (consciously or unconsciously) use to make sense of their surrounding spaces. They often reference already existing spatial formats and include recommendations for ways of thinking and acting “spatially”. In other words, “in both production and transformation of spaces, processes of transformation and thus distinct patterns are recognizable, which can be described as spatial formats resulting from stable practices and interactions [that] have left a footprint in the space-making processes of a society or across the borders of more than one society”.⁴

Spatial formats work as lenses that assist in the visualization and communication of spaces that exist only subconsciously or metaphorically. As shown above, all sociocultural (inter)actions contain a spatial dimension, even though only a fraction of these inherently commencing spatialization processes result in discursively stable formats and orders.⁵ Spatial formats come into being through their discursive institutionalization, stabilization, and multiplication as they assume meaning and condense into codified routines, patterns, narratives, and performances. This book is particularly interested in yet another functional dimension of spatial formats, namely their performativity in cultural

4 M. Middell and U. Wardenga, “Spatial Formats: Introduction”, in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 147–150, at 148.

5 M. Middell, “Raumformate – Bausteine in Prozessen der Neuverräumlichung”, SFB Working Paper 14, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019, p. 5.

and literary discourse. The task then becomes ascertaining how these formats were produced, affirmed, subverted, and performed. This includes the question of how and why they diverged, agreed or blended together on a representational plane and for what reasons some formats turned out to be more visible or “successful” than others.⁶

Spatial orders represent the more stable and formalized outcomes of spatialization processes. They are the structural aggregates of spatialization processes on multiple scales from local to global orders.⁷ They may be understood as the meta-products that emerge from the competition and selection of spatial formats, whose combined interactions together facilitate the discursive scope of a spatial order, which in turn may intersect, interact, or collide with other spatial orders on different scales. Their examination highlights the fracture points of seemingly linear meta-orders, today most notably those subsumed under the term globalization. Spatial ordering moreover involves the integration of spatial formats into more socially sanctioned superstructures. This includes practices of recognition, interpretation, as well as cultural reproduction, negotiation, representation, and narration. In this way, spatial ordering becomes analogous to signifying practices that assign heightened significance to one or more spatial formats. Prolific spatial orders are able to engender new spatial formats and imaginations. One example of this is the US itself, which some today perceive as ordered by the emergence of the neoconservative nation-state with tightening border regimes and trade tariffs. Others (sometimes even the same commentators) identify empire and colonialism as dominant spatial formats. Whereas in the absence of spatial literacy these positions appear exclusive and contradictory, the language of spatialization processes explains their dynamic juxtaposition and thus enables their discussion within a more unified and transparent heuristic framework.

Embedded in competitive power structures, spatial entrepreneurs intentionally or unwittingly seek to promote or resist the institutionalization of certain spatial formats or orders.⁸ These actors include policymakers and economic

⁶ Engel, *Regionalismen*, p. 4.

⁷ A cursory example of an unstoried or hidden spatial order involves the Neutral Ground of Texarkana that touched on parts of today's Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The US government, Spain, and Caddo tribes all claimed this region for themselves and established the Neutral Ground as a unique construct to avoid open warfare. Another example is the colonially contested Pacific Northwest with its profitable trade connections to Asian markets and regional independence movements, whose visions continue to inform contemporary political organizations such as CascadiaNow and Yes California.

⁸ The nation-state, for instance, is regularly and with confidence categorized as the format that dominated most of the twentieth century's spatial orders. It “rules” over regions and

stakeholders, but also cultural (f)actors such as authors, texts, readers, discourses, themes, tropes, symbols, metaphors, and spatial allegories. Evidently, “text” here refers not just to the written word, instead encompassing all human performances and cultural products that carry meaning. This means understanding spatial textuality and literacy, like other semiotic systems, as defined by continual processes of signification. With regards to the United States during the formative period of the nineteenth century, the workings of this spatial semiosis are most readily observable in literature and other written texts as the dominant mediums of that period. This does not imply, however, that this timeframe should be treated as a closed-off archive that can simply be isolated and perused to determine how long-dead people envisioned certain aspects of spatiality. Conversely, as demonstrated by the fusion of horizons and other previously discussed methodologies, accessing these imaginations necessitates an interactive and dialogical line of action.

Looking through a discursive lens, the following scrutinizes which spatial formats and imaginations consolidated into spatial orders and examines their relation to related or opposing imaginations of the western peripheries. Of course, these discourses regularly do not respect neatly delimited categories and instead have fuzzy edges and ambiguous boundaries that overlap and intermingle.⁹ In accounting for this issue, the concept of assemblages becomes particularly useful by recognizing spatial orders as the “product[s] of multiple determinations that are not reducible to a single logic”.¹⁰ Consequently, every act of spatial ordering (e.g. of a city, landscape, region, nation, or global system) may be an assemblage of various formats and/or competing spatial orders

municipalities as the constituents of a national framework that controls policies, trade, and taxation. In earlier centuries, however, these powers were the privileges of autonomous urban centres that acted as nodes in transnational or transurban economic and diplomatic networks. Negotiating coherent criteria for the nation-state and other spatial formats could in the future succeed via the typology of spatialization processes.

⁹ In an essay about spatial dynamics at the Mexican-American borderlands, Jesús Martínez-Saldaña describes overlapping and seemingly contradictory spatial orders that “may co-exist and reinforce each other under the proper circumstances. For example, a child belonging to a family with a long history of international migration might learn about the ‘lost territory’ in school textbooks, fantasize about the ‘Old West’ while reading *vaquero* comic books or watching reruns of *Bonanza* on Mexican television, and imagine other features of the foreign land while hearing accounts of life in California from migrant relatives, friends, or neighbors” (Martínez-Saldaña, “La Frontera”, p. 376).

¹⁰ S. J. Collier and A. Ong, “Global Assemblages, Anthropological Problems”, in: S. J. Collier and A. Ong (eds.), *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2005, pp. 3–21, at 12.

that appear smooth on the surface but on closer inspection reveal heterogenous spatial discourses that can be unravelled by means of *décalage*.

A particularly powerful example of the categorical fuzziness and subsequent usefulness of assemblages can be found in the biography of Joe Medicine Crow (1913–2016). A chief of the eponymous tribe, Crow was a historian, author, and the last human link to the Battle of Little Big Horn in which his step-grandfather served as a scout for general Custer. To become a chief, Crow had to perform certain difficult tasks, namely “command a war party successfully, enter an enemy camp at night and steal a horse, wrestle a weapon away from his enemy and touch the first enemy fallen, without killing him”.¹¹ After joining the US Army in 1943 and becoming a scout in the 103rd Infantry Division, he completed these tasks, although not on the western prairies but during the Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France. Wearing “his war paint beneath his uniform and a sacred eagle feather beneath his helmet”, he succeeded in stealing 50 horses from a mounted SS-battalion, reportedly intoning a Native American war song as he rode off.¹² After the war, he received the Bronze Star and in 2009 the Medal of Freedom from president Obama.¹³ Biographies like Crow’s expose the delicacy of top-down histories that present straightforward narratives and often neglect the assembled nature of seemingly unconnected human geographies such as Little Bighorn and D-Day.

Spatialization processes enable the approximation to such stories and characters from a less historically sedimented perspective by integrating spatial discourse into the traditional analytical trifecta of race, class, and gender. Within the network of space-affine theories in the humanities, the present study thus occupies a position located between ecocritical emphasis on the enmeshment of identity and place and phenomenological assumptions of human geography that emphasize the organic potential of spatial performances as generators of meaning.¹⁴ In the following, the spatial themes, tropes,

11 S. Kaplan, “Joe Medicine Crow, a War Chief, Historian and the Last Link to the Battle of Little Big Horn, Dies at 102”, *The Washington Post*, 4 April 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/04/04/joe-medicine-crow-a-war-chief-historian-and-the-last-link-to-the-battle-of-little-big-horn-dies-at-102/>.

12 Public Broadcasting Service, “Joe Medicine Crow”, September 2007, http://www.pbs.org/thewar/detail_5177.htm (accessed 21 April 2020).

13 K. Brandon, “Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients”, *The White House: President Barack Obama*, 30 July 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/07/30/presidential-medal-freedom-recipients>.

14 L. Buell, U. K. Heise, and K. Thornber, “Literature and Environment”, *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 36 (2011), pp. 417–440, at 420; see D. Morris, *The Sense of Space*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013, p. 33.

and subjects in literature are therefore understood as literary formatting processes, whereas more ideologically stabilized metanarratives and policy-driven structures represent processes of spatial ordering. Both of which may either be firmly based in reality or result entirely from the human faculties of imagination. Often, as will become clear, western literature operates alongside the intersections of these categories, locating the site of literary spatialization processes at the liminal zones between reality and fiction.

Spatial Imaginations

The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable.

C. G. Jung¹⁵

The constructivist influences of cultural and literary geography have put a strong emphasis on the notion that spaces are not just containers of objective realities but representations of socially constructed visions, concepts, dreams, or fears.¹⁶ In literature and elsewhere, imagining as the act of giving form to ideas then becomes the creative and aesthetic force behind spatialization processes that create, perform, negotiate, subvert, affirm, disseminate, or assemble new spatial formats and orders. Spatial entrepreneurs regularly develop or refer to mental representations of spatial formats or orders and argue how to assess, classify, organize, or delimit them. Cultural discourses provide toolsets that enable actors to give more experiential shapes to abstract ideas of space – regularly by using themes, tropes, metaphors, or allegories. Texts make offers to their audiences to affectively appropriate spatial imaginations, thereby furthering the spatial literacy and agency of actors by providing “mental scripts” or “lenses”.¹⁷ For the theoretical work of this book, this means ideating the productive location of spatial imaginations on the (imagined) flipside of the hermeneutic triangle. This covert positionality stresses the workings of spatial imaginations as background mechanisms that elude

¹⁵ C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, London: Routledge, 2016 [1921], p. 88.

¹⁶ See S. Pietsch, “Raumbezogene Imaginationen der Arktis im Kontext und Nachleben der dritten Franklin-Expedition 1845–1848”, *Historische Geographien: Ein Forum für historische Perspektiven in der Geographie*, 8 November 2018, <http://historische-geographien.de/raumbezogene-imaginationen-der-arktis-im-kontext-und-nachleben-der-dritten-franklin-expedition-1845-1848/>.

¹⁷ M. Möhring, G. Pisarz-Ramirez, and U. Wardenga, *Imaginationen* (= Dialektik des Globalen. Kernbegriffe, 5), Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019, p. 22.

recognition and thus necessitate a heightened awareness. But this lack of visibility also metaphorically means understanding

“imagination” not just as mental images or representations of the world – and [especially] not as the opposite to reality – but as a creative human faculty to react to the world, to put oneself into a relation to it, to define one’s position. [...] imaginations are powerful instruments to produce spaces as a way to react to a world which is characterized by multiple connections across longer and shorter distances, but certainly beyond the frameworks we can physically experience in our everyday lives. [...] Spatial imaginations are key dimensions of processes of spatialization, because they activate actors, provide “scripts” for their actions, mobilize them to challenge existing spatial formats and fight for the establishment of new ones, and question the dominant spatial order or legitimate it.¹⁸

Spatial imaginations thus are mental or narrative strategies that discursively connect human identities and histories to physical environments. All outcomes of human creativity bear witness to the interfacing that commences via textual signification practices between individual, social, and cultural units. David Harvey summarizes this in *Social Justice and the City*, proposing that

“spatial consciousness” or the “geographical imagination” enables the individual to recognize the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate the spaces he sees around him, and to recognize how transactions between individuals and between organizations are affected by the space that separates them. [...] It allows him also to fashion and use space creatively and to appreciate the meaning of the spatial forms created by others.¹⁹

For literary studies, viewing spatial imaginations as products of individual creativity seems to prompt an analytical focus on the person of the author. It might also raise questions regarding his or her conscious or unconscious motives to imagine certain spaces in certain ways as being human means “to be fixed, embedded and immersed in the physical, literal, tangible day to day world: the relations of human experiences rely on the construction of a coherent spatiotemporal frame in which that experience is embedded”.²⁰ Acknowledging this embeddedness of the author might herald a return to a modernist penchant of literary criticism that sees an author’s taste and biography as key factors. It also would imply

¹⁸ S. Marung, “Imaginations and Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition”, *TRAFO: Blog for Transregional Research*, 22 May 2018, <https://trafo.hypotheses.org/9655>.

¹⁹ D. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, pp. 23–24.

²⁰ J. Hanebeck, *Understanding Metalepsis: The Hermeneutics of Narrative Transgression*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017, p. 33.

resurrecting the very authorial intentionalism that Roland Barthes “murdered” in his 1967 essay “*La Mort de l’auteur*” that stated:

The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the ‘human person’. It is thus, logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the ‘person’ of the author. The *author* still reigns in histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines, as in the very consciousness of men of letters anxious to unite their person and their work through diaries and memoirs. The image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions, while criticism still consists for the most part in saying that Baudelaire’s work is the failure of Baudelaire the man, Van Gogh’s his madness, Tchaikovsky’s his vice.²¹

Barthes’ critique of the capitalized Author’s authority led him to assert “that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the AuthorGod) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture”.²² Dethroning and de-capitalizing the author concomitantly reveals the fundamentally spatial inclination of (inter)textuality as a “multi-dimensional space” that exceeds its interpretation as “an operation of recording, notation, representation, ‘depiction’” and “designates exactly what linguists [...] call a performative”.²³ This performative function of textuality becomes pivotal in the ordering of space in literature since imaginations cannot be controlled or policed by a “proper” interpretation based on an author’s alleged intent. Instead, they perpetually exceed their (seemingly) intended frameworks to attach themselves to other discourses.

Writing as a place-making act thus detaches itself from its confinement in time and artistic periodization. In other words, it becomes divorced from its chronocentric existence as a sole matter of historical and aesthetic interest. Tracing literary spatialization processes consequently exceeds its purview as a backwards-oriented, intrinsically regressive operation. In Foucauldian terms, this means “liberating writing from narrative, from its linear order, from the

²¹ R. Barthes, “*La Mort de l’auteur*” [“The Death of the Author”], S. Heath (trans.), *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana, 1977, pp. 142–148, at 142–143.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

great syntactical game of the concordance of times [and] its old obedience to time”.²⁴ Texts no longer remain static, intentional products but turn into an assemblage of discursive performances. The fact that textual spatiality has become a matter of growing interest further underlines its discursive impacts through thematic or analytical (re)production and repetition. As dominant spatial imaginations are incessantly repeated, a dynamic tension between affirmation and subversion is set in motion, which according to Judith Butler – who discusses this notion in the context of gender performances – results in a

constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style.²⁵

Irrespective of the social construction and performative acting-out of spatial imaginations, the importance of these insights does not negate authorial biographies as complementary analytical parameters. Conversely, it merely confers the negation of their gravitas as the prerequisites of literary spatialization processes. Viewing the author not at the centre but as one of many actors in literary spatialization processes then means consciously disregarding Foucault’s warnings against the “valorization of the author” as well as Derrida’s sweeping assessment “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*” (there is no outside-text).²⁶ Despite their theoretical interest, these principles must here yield to the benefits provided by “thick descriptions” that take heed of biographical aspects as indicators of the author’s embeddedness in a sociocultural milieu at a particular point in time and space.

²⁴ “Le langage de l’espace” [“The Language of Space”], G. Moore (trans.), in: J. W. Crampton and S. Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2007 [1964], pp. 163–167, at 163.

²⁵ J. Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory”, *Theatre Journal* 40 (1988) 4, pp. 519–531, at 520.

²⁶ M. Foucault, “*Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?*” [“What Is an Author?”], J. V. Harari (trans.), in: P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984 [1969], pp. 101–120, at 101; J. Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* [Of Grammatology], G. C. Spivak (trans.), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976 [1967], p. 159.

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*

Deerhunter¹

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.

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 inoculate 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/derico/amherst/lord_jeff.html. Allegedly, Amherst replied to Bouquet: "You will do well to try to Inoculate 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 poor-houses 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. Drake³³

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 north-western 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

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 metropolises, 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

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 archetypal 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 Crèvecoeur 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, Crèvecoeur 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 strewn 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 Crèvecoeur'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 Crèvecoeur, *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 rifle 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. Crèvecoeur’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

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 Crèvecoeur, *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. Baez¹¹⁹

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. Tuflly, “Correspondence”, 1855, P-G 263, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley. Tuflly 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 vestige 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

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

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 *The 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.

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-quā (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

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

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 reveal 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 har-binger of earthly wof[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. Emerson¹⁹⁸

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 Crèvecoeur 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 two-fold 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 bitter-sweet 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 in 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 through 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 place-making 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.

Chapter 2: The Incommensurable West between Integration and Separation

Colliding Visions of the Louisiana Territory

*The world shall follow in the track we're going,
The star of Empire glitters in the West.
Here we had toil, and little to reward it,
But there shall plenty smile upon our pain;
And ours shall be the prairie and the forest,
And boundless meadows ripe with golden grain.*

J. Lindsay (attributed)¹

In 1682, Robert Cavelier declared the existence of the Louisiana Territory as part of the French Empire:

In the name of the most high, mighty, invincible and victorious prince, Louis the Great, [...] I [...] take [...] possession of this country of Louisiana, the seas, the harbors, ports, bays, adjacent straits, and all the nations, peoples, provinces, cities, towns, villages, mines, minerals, fisheries, streams and rivers, within the extent of the said Louisiana [...] hereby protesting against all who may hereafter undertake to invade any or all these aforesaid countries, peoples, or lands, to the prejudice of the rights of his Majesty, acquired by the consent of the nations dwelling herein.²

The proclamation formatted the newly exclaimed French Louisiana alongside three imaginative regimes. First, a vaguely defined geographical extent and its legal organization under the doctrine of first discovery.³ Second, the assumed or

¹ National Library of Scotland, "Broadside Ballad Entitled 'Cheer Boys, Cheer!'", *The Word on the Street*, 2004, <https://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=16731> (accessed 23 April 2020). The ballad was distributed in Glasgow between 1852 and 1859 as a farewell for emigrants and sailors who left for the US and Canada.

² Qtd. in A. N. de Menil, *The Literature of the Louisiana Territory*, St. Louis: St. Louis News Company, 1904, pp. 21–22. Prior to this proclamation, there was already a long history of French ambitions to parts of the continent. In 1562, Jean Ribault, an important figure in the attempted colonization of Florida, "erected a pillar on which were engraven the arms of France, and taking possession of the country in the name of the king and of the admiral: a vain and idle ceremony" (Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, p. 12).

³ In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas laid down the Doctrine of Discovery under which Europeans were permitted to colonize foreign territories under the condition that they were inhabited by "non-Christians" (B. A. Watson, "John Marshall and Indian Land Rights: A Historical Rejoinder to the Claim of 'Universal Recognition' of the Doctrine of Discovery", *Seton Hall Law Review* 36 (2006) 481, pp. 481–549, at 499–503).

contractual consent of indigenous peoples, but also the implicit acknowledgment of them as (at least indirect) holders of rights. And third, the guarantee of protection by the French crown for all inhabitants, a policy quite dissimilar from the racially exclusive spatial orders in the English and Spanish colonies in the Americas. The king's new colony stretched from Mobile Bay to north of the current US-Canadian border, including parts of the present-day Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Unlike its imaginative conception, the physical ordering of Louisiana turned into a much more difficult and messy process. In theory, France's footholds in Canada and Louisiana had created a North-South axis that promised immense economic and military benefits. Access to the Mississippi, Missouri, and other important waterways, it was believed, would lower the costs of transportation and expand the profitable fur trade with native tribes that was undergirded by a complex network of diplomatic treaties. Easily accessible ports like New Orleans would open trade with Spanish colonies in Florida and the Caribbean, creating a dynamic hemispheric economy with considerable potential, which might even outperform British trade on the eastern seaboard. Much of this optimistic vision, however, remained a dream and was soon reformatted by more dire realities.

Louisiana's humid climate, its infestation with disease-carrying mosquitoes combined with impervious bayous, swamps, and thick mangroves made agriculture and settlement less than appealing and enticed few Frenchmen and even fewer Frenchwomen to abandon their homes in the Old World and start anew under these adverse conditions. Concurrently, Louisiana's district judge and author Henry Marie Brackenridge envisioned the drainage of swamps as a way of transforming the region into a Europe-like space. "The swamps, and wet lands", he suggested, "might be drained without any great difficulty. At some future day, this will be the Flanders of America".⁴ Despite his projections, in the middle of the eighteenth century Louisiana's population stagnated at 80,000 inhabitants, many of which depended on imports for their survival. At the same time, Great Britain's colonial subjects in the East had grown to over 1,500,000.⁵ Poor administration and a lacking infrastructure meant that much of the Sun King's colony remained unmapped, sparsely inhabited, and traversed mainly by trappers, explorers, and other socially liminal figures.

These spatial actors, together with later immigrants, entrepreneurs, and authors nonetheless crafted their own peculiar imaginations of Louisiana, which sometimes integrated, but more often collided with official policies and their

⁴ Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, p. 103.

⁵ Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 161.

guiding narratives. They engendered a spatial (dis)order whose principal feature lay precisely in its unevenness of spatial imaginations, actors, and formats. This heterogeneity created constant tensions and crises, but also signalled a constant need for negotiation, compromises, and the intercultural approximation of shared practices and knowledges between European settlers, non-white, and native actors. Unlike the Old Northwest, the Louisiana Territory hence was much less inclined to subordinate itself vis-à-vis the homogenous spatial narratives that marked the nation-state. The discursive strategies of their integration, together with the lasting after-effects of the region's ambiguous national attachment, become the focus of the following investigations into literature, paintings, and other cultural discourses regarding the region.

At the end of the French and Indian War, France was ordered to cede *La Louisiane* to Spain in exchange for the Spanish cession of West Florida.⁶ In the following decades, many inhabitants grew weary of their new administration, accusing Spanish officials of mismanagement and corruption. "These Frenchmen governed by Spaniards, and forced to be Spaniards", Alexander de Menil wrote, "while they were French in heart and soul, cast longing eyes across the border line on the free and independent Americans whose ownership of their own country, and whose right to enjoy their freedom they envied".⁷ The loss of its largest colonial asset left deep marks on the economy and national pride of France, and plans to retake Louisiana were quickly formulated but remained unrealized until Napoleon's ascent to power. After the French Revolution, the new republic signed the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso with the financially strained Spanish Empire, which decreed the exchange of Louisiana for the Italian region of Tuscany. But the history of Louisiana's commodification as a colonial bargaining chip was still not over. Even though the bilateral agreement between France and Spain was brokered secretly, the American government got wind of the deal in 1801. In light of the brewing tensions in Europe, Jefferson was less than excited about having Napoleon's armies as new neighbours in the West, replacing the weak Spanish rule and taking control of the increasingly dynamic economies of the Mississippi and its tributaries.⁸

6 From a geostrategic perspective, "[f]or Spain, Louisiana would continue to serve as a buffer to protect more vital possessions in Texas, New Mexico, and Mexico against Britain and, later, the United States" (P. J. Kastor, "What Are the Advantages of the Acquisition? Inventing Expansion in the Early American Republic", *American Quarterly* 60 [2008] 4, pp. 1003–1035, at 1026).

7 de Menil, *Literature of Louisiana*, p. 28.

8 Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 328.

To avert an impending conflict, Jefferson sent his diplomat Robert Livingston to Paris. While negotiations dragged on for several years, Napoleon's campaigns in Europe and Egypt decimated France's national budget. In addition, the inhabitants of Saint-Domingue (Haiti) had capitalized on the French preoccupation in Europe and asserted their political independence. Caught in this cumbersome geostrategic situation, engaging in a multihemispheric conflict seemed overly ambitious even for Napoleon who decided to offload his American possessions and use the proceeds to fund another round of European warfare. For the American delegation in Paris, however, it came as a surprise when the French foreign minister Talleyrand asked them: "What will you give for the whole?"⁹ In the treaty of cession signed on 30 April 1803, the price for the Louisiana Territory was set at USD 15,000,000.¹⁰ What remained a matter of uncertainty, however, was the actual object of the contract. Asked by Livingston to define precisely what the US had just bought, Talleyrand supposedly responded: "I can give you no direction. You have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it".¹¹ Both France and Spain had done little in mapping the territory, which the treaty described only as being located between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.¹² Based on this vague demarcation, the Louisiana Purchase encompassed over 800,000 square miles, hence effectively doubling the extent of the United States (see fig. 3). Louisiana in this manner turned into both "an object of desire [and] a double fiction. The first fiction was that the seller possessed the object conveyed, and the second was that the object corresponded to what either the seller or buyer imagined".¹³ This sudden territorial aggrandizement evoked concerns with regard to the

⁹ Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 53.

¹⁰ Adjusted for inflation, the prize for Louisiana is equivalent to around USD 335,000,000 and hence the very definition of a bargain for the US, which was prepared to pay a similar price for New Orleans alone. However, as a slight downside, the contract also required the new owners to respect existing treaties with natives and uphold French trading privileges (P. J. Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, p. 43).

¹¹ M. O'Brien, "Imperialism", *Placing the South*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007, pp. 48–52, at 50.

¹² White relates that "[i]n 1785, 22 years after the cession of Louisiana to Spain, the governor general, Esteban Rodríguez Miró, could only apologize for having no map of the province except for the Mississippi and the French settlements along it. [...] At the end of 1795, the lieutenant-governor stationed at Saint Louis, Zenon Trudeau, complained that more than thirty years after the acquisition of the territory, the Spanish flag had never been seen on the Upper Missouri" (White, *The Middle Ground*, p. 49).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.



Fig. 3: Map showing US territorial acquisitions including the Louisiana Territory, 1919.

young republic's tentative future ordering as either a consolidated eastern nation or aspiring continental empire.

At the time of their purchase, not much was known about the western regions that lay beyond the Mississippi and the commercial centres of St. Louis and New Orleans. When the fledgling newspaper market and literary scene engaged with the Louisiana Territory, the mindsets of many American citizens were still firmly rooted in the Puritan concept of *terra nullius* that painted the wilderness as a domain of danger, Otherness, and heathenism. Exceptions were represented by adventurous and enterprising Americans that roamed the peripheries similar to the French-Canadian *coureurs des bois*, spurred by visions of Louisiana as a springboard to far western resources like the fabled Mexican and Californian gold and silver mines. Even Robert Livingston, who had negotiated its acquisition in Paris, saw the region as nothing more than “vast solitudes”.¹⁴ Alexander Hamilton and his Federalist party opposed the government's unilateral policy of expansion and lambasted Jefferson's decision in open letters published under pseudonyms. The author of one such letter published in Boston's *Columbian Centinel* scoffed: “We are to give money of which we have too little for land of which we already have too much”. Fisher Ames, the likely composer of the letter, went on to argue that this act of territorial overabundance would achieve nothing except diminish land prices in New England. He finished by repeating the age-old Puritan adage of the trans-Appalachian West being nothing but “a great waste, a wilderness unpeopled with any being except wolves and wandering Indians”.¹⁵

In the upper echelons of power, however, Jeffersonian policy developed a diametrically opposed view that understood “Louisiana as a site for a kind of political, social, and economic mimesis”. Despite the Federalists' fear-mongering, it was argued that “[t]he United States would not change; it would only replicate itself in the West”.¹⁶ This “organic” self-replication was to be achieved not by the management of a leviathan government or aristocratic benevolence, but by some of society's lowest-ranking members. As part of this literal grassroots movement, the “plain folk” of planters and non-slaveholding yeoman farmers would set forth to cultivate Louisiana, serving their own economic interests while planting the seeds of democracy in the postcolonial region. Guided by the egalitarian philosophy of Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* and similar pamphlets, Jeffersonian agrarianism posited that not time but space would be the propellant of the nation's future. Because the raw virtues of democracy were

¹⁴ Qtd. in *ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁵ J. M. Burns, *The American Experiment: The Vineyard of Liberty, The Workshop of Democracy, and The Crosswinds of Freedom*, New York: Open Road Media, 2013.

¹⁶ White, *The Middle Ground*, p. 54.

already ingrained in the lives of hard-working, everyday farmers, all that was needed was a clean territorial slate where these virtues could freely unfold in the absence of restraints that held back the East's aristocratic society. Agrarianism thus "imagined the United States 'expanding through space' rather than 'developing through time'" based on the idea that "America could remain uncorrupted only if it remained a largely agricultural society, and it could remain agricultural only if [land] were available for settlement and if the farmer could find a ready outlet for his surplus produce. Free trade and territorial expansion were the means by which the United States might escape the curse of modernity itself".¹⁷

Despite its lofty idealism, Jefferson realized that this spatial order would not simply create itself and that some groundwork was needed to "pre-seed" Louisiana in the imagination of farmers, enticing them to cross the Mississippi together with their families. The initial steps seemed obvious: Making the opaque Louisiana Territory controllable and thus attractive first required reconnaissance, exploration, and mapping. Jefferson was captivated by his reading of Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal Through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans* (1801). The Scottish explorer became famous as being the first European who crossed the North American continent from East to West. Helped by native guides and accompanied by a handful of *voyageurs*, he had reached Oregon via a northern route through Canada. Bypassing Congress and using Mackenzie's journals as blueprints, Jefferson assembled the Corps of Discovery to survey the new territory, and with the informal goal of gaining access (preferably by waterway) to the profitable western and Asian-Pacific fur trade. The Corps was jointly commanded by Meriwether Lewis, the president's secretary, and William Clark, an ex-military without formal education who misspelled the word Sioux in more than 20 different ways in his journals. The duo was put in charge of a motley crew of 40 that consisted of experienced backwoodsmen and *voyageurs*, but also included Lewis' black slave York.¹⁸ In the spring of 1804, the group decamped from the mouth of the Missouri to enter the uncharted expanse of the Great Plains, where they arrived at settlements of the Mandan and Minnetaree (Hidatsa) nations and, living among them, captives from other tribes as well as French traders and their native wives and métis children.

The Corps erected Fort Mandan and spent the winter among the hospitable villagers engaged in pseudo-scientific participant observations, social interactions,

¹⁷ R. W. Tucker and D. C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 30.

¹⁸ Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 53.

and more intimate relationships with local women. In his particular style, Lewis noted that the latter were “generally helthy [sic] except for Venerials Complaints which is verry [sic] Common amongst the natives and the men Catch it from them”.¹⁹ They quickly learned that the prairies were not, as many in the East believed, a sterile and unchanging space structured by ancient modes of living. Conversely, it had been fundamentally reformatted during previous centuries by the introduction of horses, acquired from the Spanish-speaking sphere to the South. Effectively reducing the vast distances on the plains, the use and breeding of horses established new forms of Native American mobility and hunting techniques, some of which already began to undermine the integrity of western ecosystems, most notably the alarming decimation of buffaloes. Encountering a group of hostile Lakota on horseback, members of the Corps promised to protect their Mandan acquaintances, thus antagonizing the plains’ most powerful nomadic tribe. But this was only the first of many diplomatic mishaps that followed during their encounters with dozens of native communities before reaching the Pacific Ocean in November 1805.

Upon their return, Lewis’ and Clark’s reports were eagerly awaited and impressed policymakers and publics alike with their sheer comprehensiveness and attention to detail. The journals, written mainly by Meriwether Lewis, contained 14 volumes counting around 1,000,000 words in total. Attached were detailed maps and tables with data regarding climate and topography, as well as the documentation of 122 previously unknown animal and 178 plant species. Extensive reports detailed native languages and customs, approximated the number of their members, locations of settlements, and explained intertribal relations.²⁰ The Corps of Discovery had made peace and trade deals with various nations, often using material objects to create affective bonds by handing out “more than one hundred impressive silver peace medals”.²¹ Nonetheless, Lewis and Clark failed to achieve one of their main objectives, namely the discovery of commercially viable waterways to the Pacific. The routes on which they had crossed the Rockies proved impractical for transportation in volume.

Still, the expedition’s reports sent ripples not only through the West but the geographic epistemology of the continental United States as a whole. Both the actual results and the fact that everyone survived (except one man who died from a burst appendix, which would have been equally fatal anywhere in the

¹⁹ J. P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, p. 107.

²⁰ L. W. Carlson, *Seduced by the West: Jefferson’s America and the Lure of the Land Beyond the Mississippi*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003, p. 108.

²¹ Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 55.

world) caused sizable excitement, replacing scepticism with optimism among the public and newspapers that reprinted the volumes' most interesting passages.²² Although no comfortable route had yet been found, the Corps' reports stressed the abundance of fertile and seemingly unsettled land in the Louisiana Territory and the Far West, strongly hinting at the profitability and relative safety of overland travel. Skilfully edited by Clark's wife Julia, the journals read more like an adventure novel or docudrama full of hardship, danger, and masculine heroism. Emigrating to Louisiana or even the regions beyond the Rocky Mountains thus turned into a personal quest and spatial performance of upward mobility, particularly attractive to lower tiers of society and leading to the widespread view of the West as "a social and political safety valve".²³ In the light of this newfound optimism, the Louisiana Territory was no longer feared but more readily formatted through playful and humorous analogies. The *Connecticut Courant* for instance reported "that Capt. Lewis has lately discovered, in the interior of Louisiana, a considerable lake of pure Whiskey [and] it is believed that most of our newly imported citizens will speedily remove to that country for the sake of securing the free navigation of those waters".²⁴

In the realms of reality, the largest social groups populating Louisiana consisted of Native Americans, French, Spanish, Mexican, and French-Canadian inhabitants. But what sparked perhaps the most controversies in the US was the comparably large number of *gens de couleur libres* (free people of colour) and Creoles, i.e. people of mixed French and African-Caribbean ancestry. Their ambiguous racial and legal status threatened to undermine both the strict hierarchies of the South and the future organization of western territories as either free or slave states. Often seen as liminal figures whose uncertain loyalties prevented

22 P. A. Appel, "The Louisiana Purchase & the Lewis and Clark Expedition: A Constitutional Moment?", in: K. Fresonke (ed.), *Lewis & Clark: Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, pp. 87–116, at 109.

23 R. S. Cox et al., "The Shortest and Most Convenient Route: Lewis and Clark in Context", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 94 (2004) 5, pp. 3–255, at 12. The safety valve function of the West, in fact, is regularly overemphasized. Until today, most mobility commences from rural to urban spaces, not from urbanity to wilderness. In the second half of the nineteenth century, migration into cities led to the depopulation of entire regions in states like Kansas, where over 6,000 ghost towns exist today. Hopes that unwanted and socially destructive elements would remove themselves to the West were diminished by the hardships of overland travel and the fact that railroad tickets often cost half of an average yearly salary.

24 Qtd. in Kastor, "Advantages of the Acquisition", p. 1003. Over the course of the century, the journals faded into obscurity but were rediscovered during the expedition's centennial in 1904 that celebrated Lewis and Clark as true American pioneers. Today, the journals are regarded as key sources of US expansionism.

their clear-cut integration into racial and social categories, Creoles had nonetheless enjoyed some civil rights in New France.²⁵ In his *Tour on the Prairies*, Washington Irving alludes to these issues in his description of a Creole character named Antoine (or Tonish) who was

sometimes in the employ of traders, missionaries, and Indian agents; sometimes mingling with the Osage hunters. We picked him up at St. Louis, near which he has a small farm, an Indian wife, and a brood of half-blood children. According to his own account, however, he had a wife in every tribe [...] he was without morals, without caste, and even without language, for he spoke a Babylonish jargon of mingled French, English, and Osage.²⁶

Causing further confusion in the strictly segregated East, some coloured Louisianans were themselves slaveholders who saw their region's upcoming affiliation with the US as an opportunity to expand their businesses, for instance by importing American slaves from the South. Because slavery regimes in New France were less strict – allowing for interracial marriages and property rights for slaves under certain conditions – Jefferson was apprehensive about their destabilizing impact and propagation of liberal ideas to slave plantations, especially concerning the events in Haiti and other slave uprisings. Additionally, Louisiana's practically unmapped wilderness provided ample refuge for runaway slaves, mutinous Indians, and other unruly spatial actors. The US sought to curtail the mobility of enslaved and native populations through forays into purchasing Florida from Spain and isolating Haiti.²⁷ In its own possessions, implementing more rigid racial segregation became a key factor in transforming the Louisiana Territory “from an odd periphery in the multiethnic West to a solid member of the slaveholding South”.²⁸ Louisiana was divided into two large districts and foreign slave trade made illegal. In an example of divide and conquer, Louisiana's integration into the nation-state commenced through its isolation from outside influences and internal enforcement of racial hierarchies. Liberal manumission laws that had been further relaxed during the 40 years of Spanish rule and afforded opportunities for slaves to gain their freedom by defending the colony or paying a lump sum were replaced with a system of

²⁵ M. Wills, “The Free People of Color of Pre-Civil War New Orleans”, *JSTOR Daily*, 20 February 2019, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-free-people-of-color-of-pre-civil-war-new-orleans/>.

²⁶ Irving, *Prairies*, pp. 6–7.

²⁷ Jefferson was alarmed when he learned about British aid for Haiti and proclaimed that “the Governments who have Colonies in the West Indies [should negotiate] an Agreement not to suffer the former [slaves] to have any Kind of Navigation whatsoever or to Furnish them with any Species of Arms and or Ammunition” (R. Blackburn, “Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution”, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63 [2006] 4, pp. 643–674, at 662).

²⁸ Kastor, *Nation's Crucible*, p. 227.

white supremacy. The *Code Noir* that had decreed the legal equivalency between free people of colour and whites was substituted with the Black Code of 1806 that differentiated only between white citizens and non-white non-citizens.²⁹ Further respatialization actions even segregated the dead by requiring “owner[s] of the railroad [...] to carry the corpses of whites, free persons of color, and slaves in different cars”.³⁰

When it gained statehood in 1812, Louisiana had been reformatted from a space of likely rebellion to one of the most loyal Union members, governed by white elites that kept coloured subalterns in check and gradually wrested natives of their remaining political leverage. As Peter Kastor summarizes the transformation of the territory’s sociocultural geographies: “In becoming southern, Louisianians also became American”.³¹ With palpable excitement, Henry Marie Brackenridge expressed this notion, exclaiming: “Louisianians, you have now become truly Americans; never will you again be transferred from one nation to another; if you are EVER SOLD AGAIN, IT WILL BE FOR BLOOD”.³² But stricter hierarchies further cemented deep-seated fears of uprisings by escaped slaves or pan-tribal alliances. Brackenridge accordingly warns that “there is scarcely one white person to twenty blacks. When the lands on the coast shall be principally occupied by the larger planters, which will be the case at no distant period it will be found absolutely necessary to station an armed force at intervals, as far up as Pointe Coupée”.³³

In contrast, among African-Americans Louisiana gained infamy as one the most brutal slavery regimes, marked through forbidding imaginations that revolved around family separation and fears of being sold “down the river” into ever more adverse conditions. The river that fed Louisiana’s slave empire was,

29 J. D. Thomas, “The Black Code of Louisiana, 1806”, *Accessible Archives*, 25 August 2011, <https://www.accessible-archives.com/2011/08/the-black-code-of-louisiana-1806/>.

30 A. R. Sumpter, “Segregation of the Free People of Color and the Construction of Race in Antebellum New Orleans”, *Southeastern Geographer* 48 (2008) 1, pp. 19–37, at 19–20; 33. Melissa Meyer sees these developments as part of a “transformation of color codes to racial ones”. She explains that “[f]rom the thirteenth through the early sixteenth century, terms like *pardo*, *loro*, *negro*, *olivastre*, and *berretino* were employed in Europe to distinguish people with darker skin. Significantly, they denoted *color* differences, not racial or caste differences. In the European colonies, as conquest of Native Americans, Africans, and Asians progressed, terms like *mestizo* and *mulatto*, denoting hybrids of any sort, evolved. Increasingly, Euroamerican colonists emphasized biological or racial categorization of people of mixed descent” (Meyer, “Blood Is Thicker”, p. 238).

31 Kastor, *Nation’s Crucible*, p. 226.

32 Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, p. 146 (original emphasis).

33 *Ibid.*, p. 175.

of course, the Mississippi. On the plantations alongside its shores, a spatial order emerged that defied Jefferson's agrarian vision of non-slaveholding yeoman farmers and instead saw black slaves cultivating lands appropriated from Native Americans, effecting an economic upswing in the cotton, land, and human trafficking industries between 1820 and 1860. Walter Johnson's *River of Dark Dreams* outlines this "cotton kingdom" as the pivotal format at the heart of Louisiana's increasingly global integration: "Wealthy individuals could hire or purchase other people to stake their claims and improve their land for them. The flow of capital into the Mississippi Valley transferred the title of [Jefferson's] 'empire for liberty' to the emergent overlords of the 'Cotton Kingdom,' and the yeoman's republic soon came under the dominion of what came to be called the 'slaveocracy'".³⁴ The rise of national and global cotton trade networks happened almost simultaneously, demonstrating the consolidation of spatial formats (i.e. patterns, templates, models of thinking spatially) into spatial orders (i.e. stabilized aggregates of formats) on different scales, as well as the interactions among these scales, which in the case of the cotton kingdom have been linked to the rise of industrial capitalism and "the transformation of labour regimes all over the globe".³⁵ With regards to identity-building processes within these "cottonized" regional orders, white elites in Louisiana and elsewhere in the South saw themselves no longer as operating at the national peripheries but as occupying globally connected nodes of "a 'greater South' reaching out to Brazil and Cuba".³⁶

In trying to capture these processes, American authors and artists developed strategies that synthesized Louisiana's sociocultural intricacies into more straightforward narratives of Americanization at a civilizing frontier, guided by the liberating introduction of democratic and affective practices. "Writing into submission" and thus flattening Louisiana's spatial (dis)order made it possible to exert control over an equally-sized spatial Other that threatened to undermine the stability of the fledgling postcolonial republic, albeit at the cost of eroding the pillars of the resultant spatial order. The following analyses un-stitch the discursive seams of this order by ungluing the myths of the territory's orderly purchase, exploration, and civilization. In doing so, they also scrutinize

34 W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 5.

35 C. Dejung, "Transregional Study of Class, Social Groups, and Milieus", in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 74–81, at 78; see S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, New York: Vintage Books, 2015, pp. 234–235.

36 Pizarz-Ramirez, Wöll, and Bozkurt, *Spatial Fictions*, p. 10.

the sustainability of the United States' unilateral projection of power under today's "global condition".

In James Hall's "The French Village" (1835) and George Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Customs and Manners of the North American Indians* (1842), the Louisiana Territory eludes its unifying description alongside a single spatial format or narrative, instead turning into a reference point for agrarian utopianism, scientific discoveries and technological progress, settlement and resources, a socio-economic safety valve for disenfranchised easterners, intercultural conflicts, and fears of or empathy for unruly and ethnically ambiguous populations. As these discourses overlapped and intermingled, they produced a discursive assemblage that reflects itself in the analysed sources. What ordered – and therefore also separated – Louisiana, it becomes clear, was its very discursive assemblage of a multitude of spatial imaginations and identities. The subsequent ordering of the territory as part of the United States might thus be deemed a "spatial Frankenstein": a posthumously and often literarily stitched-together entity, assembled from mismatching parts and designed to resemble the uniform narratives of the expanding nation-state.³⁷ Similar to Shelley's creature, this was often done with ambiguous or even well-meaning intentions and produced new and unexpected forms that assumed a life of their own. Like the rampages of the Modern Prometheus, the Louisiana Territory and its far western mental extensions created spaces of Otherness, but also room for unexpected encounters. Nationhood in the Louisiana Territory, as it turned out, could not simply be performed behind the shares of a plough, impressing and Americanizing awe-struck natives and Frenchmen. Instead, variegated spatial imaginations had to be mediated through real-life and fictional dialogue whose participants were less unified than suggested by the frontier or settler colonialism narratives. The flattening of histories and spatial discourses that informed the organization of the Louisiana Territory hence created a space that appears coherent only when viewed from a comfortable distance.

³⁷ In accordance with common usage, the following uses the name Frankenstein incorrectly by referring to the creature instead of its German-Swiss creator. The Frankenstein metaphor has been used in other space-related contexts, for example as the "transatlantic Frankenstein" (C. S. Garrett, S. Feyock, and M. Lohaus, "The 'transatlantic Frankenstein'", in: M. Sus and F. Pfeifer [eds.], *European Union in the World 2025: Scenarios for EU Relations with its Neighbours and Strategic Partners*, Dahrendorf Forum, 2016, pp. 9–12, https://dahrendorf-forum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Dahrendorf_Analysis_European-Union-in-the-World-2025.pdf).

Assembling the Western Frankenstein in James Hall's "The French Village"

Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear.

Safety Warning

Discursively policing and assembling Louisiana's diverse spatial formats and imaginations into a meaningful and orderly whole presented a task that authors like James Hall who, as seen above, had located the moral fibres of the nation's westering in the Old Northwest, took on with equal fervour. Published in 1835, *Tales of the Border* is a collection of short stories set in the Louisiana Territory and bordering regions. The first indications of Hall's approach to spatializing the Louisiana Territory surfaces in his introductory remarks that directly address his readers. Penned in a defensive tone, the preface reads like a disclaimer intended to deflect responsibility from an author who appears at odds with himself concerning his literary traversals between the lines of reality and fiction:

Although the garb of fiction has been assumed [...] the incidents which are related in these and other tales of the author are mostly such as have actually occurred; [...] In the descriptions of scenery he [Hall] has not, in any instance, intentionally departed from nature, or exercised his own fancy in the creation of a landscape, or in the exaggeration of the features which he has attempted to draw and if the fidelity of his pictures shall not be recognized by those who have traveled over the same ground, the deficiency will have resulted in the badness of the execution, and not in any intentional deviation from the originals.³⁸

It remains unclear if by "originals" Hall refers to geographical accuracy or to some unspecified first-hand accounts of western travellers and settlers "who have traveled over the same ground" and whose genuine experiences he is anxious to misrepresent. In light of the book's publication at a time when interest in (far) western migration began to reach a critical mass, it seems feasible that Hall wanted to exculpate himself from personal liability vis-à-vis emigrants who used his descriptions for lack of official guides during their journeys into uncharted western territories. Equally telling seems his prefixed withdrawal into "the garb of fiction" combined with the insistence of not having "exercised his own fancy in the creation of a landscape". Apart from creating excitement by positioning himself as an unreliable narrator, however, the tension and inner strife underlying Hall's remarks exceed their classification as mere rhetorical devices; instead, they signal a desire to depict accurate physical and human geographies and simultaneously condense these "empirical" facts into more meaningful

38 J. Hall, "Preface", *Tales of the Border*, Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1835, pp. 9–12, at 9–10.

and exciting units. These units form narrative backbones in a dual sense: First, as the archetypal patterns or templates that draft thematic spaces, characterized by their implied verisimilitude and regularly magnified by including gruesome or morally liminal details. Second, they represent the moveable pieces of scenery that supplement the subjective interventions of authorial narrators who synthesize them into equally real and imagined mental spaces, thus alleviating the forlornness of readers in unfamiliar spaces such as the Louisiana Territory.

It also seems noteworthy that Hall regularly assumes the tone of a newspaper reporter – a fact that is not simply explained with his editing several journals and gazettes throughout his career. This reporting tone becomes central for Hall's strategy to approximate fictional elements with actual experiences. Historicizing fiction by placing characters in real-life and morally problematic settings was an important stylistic technique of early American novel writing, influenced by Charles Brockden Brown's essays "Walstein's School of History" (1799) and "The Difference Between History and Romance" (1800). For the Scottish Enlightenment and its most influential thinkers like John Locke, observing the difference between fact and fiction was pivotal since misrepresenting the newfound "objective" republican virtues to an impressionable readership was considered unethical. Still, these same republican virtues needed to be disseminated and made palatable to a larger audience than just those interested in the longwinded histories of western politics or military campaigns. Attaching affect, excitement, and belonging while interweaving historical facts into a spatially "orderly" narrative – and thereby creating historical fiction – therefore became the task of "[t]he fictitious historian, not the chronicler, not the political economist or moral philosopher [who] stands best equipped to render the new nation coherent and legitimate by providing a diverse people with a shared past that they do not yet have".³⁹

In contrast to Brown's romantic strategies, Hall relies on faux French dialects and western neologisms to fictitiously historicize his characters. Accordingly, he concludes the preface to his *Tales* hopeful that "[t]heir brevity will probably secure them a perusal, in common with the similar productions of the press".⁴⁰ This reporting tone would become a common feature of much western literature, demonstrated by the exploration journals of the Corps of Discovery and personal testimonials penned by people from all walks of life, some of which already had

39 A. Emerson, "The Early American Novel: Charles Brockden Brown's Fictitious Historiography", *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 40 (2006–2007) 1/2, pp. 125–150, at 127.

40 Hall, "Preface" to *Tales of the Border*, pp. 11–12.

their say in this book. This balancing act between objectivity and subjectivity, however, “makes us uneasy by its apparently oxymoronic nature – its mixing of reality and fiction”.⁴¹ By the turn of the century, this synthesis already threatened to undermine the boundaries between experience and simulation, but it was the film (and now increasingly the video game) industry that “makes the replica more seductive than the original” and “shatters historical distinctions between the real and the unreal by producing faux replicas of experience independent of the activity from which they derive”.⁴²

The most powerful results of these syntheses between originals and replicas eventually congealed into the stereotyped notions that perpetually inform popular imaginations of the West, notably as a stage for masculine regeneration and violent Otherness “by its separateness from the familiar” and by tracing “only a narrow line across the West, and yet [writing] confidently of the character of the whole region”.⁴³ As Clyde Milner elucidates, the West as a result “has been oversold and oversimplified as a vast vista of mountain, plain, and desert occupied by heroic, often male, archetypes noted for their violent actions”.⁴⁴ However, time and the endless repetitions of mental patterns have produced the opposite of “authenticity”: Overflowing with historical and cultural significance, places like the Grand Canyon and the Niagara Falls appear familiar, evoking emotions and memories even for those who have not been there. In this way, the representational structure of the West collapses onto itself and becomes hyperreal “as reality decamps into the image [and] the image ironically absorbs the space of the real”.⁴⁵ The unfamiliar West, as it is called and understood here, is grounded in Puritan views of a diabolical wilderness and aggrandized by accounts that view the West as a dangerous but fantastical

41 R. Siegle, “Capote’s ‘Handcarved Coffins’ and the Nonfiction Novel”, *Contemporary Literature* 25 (1984) 4, pp. 437–451, at 437.

42 Rothman, *Devil’s Bargains*, p. 13. Video games today are the largest category of the entertainment sector with an expected global revenue of USD 181,000,000,000 in 2021, more than the book, music, and film industries combined. Researchers must keep up with these developments and engage with games that interactively shape the imaginations of millions of players. While they have become more inclusive in their narratives, games regularly work on expanding the scripted space of the West through their obsessive pursuit of realism. Players of *Red Dead Redemption 2*, for instance, can encounter over 170 different wildlife species and may even witness the testicles of horses shrink in cold weather (J. Wills, “Red Dead Redemption 2: Can a Video Game be too Realistic?” *The Conversation*, 12 November 2018, <https://theconversation.com/red-dead-redemption-2-can-a-video-game-be-too-realistic-106404>).

43 Limerick, “Seeing and Being Seen”, pp. 18–19.

44 Milner, “America Only More So”, p. 39.

45 R. G. Smith, *Baudrillard Dictionary*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p. 96.

space “where wolves are white and bears grizzly – where pheasants are hens of the prairie, and frogs have horns! – where the rivers are yellow, and white men are turned savages in looks. Through the whole of this strange land the dogs are all wolves – women all slaves – men all lords”.⁴⁶

As is the case with other semiotic systems, the unfamiliar West (or, in its more widely used but less precise terminology, the “Wild West”) has detached itself from its own experiential references to become an arbitrary unit, taking part in a system of familiar and generationally transmitted signifiers.⁴⁷ The inflationary reproduction of the unfamiliar West as a canonical format (i.e. lemma) resulted not least from the democratization of writing and “journal-keepers, diarists, impression-recorders, and word-mongers [who] could not look out a train window at a wide open western horizon without reaching for their pens. The result of their compulsive literacy was, by 1900, a western landscape blanketed by words, covered two or three inches deep with the littered vocabulary of romantic scenery appreciation”.⁴⁸ Arguably, today’s West can thus no longer be channelled solely through an author’s narrative curating of authentic experiences. In contrast, it can only stay “wild” through its own fictional representations and their real-life imitations. Imitations of western wildness reveal themselves, for example, in contemporary re-enactments of famous battles or shootouts, or at virtual marketplaces that sell “originally western” attire such as cowboy pants, gun holsters, or replicated sheriff’s badges.⁴⁹ In 1835, although already feeling the urge to reassure his readers of his stories’ legitimacy, Hall’s personal background at the peripheries and experiences as a circuit-rider in the Old Northwest gave him additional credibility in his literary charting of the still-unfamiliar Louisiana Territory. Hall’s stories are hence among the archetypal urtexts of today’s simulated western iconographies, making their analysis critical for this book’s efforts of retracing spatialization processes to underlying discursive networks.

⁴⁶ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, pp. 105–106.

⁴⁷ See S. Wöll, “Inertia and Movement: The Spatialization of the Native Northland in Jack London’s Short Stories”, *GeoHumanities* 3 (2017) 1, pp. 65–87, at 69.

⁴⁸ Limerick, “Seeing and Being Seen”, p. 20.

⁴⁹ The “Mojave Muleskinners” are one such re-enactment group that “have received numerous awards for their authentic dress and character portrayal. They have been featured in several books, dozens of magazines, calendars, paintings, music videos, movies, and television productions”. Their emulation of authentic westernness goes so far as to frame semi-fictional eulogies for deceased members that are depicted on wanted posters under pseudonyms like “Buffalo Kid”, “Sugar Britches”, or “Misfire Mel” (Mojave Muleskinners, 2020, <https://www.mojavemuleskinners.com> [accessed 4 May 2020]).

Thematising the French colonial population, Hall's short story "The French Village" asserts discursive authority over the French as the Louisiana Territory's "other Others", highlighting their anachronistic spatial fixation and suggesting strategies for cooperation between French and Americans in the region's spatial formatting. Hall wastes no time in putting his above-described semiotic blueprints to work by unravelling the complex sociocultural configurations that Americans encountered in their new possessions and reassembling them into a more homogeneous narrative. The story begins with a description of an unnamed village, located at unknown coordinates and nestled along the banks of the Mississippi River. The settlement's buildings, Hall writes,

were scattered in disorder, like the tents of a wandering tribe, along the margin of a deep bayou [where] myriads of mosquitoes [sic] filled the air with an incessant hum [and] clouds of miasma rolled over the village, spreading volumes of bile and dyspepsia abroad upon the land and sometimes countless multitudes of mosquitoes, issuing from the humid desert, assailed the devoted village with inconceivable fury, threatening to draw from its inhabitants every drop of French blood which yet circulated in their veins. But these evils by no means dismayed, or even interrupted the gaiety of this happy people. When the mosquitoes came, the monsieurs lighted their pipes [...] and when the fever threatened, the priest, who was also a doctor, flourished his lancet, the fiddler flourished his bow, and the happy villagers flourished their heels, and sang, and laughed, and fairly cheated death⁵⁰

In this description, the villagers are epistemically subjugated to a childlike people who, instead of reclaiming land and constructing levees to farm and extirpate disease-carrying pests, stoically endure the adversities of their environments, hopelessly entangled in long-obsolete traditions.⁵¹ While their habitat is sweltering and contaminated, it is also a sublime and ancient world frozen in time and constantly on the brink of being swallowed by the surrounding wilderness. In this spatial vision Louisiana is an antithetic sociocultural leftover of pre-republican France. It is metaphorically overgrown by its own anachronisms and defined as an Old-World "logjam" blocking the progress of the democratizing frontier. However, unlike Native Americans, the French in Louisiana are not perceived as existing entirely outside of time and thus in an ahistorical state beyond the pale of civilization and progress. Instead, their pre-modern existence

⁵⁰ J. Hall, "The French Village", *Tales of the Border*, Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1835, pp. 102–128, at 102–104.

⁵¹ In *Astoria*, Washington Irving writes that St. Louis' "old French mansions, with open case-ments, still retained the easy, indolent air of the original colonists; and now and then the scraping of a fiddle, a strain of an ancient French song, or the sound of billiard balls, showed that [...] happy Gallic turn for gayety and amusement" (W. Irving, *Astoria*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1836, p. 119).

stems chiefly from spatial practices born out of isolation and inertia. In Hall's story, free-roaming horses symbolize this notion. Beyond the village, the narrator explains, prairies stretch out for endless miles "and here might be seen immense droves of French ponies, roaming untamed, the common stock of the village, ready to be reduced to servitude by any lady or gentleman who chose to take the trouble".⁵²

The concept of communal ownership and other precapitalistic subsistence economies collided with American land and property laws codified in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments that are "predicated on the paramount principle that land was first and foremost a commodity for capital gain" of individuals and "a civil liberty instead of a social resource".⁵³ For Henry Brackenridge, "[t]here was scarcely any distinction of classes" among French Louisianans who had yet to learn that "by industry it was in their power to become rich".⁵⁴ Similar considerations would later become the cornerstones of the 1887 General Allotment Act (i.e. Dawes Act) that demonstrated how capitalist epistemologies and law-making could in tandem parcel and police spaces of racial and cultural Otherness. As Melissa Meyer notes: "As part of the U.S. government's forced assimilation campaign, reservations across the country were divided into parcels [...] and assigned to individuals. Policymakers believed that owning private property would magically transform the collective values of most Indians and hasten their assimilation when nothing else had succeeded".⁵⁵ At the same time, the attempt of respatializing native customs represented a clear departure from Jefferson's agrarian idea "that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living, that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it".⁵⁶

Commodifying space through a network of laws of descent and distribution became an important spatialization technique, not only on the state level but also for emigrants passing through and settling in the Louisiana Territory. For

52 Hall, "The French Village", p. 104. Hall's narrator cites more examples for communal ownership in French Louisiana such as the "'common field,' in which all worked harmoniously" (ibid., p. 107). In the Oregon Country of the 1840s, Anne Abernethy relates the existence of communal spaces and their gradual transformation into private properties, parallel to the region's developing of commercial ties with the United States. "There was a building put up in the first place for a hospital", she recalls, "but it was turned into a store house & a place for keeping the goods" (Abernethy, "The Mission Family").

53 Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere*, p. 26; see S. B. Warner Jr., *The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, p. 15.

54 Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, pp. 135; 144.

55 Meyer, "Blood Is Thicker", p. 232.

56 H. George, "Jefferson and the Land Question", in: A. E. Bergh (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 16, Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907, pp. i–xiv, at viii.

example, after discovering an aesthetically pleasing body of water on the Great Plains that had “the appearance of having been formed by art instead of nature [,] it is so perfect”, Esther Belle Hanna records some distinctly commodifying business ideas in her diary and summarizes: “This pool would no doubt be worth thousands of dollars in the States”.⁵⁷ While the West was thus habitually envisioned as a realm of future riches and easy money, the reality of economic losses was felt more directly. After most of their oxen had succumbed to exhaustion and lack of water on the prairies, Hanna reports “throwing away many valuable things. The camp-ground is literally covered with cast away goods. Have seen hundred of dollars worth thrown away within a day or two”.⁵⁸ On his way to California, emigrant James Cardwell reveals how mobility had to be “bought” when he and his company “resolved in order to facilitate travel to throw away every thing that was not useful on the road. Consequently there was several thousand dollars worth of property thrown away”.⁵⁹ In Hall’s narrative, socially accepted deviations from these individualistic and capitalistic spatialization practices effect the Louisiana Territory’s formatting as a stage of social romance, or what M. M. Bakhtin describes as “idyllic chronotope”, namely a

little spatial word [that] is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world. [...] The unity of the life of generations [...] in an idyll is in most instances primarily defined by the *unity of place*, by the age-old rooting of the life of generations to a single place, from which this life, in all its events, is inseparable.⁶⁰

In “The French Village”, the social structure of this chronotope was “composed, partly, of emigrants from France, and partly of natives – not Indians – but *bona fide* French, born in America; but preserving their language, their manners, and their agility in dancing, although several generations had passed away since their first settlement”.⁶¹ In the wake of the Louisiana Purchase, this romantic but economically backward chronotope was reformed via the (literal) yanking out of its traditions by “Yankees and Kentuckians [who] were pouring in, bringing with them the selfish distinctions” of capitalism and “converting into private property those beautiful regions which had heretofore been free to all who trod the soil or breathed the air”.⁶² As American settlers, entrepreneurs,

⁵⁷ Hanna, “Diary”, p. 18.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 22–23.

⁵⁹ Cardwell, “Emigrant Company”, p. 1.

⁶⁰ M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, M. Holquist (ed.), C. Emerson and M. Holquist (trans.), Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981 [1975], pp. 84–258, at 225.

⁶¹ Hall, “The French Village”, p. 105.

⁶² Ibid., p. 125.

and seemingly objective observers like Hall's narrator gained access to this idyll, they were free to investigate it like an archive and mythical gateway to their own colonial past. In perusing this archive, they took close inventory of the cultural artefacts they discovered and esteemed their worth within a larger aesthetic context.

Fixating the status quo of French-Louisianan civilization went hand in hand with the attribution of placemaking authority by Americans. In a similar vein, Hall's narrator discovers the eponymous village shortly after the Louisiana Purchase, intent on reporting about its people and their eccentric manners. After being invited to attend a "king ball" that marks the start of the carnival season, both his colonial and libidinous gazes shine through when he praises "[t]he native ease and elegance of the females, reared in the wilderness and unhacknied in the forms of society [that] surprised and delighted me".⁶³ The narrator makes some acquaintances at the dance whom he crudely outlines on the following pages. One of them is Monsieur Baptiste Menou, "a bachelor of forty [who] was the most regular of men", except for his "enormous pair of sable whiskers".⁶⁴ Menou's love interest, Mademoiselle Jeanette Duval, lives right across the street from him and is an unmarried "spinster" who "unlike him [...] was brisk, and fat, and plump" while "her complexion was of a darker olive than the genial sun of France confers on her brunettes, and her skin was as smooth and shining as polished mahogany".⁶⁵ Connecting external features, character trait, and textual authority in this way became an important strategy in the literary spatialization of the Louisiana Territory that largely ignored its rich literary history. In part, this was due to language barriers, but more often based on a bluntly expressed hierarchy that dismissed French culture as inferior and immature.

In *Literature of the Louisiana Territory*, Alexander de Menil declares that "[v]ery little culture and refinement could be expected from the primitive class that lived by hunting, fishing, trapping and trading on a small scale, and that principally with the red man".⁶⁶ As a consequence, he went on, their cultural productions could be dismissed because "[u]nder the absolute, monarchical governments of France and Spain, in which the union of Church and State prevailed, and education meant but little more than religious training, a system of free public instruction, based upon social equality, would have been an impossibility". In contrast, "[a]fter the purchase of the Territory

⁶³ Ibid., p. 117.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 107–109.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 111.

⁶⁶ de Menil, *Literature of Louisiana*, p. 35.

by the American government, education progressed fast [...] while printing offices and newspapers pressed hard in their wake”.⁶⁷ In a textbook example of environmental determinism, de Menil’s statement equates Louisiana’s uncultivated wilderness with the supposedly unrefined intellects of its inhabitants. Another widespread argument proposed that spatial isolation, “false” colonial consciousness, and lack of democratic virtues worked together to suffocate their spatial literacy since “villages and hamlets [...] and rude log cabins, cannot reasonably be expected to harbor poets, essayists, historians and novelists. They may do so in isolated cases, but like the cicade, such cases are perforce voiceless; uncongenial environments strangle utterance”.⁶⁸ One of these “voiceless cicadas” was Julien de Lallande Poydras, whose epic naturalist poem “*La Prise du Morne Baton Rouge*” (1779) depicts the nymphs and deities of the Mississippi River celebrating Spanish victory over the British garrison at Baton Rouge.⁶⁹ Commenting on this paramount example of Louisianan literature, de Menil states: “It makes two hundred and seven lines of absolutely worthless and alleged poetry”.⁷⁰

On the one hand, discounting French Louisianans as voiceless and shrugging off their cultural work as the stammering of simpletons was an example of cultural imperialism designed to write the territory into submission and simultaneously defend the fledgling American literary scene. On the other hand, it also represented an effort of asserting hegemony over the usage and interpretation of language itself; significantly, its placemaking parameters and ways in which they shaped popular spatial imaginations regarding the relationship between the eastern nation and its equally sized western additions. American policy and opinion leaders knew that mere political control over Louisiana would not only be insufficient but also threaten to fragment the Early Republic’s embryonic cultural landscape and fragile postcolonial spatial order, which was constantly under threat from world powers Britain, Spain, and France. Controlling the language of space and its cultural transmission through literature then worked as the unnamed third pillar (next to politics and economic policies) in ordering Louisiana. First, by discursively subduing its native culture, and second by reassembling it mixed with the mortar of America’s spatial metanarratives

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

⁶⁹ R. A. Caulfeild, *The French Literature of Louisiana*, Gretna: Pelican, 1929, pp. 3–4; P. M. Segura, “The Capture of the Bluff of Baton Rouge”, *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 17 (1976) 2, pp. 203–209, at 203–207.

⁷⁰ de Menil, *Literature of Louisiana*, p. 44.

and tropes. In 1936, Bakhtin outlined the role of language in exerting discursive power:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. [...] It becomes “one's own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own.⁷¹

In the Louisiana Territory, this linguistic reframing commenced simultaneously on different scales. The term Frenchman, for instance, turned into an invective used to classify white Louisianans as cultural aliens with aberrant values, corrupted by nepotism and foreign (i.e. aristocratic and Catholic) loyalties.⁷² This Otherness enabled policymakers and writers to emphasize American virtues by contrasting them with their imaginary French opposites, namely adjectives such as regressive, colonial, anticapitalistic, flippant, or effeminate. On this basis, obviously colonial spatial performances like the Louisiana Purchase itself could be reframed as anti-imperial, civilizing missions, meant to bring liberty to downtrodden and oppressed colonial subjects. While the lifestyle of New France appeared hostile to American epistemes from the outside, it represented not so much an inbuilt enmity but rather a lack of consciousness and spatial literacy. “The French Village” encapsulates this notion in a single sentence: “Inverting the usual order, to enjoy life was their daily business”. Unlike American trailblazers and backwoodsmen, the French hence did not really *live* in Louisiana as a means to an end; they were in fact *caught* in it. This being-caught paints them as the childlike victims of their own ignorance for the dynamic axioms of expansion, mobility, and capitalism. “[A]s happy and as thoughtless souls as ever danced to a violin”, they are lost in the metaphorical woods of their own regressive imaginations and lack of future-directed (i.e. westward) visions.⁷³

By realigning their disorientation, Louisianans could be taught a “proper” relationship to space with the help of authorial father figures like James Hall and other authors who possessed the discursive tools to correct Louisiana's misalignment in time and space. Prior to the immigration waves of the 1840s

⁷¹ Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 293–294.

⁷² Hall suggests that “the ‘grand monarque’ had not more loyal subjects in his wide domains, [because] he had never condescended to honour them with a single act of oppression” (Hall, “The French Village”, p. 106).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 106; 102.

and 1850s, such “proper” stories could align the territory’s spatiotemporal bedlam and prepare its people – at least those with appropriate skin tones and ancestral charts – to reformat their surroundings as if they already had been naturalized American citizens. Before a critical mass of emigrants from the East could replicate agrarianism in the West through the universal languages of Protestant work ethics and business acumen, it became the task of authors like Hall, de Menil, and Brackenridge to pave the roads on which these real-life encounters would take place. When Hall’s trailblazing protagonist returns to the village some years after his first visit, he can already witness the benefits of these transformations. Upon his arrival, he finds a paved street leading to the village on which his tired horse “sprung forward with new vigor when his hoof struck the smooth, firm road which led across the plain”. By chance, he arrives just as his old acquaintances Baptiste and Jeanette are about to get married as prospective US citizens, drivelling in thick accents: “Dis come for have d’ Americain rule de countrie. Parbleu! they make charivary for de old maid and de old bachelor!”⁷⁴

Next to learning the English language (and concomitantly entertaining American audiences through quirky linguistic performances), military careers proved vital in acculturating white Louisianans, creating “opportunities in direct proportion to the limitations on Afro-Louisianians”.⁷⁵ Brackenridge mentions that “[s]everal of the young [French]men have entered the army of the United States, and have discovered talents. The females are also instructed with more care, and the sound of the Piano is now heard in their dwellings for the first time”.⁷⁶ While cultural consonance could be achieved through such ethno-political processes, another common strategy formatted the relationship between Frenchmen and Americans by imagining them as “natives of the same land”.⁷⁷ This meant that the land’s actual natives and other non-white inhabitants were in turn discursively unsettled and parcelled out as antagonists working to subvert the territory’s precarious imaginative framework. By purchasing Louisiana the US had agreed to respect existing treaties, yet the contract did not preclude the negotiaton of new and more “advantageous” conditions with the Choctaws and Caddos as the region’s major confederacies. Simultaneously, leaders of these internally fragmented and heterogenous groups pursued similar goals as their American counterparts, namely the formation of pan-tribal alliances

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 120; 124.

⁷⁵ Kastor, *Nation’s Crucible*, p. 107.

⁷⁶ Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 139.

and consolidation of territories and resources. Weakened by disease and intermittent warfare they found themselves, however, in increasingly unfavourable bargaining positions. Brackenridge understands the territory's cultural respatialization as a primarily external process that worked alongside appropriations of language and material culture.⁷⁸ He equates Louisianans becoming US citizens with the redressing of people whose Otherness was externalized by their outlandish apparel made up of “capots [i.e. capes], moccasins, blue handkerchiefs on the head, a pipe in the mouth, and the hair tied up in a long queue”.⁷⁹ In the decades after 1803, he notes, tastes and fashion trends quickly adapted and mirrored the Americanization of Louisianans as

[t]he American costume is generally introduced, amongst the first families, and amongst the young girls and young men universally, [unlike the] Pennsylvania Germans [i.e. Mennonites], who adhere so rigidly to the customs, manners, and language of their fathers. A few years have effected more change with the inhabitants of this territory than has been brought about amongst the Germans in fifty years.⁸⁰

Sporting American fashion, the next generation of Louisianans therefore cleared up doubts of eastern elites regarding the dilution of American culture during the process of territorial expansion. At least on this skin-deep level, it seemed that Jefferson's ideal of the nation's agrarian replication in the West came to fruition, even though the fashion world seemed far removed from the realities of hardworking yeomen farmers and their arduous patriotic performances behind plough handles. Dressing colonial subjects in “the American costume” also points to the covering-up of an underlying cultural complexity for which the French terminology of Edwards' *décalage* becomes a particularly fitting methodological choice. For white Louisianans, economic mobility and prospective civil rights unfolded into a promising future, supported by assurances that the “US do not want colonies – they will disdain to hold others in the same state, which they themselves so nobly despised. They [i.e. French

⁷⁸ The Frankfort School expressed similar critiques in their reprimands of cultural imperialism and the so-called culture industry. In *Die Kulturindustrie* (1944), Adorno and Horkheimer liken American popular culture to the standardized mass production of industrial goods. The culture industry, they propose, creates mass tastes that reify a system of conspicuous consumption that lacks the educational and uplifting properties of high culture (M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, “Kulturindustrie: Aufklärung als Massenbetrug”, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, Amsterdam: Querido, 1947, pp. 144–198, at 144).

⁷⁹ Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, p. 137.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 137–138.

and Americans] are in fact, both natives of the same land, and both can claim Freedom as their birth right”.⁸¹

Whereas white Louisianans were able to redress themselves through contacts with cultural centres in the East, Americans consolidated their imagined national community through its expansion into even purer western cores, which Hall and others located in the utopia of the Old Northwest as the nation’s “western heart”. Both groups hence became “natives” of the unfamiliar West as a result of the French becoming American (with elements of French and Afro-Caribbean cultures preserved in culinary or local traditions, e.g. Mardi Gras in New Orleans) and Americans becoming “truly American” by moving West, respectively. Over the course of this dialectic interaction, its millionfold repetition, and the real-life consequences of Indian removal policies, the Trail of Tears, and designation of Oklahoma as a reservation, the Louisiana Territory’s unfamiliarity eventually transmuted into the familiar spatial tropes revolving around whiteness, violence, and masculinity.

At the same time, French Louisianans were considered too spatially illiterate to realize the threat posed by their longstanding cooperation with indigenous peoples. Subsisting in the isolation of their chronotopical idyll, they lacked the nation-building frontier experiences presupposed on axiomatic mobility and perpetual warfare. In “The French Village”, the narrator relates an anecdote about Baptiste, who in his youth out of flippancy joined a colonial detachment of the French army. Used to his personal freedom, the Frenchman soon “complained of being obliged to eat, and drink, and sleep, at the call of the drum”. After first seeing combat with natives “he began to have some scruples as to the propriety of cutting the throats of the respectable gentry whom he had been in the habit of considering as the original and lawful possessors of the soil”.⁸² As a consequence of such scruples, the French were deemed incapable of actuating the disruptive potential of heterogenous socio-spatial orders and hence the very reason for their own precarious positionality between a pathogenic wilderness and unpredictable Indians. Still, their familiarity with hazardous environments and native customs

⁸¹ Ibid. Ironically, France later adopted a similar strategy of emotional and intellectual appeals in its own colonial possessions. Reacting to uprisings in Indochina and Morocco, general Lyautey aimed at “winning hearts and minds” in order to pacify unruly colonial subjects (P. de Boisfleury Grégoire, “The Origins of Marshal Lyautey’s Pacification Doctrine in Morocco from 1912 to 1925”, Master thesis, Fort Leavenworth, 2010, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/boisfleurythesis.pdf>, p. 3). In US foreign policy, winning wars through similar means was attempted – but failed spectacularly – in Lyndon B. Johnson’s “Hearts and Minds” campaign during the Vietnam War (J. A. Agnew and S. Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 167).

⁸² Hall, “The French Village”, pp. 108–109.

made them useful assets in the territory's physical ordering, through which they could prove their loyalty by turning into brokers between two divergent eastern and western orders. As Hall ponders:

[T]he French have invariably been more successful in securing the confidence and affection of the Indian tribes than any other nation. [...] the French alone have won them to the familiar intercourse of social life, lived with them in the mutual interchange of kindness; and, by treating them as friends and equals, gained their entire confidence. This result [...] is perhaps more owing to the conciliatory manners of that amiable people, and the absence among them of that insatiable avarice, that boundless ambition, that reckless prodigality of human life, that unprincipled disregard of public and solemn leagues, which, in the conquests of the British and the Spaniards, have marked their footsteps with misery, and blood, and desolation.⁸³

Of course, this tabulation of empire ignores that *La Louisiane* had also been no equal-rights utopia but a colonial extension of France with its own history of injustices, including slavery. Nonetheless, more than other North American colonies, the survival of the colony's small white population depended on alliances and the goodwill of Native Americans. Fragile demographic structures and a lack of female emigrants combined with isolated settlements separated by uncultivated land and accessible only by waterways from the few commercial hubs, strongly incentivized economic cooperation and close-knit social ties with local tribes. In 1809, William Henry Harrison addressed the replacement of these practices with harsher racial hierarchies and exploitative economic practices:

The happiness they enjoyed from their intercourse with the French is their perpetual theme – it is their golden age. [...] “you call [us],” said an old Indian chief to me “your Children [but] why do you not make us happy as our Fathers the French did. They never took from us our lands, indeed they were in common with us – they planted where they pleased and they cut wood where they pleased and so did we – but now if a poor Indian attempts to take a little bark from a tree to cover him from the rain, up comes a white man and threatens to shoot him, claiming the tree as his own.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Ibid., p. 105.

⁸⁴ Qtd. in M. Kimaïd, *Modernity, Metatheory, and the Temporal-Spatial Divide: From Mythos to Techné*, London: Routledge, 2015, p. 145. In *Summer on the Lakes*, Margaret Fuller seconds the notion of French benevolence towards Louisianan natives, commenting that “the French Catholics, at least, did not harm them, nor disturb their minds merely to corrupt them. The French they loved. But the stern Presbyterian, with his dogmas and his task-work, the city circle and the college, with their niggard concessions and unfeeling stare, have never tried the experiment. [...] Our people and our government have sinned alike against the first-born of the soil” (Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 184).

When he made this statement, Harrison served as governor of the Indiana Territory and was known for his amicable relations with Tecumseh, the famous Shawnee chief who had organized a pan-tribal confederacy in defiance of American expansionism. In Harrison's words, he was "one of those uncommon geniuses who spring up occasionally to produce revolutions and overturn the established order of things".⁸⁵ Nonetheless, in 1811 the alleged philanthropist decided to crush Tecumseh's vision of a pan-Indian West by invading and torching the alliance's capital Prophetstown. Tecumseh was forced to flee across the Canadian border, while Harrison became a national hero.⁸⁶

As already mentioned alongside discussions of the Old Northwest, the spatial format of the middle ground theorizes this notion of a "golden age" of native-settler relations. As intimated by the chief's referencing of the French as "Fathers", kinship and the assurance of intercultural ties played a key role for this mode of coexistence based on "the ceremonies, the rituals of gift giving, the rituals of fictive kinship, which made kinship relations both metaphorically and actually the basis for political and economic relations [by exchanging] medals, commissions, pipes [and other] gifts".⁸⁷ In this milieu, illegal squatting and excessive land grabbing represented less tolerable or ostracized spatial practices. From an American perspective and in light of their mild-mannered nature, Louisianans, similar to French-Canadian *voyageurs*, were regarded as liminal actors and indispensable intermediaries by their "forming a kind of link between civilised and savage men".⁸⁸ In performing this role, they could assist in negotiating terms that furthered US policies by enforcing racial hierarchies and clearing native land claims. In "The French Village", the latter happens when "[t]heir ancient allies, the Indians, had sold their hunting grounds". However, Hall's narrator also concedes that "their removal" has "deprived the village of its only branch of commerce", causing the exodus of most inhabitants who, "headed by the priest, floated down the Mississippi, to seek congenial society among the sugar plantations of their countrymen in the south".⁸⁹

Interspersed with traces of local colour melancholy, the story embraces the inexorable process of the village's and the territory's progressive respatialization

⁸⁵ Qtd. in Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 340.

⁸⁶ A. J. Langguth, *Union 1812: The Americans Who Fought the Second War of Independence*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007, p. 169. In 1841, Harrison became the ninth president of the United States but died from pneumonia after only 31 days in office, serving the shortest tenure in history.

⁸⁷ White, *The Middle Ground*, p. 52.

⁸⁸ Hall, "The French Village", p. 127.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 125; 127.

and becoming American. The newlyweds Baptiste and Jeanette stay behind to be thoroughly Americanized, eventually moving into a modern log house and enjoying “the honour done them by the American people, in buying the country” whose “beneficial effects were beginning to be widely disseminated. The roads were crowded with the teams, and herds, and families of emigrants, hastening to the land of promise. Steamboats navigated every stream [...] and the plough broke the sod whose verdure had covered the prairie for ages”.⁹⁰ But Hall also injects spatial tropes that pre-empt literary strategies more readily associated with postbellum sentimentalism and transcendentalist writings, as seen in the previous chapter. Mentioning the dilution of “pure” lineages and demise of inhabitants’ intuitive relationship with nature that had characterized the territory, the narrator laments that “their ancient customs, like their mud-walled cottages, were crumbling to ruins around them” and “the ancient heritage of the ponies was invaded by the ignoble beasts of the interlopers”.⁹¹ The void left behind by these deplorable yet inevitable developments was ready to be filled with the spatial and cultural discourses of the American West.

In the end, Hall’s Frankenstein-esque spatialization of the Louisiana Territory prompts more fundamental questions regarding the current and future stability of spatial orders that juxtapose the triumphalism of western expansionism with the United States’ unilateral dominance under the global condition of the post-Cold War era, or what Fukuyama called “the end of history”. Connecting Hall’s formatting of the Louisiana Territory unbounded and unfamiliar with the contemporary boundedness of its own simulations of familiarity leads to some of the discursive kernels of today’s US-dominated global ordering. For instance, it evokes the notion that, like the West as the main focal point of its identity, “America, too, has entered this era of undecidability: is it still really powerful or merely simulating power?”⁹² This goes to show that spatialization processes are not unidirectional in their projection of power but can also collapse under their own discursive weight. This penchant towards collapse is already inherent in the function of spatial formats to homogenize difference and engender coherent

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 116; 120.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 125. During his extended stays on the prairies, George Catlin traced legends of purebred Arabian horses that roamed the Comanche country and for him symbolized the dignity and unhindered freedom of Native Americans. The animals’ vanishing into the realms of fantasy and memory for Catlin became synonymous with the extinction of indigenous cultures and peoples. He notes that “the beautiful Arabian we had so often heard of at the East, as belonging to the Camanches [sic], must either be a great ways further South than this, or else it must be a *horse of imagination*” (G. Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. 2, New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844 [1841], p. 62).

⁹² J. Baudrillard, *America*, C. Turner (trans.), Brooklyn: Verso Books, 1989, p. 115.

narratives about localities, regions, nations, empires, and their global interconnections. Hall's synthesizing of Louisiana's complex socio-spatial landscapes into noble savages, childish Frenchmen, and enterprising Americans then points to an emerging network of spatial imaginations and a lexicon of spatial semantics that sees US hegemony of global discourse unfold from its storied westernness. This scaled linkage is not limited to the past but continues to inform contemporary developments that build upon its signifiers, visible for instance in the fictions of economic mobility and infinite resources that locate Silicon Valley as an epitome of twenty-first-century westernness.

Violence Through Empathy: George Catlin's Native American West

*Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light*

J. Milton⁹³

Next to Hall, other spatial entrepreneurs from the US employed different strategies that contributed to but also put into question the national integration of the incommensurable West. George Catlin (1796–1872) approximated western unfamiliarity through his outspoken empathy for Native Americans. He saw the prairies and plains as staging areas for the head-on collision of spatial imaginations and practices, but also for intercultural dialogue and social justice. An artist and author, Catlin's paintings and ethnographic writings influenced public views and visual language of the Native American West on both a national and global scale. Growing up in Pennsylvania, his fascination for the peripheries awakened when he witnessed a group of chiefs who were on a visiting tour to Philadelphia. Impressed by the "stoic dignity" of "these lords of the forest", Catlin realized that

the simplicity and loftiness of their nature, unrestrained and unfettered by the disguises of art, is surely the most beautiful model for the painter, – and the country from which he hails is unquestionably the best study or school of the arts in the world: such, I am sure, from the models I have seen, is the wilderness of North America. And the history and customs of such a people, preserved by pictorial illustrations, are themes worthy the lifetime of one man, and nothing short of the loss of my life, shall prevent me from visiting their county, and of becoming their historian.⁹⁴

⁹³ J. Milton, *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books*, Boston: Timothy Bedlington, 1820 [1667], pp. 7–8.

⁹⁴ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, pp. 19–20.

Not long after this pivotal moment, Catlin cut all ties to his life on the East Coast and “broke from them all, – from my wife and aged parents”.⁹⁵ Between 1830 and 1836, he embarked on five journeys to the Great Plains, Great Lakes, and Florida, first in the company of William Clark and later by himself. In total, he visited around 50 tribes, often being among the first whites to interact with them. During these interactions, he recorded native customs, amassed a substantial collection of cultural artefacts, and produced over 500 paintings. Prior to his western journeys, Catlin expressed his desire of becoming the archivist of native civilizations and “procure the costumes, and a complete collection of their manufactures and weapons, and to perpetuate them in a *Gallery unique*, for the use and instruction of future ages”.⁹⁶ Compiling such an archive for the use “of future ages” on the one hand meant detaching native culture in a timeless and spaceless vacuum. On the other hand, it points to spatialization processes designed to stabilize and homogenize the native West and thus advance its ordering as part of the nation-state. As Foucault explains, “the *archive* defines a particular level: that of a practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated. [...] it does not constitute the library of all libraries, outside time and place”.⁹⁷ In his travelogues, Catlin promotes western ordering through national parks and reservations as archival spaces designed to regulate and preserve the native West’s complexity or “multiplicity of statements”. In his two-volume tome *Letters and Notes on the Customs and Manners of the North American Indians* (1842), he keenly promotes the notion of

a *magnificent park*, where the world could see for ages to come, the native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his wild horse with sinewy bow, and shield and lance, amid the fleeting herds of elk and buffaloes. What a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world, in future ages! A *nation’s Park*, containing man and beast, in all the wildness and freshness of their nature’s beauty!⁹⁸

Based on the tension between nation-state and “nation’s Park” as opposing spaces, Catlin practically anticipated the frontier thesis. Similar to James Hall, he

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 21. Visiting the Old Northwest around the same time, Margaret Fuller mentions Catlin’s collection and expresses a similar desire to preserve native culture: “We hope, too, there will be a national institute, containing all the remains of the Indians, – all that has been preserved by official intercourse at Washington, Catlin’s collection, and a picture gallery as complete as can be made, with a collection of skulls from all parts of the country” (Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 233).

⁹⁷ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 146.

⁹⁸ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, p. 397.

attributes the development of an American identity to trailblazing Kentuckian backwoodsmen, yet identifies the Mississippi River as the future site of this genesis. The country, he argues, is

filled up, with people from all parts, tracing their own latitudes, and carrying with them their local peculiarities and prejudices. The mighty Mississippi, however, the great and everlasting highway on which these people are for ever to intermingle their interests and manners, will effectually soften down those prejudices, and eventually result in an amalgamation of feeling and customs, from which this huge mass of population will take one new and general appellation. It is here that the true character of the *American* is to be formed [...] between *literal democracy* and *aristocracy* – between low cunning and self-engendered ingenuousness. Such will be found to be the true character of the Americans when jostled awhile together, until their local angles are worn off; and such may be found an already pretty well formed, in the genuine Kentuckian, the first brace and daring pioneer of the great West; he is the true model of an American – the nucleus around which the character must form, and from which it is to emanate to the world.⁹⁹

More than 50 years before Turner, this passage encapsulates the linear spatialization at the frontier, set in motion by the “genuine Kentuckian” backwoodsman as “the true model” and “nucleus” of a nation that derives its values through the process of its westering.¹⁰⁰ In a letter written during the late 1830s, Catlin writes that this space “in common parlance is denominated the Frontier”, which he viewed as “a moving barrier [...] which indefinitely separates civilized from Indian population”.¹⁰¹ During the 1840s, Catlin toured European capitals with his *Gallery unique* (or Indian Gallery), a collection of artefacts he was gifted or had removed during his tours in the West. The gallery was put on display with the explicit goal of engendering empathy and awareness for the troubled situation of American tribes exposed to US expansionism and decimated by “whisky, the small-pox, and the bayonet”.¹⁰² The exhibitions, however, proved unprofitable and did not

⁹⁹ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 159.

¹⁰⁰ Arguably, Catlin also prefigured some central tenets of manifest destiny by envisioning himself floating above a continent destined to be ordered by him and his fellow Americans. “I laid open a small pocket-map of North America”, he muses, “and excluding my thoughts from every other object in the world, I soon succeeded in producing the desired illusion. This little chart, over which I bent, was seen in all its parts, as nothing but the green and vivid reality. I was lifted up upon an imaginary pair of wings, which easily raised and held me floating in the open air, from whence I could behold beneath me the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans – the great cities of the East, and the mighty rivers. I could see the blue chain of the great lakes at the North – the Rocky Mountains, and beneath them and near their base, the vast, and almost boundless plains of grass, which were speckled with the bands of grazing buffaloes!” (Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, pp. 392–393).

¹⁰¹ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, p. 233; see Juricek, “Usage of the Word ‘Frontier’”, p. 24.

¹⁰² Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 22.

even cover the transportation costs for the several tons of materials Catlin had mobilized in an act of transatlantic placemaking. In an article for the *Smithsonian Magazine*, Bruce Watson expounds how these financial troubles eventually changed Catlin's social mission into a sensationalist ethnological enterprise:

In London, Brussels, and at the Louvre in Paris, he packed houses with his "Wild West" show. He hired local actors to whoop in feathers and war paint and pose in tableaux vivants. In time he was joined by several groups of Indians (21 Ojibwe and 14 Iowa) who were touring Europe with promoters. Such luminaries as George Sand, Victor Hugo and Charles Baudelaire admired Catlin's artistry. But general audiences preferred the live Indians, especially after Catlin convinced the Ojibwe and the Iowa to reenact hunts, dances, even scalplings.¹⁰³

Due to economic pressures, Catlin's approach to western representation thus shifted. Instead of trying to generate awareness for the dignity of indigenous peoples as it materialized in his paintings, he began exoticizing and monetizing the West through reductive and sensationalist performances. As a result, the following suggests that he formatted the Native American West through a peculiar nexus of art, (pseudo)science, social justice, archival preservation, and exploitative spatial entrepreneurship.¹⁰⁴ From the wealth of imaginations found in *Letters and Notes*, however, only some particularly instructive examples will be addressed here. One of them harks back to Catlin's formative encounter with the Indian diplomatic delegation in Philadelphia. Preparing for his first journey in 1832, he met the Assiniboin chief Wi-jún-jon (Pigeon's Egg Head, also known as The Light) in St. Louis, together with other natives that had been convinced by Indian Agent John Sanford to pay a visit to president Andrew Jackson in Washington¹⁰⁵ Despite their initial reluctance, Catlin ultimately convinced them to pose for

103 B. Watson, "George Catlin's Obsession: An Exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C. asks: Did his Work Exploit or Advance the American Indian?", *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2002, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/george-catlins-obsession-72840046/>.

104 Catlin dedicated much of his later life to selling his *Gallery unique* to the government. Concerning his eclectic methods in formatting the West, James Ronda explains that "[a]rtists like [Charles Willson] Peale, [Karl] Bodmer, and George Catlin saw themselves as combining the disciplines of art and science within the context of geographic exploration" (J. P. Ronda, "Passion and Imagination in the Exploration of the American West", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 53–76, at 66).

105 "The 'Far West,'" Catlin writes, is "the country whose fascinations spread a charm over mind almost dangerous to civilized pursuits. Few people even know the true definition of the Term 'West;' and where is its location? – phantom-like it flies before us as we travel, and on our way is continually gilded, before us, as we approach the setting sun" (Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, pp. 109–110). On the following pages, Catlin drafts a fictional conversation between

portraits, noting that Wi-jún-jon “appeared as sullen as death in my painting-room – with eyes fixed like those of a statue, upon me”.¹⁰⁶ In his descriptions of the delegation, Catlin is highly empathic concerning the struggles of their journey to the East, detailing the painful adaption of their worldviews and practices as they faced an increasingly foreign spatial order evolving around them:

While descending the river [...] from the mouth of Yellow Stone, Wi-jun-jon and another of his tribe who was with him, at the first approach to the civilized settlements, commenced a register of the white men’s houses (or cabins), by cutting a notch for each on the side of a pipe-stem, in order to be able to shew when they got home, how many white men’s houses they saw on their journey. At first the cabins were scarce; but continually as they advanced down the river, more and more rapidly increased in numbers; and they soon found their pipe-stem filled with marks, and they determined to put the rest of them on the handle of a war-club, which they soon got marked all over likewise; and at length, while the boat was moored at the shore [they] stepped into the bushes, and cut a long stick, from which they peeled the bark; and when the boat was again underweigh [sic], they sat down, and with much labour, copied the notches on to it from the pipe-stem and club; and also kept adding a notch for every house they passed. This stick was soon filled; and in a day or two several others; when, at last, they seemed much at a loss to know what to do with their troublesome records, until they came in sight of St. Louis, which is a town of 15,000 inhabitants; upon which, after consulting a little, they pitched their sticks overboard into the river!¹⁰⁷

A year and a half later, Catlin obtained permission from the American Fur Company (AFC) to accompany the same group on their return journey from St. Louis to their homes in present-day Montana. To his surprise, he found Wi-jún-jon outwardly Americanized, having “exchanged his beautifully garnished and classic costume, for a full dress ‘en militaire’ [that] was, perhaps, presented to him by the President” (see fig. 4).¹⁰⁸ However, unlike the nation-building performances of French Louisianans who became US citizens by wearing “the American costume”, this kind of acculturation here seems impossible as Wi-jún-jon becomes a laughing stock for both his own people and Catlin’s national audiences.¹⁰⁹ The artist’s initially sympathetic account turns into a grotesque comedy, bereft of native dignity and interspersed with the transcribed laughing fits of Catlin’s French companion Ba’tiste, to whom he relates the chief’s

people from different cultures and ethnicities who all claim to be from the West, eventually culminating in a babel of English, German, French, Italian, and Native American expressions.

¹⁰⁶ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 196.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁰⁹ Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, p. 137.



Fig. 4: G. Catlin, *Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going To and Returning From Washington*, 1837–1839.

metamorphosis in the book. These conniptions extend throughout the description of his transformation and, like the canned laughter of a modern sitcom, mark the sections readers are supposed to find particularly amusing, for instance “Ha-ha-hagh-agh-ah”, “Diable!”, and “Ha-ha-hagh (pardón, Monsieur Cataline, for I am almost laugh)”. Catlin explains that “I could never look upon [Wi-jún-jon] for a moment without excessive laughter, at the ridiculous figure he cut – the strides, the angled, the stiffness of this travelling beau!”¹¹⁰ He goes on to

¹¹⁰ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 197.

describe the tragicomic repercussions of the chief's cultural uprooting, spatio-cultural hybridity, and the bewilderment of natives who saw him

paying visits to the lodges of his old acquaintances, swaggering about, with his keg [of whisky, a gift from Jackson] under his arm, whistling Yankee Doodle, and Washington's Grand March; his white shirt [...] had been shockingly tithed – his pantaloons of blue, laced with gold, were razed into a pair of comfortable leggings – his bow and quiver were slung, and his broad-sword which trailed on the ground, had sought the centre of gravity, and taken a position between his legs, and dragging behind him, served as a rudder to steer him over the "earth's troubled surface."¹¹¹

Thus ridiculed, the chief becomes a tragic figure based on a twofold transgression: First, his abandonment of the West's museal space that corrupted his "natural" dignity as an unadulterated "lord of the forest". Catlin's two-panelled painting *Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going To and Returning From Washington* (1837–1839) visualizes this transfiguration: On the left side, the chief is seen in his traditional attire, headdress, and buffalo robe, standing upright and gracefully looking to the eastern horizon towards a faint outline resembling the Capitol building. He is holding a long ceremonial pipe, likely a gift for Andrew Jackson. The right-hand panel shows him returning to his ancestral home, symbolized by a group of tepees in the background, but all external signifiers that previously connected him to this space have been replaced. Instead, he is wearing an American military uniform complemented by the attire of a Victorian gentleman: white gloves, top hat, and an oversized fan. Cigarette holder in mouth and two whiskey bottles peeking out of his back pockets, the chief's posture seems both snobbish and unstable. His eyes appear blind for his surroundings, smugly marvelling at his fan while "his neck was strangled with a shining black stock, and his feet pinioned in a pair of water-proof boots, with high heels, which made him 'step like a yoked dog'".¹¹²

The marked contrast of Catlin's side-by-side comparison clearly communicates his view of the Native American West as a natural park and prelapsarian space inhabited by unspoiled people living in artless harmony with nature. Catlin was convinced of the imminent extinction of Native Americans, whom he saw as a part of nature, equal to animals and minerals. "[M]y heart bleeds", he laments, "for the fate that awaits the remainder of heir unlucky race; which is long to be outlived by the rocks, by the beasts, and even birds and reptiles of the country they live in [...] that (to use their own very beautiful figure) 'they are fast traveling to the shades of their fathers, towards the setting sun'".¹¹³ Whereas the

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 198.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 196.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 31.

destruction of their pastoral existence represents a lamentable (but ultimately inevitable) tragedy, the expected reaction of the West's noble-savage denizens is to either gracefully fade away or perish in heroic but ultimately quixotic acts of resistance. To uphold this conceptualization of the native West, Wi-jún-jon's intercultural mobility and attempted educational work at home can only be ridiculed and discarded as a form of tragicomic corruption because it threatens to undermine the stability of this Manichean imagination.

The chief's second transgression results from his upending fundamental spatialization dynamics which defies the dominant formatting strategies of the Louisiana Territory. Instead of subjugating himself to a process that exclusively commences alongside an East-West axis, Wi-jún-jon inverts this sequence by moving from West to East, acquiring placemaking agency as well as actual and cultural mobility as a spatial entrepreneur. For Catlin and his contemporaries, this aberration from accepted norms was laughable and cast the Indian into the Shakespearean role of a liminal figure and spatial trickster thrown into a placeless limbo between the East's and West's divergent epistemologies. His misalignment and supposedly derisible disorientation are results of Wi-jún-jon's embracing a looking-glass world that subverts the unidirectional formatting of western expansion; for him, the United States, not the western peripheries, are a space of unfamiliarity and violence with their "forts, and seventy-four gun ships, which he had visited – their big guns [and] the great war parade, which he saw in the city of New York". Arguing from this subversive viewpoint, the Assiniboine chief tries to "instruct his people, by honest and simple narratives of things and scenes he had beheld during his tour to the East" but according to Catlin fails because "unfortunately for him" his reports of the US "were to them [i.e. his tribal peers] too marvellous and improbable to be believed" and therefore discounted as "fiction".¹¹⁴ In other words, the East as he described it with its military prowess and metastasizing settlements was simply too far-fetched to be believed.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 197–199.

¹¹⁵ In their attempts of fostering cultural exchange between East and West, the Corps of Discovery faced similar challenges. Returning from the Pacific coast in 1806, they persuaded a Mandan chief named Shahaka (Big White or Gros Blanc) to accompany them to St. Louis and visit Jefferson in Washington, promising to return Shahaka safely afterwards. In the spring of 1807, they tried to keep their promise but were prevented by native war parties that forced them to retreat. In the following year, Lewis personally spent USD 7,000 to hire 125 riflemen and finally managed to return the chief, although against the protests of his own tribe (Z. Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard: Fur Trapper and Trader 1831–1836*, W. F. Wagner (ed.), Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1904 [1839], pp. 22–23).

Some years after returning home and becoming a foreign body in his native community, Wi-jún-jon was murdered by a young brave who “blew out his brains” because he thought that the chief’s power as a “lying-medicine” (i.e. imposter or wizard) was growing too strong.¹¹⁶ While lamenting the death of this “noble Indian”, the moral that Catlin and his companion Ba’tiste take away from his tragic end again brings to the fore a key dynamic of the West’s literary spatialization: It becomes the task of the author to carefully amalgamate truth with fiction and create spatial semantics that infer believability by confirming familiar beliefs and simultaneously foster unfamiliar discourses that indicate a need for change and intervention. In other words, this effective literary spatialization strategy makes use of a push-pull dynamic that oscillates between the confirmation biases of the familiar and the fascinating Otherness of the West. Relying on “objective” reportage and only relating straightforward facts – like the chief attempted in front of his unbelieving audience – thus becomes less effective in formatting space. For Catlin, the case of Wi-jún-jon’s despatialization presents a cautionary tale that stresses these correlations and, as he explains to Ba’tiste, from which “we may profit [...] if we choose. [...] [T]he fate of this poor fellow, who was relating no more than what he actually saw, will *caution* you against the *imprudence of telling all that you actually know*, and narrating all that you have *seen*, lest like him you sink into disgrace for telling the truth”.¹¹⁷ An author’s placemaking agency and success, Catlin implies, hinge on their ability to satisfy existing beliefs and, in the same vein, generate new and exciting mental vectors of a particular place, thus crafting spatiotemporal assemblages that interface proven convictions with mutable future prospects.¹¹⁸ Viewed in the light of this episteme, the chief’s factual report of the United States is unsuccessful as a narrative because it contradicts familiar beliefs and imparts an overwhelmingly negative outlook of the tribe’s future.

Another thematic fulcrum in Catlin’s work reveals itself in its amalgamation of physical and representational violence. While he shuns the former and frames his obsession with painting natives and “collecting” their cultural products as

116 Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 200.

117 Ibid.

118 Fuller asserts that “Catlin’s book is far the best. I was afterwards assured by those acquainted with the regions he describes, that he is not to be depended on for the accuracy of his facts, and, indeed, it is obvious [...] that he sometimes yields to the temptation of making out a story. They admitted, however, what from my feelings I was sure of, that he is true to the spirit of the scene, and that a far better view can be got from him than from any source at present existing, of the Indian tribes of the far west, and of the country where their inheritance lay” (Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, pp. 30–31; see Birkle, “Travelogues of Independence”, p. 505).

affect-driven philanthropic exercises, Catlin's actions regularly appear uncaring and invasive. This becomes evident in the turnaround of his international awareness mission into a sensationalist and violent stage show, as well as his later attempts to monetize the painful memories he recorded by selling his gallery. But Catlin's record also includes more direct violations. In 1836, the artist trespassed on holy ground of the Dakota tribe that provided the red clay used for making calumets. Despite their elders' warnings that the "'red stone was a part of their flesh,' [and that] it would be sacrilegious for white man to touch or take it away", Catlin removed samples for chemical analysis and an estimate of its economic worth in the East.¹¹⁹ His *Letters* indicate that he was aware of the spiritual significance of the place, not only as a neutral ground but as a shared space of intertribal equilibrium that unified divergent imaginations and was central in upholding a communal spatial order. Before he describes his removing the clay in a cloak-and-dagger operation, Catlin observes

a majesty in the very ground that we tread upon, that inspires with awe and reverence; [...] Man feels here, and startles at the thrilling sensation, the face of *illimitable freedom* [...] The Great Spirit at an ancient period, here called the Indian nations together, [and] broke from its wall a piece, and made a huge pipe by turning it in his hand, which he smoked over them, and to the North, the South, the East, and the West, and told them that his stone was red – that it was their flesh – that they must use it for their pipes of peace – that it belonged to them all, and that the war-club and scalping knife must not be raised on its ground.¹²⁰

While Catlin's subsequent decision to invade and defile this tabooed space seems perplexing and contradictory, it can partly be explained by his conviction that the integrity of his originally envisaged self-contained and chronotopical "nation's Park" in the Native American West was already beyond saving. For instance, next to the calumet the scalping knife as another symbol of indigenous culture had already been wrested out of its cultural contexts and thoroughly despatialized. Catlin relates that in the 1830s these knives were no longer skilfully crafted tools endemic to indigenous culture, but "common and cheap butcher knife[s] with one edge, manufactured at Sheffield, in England, perhaps for sixpence; and sold to the poor Indian in these wild regions for a horse! [...] [E]very [knife] in [...] the Indian country, to the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean bears on its blade the impress of G. R."¹²¹ The violence ingrained in its

¹¹⁹ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 166.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 164–165.

¹²¹ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, pp. 360–361. The initials G. R. likely refer to the Green River knife, still manufactured today by A. Wright & Sons in Sheffield and advertised as a "traditional no nonsense frontier style knife" (The Famous Sheffield Shop, "Green River Knife", https://www.sheffield-made.com/acatalog/Green_River_Knife.html [accessed 24 April 2020]). Economic

regional, ritualistic functions was thus replaced with the violence of the knife's capitalistic appropriation and integration into global networks of industrial profiteering.

Catlin asserts that the despatialization of scalping as unfamiliar and violent and its respatialization and symbolic reproduction a part of global commodity chains remained opaque for natives, whose spatial imaginations focused on circumscribed localities and regions. Forced to discard traditional techniques in their ordering of spaces around them (for instance, as seen above, by throwing counting sticks overboard after they became insufficient in marking white settlements), their strategic possibilities proved limited and binary: either resist and further augment pre-existing convictions in the East or approximate Euroamerican culture and be seen as corrupted or a laughing stock like Wi-jún-jon. In the context of this discursive and economic integration of the violent West, it comes as no surprise that in the years after Catlin's trespassing, the Dakotas – incited by American traders – abandoned the concept of a neutral ground, instead laying commercial claim to it and selling clay and pipes to neighbouring tribes. Completing the cycle of commodification, the erstwhile holy pipestone was subsequently named Catlinite after the first white man who described and removed it.

Through his painting, writing, and collecting Catlin thus projected American placemaking power. As he witnessed natives vanish from physical existence, preserving them on canvas for him turned into the archival task of aesthetically transmuting their unfamiliar regional histories into the familiar and controllable space of national memory. Although the outcomes were oftentimes idealized, they nonetheless included colourful and life-like renditions of rapidly changing and fragile cultures. In hindsight, Catlin's artistic formatting of the native West proved successful as many of his works today are centrepieces of museal collections, notably the nationwide exhibitions of the Smithsonian. In the sociocultural context of his own time, his view of Native Americans was undoubtedly progressive and rooted in the conviction that Catlin was concomitantly defending "a people who are dying at the hands of their enemies, without the means of recording their own annals" and who became victims of "the wholesale and retail system of injustice, which has been, from the very first landing of our forefathers, (and is equally at

historian Geoffrey Tweedale notes "that Sheffield traders did make some attempt to cater to US needs from a very early date. American-style axes and plantation tools were on sale by the 1820s and [in] 1836, responding to a request on the frontier for scalping knives, Hiram Cutler wrote to the American Fur Co concerning a knife 'that would probably suit Indians'" (G. Tweedale, *Sheffield Steel and America: A Century of Commercial and Technological Interdependence 1830–1930*, Cambridge: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 177).

the present day, being) visited upon” them.¹²² “I have flown to their rescue”, he writes, “not of their lives or of their race (for they are ‘doomed’ and must perish), but to the rescue of their looks and their modes [...]; phoenix-like, they may rise from the ‘stain on a painter’s palette,’ and live again upon canvass, and stand forth for centuries yet to come, the living monuments of a noble race”.¹²³

In part, however, Catlin’s representations themselves worked towards their “doom” by extracting “their looks and their modes” and reassembling them according to his own highly idealized artistic vision and economic needs. He for instance ignored aniconic or iconoclastic belief systems prevalent among many native societies in his conservationist desires by elevating them from their alleged historical backwardness and displacing them onto his canvas, the East, and the world.¹²⁴ Catlin himself admits that these displacements regularly incurred a human cost:

The squaws generally agreed, that they had discovered life enough in [the paintings] to render my *medicine* too great for the Mandans; saying that such an operation could not be performed without taking away from the original something of his existence, which I put in the picture, and they could see it move, could see it stir.¹²⁵ [...] they commenced a mournful and doleful chaunt [sic] against me, crying and weeping bitterly through the village, proclaiming me a most ‘dangerous’ man; one who could make living persons by looking at them: and at the same time, could, as a matter of course, destroy life in the same way, if I chose. [...] that I was to take a part of the existence of those whom I painted, and carry it home with me amongst the white people, and that when they died they would never sleep quiet in their graves.¹²⁶

Some of Catlin’s more graphic paintings explicitly emphasize violent scenes, for example his drawings of arrow-pierced, bleeding buffaloes or his infamously bloody renditions of native rituals. In the summer of 1832, he visited the Mandan tribe near today’s Bismarck, North Dakota and, as one of very few Euroamericans, witnessed a fertility rite known as O-Kee-Pa (Buffalo Dance). This painful ceremony involved metal barbs being hooked into the chests of young warriors who were then suspended vertically from the ceiling (see fig. 5).

¹²² Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 27; Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, p. 249.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹²⁴ Aniconism (i.e. the absence or prohibition of materially represented features or figures) is also present in the artistic traditions of Islam that depict patterns instead of human forms. The Amish also avoid paintings and photographs, famously manufacturing child’s dolls without facial features.

¹²⁵ Charles Baudelaire in contrast believed that Catlin’s paintings championed native agency and that the artist “has brought back alive the proud and free characters of these chiefs, both their nobility and manliness” (qtd. in B. Eisler, *The Red Man’s Bones: George Catlin, Artist and Showman*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2013, p. 326).

¹²⁶ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, pp. 178–179.

“I entered the *medicine-house*”, Catlin reports, “as I would have entered a church, expect[ing] to see something extraordinary and strange, but yet in the form of worship or devotion; but alas! little did I expect to see the interior of their holy temple turned into a *slaughter-house*, and its floor strewed with the blood of its fanatic devotees”.¹²⁷ This “shocking and disgusting custom”, he complains, “sickens the heart [...] of a traveller in the country, and he weeps for their ignorance – he pities them with all his heart for their blindness, and laments that the light of civilization [...] cannot be extended to them”.¹²⁸



Fig. 5: G. Catlin, *The Cutting Scene, Mandan O-kee-pa Ceremony*, 1832.

In condemning this “disgusting custom”, Catlin and similar-minded contemporaries ignored the fact that flagellations and other mortifications of the flesh were (and still are) parts of the Christian and other Abrahamic faiths. Catlin’s account hence formatted the West as a vicious space, access to which seemed possible first by the representational assembling of this order, and second by replacing unfamiliar with familiar practices of violence via settlement and commerce. As demonstrated by the first chapter, this logic culminated in the pre-formatted mental landscapes that Margaret Fuller confronted at the Niagara Falls, where

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 245.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 285.

she constantly felt the unfamiliar “spirit” of western violence creep up behind her in the guise of “naked savages [...] with uplifted tomahawks”.¹²⁹ At the same time, Catlin juxtaposed his violent renditions with empathy and compassion and hence progressive discourses for his time. He engendered affective spaces that countered dominant spatial imaginations that still viewed the West as *terra nullius* and Native Americans as savages, a term Catlin despised and publicly excoriated. After attending the Mandan cutting ritual, he confessed: “I could hear the knife rip through their flesh, and feel enough of it myself, to start involuntary and uncontrollable tears over my cheeks”.¹³⁰ Five years after his visit to the Mandan village, when his painting of the cutting ceremony was displayed in the East, many observers doubted its veracity, not least because of Catlin’s known tendencies of merging fact with fiction in his formatting of the West: “‘The scenes described by Catlin existed almost entirely in the fertile imagination of that gentleman’, a scholarly journal asserted. Although Catlin was unable to prove the veracity of his depictions – smallpox had almost completely wiped out the Mandan tribe shortly after his departure – subsequent research confirmed his stark renderings”.¹³¹

Catlin’s bloody renditions and the violence inherent in his artistic performances culminated in the so-called Affair of the Dog. In 1832, he had set down his canvas at Fort Pierre on the west bank of the Missouri River to paint Mah-to-tchee-ga (Little Bear), a chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux. While he worked on the portrait, a member of the rival Bad Arrow Points Band named Shon-ka (The Dog) appeared at the scene and noticed that the portrait showed Little Bear not from the front but in a three-quarter view. Tauntingly, this “ill-natured and surly man” remarked that Catlin had painted only half of Little Bear’s face because the chief was only half a man.¹³² More precisely, Catlin quotes him saying “*Mah-to-tchee-ga* is but *half a man*. [...] Ask *We-chash-a-wa-kon* (the painter), he can tell you; he knows you are but *half a man* – he painted but one half of your face, and knows the other half is good for nothing!”¹³³ After the painting

¹²⁹ Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*, p. 5.

¹³⁰ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 1, p. 268.

¹³¹ Watson, “George Catlin’s Obsession”. In his autobiographical narrative, Zenas Leonard attributes the genocide of the Mandan tribe to their being “sacrificed by the almost criminal carelessness of the American Fur Company. The Mandans at the time of the visit of Lewis and Clark numbered about 1,500 or 2,000 souls [...]; after the ravages of this disease [i.e. smallpox], only about thirty persons – mostly old men and boys – were left” (Leonard, *Adventures*, p. 43).

¹³² Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, p. 190.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

was finished, an argument ensued between the two men during which Little Bear was shot: "Little Bear lay weltering in his blood [...] with all that side of his face entirely shot away, which had been left out of the picture; [...] carrying away one half of the jaws, and the flesh from the nostrils and corner of the mouth, to the ear, including one eye, and leaving the jugular vein entirely exposed".¹³⁴ After Catlin hastily left the scene of the crime, the incident eventually spiralled out of control and escalated into an intertribal war that claimed many lives. Some members of the Hunkpapa blamed Catlin personally for the bloodshed and allegedly condemned him to death, but he had already packed his bags and moved further upriver.

Following a number of similar incidents and hair-breadth escapes, Catlin disseminates his visions of the native West by travelling to the East Coast and Europe, leading him as far as the courts of Queen Victoria and King Louis-Philippe. Accompanied by his daughters, he reached London in 1848 where he tried to generate excitement and raise funding for his newest spatialization project that was intended to make visible the plight of natives in the West. His idea was to move the Indian Gallery onto a ship that would constantly travel the world and in this manner vest his native subjects with a new dimension of global awareness and mobility. What he imagined to be a floating chronotope of native history, however, never came to fruition. In 1852, the 56-year-old Catlin found himself bankrupted and incarcerated in London's debtor prison. Joseph Harrison, an American industrialist, finally cleared Catlin's liabilities and acquired the whole Gallery for USD 20,000. Rather than showing it to the world as Catlin intended, the art collector put the paintings and artefacts in boxes and stored them in the damp basement of a Philadelphia boiler factory. Recovering from his failures and time in jail, Catlin spent the following years travelling across South America. Exhibitions of the resulting portraits of native peoples met only limited interest of the American public. In 1871 – one year before his death – Harrison's widow donated Catlin's works to the Smithsonian Institution, whose existing collection (including paintings by Charles Bird King and John Mix Stanley) had been partially destroyed during a fire.¹³⁵

Catlin's artistic and performative spatializations of the Louisiana Territory, in conclusion, are all-too easily dismissed as one-dimensional expressions of manifest destiny and settler colonialism. Spatially aware analyses of their inner workings and (inter)textual dynamics, however, unveil discursive strands of both their affirmation and subversion of these metanarratives, in addition to a surprising

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 191–192.

¹³⁵ Watson, "George Catlin's Obsession".

number of fault lines and contradictions between them. In their totality, Catlin's mostly well-meaning renditions of the Native American West did more to paint the Louisiana Territory as a colonial space, the tokens of whose vanishing spatial order they tried to conserve in the national memory. While Hall's stories synthesized the territory's complexity and reformatted it via the axioms of simulated unfamiliarity, Catlin became the archivist who organized and commodified said complexity through his painting, writing, and artefact hunting. While Catlin's legacy undoubtedly engendered public awareness about the forced removal and genocide of Native Americans in the West, it implicitly endorsed these developments as regrettable but inevitable steps towards the westwards-directed formatting of the American nation.

Precarious Destinies: Integrating and Separating the Oregon Country

Whoo ha! Go to it boys! We're in a perfect Oregon Fever!

Unknown journalist¹³⁶

Oh, I wish we had never started.

Unknown emigrant¹³⁷

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the term Oregon Country turned into a reference point for the Far West, outlining a region that roughly covered the northwestern Pacific Coast of the continent but lacked clearly defined borders. Early historical accounts of Spanish *conquistadores* mythologized the region as the northern extension of an imagined transamerican gold economy. With its richness in natural resources and precious metals and it being an important node of profitable Asian-Pacific trade networks that developed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Oregon Country came into the focus of colonial powers.¹³⁸ Washington Irving writes in *Astoria*:

While the fiery and magnificent Spaniard, inflamed with the mania for gold, has extended his discoveries and conquests over those brilliant countries scorched by the ardent sun of the tropics, the adroit and buoyant Frenchman, and the cool and calculating Briton, have

¹³⁶ Qtd. in V. Bright, "The Folklore and History of the 'Oregon Fever'", *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 52 (1951) 4, pp. 241–253, at 241.

¹³⁷ Qtd. in Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 504.

¹³⁸ E. M. DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 94.

pursued the less splendid, but no less lucrative, traffic in furs amidst the hyperborean regions of the Canadas, until they have advanced even within the Arctic Circle.¹³⁹

While the British, Spanish, and Russian empires arrogated their dominance in Oregon based on treaties or historically established rights in the region, the American claim invoked Robert Gray's 1792 expedition to the Columbia River and the subsequent forays led by Lewis and Clark. The Anglo-American Convention of 1818 decreed the joint British-American occupancy of the entire area between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.¹⁴⁰ Like the Louisiana Territory and other barely delimited spaces between the Pacific and the organized states, the Oregon Country was inhabited by ethnically diverse peoples, again planting doubts in Americans who wondered if they could (and should) be integrated into a spatial order whose elites and middle class were overwhelmingly white. Irving's description of Oregon stands representative for these doubts, fears, and racial insecurities by depicting the region as

a lawless interval between the abodes of civilized man, like the wastes of the ocean or the deserts of Arabia [...] Here may spring up mongrel races, like new formations in geology, the amalgamation of the "debris" and "abrasions" of former races, civilized and savage[...] the descendants of wandering hunters and trappers; of fugitives from the Spanish and American frontiers; of adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country, yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness. We are contributing incessantly to swell this singular and heterogeneous cloud of wild population [...] by the transfer of whole tribes of savages from the east of the Mississippi to the great wastes of the far West.¹⁴¹

In *The Oregon Trail*, Francis Parkman maintains that Oregon's ethnic structure was characterized by "half-breeds, a race of rather extraordinary composition, being according to the common saying half Indian, half white man, and half devil".¹⁴² Adding even more uncharted territories and unknown populations to the already overstretched physical and human geography of the US thus evoked "a fear of boundlessness and a need to impose form on space".¹⁴³ Prior to its opening via the Oregon Trail – a key signifier of nation-building through westering – the Oregon Country was deemed too difficult to be accessed overland, mainly due to its isolation by the Rocky Mountains and long communication and

139 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 1.

140 A. F. Hyde, "Transients and Stickers: The Problem of Community in the American West", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 304–328, at 309.

141 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 200.

142 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 407.

143 Baker, *Heartless Immensity*, p. 27.

travel times. The only viable alternative to crossing scorched deserts and towering mountains was passage by ship. With the Panama Canal still 100 years in the future, vessels usually departed from Boston and had to circumnavigate the storm-swept Cape Horn. Navigation was perilous and could take anywhere from weeks to several months. The risks and costs associated with sea travel made it viable only vis-à-vis the high-margin fur trade and the establishment of coastal trading posts, but generally precluded large-scale emigration as well as effective governance from the remote seats of power in Washington, D.C.

In the absence of state power, historically grown local alliances and hemispheric trade networks connected the region with Central American, Asian, and archipelagic spaces in the Pacific such as the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). In the early nineteenth century, competition flared up between American settlers and the preeminent Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) whose trade monopoly had de facto dominated the territory for 200 years in the absence of governmental infrastructures. These tensions exceeded issues of political ordering as Jesuit priests from Canada competed with Methodist and Presbyterian ministers from the US over the formatting Oregon's spiritual landscape and monopoly to convert native denizens.¹⁴⁴ Eastern policymakers and commentators framed Oregon as the final piece in the continental puzzle of the nation's expansion. John Louis O'Sullivan, a New York City lawyer, proponent of Jacksonian Democracy, and editor of *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* coined the key concept for this desire of expansion in 1845. "[O]ur manifest destiny", he boasted, is "to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions".¹⁴⁵ In other words, some higher power (or god personally) wished for the US to spread out from Atlantic to Pacific. "At its best", George Tindall comments, "this much-trumpeted notion of Manifest Destiny offered a moral justification for expansion, a prescription for what an enlarged United States could and should be. At its worst it was a cluster of flimsy

144 An early pioneer in the Oregon Country, Jesse Applegate relates that a fellow missionary "changed a nomadic race who had before depended on fish and buffalo meat for subsistence into a settlement of small farmers, making their own bread and vegetables, with plenty of milk and butter. [...] School books were prepared for the Indians in their own language and they read [...] portions of the New Testament [...] in their own language" (J. Applegate, "Views of Oregon History", Yoncalla, 1878, P-A 2, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 2). At times, this space of Protestantism "was invaded by the Catholics, a mission established in [its] vicinity, and by the novelty of new teachers – new modes of worship, and to the simple minds of the savages what appeared to be new Gods, a part of his people were drawn away from him and the rest made restless and discontented" (ibid., p. 34).

145 J. L. O'Sullivan, "Annexation", *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17 (1845), pp. 5–10, at 5.

rationalizations for naked greed and imperial ambition”.¹⁴⁶ In reality, the semantic clothing of colonial ambitions into a thinly veiled piety had less in common with the lofty values championed by O’Sullivan and more with the zealous battle cry *deus le volt* (god wills it) of medieval crusaders on their way to (re)conquer and Christianize the “heathenish” spaces between Europe and Asia. One year after O’Sullivan’s declaration, the Oregon Treaty officially put an end to questions regarding the region’s political affiliation by establishing the British-American boundary at the 49th parallel.

Even more than the western spaces discussed above, the following analyses reveal the profound challenges the transmontane or Far West presented for American policymakers, authors, and entrepreneurs as the nation-state faced opaque and resilient spatial orders of the Asian-Pacific hemisphere.¹⁴⁷ Integrating the Oregon Country into the nation’s spatial metanarratives required discursively repositioning it into an Asian-Pacific matrix and thus unsettling core premises of American exceptionalism that emphasize the differences between American democracy and retrograde Old World epistemes. Historiographies often insist that the discursive transposition of the United States into the Pacific hemisphere became possible via sociocultural code-switching to the metanarrative of manifest destiny, hence resolving this contradiction through metaphysical mental gymnastics that explained transcontinental expansion as an act of god. Hailing the nation’s manifest destiny to overstretch the continent, as is commonly proposed, became a central literary and political strategy of spatial formatting during the second half of the nineteenth century, concurrently acting as a rhetorical fig-leaf that justified political and economic exploitation.

What is rarely considered, however, are the underlying dynamics of spatialization that energized – and more often, destabilized – the seemingly “manifest semantics” of expansionism. These issues came to the fore because Oregon’s territorial incorporation also required relocating the nation’s exceptionalist narratives from the Atlantic to the Pacific hemisphere. This relocation, as will become clear, did not commence as organically and successfully as is oftentimes assumed in more straightforward explanations. On the one hand, positioning Oregon (and California) as the future nexus of an American Empire in the Asian-Pacific hemisphere clashed with opposing interests of other colonial powers and regional independence movements. At the same time, it also perpetually weakened the discursive pillars of the United States’ integrity. In praxis, the shifting of

¹⁴⁶ Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 492.

¹⁴⁷ Giles, *Global Remapping*, p. 232; see R. Wilson, *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, p. ix.

hemispheric paradigms only came into full swing with the New Imperialism at the end of the century, Spanish-American War of 1898, and annexation of overseas territories. At this point, the (forcible) opening of new markets, religious proselytizing, and colonial “obligations” like the White Man’s Burden became the narrative cornerstones that undergirded the nation’s imperial ordering of the Pacific space as an imagined spatiotemporal extension of a continental heartland. In the poetic phraseology of Charles Olson, the Pacific became the American “HEART SEA, twin and rival of the HEARTLAND. The Pacific is, for an American, the Plains repeated, a 20th century Great West. [...] With the Pacific opens the NEW HISTORY. [...] America completes her West only on the coast of Asia”.¹⁴⁸ Olson’s and other authors’ attempts of synthesizing hemispheric imperialism with continental expansionism by envisaging the Pacific space as “a 20th century Great West” resulted in various geographic discourses, ranging from the Yellow Peril of Chinese immigration to the global integration of Chinese and American markets. The increasingly complex separation between domesticity and foreignness in American spatial narratives was, and continues to be, subject to contradictions and narrative reconfigurations. Looking at some of the first literary encounters of American authors and emigrants with the Oregon Country and its transpacific circuits then becomes key in understanding ongoing spatialization processes and their literary-historical dynamics.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Native Americans, British, French-Canadians, Spaniards, Americans, Pacific islanders, and Russians found themselves locked in fierce competition in the Pacific Northwest, trapping beavers and sea otters and shipping their valuable pelts to continental, European, and Asian marketplaces.¹⁴⁹ Zenas Leonard warned his government about this volatile situation, noting the region’s political and economic disjointedness but also its future significance for the United States:

The Spaniards are making inroads in the South – the Russians are encroaching with impunity along the sea shore to the North, and further North-east the British are pushing their stations into the very heart of our territory [...]. Our government should be vigilant. She should assert her claim by taking possession of the whole territory as soon as

¹⁴⁸ Olson, *Call me Ishmael*, pp. 114; 117.

¹⁴⁹ Since their introduction in the late sixteenth century, beaver hats and pelts turned into status symbols in the circles of European royalty and upper classes where “they became very quickly objects of a commodity fetishism unseen elsewhere in the age of Elizabeth” (D. Wallace-Wells, “Puritan Inc”, *The New Republic*, 23 November 2011, <https://newrepublic.com/article/75603/puritan-inc>). After Russian beaver populations were nearly extinct, demand for furs from the American colonies skyrocketed. Because the material was smooth, resilient, and naturally waterproof, it was preferred for the production of top hats like the English Wellington.

possible – for we have good reason to suppose that the territory *west* of the mountain will some day be equally as import to the nation as that on the *east*.¹⁵⁰

While the coastal waters north of the Columbia River were frequented by ships from empires and companies competing in the fur trade, the region's interior remained mostly untouched except for dispersed trading stations and insular fortifications. These outposts of Oregon's extractive fur economy became multicultural venues for traders, trappers, as well as native suppliers and guides. Despite their role as multiethnic points of exchange and encounter, these commercial hotspots continuously faced a plethora of adversities. The seasonal nature of beaver trapping meant that occupants of trading posts faced supply shortages and starvation during summers. Additionally, this cyclic economy made white Oregonian entrepreneurs dependent on trade with natives, which in turn hinged on their (often very limited) knowledge of intertribal relations, as well as spatial practices and imaginations that regulated the allocation of property rights, bordering, and diplomacy among local Native American societies.

On the shaky grounds of this spatial order, competition for scarce resources and diplomatic ineptitude constantly threatened the survival of vital economic nodes and therefore the overall business of leviathan corporations like the HBC. Unlike the French inhabitants of the Louisiana Territory, British and American entrepreneurs in Oregon often ignored the customary notion "that gift-giving was part of the cost of doing business with Indian fur-suppliers".¹⁵¹ The extinction of wildlife populations moreover required the continual relocation of trading posts into ever more remote backwoods, further increasing travel times and stretching out supply routes. As a result, commercial success was closely linked to the geographical knowledge and survival expertise of "exceptional" individuals able to navigate the region's treacherous cultural and physical landscapes. Pathfinders, trailblazers, and mountain men hence became the mythicized and often hyper-masculine characters that dominated the Oregon Country, both in real life and in contemporary writings that celebrated their exploits and tragedies in the Pacific Northwest. This new breed of land-based spatial entrepreneurs eventually supplanted the canoes and water-locked modes of transportation traditionally utilized by French-Canadian *voyageurs* with individual mobility on horseback. For authors like Washington Irving, this increase of spatial agency made "them physically and mentally a more livery and mercurial race than the

¹⁵⁰ Leonard, *Adventures*, pp. 192–193.

¹⁵¹ S. Aron, "The Making of the First American West and the Unmaking of Other Realms", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 5–24, at 8.

fur traders and trappers of former days, the self-vaunting ‘men of the north.’ A man who bestrides a horse must be essentially different from a man who cowers in a canoe”.¹⁵²

The prospective members of this “superior” breed that crossed the Rocky Mountains were rarely mobilized by sheer idealism and desires to blaze trails for the nation-state, but entered the service of British, Canadian, or American companies to get a slice of the fur trade’s staggering profits. Irving notes that in the exchange of furs for cheaply manufactured goods between native suppliers and white buyers “a clear profit of seven hundred per cent” was no exception.¹⁵³ Conversely, Zenas Leonard recounts that this profitability was regularly undermined by hedonistic tendencies as “[s]carcely one man in ten ever think of saving a single dollar of their earnings, but spend it as fast as they can see an object to spend it for. They care not what may come to pass to-morrow – but think only of enjoying the present moment”.¹⁵⁴ But Leonard also stresses the American’s lack of patriotism and placemaking pride as “neither geographical knowledge, nor the honor won by making new discoveries for the use and benefit of mankind in general, but a mercenary motive – the commercial value of the harmless and inoffensive little beaver” motivated them to enter the Oregon Country.¹⁵⁵ In his memoirs, Jesse Applegate, an early arrival and founder of the Applegate Trail (i.e. an alternative route to the Oregon Trail) explains that while they “were Americans and American in sentiment [they] were wholly dependent upon the HBC for their presence and protection in the country. They were not the class of men who found states and extend empires [but were] more for themselves than for their country”.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the seemingly patriotic spatial performances of pioneers such as Jedediah Smith, William Sublette, and Benjamin Bonneville take centre stage in seminal texts like Parkman’s *Oregon Trail* or Irving’s *Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.*

While the Oregon Country and the mythical Far West initially entered the consciousness of American audiences via the Corps of Discovery’s journals, the region remained sparsely settled. Perusing the records of Alexander Mackenzie’s “gigantic thrusts into the unknown” provided a mental blueprint for Jefferson to survey the region and determine “whether the Columbia, the Oregon, the

¹⁵² Irving, *Bonneville*, pp. 27–28.

¹⁵³ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ Leonard, *Adventures*, p. 247. As proof, Leonard includes a transaction receipt between the free trapper Johnson Gardner and the AFC, showing that of the total amount “nearly one-third was [spent] for liquor and feasting” (ibid., p. 248).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ Applegate, “Views of Oregon History”, p. 32.

Colorado, or any other [river] might offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent for the purposes of commerce”.¹⁵⁷ Setting sights on transcontinental expansion, the Louisiana Territory no longer appeared like a geopolitical dead end that threatened the nation’s unity and postcolonial identity, which during the Early Republic “was as uncertain, as provisional, as its cartography”.¹⁵⁸ Shifting the paradigm of spatial overindulgence, Louisiana could now be envisioned as a springboard to a grander, more coherent geopolitical destiny.

While this paradigm shift occupied the mindsets of policymakers in Washington, its scaled-down dynamics surfaced in the performances of “minor” spatial actors tasked with the region’s integration into the nation’s transcontinental schematic. One such performance was the carving of names and dates into prominent locations. At Cape Disappointment, the extreme western headland at the mouth of the Columbia River, William Clark recreated an inscription from Mackenzie’s travelogue, noting that “I also engraved my name, & by land the day of the month and year, as also several of the men”.¹⁵⁹ The Corps of Discovery’s journals in fact unabashedly “emulated, and even plagiarized, many textual passages” from Mackenzie’s records.¹⁶⁰ The nation’s first encounter with the Pacific sphere, and what was later mythologized as an exceptionally patriotic performance hence replicated the spatialization strategies of the British Empire as the young republic’s outspoken geopolitical opposite. What motivated Americans to emulate the spatial formatting of their adversaries was not least economic reasoning. As John Floyd, Governor of Virginia and passionate advocate of Oregon’s annexation proclaimed:

We must govern the Canton trade. All this rich commerce could be governed, if not engrossed, by capitalists at Oregon, making it the Tyre of America, to supply the whole coast below, and thus obtain the silver and gold of those rich countries on that coast [...] The ginseng of the Oregon, the fur trade of that river and that sea, with sandal wood, and other valuable productions of the [Sandwich] Islands, will purchase all we want,

157 B. Gough, *First Across the Continent: Sir Alexander Mackenzie*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997, p. xviii; Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 15.

158 Giles, *Global Remapping*, p. 5.

159 Qtd. in M. Isserman and J. S. Bowman (eds.), *Across America: The Lewis and Clark Expedition*, New York: Facts on File, 2005, p. 132; see W. H. Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men: America and the Second Great Age of Discovery*, New York: Viking, 1986, p. 113. According to historian David Nicandri, the template for these particular engravings was a message Mackenzie had engraved onto a rock at Bella Coola in 1793 (D. L. Nicandri, “Lewis and Clark: Exploring under the Influence of Alexander Mackenzie”, *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 95 [2004] 4, pp. 171–181, at 171).

160 Ibid.

not only to supply our own wants, but to dispose of in Europe, and return the proceeds to our own country.¹⁶¹

Irrespective of Floyd's vision of an American commercial empire in the Pacific, for the time being Oregon's commercial landscape was not "the Tyre of America" but remained firmly in the grip of British and French-Canadian companies. Although the US and Britain agreed on the region's joint occupation in 1818, the HBC adopted effective measures that impeded its main competitors, the Montreal-based North West Company (NWC) and John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company, from gaining a permanent foothold in the Far West.¹⁶² Mass emigration to the region only kicked off in the aftermath of the financial Panic of 1837 and John Charles Fremont's discovery of a practicable overland route. In 1848, the territory's definite borders were established and 11 years later the nation's manifest destiny seemed to fulfil itself when Oregon became the 33rd member of the Union, nicknamed the Beaver State.

The subsequent competition for land and resources threatened native communities and led to numerous injustices and massacres. James Cardwell was one of thousands who traversed the region on his way to the Californian gold mines. In his journals, he nonchalantly mentions having "the pleasure of shooting" a native man who had supposedly disrespected him, although to his disappointment the bullet "did not kill him".¹⁶³ At the same time, Cardwell seemed aware of the desperate situation of indigenous peoples whose lands were rapidly appropriated, often not by purchases or treaties but through mere speech acts:

A great many miners came in, and people began to take up land for ranches all over the country, and have them surveyed. While the surveying was in progress, the Indians seemed to be [sic] at a great loss to know how it was that the White men would take

161 Qtd. in J. Eue, *Die Oregon-Frage: Amerikanische Expansionspolitik und der Pazifische Nordwesten, 1814–1848*, Münster: LIT, 1995, p. 81. American trade with China first "began in 1784–1785, when the *Empress of China* sailed from New York to Canton (present-day Guangzhou) and back, around the tip of South America. Profits from its cargo of silks and tea encouraged the outfitting of other ships, which carried ginseng root and other American goods to exchange for the luxury goods of east Asia" (Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 258).

162 Jesse Applegate explains how the HBC discouraged American interlopers: "To the mountain men[,] the van guard of the real founders of our Empire on the Pacific[,] they showed no hospitality – sold them no supplies, except on harder terms and higher prices than those asked of them by the 'enimy' [i.e. Native American entrepreneurs]" (Applegate, "Views of Oregon History", p. 32). At the time of this book's publication, both the HBC and NWC remain in business, maintaining retail stores in Canada, England, and the US.

163 Cardwell, "Emigrant Company", p. 16.

compass & chain and go round and cry *stick stuck* and set up a few stakes and call the land thair [sic] own, when the government had not paid them for the land.¹⁶⁴

Responding to these illegal appropriations, natives developed resistance strategies designed to take advantage of the greed of miners and settlers. Cardwell relates that his band employed native “gides [sic] to show where we could find [gold] in [...] large lumps [...] scattered all over the surface of the earth for sevel [sic] miles”. However, to the prospective miners’ dismay it turns out that the natives purposefully misled them by inventing a tall tale of El Dorado that was supposed to cure their gold fever. When the group arrive at what they imagined as a golden land, they find themselves trapped in a dusty gulch devoid of any resources. Taken aback, they turn to their guide but

the indian said he could not account for the absence of the gold and [...] that the last time [he] was there was great quantities in sight [...] we discharge[d] him and wen[t] gold hunting on our own book [when] the indians began to show themselves in large numbers on the hills above us and they would yell horribly and roll stones down as if to try to frighten us.¹⁶⁵

While constantly accusing native actors of malicious intent, settlers normalized their own acts of short-changing as astute business practices, whose profits turned into a source of personal pride. “We got a very fine [Salmon] weighing about 21 pounds for an old shirt belonging to one of our young men”, Esther Belle Hanna boasts accordingly, adding that “we could have gotten half a dozen for almost nothing”.¹⁶⁶ The French-Canadian ex-revolutionary Francis Matthieu highlights another dimension of native-settlers conflicts. Working for Astor’s AFC in the Louisiana Territory, Matthieu grows increasingly frustrated by his witnessing the spread of alcoholism among Native Americans, encouraged by company policies.¹⁶⁷ “The Indians got drunk”, he notes. “As long as they had plenty to trade it was all right and we had peace; but when their buffalo robes got scarce their appetite was so great for liquor that they would beg of one another and finally kill one another”. Instead of exploiting the situation for his own ends, Matthieu leaves Astor’s employ, explaining: “That is what induced me to go to Oregon. I did not know what kind of a country it was but if I did not like it I knew I could go to California”.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 22 (emphasis added).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁶⁷ S. A. Clarke, “Pioneer Days: A Life Sketch of F.X. Matthieu, of Marion, a Pioneer of 1842”, *The Morning Oregonian* 5 (1886) 39, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Matthieu, “Refugee”, pp. 5–6.

After embarking from St. Louis on her half-year-long journey across the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains – “the limits, as it were, of the Atlantic world” – Esther Belle Hanna reaches Oregon in the fall of 1852.¹⁶⁹ With palpable relief, she notes: “We are now in Oregon proper [...]. My heart arouse in gratitude to God that we were spared to reach this land. Six long months have elapsed since we left our native land and now after having passed through dangers seen and unseen, sickness, trial and difficulty, toil & fatigue, we are here safely landed on the Pacific shores”.¹⁷⁰ Before reaching these shores, however, her company had to cross the Powder River Basin, located between today’s southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming. She is surprised to find the valley bustling with economic activity, leading her to readjust previously held pastoral visions of Oregon, which now appears to her “more like the noise and haste of a city than a remote spot far removed from civilization”.¹⁷¹ Hanna’s mental renegotiation between the region she arrived in and the nation she started from allows for different interpretations. On one hand, it projects the Oregon Country as a replica of the East’s industrial centres, implying commercial and sociocultural continuity between two disparate spaces. Despite its remoteness Oregon thus becomes a working extension of the nation-state and benchmark for its predetermined transcontinental expansion. Conversely, Hanna’s impressions could also point to the region’s formatting as a self-contained commercial space able to support and organize itself independently from the far-away United States.

What Hanna saw at the Powder River Basin were the offshoots of a new economic macro-region that developed around the middle of the nineteenth century. During this time, agriculture in the fertile Willamette Valley gradually started to supersede beaver trapping as Oregon’s the economic. These changes, to be sure, were not results of Jefferson’s agrarian ideals that came to fruition in the farthest reaches of the continent. In a more mundane reality, fashion trends in Europe dictated that headdresses made out of smooth Asian silk instead of rustic beaver pelts were now en vogue, effecting the decline of the fur industry and Oregon’s agrarian respatialization.¹⁷² On a

¹⁶⁹ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 199.

¹⁷⁰ Hanna, “Diary”, p. 20.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁷² Ever taller and narrower silk hats like the “stovepipe” or “chimney pot” were popularized by American leaders, most famously Abraham Lincoln. It has been suggested that this change in taste saved North American beaver populations from extinction. Today, some imagine the animals’ resurgence as a contributing factor in the creation of biodiverse and ecologically intact spaces, while others view them as pests that cause floods and deforestation (F. Rosell et al., “Ecological Impact of Beavers *Castor Fibre* and *Castor Canadensis* and their Ability to Modify Ecosystems”, *Mammal Review* 35 [2005], pp. 1–29).

micro-level, spatial entrepreneurs like Hanna witnessed and participated in these processes. “About noon we hailed the Columbia [River] for the first time”, she notes, but also consigns to her diary that “[i]t was with varied emotions that I gazed on its broad bosom”:

Little did I think in my school girl days as I traced out this river that ever I should stand upon its shores or drink of its clear cool water. But so it is, here I am after months of toil & fatigue permitted to see this noble & far-famed river. There is something grand & sublime in the scenery around it, yet I must say that I was disappointed in the scenery, instead of trees with luxuriant foliage, you see massive rocks, pile upon pile which have stood the wreck of time for centuries.¹⁷³

In this portrayal, the top-down triumphalism of reaching the destined land is curbed by the disparity between idealized, “luxuriant” imaginations and their much stonier “grassroots” equivalents. Following the Columbia’s shoreline, Hanna complains: “I never could have imagined such a road nor could I describe it for it beggars description!” Her statement then becomes a metaphor for the rocky path of the transcontinental journey and arrival not as triumph but rather as her entering another, even more challenging road that leads “over roots & branches, stumps, rocks, fallen trees and logs, over streams, through sloughs & marshes, up hill and down hill – and in short everything that could possibly tend to make it intolerable”.¹⁷⁴

More powerful spatial actors also struggled with the unexpectedly uneven physical and discursive landscape of Oregon. Even after the victories of the Mexican-American War, president Zachary Taylor was still convinced that “California and Oregon [were] too distant to become members of the Union” and should better “be an Independent Government”.¹⁷⁵ Even in today’s hardly disputed northwestern border regime, some view Oregon as part of a greater bioregion, detached from the political (b)orderings of the nation-state. In their combination, the following argues, the divergent vectors of formatting the Oregon Country expose its epistemic liminality and the shaky grounds on which the region was integrated into the axiom of manifest destiny. In addition, it shines a spotlight on the aftershocks produced by Oregon’s volatile integration that continue to energize present debates about regional autonomy and declining state power under both local and global conditions. The nation’s triumphal incorporation of the Far West, it becomes clear, was destabilized by alternative and ongoing spatialization processes that view Oregon through antithetical lenses,

¹⁷³ Hanna, “Diary”, p. 28.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷⁵ Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, p. 159.

for instance as the easternmost part of Asian-Pacific hemispheric networks or embedded in the Pacific Northwest's peculiar ecosystems. Engaging with these alternatives moreover shows that the paradigm change from continental westernness and the moving frontier towards a hemispheric periphery in the Pacific could not be effectively supported by the tenets of exceptionalism and manifest destiny. Instead, the flattening of Oregon's uneven cultural and human geographies by these axioms perpetually destabilized the nation's overall spatial ordering until today.

Leaving the Course of Empire in Francis Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*

With the movement upon us, hope we make it okay

If it takes a life or a couple of days

It's coming together in relative ways ... And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead¹⁷⁶

Between 1847 and 1849, *The Oregon Trail: Sketches of Prairie and Rocky-Mountain Life* was serialized in 21 instalments of *Knickerbocker Magazine* and later republished as an abridged edition.¹⁷⁷ The resulting narrative is the first-person account of Francis Parkman (1823–1893), a Harvard graduate, aspiring historian, and eldest son of one of the East Coast establishment's most distinguished families. This status and privilege enabled the young Parkman to travel across Europe in the manner of the Grand Tour, a classicist coming-of-age tradition for aristocratic adolescents “in search of art, culture and the roots of Western civilization”.¹⁷⁸ Much to the chagrin of his parents, Parkman however showed little interest in fine arts and culture. Instead, he nurtured an ungentlemanly fascination for nature and the outdoors. As a boy of poor health, he was sent to live on his grandfather's farm, located at the edge of Massachusetts' wilderness, where

¹⁷⁶ C. Keely, “Relative Ways”, *Source Tags & Codes*, 2002, <https://open.spotify.com/track/69Up0rtQOEzLnvd8dfELS>.

¹⁷⁷ The following uses the 1910 edition of *The Oregon Trail* based on the unabridged serialized version published in *Knickerbocker Magazine*. As Clarence Vail seconds in the book's preface, this is mostly due to the “feeling that Parkman, in revising his work for later editions, was unfortunate in omitting portions which gave greater virility and freer expression of self than are found in the revised form” (Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 3).

¹⁷⁸ M. Gross, “Lessons From the Frugal Grand Tour”, *The New York Times*, 5 September 2008, <https://frugaltraveler.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/05/lesons-from-the-frugal-grand-tour>.

he developed a passion for the forests and their cultural history. His European travels only deepened this passion as he trekked through the Alps and climbed Mount Vesuvius.

In the summer of 1846, shortly after finishing his law degree, Parkman and his friend Quincy Shaw started on a two-months-long tour across today's states of Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, and Wyoming. Crossing the frontier in Missouri, Parkman noted excitedly that "in the phraseology of the region [passing it means] to 'jump off!'"¹⁷⁹ On their way westwards, the friends encountered scores of American emigrants on the Oregon Trail but also spent time with the Oglala Lakota and joined them on buffalo hunting excursions. Accompanying Parkman and Shaw was a motley crew that included the French-Canadian guides Henry Chatillon and Lorel (an old trophy hunter from Ireland called the Captain), his brother Jack, an English boaster and know-it-all referred to only as R., two so-called muleteers named Delorier and Wright, as well as eight mules that pulled their canvas-covered wagon. Parkman's resulting narrative of the tour traces the histories and cultures of Native Americans residing in these spaces and their interactions and conflicts with the swelling ranks of Euroamericans that traversed their territories on the Oregon Trail.

Published at the peak of Oregon's figurative "fever curve", the book received much attention in the East, particularly by aspiring emigrants to the Oregon Country. But Parkman's account of the West was also favourably (albeit anonymously) reviewed by Herman Melville who commented that its "style is easy and free, quite flowingly correct. There are no undue sallies of fancy and no attempts at wit which flash in the pan".¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the eminent writer also complained about Parkman's depiction of natives and the book's title that "will be apt to mislead" because "[t]here is nothing about California or Oregon in the book; but though we like it the better for this, the title is not the less ill-chosen".¹⁸¹ In a more abstract vein, Melville recognized the text's role for literary spatialization processes, both in the national-expansionist and hemispheric-colonial contexts, remarking that perhaps "the title is correct after all [...] inasmuch as the route or 'trail' pursued by Mr. Parkman towards the Rocky Mountains would be the one pursued by a traveller bound overland to the Pacific. [...] And it

¹⁷⁹ Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 46.

¹⁸⁰ H. Melville, "Mr. Parkman's Tour", *The Literary World* (1849) 113, pp. 291–293, at 291. Melville's critique likely refers to Parkman's sometimes harsh and dehumanizing descriptions, e.g. of "tribes beyond the mountains, who are scattered among the caves and rocks like beasts, living on roots and reptiles" (Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 214).

¹⁸¹ Melville, "Parkman's Tour", p. 291.

would also be part of the route followed by a traveller bound due West from Missouri to Pekin[g] or Bombay”.¹⁸²

In a glowing review in *The Atlantic Monthly*, historian-philosopher John Fiske praised *The Oregon Trail* as an exceptionally patriotic performance of literary history writing that was equally informed by the nation’s spatial themes and global epistemic trajectories. Of “all American historians”, Fiske states, Parkman “is the most deeply and peculiarly American, yet he is at the same time the broadest and most cosmopolitan. The book [...] clearly belongs, I think, among the world’s few masterpieces of the highest rank along with the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Gibbon”.¹⁸³ At the time of Parkman’s death, his historically accoutred account of transcontinental movement towards the Far West had already become a centrepiece of a national historiography that revolved around manifest destiny and the frontier as the spatial formats that sustained the nation’s imminent expansion into the Asian-Pacific and Caribbean hemispheres. One of the most outspoken advocates of this New Imperialism, Theodore Roosevelt dedicated his four-volume opus *The Winning of the West* “to Francis Parkman to whom Americans who feel pride in the pioneer history of their country are so greatly indebted”.¹⁸⁴

A must-read for westward-thinking Americans, Parkman’s book played a crucial role in compounding the hemispheric Otherness of the Asian-Pacific with the transatlantic exceptionalism of the westering nation. While the endorsement of Melville, Fiske, and Roosevelt positioned *The Oregon Trail* as an epoch-making constituent of US history, the text contains a diversity of spatial imaginations that oppose its commonly cited nationalistic and triumphal readings. Overcoming hardships on the trail for Parkman was not necessarily a spatial performance of American ingenuity, progressive civilization, or racial superiority. More often, it became the cause of individual uprootedness and collective trauma. Confronted with human grief and loss of life on the trail, the sense of mission and destiny that supposedly animated emigrants on their way to Oregon is compromised by violence, anarchy, and greed. Combined with extra-legal spaces of exploitation, the resilience of Native American belief systems, and deviant visions such as the Mormon empire of Deseret, Parkman’s textual performances subvert linear spatial formatting through manifest destiny.

As word of Oregon’s fertile soil reached the eastern seaboard, literary and personal accounts of the Pacific Northwest energized visions of upwards mobility,

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ J. Fiske, “Francis Parkman”, *The Atlantic Monthly* 73 (1894) 439, pp. 664–674, at 674.

¹⁸⁴ T. Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1, New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1904 [1889]. In 1910, Ginn and Company published an annotated edition titled *The Oregon Trail of Francis Parkman* that was coedited by Frederick Jackson Turner.

cheap land, and fast money. As newspapers commentators put it, Americans had caught “the Oregon Fever”.¹⁸⁵ In contrast to reductive depictions found in popular histories, the “fever” that incentivized this frantic movement was no sickness that exclusively afflicted white emigrants. Driven by a variety of motives, an ethnically and culturally diverse assemblage of people from the East, South, and North gathered at the trailhead in St. Louis. To Parkman’s own surprise, a multinational and multiethnic group congregated aboard his travel party’s vessel, consisting of “Santa Fé traders, gamblers, speculators, and adventurers of various descriptions, and her steerage was crowded with Oregon emigrants, ‘mountain men,’ negroes, and a party of Kansas Indians, who had been on a visit to St. Louis”.¹⁸⁶ This unexpected diversity of emigrants and travellers already contradicts some central postulations of manifest destiny that concede the tokens of mobility and epoch-making spatial agency exclusively to white Euroamericans, while attributing the fate of non-white peoples to displacement and forced (im)mobility.

In the summer of 1843, in what would later be dubbed the Great Wagon Train, around 1,000 emigrants started from Independence, Missouri towards the fertile Willamette Valley and “began their invasion of Oregon, carrying with them all things requisite for the establishment of farms” and encouraging even more emigrants to embark on the trail in the following season.¹⁸⁷ Parkman’s use of the term “invasion” gives a first hint of this migration not just being a materialization of god-pleasing progress by spatial entrepreneurs “on [their] way, to found new empires in the West”.¹⁸⁸ In several other passages in the text, emigrants actually resemble barbaric hordes socially uprooted from their eastern or European homes and wandering the trail not as personifications of empire, but as a disoriented and destructive force: “Finding at home no scope for their fiery energies, they had betaken themselves to the prairie; and in them seemed to be revived, with redoubled force, that fierce spirit which impelled their ancestors, scarce more lawless than themselves, from the German forests, to inundate Europe and break to pieces the Roman Empire”.¹⁸⁹ In this analogy to the Migration Period in ancient European

185 Bright, “Folklore and History”, p. 241.

186 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 22.

187 *Ibid.*, p. 17. The Oregon Trail was not a single route but had many offshoots and forks leading in different directions, e.g. the California Trail (from 1843), Mormon Trail (from 1847), and Bozeman Trail (from 1863). While most Oregon-bound emigrants headed for Willamette Valley, the part that led to the Pacific Northwest reached as far as Fort Vancouver, Washington. With the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 the use of all trails declined rapidly.

188 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

189 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

history, the emigrants' movement to Oregon seems less guided by higher principles than by the necessities of sheer survival. Instead of civilization and cleanliness as the centrepieces of imperial discourses in the Pacific hemisphere, the torchbearers of manifest destiny spread chaos and contagious diseases across the continent. In their struggle to survive, they even abandon the material tokens of western civilization that have become utterly useless in this new environment. As a result, erstwhile priceless possessions, heirlooms, and other civilizational achievements litter the trail, signifying regression and loss instead of progress. During his travels, Parkman witnesses

the shattered wrecks of ancient claw-footed tables, well waxed and rubbed, or massive bureaus of carved oak. These, many of them no doubt the relics of ancestral prosperity in the colonial time, must have encountered strange vicissitudes. Imported, perhaps, from England; then, with the declining fortunes of their owners, borne across the Alleghenies [sic] to the remote wilderness of Ohio or Kentucky; then to Illinois or Missouri; and now at last fondly stowed away in the family wagon for the interminable journey to Oregon. But the stern privations of the way were little anticipated. The cherished relic is soon flung out to scorch and crack upon the hot prairie.¹⁹⁰

Introducing this spatio-historical simile to the erratic and destructive movement of subaltern peoples during Europe's Barbaric migrations, the book on the one hand devalues the accolades of a manifest destiny which now appears chaotic and ephemeral instead of inevitable and everlasting. On the other hand, Parkman's knowledge of ancient history suggests that he was mindful of how his contemporaries interpreted the events that led to the Western Roman Empire's downfall. Political and moral corruption, it was argued, were introduced through contact with spaces of sociocultural Otherness on the fringes of the empire. Domestically, the transition from polytheistic spiritual landscapes towards Christian monotheism completed the erosion of Roman unity.¹⁹¹ These are the same cataclysmic forces which nineteenth-century authors such as Hall, Catlin, and Fuller saw at work in dismantling the spatial orders that had structured the coexistence of indigenous and colonial societies. Like Rome was hollowed out by diseases, corruption, and alcoholism, informal native empires now faced the same fate, brought about not by wandering Barbarians but American emigrants as its oftentimes themselves subaltern emissaries, among whom not triumph and pride but "fear and dissension prevailed".¹⁹²

190 Ibid.

191 R. MacMullen, *Roman Government's Response to Crisis: A.D. 235–337*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976, pp. 195–213.

192 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 95.

The prairies in this historically permeated vision then become the stage for a Social Darwinist spatial formatting in which the future ordering of white America is exacted not through the noble motives of its patriotic harbingers, but via purely Hobbesian dynamics. “Here the feeble succumb to the brave”, Parkman notes accordingly, “with nothing to sustain them in their weakness. Here society is reduced to its original elements, and the whole fabric of art and conventionality is struck rudely to pieces, and men find themselves suddenly brought back to the wants and resources of their original natures”.¹⁹³ The collision of ethnically and historically antagonistic macro-groups, their encompassing spatial orders and underlying imaginations, the text implies, is destined to culminate in the conquest of one by the other: “Great changes are at hand in that region. With the stream of emigration to Oregon and California, the buffalo will dwindle away, and the large wandering communities who depend on them for support must be broken and scattered. The Indians will soon be corrupted by the example of the whites, abased by whiskey, and overawed by military posts”.¹⁹⁴

In this gloomy vision, the “long train of emigrant wagons [...] in their slow, heavy procession, passed the encampment of the people whom they and their descendants, in the space of century, are to sweep from the face of the earth”.¹⁹⁵ Native people whose lives were often predicated on movement and seasonal mobility were thus obliterated by the spontaneous and colonizing mobility of a sedentary people, whose sedentariness was paradoxically also hailed as a hallmark of western civilization. While natives were overwhelmed and immobilized by the seductions and exploitations of this invasion, white emigrants carved out spatial practices designed to guarantee their survival in the Darwinist Far West.¹⁹⁶ Material cultures developed along the trail and formed assemblages that reformatting the artefacts of eastern civilization through their juxtaposition with the objects and symbols of western unfamiliarity, therefore engendering folded,

193 Ibid., p. 105.

194 Ibid., p. 274.

195 Ibid., p. 145.

196 There were, of course, exceptions to this rule as some tribes successfully adopted American business methods. About an entrepreneurial Shawnee chief Parkman writes that he “just arrived from Westport, where he owns a trading establishment. Besides this, he has a fine farm and a considerable number of slaves. Indeed, the Shawanoes [sic] have made greater progress in agriculture than any other tribe on the Missouri frontier” (Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 39). In contrast, Pawnees who actively resisted the influx of white settlers Parkman calls “a treacherous, cowardly banditti, who by a thousand acts of pillage and murder have deserved summary chastisement at the hands of government” (ibid., pp. 102–103).

hybrid, and transitory formats alongside East-West trajectories. After reaching an isolated trading post on the prairies, Parkman observes that its collection of

sofas, chairs, tables, and a well-filled bookcase would not have disgraced an Eastern city; though there were one or two little tokens that indicated the rather questionable civilization of the region. A pistol, loaded and capped, lay on the mantelpiece; and through the glass of the bookcase, peeping above the works of John Milton, glittered the handle of very mischievous-looking knife.¹⁹⁷

Reformatting the material symbols of their culture in this manner, American emigrants laid the epistemic foundations for the Turnerian frontier as the birthplace of a newfound national character reassembled from the fragments of different ideas and practices and developed through utilitarianist necessity. While this equation could work on the abstract level of national historiography, the human realities Parkman observes on the trail turn out to be much more tangible and complex. In reality, it becomes clear, many who may have cradled these or similar notions did not live to see them realized. With widespread malnutrition and unsanitary conditions, the majority of the up to 30,000 deaths on the Oregon Trail were caused by cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and the dreaded “mountain fever”, a bacterial disease transmitted by ticks. Constantly exposed to the elements, some adopted indigenous techniques and constructed underground sod shelters or burned buffalo chips for heat and cooking. Edith Ammons, a homesteader in South Dakota, recounts weathering a blizzard inside a haphazard shelter on the plains, feeling “defenceless against the elemental fury of the storm, was like drifting in a small boat at sea, tossed and buffeted by waves, each one threatening to engulf you”.¹⁹⁸ Outside the realms of fiction, attacks by hostile natives proved to be a minor threat that accounted for less than one per cent of fatalities. Many more died from drowning during river crossings, stampeding livestock, gunpowder explosions, violence among emigrants, accidental shootings, and suicide.¹⁹⁹ Falling off the wagon and getting run over was a tragedy that befell unsupervised children and contributed

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁹⁸ Qtd. in L. S. Peavy and U. Smith, *Pioneer Women: The Lives of Women on the Frontier*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, p. 60.

¹⁹⁹ Gun accidents often happened at night when nervous wagon guards fired at fellow travelers or family members. The breakup between the realities on the trail and their pre-formatting through violent discourses made emigrants dread nightly assaults by natives.

to “an average of ten graves per mile” on the 2,000-mile-long trail.²⁰⁰ Parkman notes that at these sites of suffering

[t]he earth was usually torn up, and covered thickly with wolf-tracks. [...] One morning a piece of plank, standing upright on the summit of a grassy hill, attracted our notice, and riding up to it we found the following words very roughly traced upon it, apparently by a red-hot piece of iron:

MARY ELLIS.
DIED MAY 7TH, 1845.
AGED TWO MONTHS.

Such tokens were of common occurrence. Nothing could speak more for the hardihood, or rather infatuation, of the adventurers, or the sufferings that await them upon the journey.²⁰¹

For Parkman, these tragedies reify the human cost of mobility and victims of the incommensurable West’s spatial formatting. Sordid and less than triumphal grassroots performances and experiences counterpointed the overarching mission of bringing prosperity, enlightenment, and Christianity to supposedly uncivilized spaces. Western histories and literary studies show a certain aversion to addressing issues of migrant poverty and subalternity because they complicate basic axioms and ethnic binaries of settler colonialist narratives. While the indisputably exploitative colonization of the American West would not be conceivable without the element of westward migration, the role of migrants in these spatialization processes, however, must be examined in conjunction with aspects of poverty, trauma, and desperation that existed parallel to ideological narratives and theoretical placemaking axioms. Contrary to categories like ethnicity or gender, Gavin Jones points out that poverty as a mainspring of nineteenth-century mobility has been neglected as a “critical discourse in the study of American literature and culture”, not least because it also threatens to diminish “those assumptions of freedom and universality that underpin a liberal market economy”.²⁰² According to a longstanding consensus, there was no widespread poverty among Americans prior to the economic upheavals of the 1930s. Like the fever curve of a stock chart, American mobilities always seemed to point upwards and westwards, until these stock values figuratively and literally collapsed over the course of

200 US Department of the Interior, “History and Educational Resources: The Oregon Trail”, *National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center*, <https://www.blm.gov/learn/interpretive-centers/national-historic-oregon-trail-interpretive-center/history-and-educational-resources> (accessed 7 May 2020).

201 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, pp. 93–94.

202 G. Jones, *American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in U.S. Literature, 1840–1945*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, p. xiii; see Giles, *Global Remapping*, p. 229.

a week in 1929. The ensuing Great Depression immobilized not only subaltern bodies in the US but paralyzed spatial orders on a global scale. As Julia Leyda explains,

geographic mobility could no longer be equated with nation-building progress; rather, the migration, displacement, and homelessness of millions of unemployed Americans during the Depression constituted a real threat to the nation itself. Instead of signifying upward social mobility, geographic movements during the Depression resulted from involuntary relocation in search of work, food, and shelter. Up to this point in American history, westward movement had always implied progress, development, and opportunity, and thus been linked ideologically with upward class mobility. [...] Territorial expansion – moving west, homesteading, and building railroads – was replaced in the national imagination with this new kind of negative mobility motivated by economic survival²⁰³

The traumas of nineteenth-century migrants and their “negative mobilities” continue to reverberate in contemporary discourse, an infamous example being that of a specific group of emigrant families on the Oregon Trail. After taking a shortcut via the Great Salt Lake on their way to California, a wagon train headed by James Frazier Reed and George Donner was snowed in during an early Sierra Nevada winter. Frostbitten and starving, desperate party members resorted to consuming their companions and relatives. H. A. Wise provides some disturbing (and perhaps exaggerated) details in his memoirs *Los Gringos* (1849). “The women”, he starts his account,

held on to life with greater tenacity than the men. One of them feasted on her good papa, but on making soup of her lover’s head, she confessed to some inward qualms of conscience. The young Spaniard, Baptiste, was the hero of the party, performing all labor and drudgery in getting food and water, until his strength became exhausted; he told me that he ate Jake Donner and the baby, “eat baby raw, stewed some of Jake, and roasted his head, not good meat, taste like sheep with the rot; but sir, very hungry, eat anything,” – these were his very words.²⁰⁴

During his time on the trail, Parkman met some members of the Donner Party before they embarked on their ill-fated journey. “As the [drunken] Colonel spoke”, he recounts, “I looked round on the wild assemblage, and could not help thinking that he was but ill qualified [...] Fearful was the fate that months after overtook some of the members of that party. [...] They were interrupted by

203 J. Leyda, *American Mobilities: Geographies of Class, Race, and Gender in US Culture*, American Culture Studies, Bielefeld: transcript, 2016, pp. 12–13.

204 H. A. Wise, *Los Gringos: or, An Inside View of Mexico and California, with Wanderings in Peru, Chili, and Polynesia*, New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849, pp. 74–75; see K. Johnson (ed.), *Unfortunate Emigrants: Narratives of the Donner Party*, Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996, p. 132.

the deep snows among the mountains, and maddened by cold and hunger, fed upon each other's flesh!"²⁰⁵ Esther Belle Hanna also had to come to terms with disturbing and traumatic experiences while travelling on the Oregon Trail. At one point, she mentions her attending a wayside funeral for an anonymous emigrant and the marks it left on her psyche:

No mother, wife or sister was near him in the last trying hour to wipe the death damp from his brow or close his eyes in death. Not a tear was shed as the coffin was lowered into the deep damp vault. [...] The last shovel full of earth was placed upon the mound – the sound of the retreating footsteps of the crowd have died upon the air and the poor sojourner is forgotten. The solemn scene made a deep impression on my mind; I too am a wan[d]erer, a sojourner, a pilgrim and little know how soon my poor frail body will be laid by the wayside.²⁰⁶

On her way to Oregon, Hanna confronts death and dying to such a degree that counting graves turns into a narrative backbone of her diary. For instance, she reports seeing “another new grave yesterday & 2 today. [...]. There have been several deaths from cholera. I feel a little discouraged, but will try to be calm & submissive. [...] Have heard of several more deaths from cholera. 3 men of Perry's train buried in one grave. Passed 5 more graves today”.²⁰⁷ In a letter to his wife, Edmund Botsford Calvin Park, travelling on the same route towards California, expresses his grief after a friend succumbed to cholera. For Park, conquering the trail and moving westwards appear less like the fulfilment of a greater mission than a deeply traumatic journey shaped by a series of emasculating

205 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 191. The drunken colonel Parkman refers to is probably James F. Reed, one of the leading figures of the Donner party. Reed had fought with Abraham Lincoln in the Black Hawk War of 1832 but, contrary to Parkman's belief, held no military rank.

206 Hanna, “Diary”, pp. 2–3. Kenneth Holmes collected a plethora of autobiographical writings that record women's experiences on the Oregon Trail. For instance, Amelia Steward Knight notes in her diary on 6 May 1853: “Pleasant [weather], we have just passed the Mormon graveyard, there is a great number of graves on it, the road covered with wagons and cattle, here we passed a train of wagons on their way back, the head man had been drowned a few days before, in a river called Elk horn while getting some cattle across, and his wife was lying in the wagon quite sick, and children were mourning for a father gone and with sadness, and pitty, I passed those who perhaps a few days before had been well and happy as ourselves” (qtd. in K. L. Holmes, *Best of Covered Wagon Women*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008, p. 202).

207 Hanna, “Diary”, pp. 4–5. *The Oregon Trail* (1971), one of the earliest and best-known American-made video games, was designed to educate school children about the realities of western emigration. In the game, players assume the role of wagon leaders who must make difficult economic and ethical decisions while guiding their party from Independence to the Willamette Valley. Along the way, laying to rest fictional family members (which players often named after actual friends and family) becomes a disheartening if regular occurrence (see https://archive.org/details/msdos_Oregon_Trail_Deluxe_The_1992 for a playable version [accessed 7 May 2020]).

and dehumanizing calamities that culminate in his laying to rest a man named Carter who “yielded his manly form to his conqueror [...] with a pillow under his head to take his long and awfully silent rest amidst this desolation”.²⁰⁸ He goes on to confide his emotional oppression to his wife in the East:

*You have no idea [how] sad and sorrowful [it is] to witness the struggles of the strong man on the cold earth, in this deep solitude as he grapples with death, with neither wife or mother, sister or daughter to minister his wants. Then, when the struggle is over, to leave him, so rudely buried, to sleep so far away from family and friends. It is truly painful.*²⁰⁹

This “truly painful” migration with its human cost of mobility and victimizing propensities inform Parkman’s book, whose overall tone, in contrast to common interpretations, is reluctant to transpose individual experiences on the Oregon Trail to the national vectors of manifest destiny. “I have often perplexed myself”, he ponders, “to divine the various motives that give impulse to this strange migration” and goes on to wonder “whether [it is] an insane hope of a better condition in life, or a desire of shaking off restraints of law and society, or mere restlessness, certain it is that multitudes bitterly repent the journey, and after they have reached the land of promise are happy enough to escape from it”.²¹⁰ Although the book sometimes displays merciless and Darwinist attitudes towards the tribes Parkman encounters, it acknowledges the impacts of hardships and shared sites of suffering. At these sites, imagined boundaries between ethnic groups dissipate as the social structures, spiritual landscapes, and communal bonds among spatial actors, whose histories intersect on the Oregon Trail, unravel. Similar to white emigrants who saw their hopes shatter and fall to the wayside, the Oglala chief White Shield becomes “the victim of his own imagination” after being afflicted by a throat infection:

The White Shield was a warrior of noted prowess. Very probably, he would have received a mortal wound without the show of pain, and endured without flinching the worst tortures that an enemy could inflict upon him. [...] But when he feels himself attacked by a mysterious evil [...] when he can see no enemy to resist and defy, the boldest warrior falls prostrate at once. [...] When suffering from a protracted disorder, an Indian will often abandon himself to his supposed destiny, pine away and die [...].²¹¹

208 Park, “Letters to His Wife”, p. 1.

209 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

210 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 28.

211 *Ibid.*, pp. 332–333. Parkman mentions berserk and kamikaze-like practices among desperate natives in which “the sufferer has been known to ride into the midst of an enemy’s camp, or attack a grizzly bear single-handed, to get rid of a life which he supposed to lie under the doom of misfortune” (*ibid.*, p. 333).

As already mentioned, Parkman accompanied a band of Dakotas on several buffalo hunting expeditions. These journeys shaped his opinions about the character and organization of Native Americans that settled in and transmigrated the region of today's Midwest. On the macro-scale of spatial orders, as becomes clear in *The Oregon Trail*, Parkman largely discards potentialities of coexistence and interculturalization. Unlike French Louisianans who established common ground through their adoption of the slave economy and military service in the War of 1812, the scattered regionalisms of native societies largely prevented similarly integrative processes. For Parkman, the disunity ingrained in tribalism itself engendered less stable spatial orders whose heterogeneous policies and lack of unified narratives could not compete with the powerful frontier and manifest destiny ideologies. "Indians cannot act in large bodies", he concludes. "Though their object be of the highest importance, they cannot combine to attain it by a series of connected efforts. King Philip, Pontiac, and Tecumseh all felt this to their cost".²¹² Despite these famous leaders' visions of greater pan-tribal orders, measures taken by single communities or fragile coalitions either remained ineffective against the onslaught of white migration or backfired when American policymakers exploited opposing interests and long-standing rivalries among tribal communities.

Depicting the moral and aesthetic dimensions of native society, Parkman's book upholds the classic binaries between the chastity of noble savages and depravity of "bad Injuns". With similar undertones as George Catlin, it views the former as existing (or having existed) within far western conservatories of ethnic and moral purity that form a distinct counterpoint to the United States and its increasingly complex urban spaces. "[N]ever have I seen in any Indian village on the remote prairies such abject depravity, such utter abasement and prostitution of every nobler part of humanity", Parkman laments, "as I have seen in great cities, the center of the world's wisdom and refinement. The meanest savage [...] would seem noble and dignified compared with some of the lost children of civilization".²¹³ To underscore this moral purity, the text idealizes the prairie tribes via their spatiotemporal juxtaposition to classicist Grecian and Roman ideas of beauty. Stating that "I do not exaggerate when I say, that only on the prairie and in the Vatican have I seen such faultless models of the human figure", Parkman expresses this by establishing a global assemblage. Simultaneously, he likens these archetypal "models of the human figure" to exhibition pieces that personify a caprice of nature and an oddly aesthetic synthesis of history, geography,

²¹² Ibid., p. 211.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 222.

and physiognomy: “With his free and noble attitude, with the bow in his hand, and the quiver at his back, he might seem, but for his face, the Pythian Apollo himself. Such a figure rose before the imagination of Benjamin West, when on first seeing the Belvidere [sic] in the Vatican, he exclaimed, ‘By heaven, a Mohawk warrior!’”²¹⁴ Finding analogies and externalizations of antique virtues in tribes like the Mohawks reveals Parkman’s view of the Far West as a counter-space or “live-cell therapy” for the crumbling morals of urbanizing East Coast societies, comparable to Hall’s symbolic location of the West as the unsullied “heart” of the nation.

At the same time, Parkman’s constant anticipating and thus mentally framing of the Oregon Trail as a space of looming danger, passage through which could only be attained by the perpetual simulation of threats, subverts this pastoral vision. This goes as far as him stating “we all earnestly hoped that we might not meet a single human being, for should we encounter any, they would in all probability be enemies, ferocious robbers and murderers”. Whether real or imagined, violence hence becomes a prerequisite for mobility on the trail; in fact, it turns into the de facto “admission card” to California and the Oregon Country as spaces of Otherness to which “our rifles would be our only passports”.²¹⁵ In contrast to the ethereal beauty Parkman spots in the guise of Mohawk warriors, members of the Arapahoe nation in this space turn into “ferocious barbarians, of a most brutal and wolfish aspect”.²¹⁶ During the return journey he writes that “I looked in vain among this multitude of faces to discover one manly or generous expression; all were wolfish, sinister, and malignant, and their complexions, as well as their features, unlike those of the Dahcotahs [sic], were exceedingly bad”.²¹⁷ Fusing geographical determinism with early phrenological impulses, Mexicans, ethnically ambiguous people, and certain tribes are seen as incompatible with the clear-cut racial hierarchies of the US and thus as nonparticipants, antagonists – or, like the unremembered emigrants buried on the wayside of the Oregon Trail – as the human cost of western expansion.

Next to these conflicting imaginations, the trail’s formatting as the nation’s physical and discursive interface to Oregon and California under the auspices of manifest destiny appears equally contradictory. In the text, the author-narrator and his protagonists regularly assess Oregon in terms of its commercial value, whereas appeals to nationalism and patriotism become semantic strategies that frame the trail as an extension of the imagined community in the East. On the one

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 227–228.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 410.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 334.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 450.

hand, thinking of the Oregon Trail as an interface between an emerging continental nation and its future Pacific extensions served to further the geopolitical agendas of policymakers in Washington. On the other hand, migrants and travellers who found themselves uprooted and exploited alongside said interface hoped to bolster their precarious situation by publicly hailing these agendas, for instance by hoisting the star-spangled banner or intoning patriotic hymns. Despite these symbolic placemaking performances, Parkman makes plain that “traveling in that country, or indeed anywhere, from any other motive than gain, was an idea of which [Americans] took no cognizance”.²¹⁸ Patriotism hence turned into a catalogue of ritualized performances that identified the spatial actors of a commonly shared but decidedly individualistic and capitalistic order that became profitable for its participants, regardless of parameters such as nationality and race.

Transmitting national realpolitik into the Far West, eastern power brokers began to channel their influence chiefly through local strongholds. Places like Fort Laramie at the confluence of the North Platte and Laramie rivers were geographic markers of political expansionism, military policing of the West, and the Americanization of the overland fur trade by entrepreneurs such as John Jacob Astor. In 1851, the fort became a venue for a performance that permanently altered mobility regimes that previously ordered communal life on the prairies. Over 12,000 members of the Dakota, Mandan, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, and Arikara nations attended a ceremony during which their leaders agreed to receive annual reimbursements in exchange for their granting rights to construct roadways and outposts across the Great Plains. In tandem with these infrastructural developments, US policymakers continued to strive for the determination of precise territorial boundaries for plains nomads, already “hinting at the reservation system that would become the hallmark of federal Indian policy”.²¹⁹ Prior to these developments and during Parkman’s travels, forts and trading posts came to symbolize spatial assemblages of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They provided shared marketplaces for the trade of goods but also for exchanges of spatial ideologies and imaginations, albeit regularly marred by disparate power hierarchies and unequal circumstances.

The exploitative vein of these places, however, did not confine itself to exclusively targeting non-American nationalities or non-white ethnicities. Instead, control over and knowledge of commercial flows and sometimes artificially created

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

²¹⁹ Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 88.

shortages of essential goods and sought-after luxuries like alcohol and tobacco enabled companies and their local agents to profit from the fragile position of both emigrants and natives. Powerful actors like the AFC advertised commerce as a performance of patriotism that bolstered the emergence of an American Empire based on economic prowess. While this virtue-signalling of corporations served a lobbying function in the acquisition of official licences, it did not concurrently engender “fair trade” spaces for American citizens in the West. Conversely, Parkman denounces business practices along the Oregon Trail through which “a most base advantage was taken of the ignorance and the necessities of the emigrants. They were plundered and cheated without mercy. In one bargain concluded in my presence, I calculated the profits that accrued to the fort, and found that at the lowest estimate they exceeded *eighteen hundred per cent*”.²²⁰ Abuses of market power, local monopolies, and quasi-hegemonic practices thus turned outposts like Fort Laramie into virtually extra-legal spaces where the AFC’s “officials rule with an absolute sway; the arm of the United States has little force; for when we were there the extreme outposts of her troops were about seven hundred miles to the eastward”.²²¹ Trading posts and forts, however, did also serve as nexuses of entirely different spatial imaginations: For natives, their surroundings could turn into safe havens whose proximity to forts prevented the desecration of graveyards as a strategy of psychological warfare used by some prairie tribes. Parkman describes Fort Laramie evolving into a

place of sepulture of some Dahcotah chiefs, whose remains their people are fond of placing in the vicinity of the fort, in the hope that they may thus be protected from violation at the hands of their enemies. Yet it has happened more than once [...] that war parties of the Crow Indians [...] have thrown the bodies from the scaffolds, and broken them to pieces amid the yells of the Dahcotahs, who remained pent up in the fort, too few to defend the honored relics from insult.²²²

Parallel to the state-supported narrative of divinely ordained migration of white American protestants, other religious groups used the Oregon Trail to pursue their own spiritual destinies. At a turnoff near Bent’s Fort in today’s southeastern Colorado, Parkman encounters members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) who are on their way to the Utah Territory, seeking refuge from religious prosecution they had faced in the US. “As we came up”, he recounts, “the Mormons left their work and seated themselves on the timber around us, when they began earnestly to discuss points of theology,

²²⁰ Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, pp. 165–166.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

complain of the ill-usage they had received from the ‘gentiles,’ and sound a lamentation over the loss of their great temple at Nauvoo”.²²³ At the time of Parkman’s journey, rumours of immoral practices circulated after Brigham Young succeeded Joseph Smith as leader of the movement’s growing following. In response to critiques about the disenfranchisement of Mormon women, Young drafted the United States’ second (after Wyoming) universal women’s suffrage bill in 1870. Mormon women enthusiastically participated in nationwide suffrage movements and founded the *Woman’s Exponent* journal as a platform to voice their opinions on political issues. Still, eastern commentators argued that these women only voted as their husbands told them, thus doing a disservice to the overall movement. In 1887, the federal government made the issue superfluous by taking away women’s suffrage rights altogether.²²⁴ As a result of this and other struggles between local and national institutional powers, the Mormons were forced to abandon their settlements in Ohio, Missouri and Nauvoo, Illinois, accompanied by violent clashes with other settlers that led to several massacres and small-scale wars.²²⁵ Like many of his contemporaries, Parkman viewed the Mormons as secessionist apostates and aberrant spatial actors. Agreeing with their continual displacements, he notes his being “happy that the settlements had been delivered from the presence of such blind and desperate fanatics”.²²⁶ Despite these resistances, Mormons managed to integrate their decades-long continental exodus into their own spiritual landscapes, resulting in mental counter-spaces that opposed dominant spatial discourses and collided with federal laws and land policies.

The founding narrative of the LDS holds that in the town of Palmyra, New York, an angelic vision directed the 14-year-old Joseph Smith to the location of a buried book printed on golden plates.²²⁷ Helped by higher powers, Smith

²²³ Ibid., p. 428.

²²⁴ S. B. Gordon, “Law and the Contact of Cultures”, in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 130–142, at 132; R. L. Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 92.

²²⁵ Conflicts included the Missouri Mormon War in 1838 and Mormon War in Illinois 1844–1845. After the Mormons established their settlement in Salt Lake City, decades of raids and skirmishes with local tribes ensued, including Black Hawk’s War 1865–1872 (Tindall and Shi, *America*, pp. 464–465).

²²⁶ Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 428.

²²⁷ Palmyra is named after the ancient Syrian oasis town that was mostly destroyed by Islamic State extremists in 2015. A hotbed of religious revivalism and the Second Great Awakening, western New York was also referred to as the “burned-over district”. As historian John H. Martin notes: “Just as a forest fire can sweep all before it, the religious and reforming urges swept their way across the Ontario Plain between Albany and Lake Erie, changing the religious and social

translated the plates' inscriptions and in 1830 published *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. Mormon, the book's alleged author, according to Smith lived during the fourth century. Apart from being a historian and prophet, he belonged to the native tribe of the Nephites who after falling from god's grace left Jerusalem and emigrated to the Americas in 589 BCE.²²⁸ In the millenarian spatial visions of Brigham Young and his disciples, the task that this descendant of one of the ten lost tribes of Israel bestowed upon them was to construct a new Zion in the wilderness of the American West. Before Smith was killed by a lynch mob and his disciples expelled from Illinois, the town of Nauvoo was chosen as the site of this heavenly-inspired act of respatialization, set in motion by a semi-literate New Englander's vision based on the translation of a Jewish Native American's exegesis of the Old Testament. Following in the footsteps of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young imagined the realization of this spatio-temporal assemblage in a theodemocratic empire. This empire was to materialize in the State of Deseret as a kingdom of god whose governmental organization blended scripture-based theocracy with principles of US republicanism.

On their way to attaining this exceptional space, Mormon pioneers used the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails on their trek to the Southwest and California, some pulling handcarts in lieu of oxen, while later emigrants arrived by train after the completion of the southwestern sections of the transcontinental railroad.²²⁹ In the midst of the Mexican-American War, their final destination in what would later become Utah was still under Mexican jurisdiction. Young sent a letter to president James Polk, informing him about his plans to send some of his followers across the Rocky Mountains to settle in the Mexican territory of Alta California. If they would receive no support from the United States, Young warned the president, they would offer their services to the Mexicans instead. Concerned about thousands of armed fanatics joining enemy forces, Polk decided to control the mobility of these unpredictable spatial agents by putting them under the command of his most reliable officers. On 3 June 1846, he noted in his war diary that "Col. [Stephen W.] Kearney was also authorized to receive into service as volunteers a few hundred of the Mormons who are now on their way to California, with a view to conciliate them, attach them to our country, & prevent

approaches to life (J. H. Martin, "Saints, Sinners and Reformers: The Burned-Over District Re-Visited", *The Crooked Lake Review*, Fall 2005, http://crookedlakereview.com/articles/136_150/137fall2005/137martin.html).

228 G. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 89–90.

229 Brigham Young referred to on-foot emigrants as the "handcart brigade", over 200 of whom perished during a blizzard in 1856.

them from taking part against us”.²³⁰ Polk’s decision resulted in the establishment of the Mormon Battalion as the only explicitly religious military unit in US history, consisting of around 550 volunteers who served between 1846 and 1847.

The battalion assumed a dual and contradictory role, simultaneously furthering the nation-state’s territorial expansion during the war and concurrently working towards their own vision of an autonomous Mormon empire in the West. The Mormon Battalion, however, never encountered Mexican troops and was never directly engaged in combat. Instead, it was renowned for its nearly 2,000-mile-long march from Iowa to San Diego, where the gruelling performance of mobility is still commemorated with several monuments and mythologized by the church’s proponents.²³¹ Nearing the end of his travels on the Oregon Trail, Parkman encounters the main body of the battalion and reports that “[t]he Mormons were to be paid off in California, and they were allowed to bring with them their families and property. There was something very striking in the half-military, half-patriarchal appearance of these armed fanatics, thus on their way with their wives and children, to found, it might be, a Mormon empire in California”.²³² The search for the capital of the Mormon empire came to an end with Brigham Young’s famous declaration “this is the place” and subsequent founding of Salt Lake City in 1847.²³³ After the war, Young drafted the provisional boundaries of Deseret, which encompassed most of the territorial gains fixed in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, including parts of California and the Oregon Country.²³⁴ While Young’s proposition of a vast and autonomous empire inside the continental body of the US appeared fantastical, it was seriously considered by Congress and president Taylor. They conceived the merger of Deseret and California into one political entity as a way of restoring the balance between free and slave states and prevent further strife over the country’s “peculiar institution”.²³⁵ The issue was resolved by the Compromise

230 J. K. Polk, *The Diary of James K. Polk During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, M. M. Quaife (ed.), vol. 1, Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company, 1910, p. 444.

231 B. J. Metcalf, “Four Things to Know about the Journey of the Mormon Battalion: An Expedition of Faith and Sacrifice”, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 24 January 2018, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/historic-sites/journey-of-the-mormon-battalion>.

232 Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, pp. 515–516.

233 L. Arave, “This Is the Place Monument Isn’t Quite at Actual ‘Place’”, *Deseret News*, 24 July 2009, <https://www.deseret.com/2009/7/24/20330678/this-is-the-place-monument-isn-t-quite-at-actual-place>.

234 Tindall and Shi, *America*, p. 465.

235 R. K. Crallé (ed.), “Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Feb. 6, 1837”, *The Works of John C. Calhoun*, vol. 2, New York: Russell & Russell, 1851, pp. 625–633, at 626.

of 1850 that admitted California as a free state and left the introduction of slavery in the newly organized territories of Utah and New Mexico up for vote.²³⁶ In spite of their ephemeral cooperation during the war, tensions between the government and LDS Church erupted in the following decades, mainly over the constitutionality of theocratic rule and plural marriage, bringing the region to the brink of war several times, until Utah joined the Union in 1896 as its 45th member state. However, before gradually aligning themselves with their surrounding spatial order during the twentieth century

the Mormon faithful signaled their difference from mainstream American culture by attempting to farm, merchandise, and manufacture with commonly owned and worked lands, products, and cash. Everything from railroad building, banking, stock grazing, sugar production, and lumbering was undertaken with two related goals: to make the Mormons entirely self-sufficient so that they could cease all contact with the unfriendly United States and so that they could create the Kingdom of God on earth where all people shared according to their abilities and needs in work, profits, and grace.²³⁷

In praxis, Brigham Young's spatial imagination of a heavenly kingdom of Deseret was to come about through hard work and a strong, self-sufficient economy. The Mormons hence embraced a spatial narrative that not only emphasized its historical origins by harking back to millennialist traditions of spiritual elation through self-improvement but that was also a practical necessity in the inhospitable topography of Utah's salt deserts. By becoming "the owner of mercantile outlets, sugar and woolen factories, a bank, and a life insurance company [...] [t]he Mormons succeeded spectacularly, proof to them of God's blessings. Communitarian theology was happily wedded with economic development".²³⁸ A constant challenge for Mormons in upholding their commercially driven utopia was balancing the exploitation of their environment with the spiritual ensoulment of work and industry. In an instructional letter cited in James Godson Bleak's memoirs, Elder George A. Smith urges the need for 100 workers in the construction of a fort near the Colorado River. Although severe labour shortages in the Southwest complicated the already difficult undertaking, he insists on only "selecting such men as are willing to work for Israel, and do not worship the Almighty Dollar".²³⁹ Smith's concerns about the undermining of

236 M. van Frank, "Creation of the Utah Territory", *The Beehive Archive*, 17 September 2010, <https://www.utahhumanities.org/stories/items/show/196>.

237 Hyde, "Transients and Stickers", pp. 315–316.

238 Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers*, p. 150.

239 Qtd. in G. Bleak, *Annals of the Southern Utah Mission, 1847–1877*, P-F 335, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 138. Not all Mormon leaders were convinced of abstaining from capital gain. Bleak quotes a letter penned by Erastus Snow, a

his congregation's money-driven yet anticapitalistic and commonwealth-based spatial order by the lure of "the Almighty Dollar" were not entirely unfounded. As Bleak's records reveal, in the previous year

Apostles Amasa M. Lyman and Charles C. Rich were called by President Brigham Young to organize a company in Salt Lake City to go to California and form the nucleus of a settlement at Cajon Pass, where they were to cultivate the olive, grape, sugar-cane and cotton. The original intention was to have twenty in the company. The number, however, reached over five hundred. This rush to travel to California was not approved by President Young, as it evidently was prompted by the gold-craze.²⁴⁰

Ultimately viewing Mormons as sectarian and unreliable spatial entrepreneurs, Parkman remains unsure about their multiscale role in the spatial ordering of the United States, of which "[n]o one could predict what would be the result".²⁴¹ As equally unpredictable actors, climate and weather in the text become antagonistic forces that stand in stark contrast with the familiar and predictable conditions on the East Coast. "The thunder here", Parkman writes, "is not like the tame thunder of New England".²⁴² While he and other American authors attempted to assert discursive power over the West's disparate environments, Parkman relates that its indigenous inhabitants were engaged in their own campaigns against the adversities of nature:

Whenever a storm which they wished to avert was threatening, the thunder-fighters would take their bows and arrows, their guns, their magic drums, and a sort of whistle, made out of the ringbone of the war-eagle. Thus equipped, they would run out and fire at the rising cloud, whooping, yelling, whistling, and beating their drum, to frighten it down again.²⁴³

Short of attacking nature itself, by introducing familiar transcontinental associations the book develops equally symbolic strategies to come to grips with the West and its peoples' unpredictable movements. These associations manifest themselves, for instance, in the description of features alongside the trail that

principal figure in the colonization of Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, in which Snow reports that "a few apostates and gentile miners who were exploring in that region [i.e. northwestern Utah] professed to have found much more [precious metals]. [...] [R]eports from that region say they making new discoveries; not only of lead and silver, but of cinnabar and gold-quartz [...]. In view of this state of things I have selected from twenty-five individuals that were comparatively foot-loose in the Southern settlements, to go [...] and claim, and hold claim to the most desirable locations in those upper valleys" (qtd. in *ibid.*, p. 184).

²⁴⁰ Bleak, *Annals*, p. 11.

²⁴¹ Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 67.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

resemble places from Parkman's youth yet are uncannily enmeshed in a hostile environment. "Objects familiar from childhood surrounded me" he contemplates: "The objects were the same, yet they were thrown into a wilder and more startling scene, for the black crags and the savage trees assumed a grim and threatening aspect".²⁴⁴ In contrast to the eerie likeness evoked by these objects, familiar tastes and olfactory impressions help in connecting the West to Parkman's native New England: "I made a welcome discovery, no other than a bed of strawberries", he reports enthusiastically, "and I sat down by them, hailing them as old acquaintances; for among those lonely and perilous mountains they awakened delicious associations of the gardens and peaceful home of far-distant New England".²⁴⁵ At other occasions, he allows his mind to wander to the conversant places he visited during his European coming-of-age tour, for example when the western sky "seemed more like some luxurious vision of Eastern romance than like a reality of that wilderness; all were melted together into a soft delicious blue, as voluptuous as the sky of Naples or the transparent sea that washes the sunny cliffs of Capri".²⁴⁶ After descending into a hidden ravine awash with otherworldly illumination, he experiences a dream-like vision as "[t]he genius of the place exercised a strange influence upon my mind", engendering a plethora of hemispheric connections:

In that perilous wilderness, eight hundred miles removed beyond the faintest vestige of civilization, the scenes of another hemisphere, the seat of ancient refinement, passed before me like a succession of vivid painting than any mere dreams of fancy. I saw the church of *St. Peter* illumined on the evening of Easter-Day, the whole majestic pile, from the cross to the foundation stone, penciled in fire and shedding a radiance, like the serene light of the moon, on the sea of upturned faces below. I saw the peak of *Mount Etna* towering above its inky mantle of clouds and lightly curling its wreaths of milk-white smoke against the soft sky flushed with the *Sicilian* sunset. [...] and the grated window from whence I could look out, a forbidden indulgence, upon the melancholy *Coliseum* and the crumbling ruins of the *Eternal City*. The mighty glaciers of the *Splügen* too rose before me, gleaming in the sun like polished silver, and those terrible solitudes, the birth-place of the *Rhine*, where, bursting from the bowels of its native mountains, it lashes and foams down the rocky abyss into the little valley of *Andeer*. These recollection, and many more, crowded upon me, until remembering that it was hardly wise to remain long in such a place, I mounted again and retraced my steps.²⁴⁷

Evoking these hemispheric linkages and spatial analogies to the East then becomes a strategy of discursively controlling the human and environmental

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 351.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 351–352.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 421.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 379–380 (emphasis added).

Otherness that exists alongside the seemingly straightforward path to Oregon, California, and what Melville in *Moby-Dick* described as “the possibilities of the immense Remote, the Wild, the Watery, the Unshored”.²⁴⁸ In order to exact this control, Parkman establishes the eastern states and Europe as counterweights to the spectres of western Otherness, projecting the imaginative genius of these places onto the Oregon Trail to tame its epistemic wildness. Taking recourse to these familiar geographies, in turn, conflicts with the progressive narrative of manifest destiny by conjuring a regressive style of spatial formatting that tries to “easternize” the West instead of (as Hall, Drake, and others proposed) reforming the postcolonial order of the East by hailing purer forms of western identity. In contrast to the book’s more conventional readings, these spatializing processes further remove *The Oregon Trail* from ostensibly celebrating the transcontinental mobilization of the nation-state. Parkman in fact often shrinks from viewing the transmontane West and Asian-Pacific hemisphere as destined spaces of the United States’ expansion.

After he awakens from his daydream in the otherworldly ravine, he regains his sense of place and rides his horse to the top, from where he “could look down on the savage procession [of Native Americans] as it passed just beneath my feet” and his “imagination might have tasked itself in vain to have conceived a more striking spectacle than that wild scene, with wilder men who animated it”.²⁴⁹ Following the trail to the Southwest, his party encounters ever more unfamiliar scenes that defy Parkman’s mental transposition of European picturesqueness and New England tranquillity into the ferocious Far West. This ferocity manifests itself in his equation of environmental with human Otherness when he remarks seeing “squaws and Spanish women, and a few Mexicans” that looked “as mean and miserable as the place itself”.²⁵⁰ In contrast, native tribes like the Delaware could very well be imaginatively transposed into the East Coast’s romanticized mindscape. “There was no village bell, for the Delawares have none”, Parkman ponders, “and yet upon that forlorn and rude settlement was the same spirit of Sabbath repose and tranquility as in some little New England village among the mountains of New Hampshire or the Vermont woods”.²⁵¹

As a result, examining *The Oregon Trail* through the lens of spatialization processes undermines historical truisms and makes accessible new understandings of manifest destiny, revealing the non-canonical workings of spatial literacy within a seemingly triumphalist key text of American expansionism. In this way,

²⁴⁸ Melville, *Moby-Dick*, p. 539.

²⁴⁹ Parkman, *Oregon Trail*, p. 380.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

formerly hidden discursive layers and spatial imaginations come into view that can be decoded through spatial semantics. Parkman's textual encounter with partly antagonistic, partly overlapping spatial imaginations and attempts of spatial formatting by subaltern emigrants, Native Americans, traders, Mexicans, and Mormons subverts the apparently unambiguous narrative of the trail as a direct path towards transcontinental and transhemispheric empire. The formatting of the nation-state through manifest destiny is further challenged by Parkman's allegorical recourses to Europe and New England that emphasize the contradictions between the transatlantic trajectory of American exceptionalism and the paradigm change needed for the nation's imperial outreach into the Asian-Pacific hemisphere. The above analyses demonstrate that parallel and oftentimes subversive spatialization processes accompanied the emergence of an American Empire. Instead of turning into a highway to empire, scrutinizing Parkman's rendition of the Oregon Trail under the lens of spatialization processes demonstrates its concomitant formatting alongside themes of subaltern mobility, trauma, exploitation, and liminal human performances that destabilize the book's dominant interpretation as an urtext of manifest destiny.

Confronting the Limits of Empire in Washington Irving's *Astoria*

*There is no pride so jealous and irritable as the pride of territory.
As one wave of emigration after another rolls into the vast regions of the west,
and our settlements stretch towards the Rocky Mountains,
the eager eyes of our pioneers will pry beyond,
and they will become impatient of any barrier or impediment
in the way of what they consider a grand outlet of our empire.*

W. Irving²⁵²

A decade before Parkman's account of the Oregon Trail received national acclaim, an already more established author chronicled the story of an immigrant entrepreneur and his vision of planting the seeds of empire on the Pacific coast. Washington Irving's (1783–1859) *Astoria* (1836) came into being as a result of the writer's friendship with John Jacob Astor, the famously rich German-American fur dealer, real estate mogul, and the country's first multi-millionaire.²⁵³ Astor

²⁵² Irving, *Astoria*, p. 473.

²⁵³ Adjusted for inflation, Astor's net worth amounted to USD 138,000,000,000 as of 2013, making him the third-richest American in history, trumped only by Cornelius Vanderbilt and John D. Rockefeller (S. Hargreaves, "The Richest Americans in History", *CNN Money*, 2 June 2014, <https://money.cnn.com/gallery/luxury/2014/06/01/richest-americans-in-history>).

commissioned Irving to write a book that would detail the history of his Pacific Fur Company (PFC) and its establishment of Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River. The businessman was convinced “that the true nature and extent of his enterprise and its national character and importance had never been understood”.²⁵⁴ Johann Jakob Astor was born in 1763 in the village of Waldorf near Heidelberg, Germany.²⁵⁵ At age 16, he moved to London where he found employment as an instrument maker at his brother’s workshop. In 1783, Astor emigrated yet again, this time to Baltimore in the newly independent United States, where he became familiar with the potential profits of the fur trade. He set up headquarters in New York City and began importing and exporting furs. The operation expanded quickly, funnelling goods from Canada and the Great Lakes region to the East Coast and Europe, until in 1807 Jefferson’s Embargo Act against Britain caused a nation-wide depression and threatened to disrupt the exponential growth of Astor’s business.

After the embargo was lifted, he acquired the permission to launch the American Fur Company with a starting capital of USD 1,000,000. With the objective to gain access to the lucrative Chinese market, Astor began to scout shipping routes and global trade networks in the Pacific and soon managed to establish a transcontinental trade empire that integrated the fur, silk, and tea markets of North America, Europe, and Asia. Intrigued by the opportunities of expanding his activities into the Asian-Pacific hemisphere, Astor turned to the government to canvass diplomatic and military support for a new venture on the far western limits of the continent. Strategically located at the juncture of the Pacific Ocean and Columbia River, he envisioned Fort Astoria as the starting point of “a line of trading posts from the Mississippi and the Missouri across the Rocky Mountains, forming a high road from the great regions of the west to the shores of the Pacific”.²⁵⁶ Beaver and otter pelts harvested at the nodes of this network were to be transported to the fort, from where Astor’s merchant fleet would ship them via Hawaii to Guangzhou, China. The profits from these transactions would then be used to purchase Chinese luxuries including tea, porcelain, and nankeens to be unloaded onto the European and American markets.²⁵⁷

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, American policymakers were painfully aware that British and Canadian enterprises controlled almost the entire

²⁵⁴ Irving, *Astoria*, p. vi.

²⁵⁵ John Jacob Astor is not to be confused with his great-grandson John Jacob Astor IV, who died during the sinking of the *Titanic*, being not only the richest passenger on board but also among the wealthiest people on the planet.

²⁵⁶ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 472.

²⁵⁷ Ronda, “Passion and Immigration”, pp. 18–33.

continental fur trade. This made them receptive to Astor's plans, which would not only challenge the duopoly of the powerful Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company but also give the US political leverage over the continental West and the Asian-Pacific hemisphere with its untapped resources and geopolitical benefits. Captivated by the potential of Astor's envisaged colony, president Jefferson calculated that a strong presence in the Far West would bolster the young republic's delicate position among the concert of European powers. In turn, increased leverage in the international arena would support future claims to the Oregon Country with its fertile soils as described in the Corps of Discovery's journals.²⁵⁸ In Irving's words, Astoria would become the country's "embryo metropolis" in the Pacific hemisphere.²⁵⁹ In a letter addressed to the Scottish mapmaker John Melish, Jefferson envisions Astoria as the centre-piece of an American Empire in the Pacific: "If we claim that country at all, it must be on Astor's settlement near the mouth of the Columbia, and the principle of the *jus gentium* [i.e. the international law of nations] of America, that when a civilized nation takes possession of the mouth of a river in new country, that possession is considered as including all its waters".²⁶⁰

Reversing the imaginary trajectory of annexing and colonizing the Oregon Country and West Coast, Jefferson also considered formatting Astoria as an independent replica and "sister democracy to the United States that looked out to the Pacific".²⁶¹ Irving explains that "Astoria might have realized the anticipations of Mr. Astor, so well understood and appreciated by Mr. Jefferson in gradually becoming a commercial empire beyond the mountains, peopled by 'free and independent Americans, and linked with us by ties of blood and interest'".²⁶² While Astor considered both options for his envisaged trade empire, the main hurdle to these visions remained more practical, namely "the stern barriers of the Rocky Mountains, the limits, as it were, of the Atlantic world".²⁶³ In a shrewd example of geopolitical manoeuvring, the millionaire strategically selected what he thought was the most favourable moment to realize his scheme on the Pacific coast. In 1810, the HBC and NWC were pitted against each other in a North American

²⁵⁸ See Hyde, "Transients and Stickers", p. 309.

²⁵⁹ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 78.

²⁶⁰ T. Jefferson, "To John Melish", in: A. E. Bergh (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 16, Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907 [31 December 1816], pp. 93–95, at 94.

²⁶¹ P. Stark, *Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival*, New York: HarperCollins, 2014, p. 2.

²⁶² Irving, *Astoria*, p. 472.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

sideshow of the Napoleonic Wars, while at the same time a privateering war sweltered between the American and British fleets.

After receiving Astor's request for military protection of his "patriotic" venture, Jefferson was unwilling to stretch his already understaffed forces across the continent, hence risking to expose commercial hubs like New Orleans that were under constant threat of British invasion. Despite being turned down by the government, the entrepreneur nonetheless went ahead and established the PFC as a subsidiary of the AFC. Its goal was nothing less than to assemble a new spatio-economic order that conjoined the Pacific Northwest, Russian America, Great Lakes region, East Coast, Europe, and China into a global trade empire, sanctioned by US policy and controlled from the mogul's hometown of New York. Irving describes the blueprint of Astor's envisioned establishment of a liberal-democratic but decidedly monopolistic global empire as consisting of

a line of trading posts from the Mississippi and the Missouri across the Rocky Mountains, forming a high road from the great regions of the west to the shores of the Pacific. We should have had a fortified post and port at the mouth of the Columbia, commanding the trade of that river and its tributaries, and of a wide extent of country and sea-coast carrying on an active and profitable commerce with the Sandwich Islands, and a direct and frequent communication with China.²⁶⁴

Next to unruly natives and the colonial proxies of Spain, France, and Russia, the London-based aristocratic agents of the British Empire and HBC were the central antagonists of Astoria and "held a lordly sway over the wintry lakes and boundless forests of the Canadas, almost equal to that of the East India Company over the voluptuous climes and magnificent realms of the Orient".²⁶⁵ In contrast to the progressive ideals of democracy and free trade, the European monarchies' commercial activities here appear arrested in the past, with British and Canadian companies ruling over the Pacific Northwest in the authoritarian and pompous manner of medieval despots. In *Astoria*, the visits of these "royal capitalists" resemble regal processions, awkwardly transplanted into the wilderness as "[t]hey ascended the rivers in great state, like sovereigns making a progress, or rather like Highland chieftains navigating their subject lakes. They were wrapped in rich furs, their huge canoes freighted with every convenience and luxury, and manned by

²⁶⁴ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 472.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8. The NWC was the other main competitor of Astor's envisioned trade imperialism with strongholds in Montreal and Fort William Henry at Lake George. The fort features in J. F. Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* as the site of a massacre by Huron tribes against British soldiers in 1757.

Canadian voyageurs, as obedient as Highland clansmen”.²⁶⁶ After the outbreak of the War of 1812, US policymakers found themselves pitted against this powerful adversary and its fur-clad assets in the Far West. Pitted against the British fleet and other adversarial circumstances to be discussed below, the loss of 40 per cent of ship crews to starvation and accidents, the sinking of the *Tonquin*, and other calamities put an end to the transhemispheric dreams of the Oregon Country as embryo of Astor’s nascent empire. When the first ships sailing under the Union Jack entered the bay, Astor’s agents seemed unwilling to sacrifice their lives in order to uphold the millionaire’s aspirations and surrendered the garrison without resistance. Increasing the wrath of Astor, they also sold off all remaining pelts and valuables to the NWC.²⁶⁷ On 12 December 1812,

the fate of Astoria was consummated by a regular ceremonial. Captain Black, attended by his officers, entered the fort, caused the British standard to be erected, broke a bottle of wine, and declared, in a loud voice, that he took possession of the establishment and of the country, in the name of his Britannic Majesty, changing the name of Astoria to that of Fort George.²⁶⁸

Although the United States used Astoria’s brief existence from 1810–1812 to substantiate their claims to the Oregon Country, the fur trade remained under British control until the opening of the region via the South Pass in 1813 and the Oregon Trail during the 1840s. Although the Treaty of Ghent in 1815 forbade British trade in the region, the American government – thousands of miles away from the scene – was powerless to enforce the ban, “which, in effect, was a dead letter

266 Ibid., pp. 11–12.

267 J. P. Ronda, *Astoria & Empire*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990, p. 265; see D. Drabelle, “‘Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson’s Lost Pacific Empire’ by Peter Stark”, review of *Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson’s Lost Pacific Empire: A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival*, by P. Stark, *The Washington Post*, 21 March 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/astoria-john-jacob-astor-and-thomas-jeffersons-lost-pacific-empire-by-peter-stark/2014/03/21/61c53796-a2dd-11e3-a5fa-55f0c77bf39c_story.html. The rogue deal of his officers with the NWC not only enraged Astor but also the crews of the British ships who “conquered” Astoria hoping to collect spoils of war, and whose “disappointment [...] may easily be conceived, when they learned that their warlike attack upon Astoria had been forestalled by a snug commercial arrangement; that their anticipated booty had become British property in the regular course of traffic, and that all this had been effected by the very [North West] Company which had been instrumental in getting them sent on what they now stigmatized as a fool’s errand. They felt as if they had been duped and made tools of, by a set of shrewd men of traffic, who had employed them to crack the nut, while they carried off the kernel” (Irving, *Astoria*, p. 460).

268 Ibid., p. 462.

beyond the mountains”.²⁶⁹ In its recounting of Astoria’s history, Irving’s book is based on the letters and journal entries of the so-called Astorians who pioneered the fur trade in the Oregon Country. Astor avidly collected these documents and handed them to Irving together with the task of writing the definitive history of his venture. Many sources, however, contained only information pertaining to numbers and business practices, hence making for rather dull reading. In addition, their semi-literate composers relentlessly plagiarized each other while also taking cues from already “published journals of other travellers who have visited the scenes described [such as] Lewis and Clark, Bradbury, Breckenridge, Long, Franchere, and Ross Cox”.²⁷⁰ Unlike Irving’s first-hand account of the Far West in *A Tour on the Prairies* released four years prior, *Astoria* represents an exercise in retrospective historical constructivism, loosely based on semi-fictional letters and questionable journal entries. In view of its mostly unreliable narrators, the text can thus either be approached as an adventure novel assembled from historical facts, tall tales, and randomly recorded factoids, or conversely as a “narratively embellished” work of early American history.

Irrespective of these issues, the resulting book quickly became a bestseller among East Coast readers and also shaped the younger generations’ spatial imaginations when it appeared on the syllabuses of history classes.²⁷¹ Simply titled *Astoria*, it presented an eye-catching exception to the sentence-long subtitles that often adorned of the period. No subtitle took away attention from Astor and his eponymous global vision. Edgar Allan Poe, who graced the book with a lengthy review in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, accordingly complimented “the modesty of the title affording no indication of the fulness, comprehensiveness, and beauty, with which a long and entangled series of detail, collected, necessarily, from a mass of vague and imperfect data, has been wrought into completeness and unity”.²⁷² In contrast to this “modesty”, in the mind of the businessman and in Irving’s narrative reflections, the actual Astoria should have been a shining City Upon a Hill that prefigured the nation’s destiny in a Pacific Empire, replacing the agrarian “myth of the yeoman farmer and the

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 469.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. vii.

²⁷¹ Stark, *Astoria*, p. 282.

²⁷² E. A. Poe, “Astoria”, *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe*, vol. 4, New York: Redfield, 1857, pp. 420–447, at 420–421. Later editions, however, were subtitled and published as *Astoria: or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains*.

family cow” with “thousand-acre wheat farms and vertically integrated corporate feed lots” that catered to the profitability of far western markets and globally connected economies.²⁷³

To stabilize this envisioned spatial order, the entrepreneur framed the imaginative opening of this economic macro-space as a decidedly patriotic exercise. Irving relates that while “Mr. Astor had been obliged to have recourse to British subjects experienced in the Canadian fur trade [...] it was his intention, as much as possible, to select Americans, so as to secure an ascendancy of American influence in the management of the company, and to make it decidedly national”.²⁷⁴ The book positions US trade and commerce as factors that could integrate the aberrant imaginations and populations of the Asian-Pacific sphere into the economic and racial hierarchies of United States. Apart from its obvious financial allure, the transcontinental fur trade became an arbiter of an overarching civilizing mission postulated through literary discourse. As Irving summarizes, Astor “considered his projected establishment at the mouth of the Columbia as the emporium to an immense commerce: as a colony that would form the germ of a wide civilization; that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains and spread it along the shores of the Pacific, as it already animated the shores of the Atlantic”.²⁷⁵

In literary historiographies, *Astoria* has long-since been approached in the light of these grand and epochal narratives that posited the colony as a symbolic place for the struggles of imperial powers over the natural and strategic resources of the North American continent, but also opened up the Far West for the spatial imagination of writers, politicians, and emigrants. Undoubtedly, the textual manifestation of these notions in Irving’s text contributed to the groundwork of manifest destiny and its infrastructural reifications on the Oregon Trail and later the transcontinental railroad. Complicating this dominant reading, the following unearths a much broader bandwidth of local, regional, and global vectors that stood in the way of Astor’s and Jefferson’s visions of commercial and national empires, respectively. Implicitly or explicitly, *Astoria*’s protagonists suggest different, oftentimes more flexible and practicable spatial formats, many of which build upon the region’s cultural diversity and the anational integration of the Pacific Northwest with Asian-Pacific and archipelagic frameworks.

Entrusted by his friend to bring said dreams of an American-controlled global economic order to paper and disseminate them to a national audience,

273 D. D. Quantic, “The Great Plains”, in: C. L. Crow (ed.), *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 213–230, at 213.

274 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 332.

275 Ibid., p. 26.

Irving's literary renditions bring to the fore their epistemic origins and political appeal but also their limitations and epistemic contradictions. Approximating *Astoria* through the semantics of spatialization processes unfolds complex cultural geographies animated by heterogenous ideas and agendas of actors that operated alongside, beneath, or outside the formats of empire and nation-state. In the introduction, Irving acknowledges his aspiration of delivering a "work [that] actually possesses much of that unity so much sought after in works of fiction, and considered so important to the interest of every history".²⁷⁶ Conversely, Irving's equally strong desire to embellish a seemingly straightforward story into a momentous work of literature by introducing a wealth of themes and protagonists provides an interface to spatialization processes that proposed alternatives to or resisted this very "unity".

The ultimate failure of *Astoria*, it becomes clear, was not merely a result of the outbreak of war with the leviathan of the British Empire or betrayal by unpatriotic agents who "instructed [their] men to pass themselves for Americans or Englishmen, according to the exigencies of the case".²⁷⁷ In turn, Canadian *voyageurs*, Native American traders, Hawaiian policymakers, and Russian bureaucrats were at least equally important spatial actors in their envisioning *Astoria* as part of alternative models of region, nation, and empire. Placed in the context of present-day debates revolving around spatial ordering under global conditions, *Astoria* (both Irving's book and the colony) becomes an early showcase of the conflicting dynamics and ongoing tensions between global and local cultures and identities. Taking recourse to literary discourses then provides insights not only into the real or imagined globalization of regions but also to routinely overlooked discourses concerning the re-localization of globalized power and knowledge structures.

Before he could connect the continental nodes of his envisaged empire to his coastal colony and the oceanic spaces that lay beyond, Astor first had to build the fortified trading post called *Astoria*. Since Lewis and Clark had not found a viable overland route, the only remaining way of reaching the Oregon Country was by sea. A fleet of commercial vessels was hence to establish the PFC as the market leader in the international fur trade. Supporting its flagship *Tonquin*, the *Beaver* and the *Lark* started to the Far West from the eastern seaboard. Over 100 years before the Panama Canal linked Atlantic and Pacific, the trailblazing *Tonquin* had to sail around the storm-swept Cape Horn. Late in 1810, the ship left New York City under the command of Jonathan Thorn and

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. vii.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 459.

with the mission to construct Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River, explore the region, establish ties with local traders, and carve out a dominant position among competing colonial powers whose ships traversed the coastline in search of furs. But before a suitable place for the fort was found, attempts to locate a safe anchoring place for the *Tonquin* had already cost the lives of eight sailors whose boat capsized in the tumultuous waters between Chinook Point and Cape Disappointment.

Already during the first legs of the journey and before rounding Cape Horn, social dynamics on the *Tonquin* created their own idiosyncratic and highly mobile spatial configurations and human geographies. Captain Thorn, an aristocratic American who grew up during the colonial period and tried to enforce strict hierarchies aboard the vessel, found himself pitted against a group of younger and mutinous crew members. They took a stance against the verticality of Thorn's despotic spatial ordering, arguing that flat hierarchies and popular votes were more democratic and therefore the proper way of running an American ship. Irving identifies one of the insurgents as Elder Stuart, a well-travelled Canadian *métis* and *voyageur* who incurred Thorn's anger with his contempt for ranks and racial hierarchies. Stuart's "gossiping familiarity shocked the captain's notions of rank and subordination", Irving notes, as "nothing was so abhorrent to [Thorn] as the community of pipe between master and man".²⁷⁸ The crew's anti-authoritarian tendencies moreover became apparent in divergent spatial imaginations that wallowed in the myth of limitless mobility and fantasies of a borderless global order, as opposed to their captain's "bordered" mindset that adhered only to facts, commands, and nautical measurements:

That craving desire, natural to untravelled men of fresh and lively minds, to see strange lands and to visit scenes famous in history or fable was expressed by some of the partners and clerks, with respect to some of the storied coasts and islands that lay within their route. The captain, however, who regarded every coast and island with a matter-of-fact eye, and had no more associations connected with them than those laid down in his sea-chart, considered all this curiosity as exceedingly idle and childish. "In the first part of the voyage," says he [Thorn] in his letter, "they were determined to have it said they had been in Africa, and therefore insisted on my stopping at the Cape de Verds. Next they said the ship should stop on the coast of Patagonia, for they must see the large and uncommon inhabitants of that place. Then they must go to the island where Robinson Crusoe had so long lived. And lastly, they were determined to see the handsome inhabitants of Easter Island."²⁷⁹

Although their superior stood in the way of their spatial imaginations' materialization – of course, the ship did not divert from its planned route to the Oregon

²⁷⁸ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 43.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

Country to visit these places – the *Tonquin*'s crew found alternate ways of satisfying their desire to see, experience, and also appropriate exotic locations. This led to some early examples of high-impact "tourism" when the ship anchored at Hawaii's Kealahou Bay, the place where the famous Captain Cook was killed by natives in 1779. After landing on the rocky beaches of the island, crew members immediately began to collect artefacts as souvenirs, "knocking off pieces of the rocks, and cutting off the bark of the trees marked by the balls" of British muskets.²⁸⁰ While they did not see themselves as tourists in today's understanding of the word, their place-making performances turned the *Tonquin*'s crew into proto-touristic actors that formatted (and partly erased) an archipelagic space commensurate with their imaginations of the exotic Far West and its affective networks.

Having read about the Far West's ethnic heterogeneity and the diplomatic intricacies of the Pacific fur trade in the journals of Scott, Lewis and Clark, and others, Astor realized that the success of his enterprise depended on its successfully tapping into, dominating, and expanding business connections that already existed among European companies and local merchants. On the first page of the book, Irving historicizes – and essentializes – the spatial order that the millionaire's agents encountered in the Oregon Country:

While the fiery and magnificent Spaniard, inflamed with the mania for gold, has extended his discoveries and conquests over those brilliant countries scorched by the ardent sun of the tropics, the adroit and buoyant Frenchman, and the cool and calculating Briton, have pursued the less splendid, but no less lucrative, traffic in furs amidst the hyperborean regions of the Canadas, until they have advanced even within the Arctic Circle.²⁸¹

Still a part of New Spain, Alta California in the early 1800s was a sparsely populated region whose economy was less driven by "the mania for gold" as Irving believed, but instead based on agriculture and the open range horse and cattle industries. Controlled by Franciscan priests and stretching along the coast to San Francisco, a Catholic mission system thrived on indentured servitude and forced labour of Native American subalterns. Although Alta California plays only an ephemeral role in *Astoria*, the region with its commercial and cultural centre San Francisco later overtook the Oregon Country as the discursive hotbed

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 54. This respatialization of the island's environment contradicts historiographies that view tourism as the final phase of western conquest and the point when "the violent history of conquest ended, and a new, tame history of buying souvenirs and taking photographs began. [...] the war was over; white people had won; the West was subdued; the West was an occupied terrain; and the tourists were the army of occupation" (Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen", pp. 21–22).

²⁸¹ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 1.

of the United States' Pacific empire, albeit this time energized by the gold fever of American and global citizens. In *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), Richard Henry Dana traces San Francisco's transformation from the sleepy and dusty hamlet he had visited during the travels of his youth to "one of the capitals of the American Republic" on his return to the West Coast in 1859. "When I awoke in the morning", Dana ponders,

and looked from my windows over the city of San Francisco with its storehouses, towers, and steeples; its court-houses, theatres, and hospitals; its daily journals; its well-filled learned professions; its fortresses and light-houses; its wharves and harbor, with their thousand-ton clipper ships, more in number than London or Liverpool sheltered that day, itself one of the capitals of the American Republic, and the sole emporium of a new world, the awakened Pacific. [...] I could scarcely keep my hold on reality at all, or the genuineness of anything, and seemed to myself like one who had moved in "worlds not realized."²⁸²

Following Fort Astoria's establishment in May 1811, a botched trade deal dealt the first blow to the "worlds not realized" of Astor's own envisaged empire. Manned by a crew of 24, the *Tonquin* had dropped anchor at Clayoquot Sound near Vancouver Island to build trade relations with local Nootka tribes. After making first contact, captain Thorn, known for his hot temper and lack of tact, accused a chief of the Tla-o-qui-aht nation of inflating prices for otter pelts and in a fit of rage reportedly threw him overboard.²⁸³ The natives immediately attacked the crew, killing most them with the new knives they had just received in exchange for furs. After the bloodbath, a mortally wounded sailor named James Lewis hid away until the next morning. When a large group of natives boarded the ship to plunder its goods, he allegedly set fire to the *Tonquin*'s powder magazines, making him one of the first recorded suicide bombers in US history.²⁸⁴ "Arms, legs, and mutilated bodies were blown into the air", Irving quotes Joseachal, a Quinault interpreter Thorn had recruited to communicate with the Tla-o-qui-aht. Joseachal was the only surviving crew member and made his way back to Astoria by land after witnessing the ship's explosion. He later claimed that "[u]pwards of a hundred savages were destroyed by the explosion, many more were shockingly mutilated, and for days afterwards the limbs and bodies of the slain were thrown upon the beach".²⁸⁵ While the text depicts the massacre as a spectacularly

²⁸² R. H. Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911, p. 465.

²⁸³ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 93.

²⁸⁴ C. Cornwall, "The Suicide Bomber of Clayoquot Sound, Revived", *The Tyee*, 14 March 2008, <https://thetyee.ca/Life/2008/03/14/SuicideIn1811/>.

²⁸⁵ Irving, *Astoria*, pp. 98–99. Loosely inspired by these events, the movie *This Woman is Mine* was released in 1941 whose plot revolves around three fur traders who fall in love with a (fictional) female stowaway hiding aboard the *Tonquin*.

brutal event meant to shock and impress readers, its commercial consequences proved equally dire. Losing the *Tonquin* significantly curtailed the PFC's mobility and diminished the sphere of activity of the prospective Astorian empire.

Unmentioned in Irving's itemization of colonial powers cited above are the possessions of the Russian Empire, even though they also contributed to Astoria's troubles. North of the fort lay the far-eastern outposts of Russian Alaska with its administrative centre in Novo-Arkhangelsk (New Archangel), today's town of Sitka, Alaska.²⁸⁶ Around the turn of the century, Russia had made some important contributions to global exploration and development of trade networks, for instance Ivan Fyodorovich Kruzenshtern's circumnavigation of the globe from 1803 to 1806.²⁸⁷ At the time of Astoria's foundation, the state-sponsored Russian-American Company (RAC) had all but abandoned its colonizing of the continent's interior through the founding of Orthodox churches and missions. Among other difficulties, the Russians were facing increasing resistance from Alaskan tribes that traded with the NWC and independent Canadian *voyageurs* and exchanged furs for firearms. Astor's proxies knew about the Russians' problems and offered their cooperation in ousting native interlopers together with pirates and seal poachers, whose activities destabilized the Tsar's transpacific sphere of influence. In return, the PFC "was to have the exclusive right of supplying the Russian posts with goods and necessities, receiving peltries in payment at stated prices. They were, also [...] to convey the furs of the Russian company to Canton, sell them on commission, and bring back the proceeds".²⁸⁸ To finalize these agreements, the PFC sent the *Beaver* to Alaska in August 1812. Aboard the ship was Astor's agent Wilson Price Hunt with the mission of attaching Astoria to Russian trade at the peninsula. These ambitious plans, however, were based in fantasy. In reality, Fort Astoria's supplies were running dangerously low and barely allowed for the subsistence of the garrison itself. Instead of disrupting northwestern trade networks, the opposite happened as the Americans became more and more dependent on Russian outposts to supply their trading vessels. Irving notes that Hunt

would come, in a manner, empty-handed to New Archangel. Here his ship would be furnished with about fifty canoes and a hundred Kodiak hunters, and fitted out with

286 The Russian Empire also possessed some smaller trading posts dispersed along the Californian coastline.

287 Melville mentions Kruzenshtern in *Moby-Dick*, whose narrator emphasizes the importance of whaling ships as spatial entrepreneurs and truly global trailblazers that should be "celebrate[d] [like] the heroes of Exploring Expeditions, your Cookes, your Krusensterns" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, p. 121).

288 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 405.

provisions, and everything necessary for hunting the sea-otter on the coast of California, where the Russians have another establishment. The ship would ply along the Californian coast from place to place, dropping parties of otter hunters in their canoes, furnishing them only with water, and leaving them to depend upon their of the own dexterity for a maintenance. When a sufficient cargo was collected, she would gather up her canoes and hunters, and return with them to Archangel; where the captain would render in the returns of his hear, voyage, and receive one half of the skins for his share.²⁸⁹

Cultural relations between Americans and Russians also did not play out on equal footing, further inhibiting economic cooperation and the creation of shared visions between the spatial actors. Apart from language barriers and discrepancies between Orthodox and Protestant worldviews, morals and ceremonial customs turned into obstacles among the prospective business partners. In many ways, count Alexander Andreyevich Baranov personified these obstacles. A senior manager of the RAC, the aristocrat had founded Novo-Arkhangelsk and Pavlovskaya, today's Kodiak. Given the sporadic communication with the government in St. Petersburg, he was in all but name the acting governor of Russian Alaska. Baranov was also in charge of the important trading post in Kamchatka, where he had built a reputation for his eccentric mannerisms and alcoholic rituals that he put in front of any business activities.²⁹⁰ Captain Hunt, his American counterpart, was Baranov's exact opposite: a devout Protestant and abstinent teetotaler. Quoting from Hunt's personal journals, Irving relates that Baranov was "continually [...] giving entertainments by way of parade, and if you do not drink raw rum, and boiling punch as strong as sulphur, he will insult you as soon as he gets drunk, which is very shortly after sitting down to table". Defying these conventions, the "temperance captain" Hunt "stood fast to his faith, and refused to give up his sobriety".²⁹¹ While Irving tries to reframe Hunt's abstinence as an example of American moral superiority, he is forced to conclude that Astor's officer had no choice but to "go elsewhere for a market, for he stood no chance with the governor".²⁹²

289 Ibid., p. 439.

290 Ronda, *Astoria & Empire*, p. 283. Baranov's antics became so legendary that they found their way to Europe. In an article titled "The Carousals of Count Baranoff", the London-based *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* praised his powers of recovery from a drunken stupor: "The count, in the meantime, was undergoing a process which soon qualified him for a prolongation of the revels. Evaporation was going on rapidly with him; wine, rum, and punch, rolled in streams from his pores, and in half an hour he seemed as good as new again" ("The Carousals of Count Baranoff", *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* 7 (1838) 343, p. 247).

291 Irving, *Astoria*, pp. 439–440.

292 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 440.

While Hunt's temperance and Protestant work ethic spoiled the trade deal and thwarted Astoria's attachment to Russian Alaska, it created common ground with several Native American tribes that abhorred drinking as much as Hunt. Irving writes that even though the coastal tribes were "altogether inferior in heroic qualities to the savages of the buffalo plains on the east side of the mountains" they nonetheless "showed superior judgment and self-command to most of their race [...] in their abstinence from ardent spirits, and the abhorrence and disgust with which they regarded a drunkard".²⁹³ This imagined solidarity among abstainers, however, did not mean that American entrepreneurs and policymakers refrained from using alcohol as a means of subduing indigenous resistance. After the United States purchased Alaska from Russia for USD 7,200,000 in 1867, distributing cheap liquor quickly became a popular method to stifle growing discontent among Alaskan locals who suffered under the highly exploitative respatialization of their region. Faced with price increases of basic foodstuffs that impoverished natives overnight, alcohol became a tool with which the Alaskan territory was formatted according to its authoritative function as an uninhabited container of "free" natural resources like pelts, gold, and later oil. The San Francisco *Commercial Herald* reported on 22 August 1868 under the headline "Terrible Distress in Alaska"

that the incoming [American] agent, immediately proceeded to eject the inhabitants from the houses, and drove them to the shelter of the woods where they improvised tents; that the price of flour, which had been furnished them for fifty cents by the Russian [American] Company, had been raised to two dollars by its successors; and that the new company, when appealed to by the people to supply their wants at former prices, were denied and told to go to work for the company at fifty cents a day. [...] The Russian schools have been closed and the children allowed to go at large. Intoxicating liquors are sold to boys eight years of age by American storekeepers, and they are fast becoming addicted to the vice of drunkenness.²⁹⁴

In marked contrast and 56 years prior, Irving denotes Hunt's sobriety as an example of morally superior American placemaking, even if it caused the loss of profitable networking opportunities on which the success of Astoria ultimately depended. Located offshore from Baranov's headquarters in Novo-Arkhangelsk, the seal station of St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea was one of the businesses that consequently stayed out of Hunt's and the PFC's reach. According

²⁹³ Ibid., pp. 319–320.

²⁹⁴ Qtd. in A. Honcharenko, *Alaska Scrap-Book: 1868–1876*, San Francisco, 1909, P-K 10–11, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 1. Father Agapius Honcharenkow was a Russian missionary in Alaska and an avid collector of newspaper clippings.

to Irving, Russian sealing enterprises in the Sea of Kamchatka became profitable and sustainable ventures because “the Russians take only the small [seals], from seven to ten months old, and carefully select the males, giving the females their freedom, that the breed may not be diminished”.²⁹⁵ This knowledge about the fragility of ecosystems and their importance for commercial networks meant that little tolerance was afforded to those who disturbed them. Poachers caught in the territorial waters of the Russian Empire were regularly punished with forced labour in the Siberian salt mines.²⁹⁶ This business attitude collided with that of American spatial actors who rarely paid regard to the preservation of the ecosystems they traversed or did business in. During her journey to Cape Horn, for instance, the *Tonquin* stopped at the Falkland Islands to take on fresh water and provisions. Once on land, sailors “passed their time merrily in rambling about the island, and coasting along the shores, shooting sea-lions, seals, foxes, geese, ducks, and penguins” for their personal amusement. An incident that led to the complete destruction of a previously intact ecosystem was reported by the survivors of the *Essex*, the ill-fated American whaler that inspired *Moby-Dick*. In August 1819, the ship

anchored at Charles Island in the Galapagos, where the crew collected sixty 100-pound tortoises. As a prank, one of the crew set a fire, which, in the dry season, quickly spread. [The] men barely escaped, having to run through flames, and a day after they set sail, they could still see smoke from the burning island. [...] Many years later Charles Island was still a blackened wasteland, and the fire was believed to have caused the extinction of both the Floreana Tortoise and the Floreana Mockingbird.²⁹⁷

Newly arrived in the Oregon Country, one of Astor’s agents named Bradbury entertains himself by indiscriminately shooting wild pigeons and “in the course of a morning’s excursion, shot nearly three hundred with a fowling-piece”.²⁹⁸ His pointless killing is reminiscent of a chapter titled “The Slaughter of Pigeons” in Cooper’s *The Pioneers* (1823). There, white townspeople come together to shoot migrating pigeons with an arsenal of weapons ranging from rifles, pistols, bow and arrow, to an artillery cannon, while Natty Bumppo remarks: “It is much

²⁹⁵ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 441.

²⁹⁶ Jack London’s story “An Odyssey of the North” (1900) relates a similar incident when its native protagonist Naass is forced into slave labour in Siberia after his crew are caught poaching seals in the Bering Strait.

²⁹⁷ C. King, “The True-Life Horror That Inspired *Moby-Dick*”, *Smithsonian Magazine*, 1 March 2013, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-true-life-horror-that-inspired-moby-dick-17576/>.

²⁹⁸ Irving, *Astoria*, pp. 46; 139.

better to kill only such you want, without wasting your powder and lead, then to be firing into God's creatures in this wicked manner".²⁹⁹ While referring to it, Irving leaves the Americans' barely civilized ecocide uncommented but thematizes the fate of native communities that are uprooted as a consequence of the indiscriminate extermination of wildlife and rapid deforestation in the path of western settlement. In doing so, the text evokes an apocalyptic tension between the Americas and Asia:

Some may gradually become pastoral hordes, like those rude and migratory people, half shepherd, half warrior, who, with their flocks and herds, roam the plains of upper Asia but others, it is to be apprehended, will become predatory bands, mounted on the fleet steeds of the prairies, with the open plains for their marauding grounds, and the mountains for their retreats and lurking-places. Here they may resemble those great hordes of the North, "Gog and Magog with their bands," that haunted the gloomy imaginations of the prophets.³⁰⁰

Alluding to the haunted "imaginations of the prophets", the text constructs a spatiotemporal conjuncture between the movements of mythical Asian and contemporary Alaskan tribes. Gog and Magog were kings of the so-called Unclean Nations, perhaps a marauding Scythian tribe that migrated through the area of today's Iran during antiquity. Their allegedly cannibalistic members, or what Irving calls "their bands", were driven beyond a mountain pass and walled off by the armies of Alexander, as depicted on various medieval *mappa mundi* (i.e. cosmological maps). Millennialist prophecies in the Old Testament also discuss Gog as a possible site of the Second Coming, whereas John Kirtland Wright sees Gog and Magog as an anthropologic key narrative that shaped the cross-cultural archetype of terra incognita:³⁰¹

[A]lthough our stone-age ancestors and their descendants down until the dawn of modern times moved back the rim of terra incognita bit by bit, their "known world" was only a

299 J. F. Cooper, *The Pioneers, or The Sources of the Susquehanna; a Descriptive Tale*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1899, p. 255.

300 Irving, *Astoria*, pp. 200–201.

301 Wright is the founder of geosophy as the concept of geographical subjectivity, which stresses the duality between reality and geographical imaginations informed by cultural, often theological discourses. Using the metaphor of terra incognita, Wright argues for interdisciplinary extensions of traditional geography to highlight the humanities' potential in the analyses of cultural spaces: "Scholarship, moreover, embraces not only the natural sciences and social studies but also the humanities – the arts and letters – inquiring no less into the world of subjective experience and imaginative expression than into that of external reality. The *terrae incognitae* of the periphery contain fertile ground awaiting cultivation with the tools and in the spirit of the humanities" (J. K. Wright, "Terra Incognitae: The Place of the Imagination in Geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 37 [1947] 1, pp. 1–15, at 15).

pool of light in the midst of a shadow – limitless, for all that was definitely understood and proven. Voyages into this shadow became a favorite theme of poets and story tellers – the theme of the Argonautic myth and the *Odyssey*, of the legends of Sinbad and Saint Brandan. Out of its darkness wild hordes poured forth from time to time to carry fire and sword across Europe – Scyths, Huns, Tartars; it was a mysterious shadow, whence came rumors of strange men and monsters, of the priestly empire of Prester John, of the Apocalyptic tribes of Gog and Magog shut behind Alexander's wall until, on the day of judgment, they shall burst out to ravage the world.³⁰²

However, the apocalyptic discourses emanating from Irving's tribal analogy are by no means limited to scripture or cultural theory; they also permeate geopolitical ordering processes during the Cold War. Ronald Reagan, for instance, was convinced that an upcoming nuclear Armageddon would take the form of a clear-cut battle between good and evil on Judgment Day. The former actor perceived Soviet Russia as the weaponized incarnation of Gog and Magog, which constantly threatened to "burst out to ravage the world".³⁰³ In *Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, Paul Boyer quotes one of Reagan's informal speeches held during a dinner with legislators in 1971, in which the then-governor of California suggests that the Book of

Ezekiel tells us that Gog, the nation that will lead all of the other powers of darkness against Israel, will come out of the north. Biblical scholars have been saying for generations that Gog must be Russia. What other powerful nation is to the north of Israel? None. But it didn't seem to make sense before the Russian revolution, when Russia was a Christian country. Now it does, now that Russia has become communist and atheistic, now that Russia has set itself against God. Now it fits the description of Gog perfectly.³⁰⁴

Both Irving and Reagan – in a rather unexpected discursive continuity – take recourse to apocalyptic rhetoric in order to give discursive weight to their spatial imaginations, namely by positioning antagonists as ultimate Others, hell-bent on destroying the familiar (spatial) order of things: either as uncivilized marauders who menace the nation's imperial and commercial projects on the West Coast, or as ungodly Communists that subvert NATO's democratic global ordering through their internationalist formatting of developing countries that fall like dominoes to the lure of dialectical materialism.

Still dealing with the Tsar's officials in Alaska, a rare stroke of luck finally befell Astor's PFC. After weeks of back and forth, Baranov changed his mind

302 Ibid., p. 1.

303 S. D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 180.

304 P. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 162.

and agreed to trade his seal furs with Hunt. However, in yet another unfortunate coincidence, a storm had damaged the *Beaver* that was supposed to transport the wares to Canton, while Hunt was still resisting Baranov's alcoholic advances in Novo-Arkhangelsk. It was decided to haul the leaking ship to Hawaii, make repairs, and start for China afterwards. Once on the islands, Astor's proxies were stunned by the diplomatic adroitness of Hawaiian policymakers. Emperor Kamehameha was well aware that his archipelagic kingdom represented a vital repair and wintering port that enabled mobility between the American and Asian-Pacific hemispheres for travellers and companies. To the chagrin of PFC officials, the Hawaiian leadership took a neutral standpoint that pitted the interests of American and British actors against each other, instead of accepting a subordinated role within global trade networks. Determined to profit from its beneficial position and increasing commercial activities in the Pacific, the island kingdom acquired European ship-building expertise and sent its own merchant ship, loaded with sandalwood and sailing under the Hawaiian banner, to China.

To secure the kingdom's status as an independent geopolitical actor, Kamehameha worked towards the unification of the various native communities that inhabited the Hawaiian archipelago, partly through diplomatic means and partly by force.³⁰⁵ Curiously, one of the islands had a British governor. Irving mentions the case of John Young (Olohana) who was left for dead in 1790 by British-American surveyor Simon Metcalfe and subsequently made his home on the islands, "thinking it better, perhaps, to rule among savages than serve among white men".³⁰⁶ In the following years, Young befriended Kamehameha and became an important figure in Hawaiian politics, advising the king in questions of trade, naval strategy, and foreign policy. He planned fortifications, trained a militia, purchased firearms from both British and American merchants, and eventually acquired the formula for making gunpowder, whose recipe conveniently includes sulphur, potassium nitrate, and charcoal and thus abundant resources in Hawaii's volcanic ecosystems. Until today, these placemaking impulses towards autonomy as well as a liminal sense of national loyalty manifest themselves in the Hawaiian banner as the only US state flag that depicts the insignia of a foreign power, namely the Union Jack in addition to eight stripes that represent the major islands. Responding to Hawaii's shifty allegiance and independent geopolitics that blockaded his wealthy commissioner's trade routes, there is nothing left to do for Irving

³⁰⁵ R. Tregaskis, *The Warrior King: Hawaii's Kamehameha the Great*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973, p. 203.

³⁰⁶ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 57.

but to ridicule the diplomatic synthesis of the Hawaiian and British monarchies. “The reader cannot but call to mind the visit”, he scoffs, “which the royal family and court of the Sandwich Islands was, in later years, induced to make to the court of St. James; and the serio-comic ceremonials and mock parade which attended that singular travesty of monarchical style”.³⁰⁷

Further expanding its position as a power broker in the Asian-Pacific space, the kingdom leased the *Albatross* from Astor’s company. Transporting sandalwood to Canton, the ship brought back news in the summer of 1813 that confirmed rumours of a war with Great Britain. PFC agents on the islands immediately realized the danger for Fort Astoria but found themselves stranded in lieu of a seaworthy vessel. The *Lark*, another one of Astor’s apparently cursed ships that shuttled between Oregon and Hawaii, was supposed to bring the agents back but suffered shipwreck on the Oregonian coast. “The horrors of their situation were increased by the sight of numerous sharks, prowling about the wreck, as if waiting for their prey” Irving writes about their desperate fate.³⁰⁸ Eventually, negotiations restored the agents’ curtailed mobility when Hawaiian authorities agreed to lease the *Albatross* back to the PFC, albeit for appropriate payment.

These events further underlined the PFC’s lack of spatial agency as well as the precarious situation of the Oregon Country, which some imagined as not only geographically remote but also as temporally cordoned off from the progressing histories in the East. As late as 1878, immigrant Jesse Applegate expressed this view of the region as an ahistorical space by stating: “Oregon has no history. It has added no newer fact to human knowledge, has provided no high illustration of any fact already known, has produced no statesman, warrior, or scholar in any branch of human knowledge, in fact not a *single* name that for any merit or act of its possessor *deserves* to live in the memory of mankind”.³⁰⁹ Applegate’s sweeping statement is part of his review of Frances Fuller Victor’s *The River of the West: Life and Adventure in the Rocky Mountains and Oregon* (1871), whose author admits of retroactively historicizing the Oregon Country while he was “absorbed in the elegant narratives of Washington Irving, reading and musing over *Astoria* and *Bonneville*, in the cozy quiet of a New York study”.³¹⁰

307 Ibid., p. 51.

308 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 451.

309 Applegate, “Views of Oregon History”, pp. 23–24.

310 F. F. Victor, *The River of the West: Life and Adventure in the Rocky Mountains and Oregon*, New York: Columbian Book Company, 1871, p. iii.

Some decades earlier and formatting the region from the comfort of his own New York study, Irving's task given to him by Astor was also to historicize the region, which he attempted through Oregon's discursive linkage with more familiar (mental) geographies. In *Astoria*, the Orient often assumes this function, for instance when Irving muses that "the Indian in his native state [...] has the hospitality of the Arab: never does a stranger enter his door without having food placed before him and never is the food thus furnished made a matter of traffic", or that "in the number of his horses consists the wealth of an Indian of the prairies who resembles an Arab in his passion for this noble animal".³¹¹ Like the people of the Orient, Native Americans are hence viewed as a part of nature due to their supposed lack of historical agency and inability to articulate themselves meaningfully. This assumed deficit of representational power is a central tenet of Said's concepts of Orientalism. It effectively compresses the space in which Orientals, or in this case, indigenous peoples, subside into an ahistorical non-place. Fulfilling what Rudyard Kipling called the "white man's burden", it becomes the responsibility of western authors to speak vicariously "*faute de mieux* [for want of a better alternative], for the poor Orient [because:] 'Sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werden' [they cannot represent themselves, they have to be represented], as Marx wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*".³¹² Because their identities are fixed by the inertia of their historically static environments, Orientalized spatial actors thus cannot actively participate in the progressive sequence of placemaking.

Instead, the Orient becomes an "enclosed space" and "a theatrical stage affixed to Europe" and western civilization.³¹³ Accordingly, Irving casts American citizens for the few roles vested with spatial agency and mobility in Orientalist discourses, for instance by calling pioneers "Sindbads of the wilderness".³¹⁴ Installing Astor's hemispheric empire in the Oregon Country then turns into an endeavour of breaking through the alleged inertia of Orientalized peoples by "erasing" timeless space and subsequently reformatting it by introducing capitalist business practices. The book envisions the erection of Fort Astoria as the first spark in a chain reaction that vitalizes the static far western wilderness and awakens its inhabitants through their exposure to and integration into trade and commerce practices. "The establishment of a trading emporium at such a point", Irving encapsulates this notion, "was calculated to cause a sensation to the most remote parts of the vast wilderness beyond the mountains. It in a manner struck

³¹¹ Irving, *Astoria*, pp. 189; 183.

³¹² E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, p. 21.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³¹⁴ Irving, *Astoria*, p. v.

the pulse of the great vital river, and vibrated up all its tributary streams”.³¹⁵ In turn, native dissenters that lack sufficient enthusiasm regarding the “sensation” of private property are represented as morally flawed, for example when Irving complains about “the laws of *meum* and *tuum* being but slightly respected among them”.³¹⁶

Instead of acknowledging the agency of native actors in foiling Astor’s plans concerning their economic exploitation as subaltern suppliers of cheap furs, the text resorts to discourses of native corruption, either because of an overabundance of resources or by the introduction of Euroamerican customs: “[W]henever an Indian of the upper country is too lazy to hunt, yet is fond of good living, he repairs to the falls, to live in abundance without labor”, Irving remarks, while simultaneously “[t]he habits of trade and the avidity of gain have their corrupting effects even in the wilderness”.³¹⁷ Ignoring the significance of long-standing economic traditions based on communal ownership of resources, this imagination regards natives as passive recipients of manifest destiny and similarly irresistible ideologies, which their Orientalized immobility prevents them from aligning with. Put otherwise, the inbuilt ahistoricity of native societies proves incompatible with the forward-directed, uni-temporal spatial formats of the frontier and manifest destiny. Efforts to combat this “stubbornness” regularly ended in failures. For example, to ensure the loyalty of Canadian *voyageurs* who entered his service, the millionaire required these spatial actors, whom he saw as chaotic and unreliable, to prove their loyalty by “tak[ing] the oaths of naturalization as American citizens. To this they readily agreed, and shortly afterward assured him that they had actually done so. It was not until after they had sailed that he discovered that they had entirely deceived him in the matter”.³¹⁸

Other measures designed to convince resilient natives to fall in line with Astor’s visions included more nefarious methods on the part of the PFC’s officials, one of whom Irving calls “The Great Small-pox Chief” of Astoria. Worried about (likely non-existent) plans of local tribes to plunder the fort, agent Duncan McDougall called a meeting with native leaders during which he exploited their fear of smallpox that had decimated their communities in previous years.³¹⁹ “[I]n this bottle I hold the small-pox, safely corked up,” he declared in front of them: “I have but to draw the cork, and let loose the pestilence, to sweep man,

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 300.

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 78.

³¹⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

³¹⁹ McDougall was a Scottish native who worked for the PFC starting in 1810. Throughout the book Irving misspells his name in various ways.

woman, and child from the face of the earth”’. Irving explains that “[f]rom this time [...] he was much dreaded by the natives, as one who held their faith in his hands, and was called, by way of preeminence, ‘The Great Small-pox Chief’”.³²⁰

Reading *Astoria* through the lens of spatialization processes, however, also makes visible a multitude of opposing visions and acts of spatial formatting on the part of Native Americans who subverted their singular interpretation as passive victims, as implied by the narrative of settler colonialism. While some of these resistances directly diminished the enterprise’s agency, others manifested themselves less apparently via symbolic performances or spiritual discourses. Indigenous economic networks reacted to the introduction of capitalist practices by restructuring supply chains according to increasing demands for certain goods. In contrast to the monopolies that made prairie trading posts into spaces of exploitation for both settlers and natives on the Oregon Trail, native communities on the Pacific coast used their leverage over rare commodities as a strategy to resist the introduction of American business practices and, at least in part, reformat the region’s commercial landscape on their own terms. Irving mentions several such occurrences, explaining that “[a]t one place the natives had just returned from hunting, and had brought back a large quantity of elk and deer meat, but asked so high a price for it as to be beyond the funds of the travellers, so they had to content themselves with dog’s flesh”.³²¹ During an inland expedition in winter, agent Donald McKenzie encountered members of the “rascally” Tushepaw nation “who possessed innumerable horses. [...] Game being scarce, he was obliged to rely, for the most part, on horse flesh for subsistence, and the Indians discovering his necessities, adopted a policy usual in civilized trade, and raised the price of horses to an exorbitant rate, knowing that he and his men must eat or die”.³²² In this manner, natives were not only able to beat traders at their own game but also upended their own Orientalized reduction as non-actors without agency.

Sepulchre rites and burial sites played a pivotal role for Native American spatial orders that perceived death not as the end but beginning of mobility and spatial agency. For the Cowlitz people, mountains were key for the extension of agency into the afterlife. Mount Coffin in today’s state of Washington was one such place. Named after the graveyard on its summit, here members of the Skillute tribe were “wrapped in [their] mantle of skins, laid in [their] canoe, with [their]

³²⁰ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 103.

³²¹ Ibid., p. 298.

³²² Ibid., p. 418.

paddle, [their] fishing spear, and other implements beside [them]”.³²³ In the 1920s, the mountain was levelled and turned into gravel used in the construction of the nearby port of Longview. Americanist Stefan Krause suggests that “[t]he slow destruction of Mount Coffin and the replacement of this geographical landmark by colonial landmarks – such as factory buildings and logging bridges – illustrate the different ways of claiming, shaping, and stewarding land by indigenous and colonial agents”.³²⁴ In a way, Mount Coffin thus still stands: First, as a symbol for the erasure of sacred landmarks in the service of profit. And second, as an example of spatial formatting that did not stop at the displacement and extermination of people but also included un-placing and un-naming the geographic centrepieces of their cultures and belief systems.

Unexpectedly, *Astoria* thematizes montane burial sites as symbols of native dignity, economic power, and indomitable control over the far western landscape. Irving mentions the biography of Blackbird, an Omaha chief who, after being buried on a mountain sitting on his war horse, posthumously overlooks the Missouri River and the profitable business of his tribe with American fur merchants. In the 1830s, “the hill of the Blackbird continues [to be] an object of veneration to the wandering savage, and a landmark to the voyager of the Missouri; and as the civilized traveller comes within sight of its spell-bound crest, the mound is pointed out to him from afar, which still encloses the grim skeletons of the Indian warrior and his horse”.³²⁵ Irving acknowledges that the western landscape can assume an affective function for both whites and natives, while the latter believed that “[i]f they have acquitted themselves well while living, they will be permitted to descend and enjoy this happy country; if otherwise they will but be tantalized with this prospect of it”.³²⁶ Protecting this divine spatial order against the onslaught of its commodification for Irving becomes a worthwhile goal. First, like George Catlin’s life mission, as a museal space that preserves the “mementoes of the primitive lords of the soil, of whom in a little while scarce any traces will be left”. And second, for semantic reasons

323 Ibid., p. 85. Excavations of graves on top of Mount Coffin have garnered interest of early anthropologists and curiosity hunters particularly because the Skillute practiced infant head flattening. Irving speculates that “this flattening of the head has something in it of aristocratic significance, like the crippling of the feet among the Chinese ladies of quality. At any rate, it is a sign of freedom. No slave is permitted to bestow this enviable deformity upon his child; all the slaves, therefore, are roundheads” (ibid., p. 75).

324 S. Krause, “Mount Coffin – Ein bemerkenswerter Fels”, *Rostock University*, 3 September 2016, <https://www.iaa.uni-rostock.de/forschung/laufende-forschungsprojekte/american-antiquities-prof-mackenthun/project/places/mount-coffin/>.

325 Irving, *Astoria*, p. 150.

326 Ibid., p. 230.

when he laments the erasure of traditional place names by “stupid, commonplace, and often ribald names entailed upon the rivers and other features of the great West, by traders and settlers”.³²⁷ The naming of places, Peter Larkin elucidates, was an important theme that structured the ways in which American authors formatted the expanding nation:

Bartram had visited Mount Hope on his travels, a site itself christened by his own father some fifteen years before, and Crevecoeur mourned the loss of old tribal place-names which seemed to enshrine the secrets of the land as no European labels could. For Whitman the names of places were magical tokens of reality charged with creative energy, a way of subsuming history within a new spiritual geography. But Wordsworth, too, in his *Poems on the Naming of Places* had invented a similar geography out of his favourite sites, places made new and renamed by the imagination, the journey of exploration having gone “underground” as it were within the more confined European landscape. His inscriptional poetry retains a sense of the place in which or onto which it is written (even if only notionally), and one can as well say that the leading fantasy of early American literature is to constitute itself as one vast inscription upon the American landscape.³²⁸

In *Astoria*, Big River in Missouri becomes an example of “the wretched nomenclature inflicted upon it, by ignorant and vulgar minds”.³²⁹ Irving’s affective attachment to and fervent advocacy for the creation of “a map, or maps, of every part of our country, giving the Indian names wherever they could be ascertained” here overtakes his original task of praising Astor’s commercial forays, whose vulgar-minded proxies’ ineptitude reflects itself in their unimaginative defacing of semantically intact spaces.³³⁰ The failures of Astor’s entrepreneurs to effectively format the Oregon Country and its hemispheric connections then becomes explainable by their incapacity to meaningfully respond to the multifariousness of its physical, cultural, and semantic geographies.

To recover from these failures and the financial losses of his ambitious venture, Astor engaged in yet another high-risk, high-margin global undertaking: the smuggling of Turkish opium to China and the British Isles, parts of whose profits he invested in the growing real estate market of his hometown. When he passed away in 1848, the patriarch and his family were known as “the landlords

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 205.

³²⁸ Larkin, “Landscape Sailing”, p. 56.

³²⁹ Big River was no malapropism of a native name but translated from the French *Grande Rivière*, the name assigned to the river by Philippe Renault in 1720 (A. P. Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785–1804*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002, p. 799). Still, Irving was right in believing it to be a particularly generic name as there exist at least eight other Big Rivers in Alaska, California, Michigan, New Hampshire, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin, respectively.

³³⁰ Irving, *Astoria*, p. 205.

of New York City”, having attached their name to places like the Waldorf Astoria hotel in Manhattan, the Astoria neighbourhood in Queens, and Astor Avenue in the Bronx. But Astor’s name exerted an influence in the country’s geographical history that went far beyond the circles of East Coast aristocracy. Districts, towns, and institutions that bear his name can today be found in Iowa, Georgia, Kansas, Illinois, Missouri, Oregon, and Florida. Ultimately, the imagined empire of Astoria remains one of the earliest explicitly American attempts of spatialization aimed at unfolding on a global, transhemispheric scale. As demonstrated by this chapter, the ultimate failure of this vision, however, was not solely a result of the War of 1812 or incompetence of Astor’s agents, but was accelerated by more successful spatial formats and practices grounded in ethnic and cultural diversity and cooperation that counteracted the PFC’s implementation of racial hierarchies and exploitative business practices. Divergent and diverse spatial imaginations of Native Americans, Russians, Hawaiians, and others curtailed American mobility and agency in the Oregon Country and adjacent regions, ultimately shattering Astor’s and Jefferson’s dreams of an American Empire in the Asian-Pacific hemisphere.

Defiance and Disorder: Bioregionalism, Separatism, and Constitutional Safe Spaces

What will be the Government of the people of Western America?

Are they to be subject to English laws? Is the United States to establish her jurisdiction there? Is Russia to maintain her power in that quarter? Or, last, is the country to be free, its inhabitants independent of any authority except their own. W.³³¹

Contrary to the visions of politicians like Jefferson and entrepreneurs like Astor, political and economic affiliation with the United States for Oregonian settlers was only one of several options in the spatial formatting of the Oregon Country. Some of these options regained popularity in recent decades, while others have remained on minor scales and in historically liminal discourses. While the literary accounts of Parkman and Irving in less spatially literate readings are merely directed at integrating the Far West into the linear narratives of statehood, empire, and manifest destiny, other writers envisioned regional autonomy as a solution to Oregon’s entanglement in the geopolitics of colonial powers, including

³³¹ W., “Present Condition and Future Prospects of Oregon”, *The Oregonian, and Indian’s Advocate* 1 (1839) 5, pp. 146–149, at 146, https://oregonhistoryproject.org/media/uploads/indians_advocate_r2fZN0n.pdf.

the United States. Such spatial imaginations range from revisionist histories of Oregon's political attachment, calls for an independent Pacific republic, conceptions of an anational and anti-imperialist bioregion in the Pacific Northwest, to the virtue-signalling of national loyalty by the so-called State of Jefferson. These formats emerged and continue to emerge in moments of crisis that put to question the stability of overarching spatial orders, for instance during the Mexican-American War, Civil War, ecological crises since the 1970s, and most recently Donald Trump's election. Proneness to instability, the following demonstrates, continues to be a feature of Oregon's imaginative regime that acts both as a laboratory for different spatial formats and benchmark for the soundness of super-ordinate spatialization processes.

Prior to the influx of settlers on the Oregon Trail, Americans, French-Canadians, and British subjects negotiated local policies during the Champoege Meetings (also known as Wolf Meetings) between 1842 and 1845. Next to issues like the legality of slavery and bounties for killing wolves and other dangerous wildlife, the meetings were grassroots attempts of carving out legislative ground rules in the contested territory. Eventually, they engendered Oregon's Organic Law system that declared the intent to be annexed by the United States, which was subsequently framed as a veritable performance of patriotism and democracy. The decisive meeting was scheduled for 2 May 1843 and put the future political organization of the territory to the vote of 102 French-Canadian, American, and British participants. While agreeing to form a provisional governmental body, the electorate was split concerning its future affiliation with the US or the British Empire. The man whose vote broke the stalemate in favour of the Americans – supposedly persuaded by Joseph Meek's passionate appeal to the Stars and Stripes – was none other than the former gun smuggler Francis Matthieu, who in his youth rebelled against oppressive British rule in Canada before traversing the Old Northwest, Louisiana Territory, and finally arriving in the Oregon Country.³³²

Matthieu's decisive vote caused his mythical ascent from a subaltern foreigner and refugee to the celebrated spatial entrepreneur whose patriotic performance enabled the geopolitical ordering of the nation according to its manifest destiny. His free and westwards movement across the continent became tantamount to his own Americanization, culminating in his vote to endorse Oregon's federation. Matthieu's mobility beyond the physical and mental boundaries of

³³² Joseph Lafayette "Joe" Meek was a patriotic trapper and politician from Virginia who played a prominent role during the Champoege Meetings, where he was elected sheriff. He later petitioned president Polk for Oregon's organization as a federal territory and was appointed its first Federal Marshall in 1848.

the country's colonial past hence turns into an archetypal spatial performance and blueprint for its large-scale replication on the Oregon Trail and transcontinental railroad system. When he passed away at age 96 in 1914, *The Oregon Daily Journal* put his portrait on the front page together with a lengthy obituary that praised Matthieu as the “hero [...] whose vote saved Oregon to [the] Union”.³³³ A death notice in *The San Juan Islander* described him as the spatiotemporal linchpin for the ordering of the nation and “the most picturesque link between the old Oregon of trading posts and canoes and the new Oregon of railroads, steamships and department stores”.³³⁴ Today, symbolic markers of the region's integration with the nation-state remain visible in Champoeg State Park or the epic mural behind the speaker's desk at Oregon's State Capitol in Salem.³³⁵

Questioning this authoritative narrative, the former Episcopal priest and regional historian J. Neilson Barry proposed a different version of the proto-democratic performances at Champoeg that highlights the “contradiction[s] between the valid, authentic primary sources and the secondary literature”.³³⁶ The decisive meeting during which the future organization of Oregon was decided, he argues, was a product of a posteriori myth-making. Instead, a total of 17 meetings took place, only two of them in Champoeg. The meeting on the second of May, Barry maintains, was selectively mythologized but was less democratic than commonly believed, with only a third of the actual “356 [...] settlers on the ‘American side’ of the Columbia river” in attendance.³³⁷ In addition, he asserts that the gatherings were fraught with distrust, conspiracies, and regularly escalated into bilingual shouting matches. Finally, a scheme was concocted among the Americans to expel the “French [who] were a very unpopular minority [...]”.

333 “Francis Xavier Matthieu Dead: Pioneer Last Champoeg Patriot: His Vote Saved Oregon to Union”, *The Oregon Daily Journal*, 4 February 1914, pp. 1; 4, <https://newspapers.com/image/77159068/> (accessed 10 May 2020).

334 “Francis Xavier Matthieu, Pioneer of the Northwest”, *The San Juan Islander*, 13 February 1914, <https://newspapers.com/image/201668514/> (accessed 10 May 2020).

335 Located in the Willamette Valley halfway between Salem and Oregon City, Champoeg was the seat of Oregon's provisional government until 1848. After a flood in 1861, it was abandoned and today is an overgrown ghost town dotted with stone pillars that mark former street corners.

336 J. N. Barry, “Letter to Eloise Ebert”, Portland, 13 January 1960, fol. 1016, Boise State University Library.

337 J. N. Barry, “How Oregon Was Acquired”, Portland, 1936, P-W 15, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley, p. 4.

They were Catholics, and did not understand the English language. But worse – they had the best land”.³³⁸ Prior to the meeting, American

conspirators [sic] signed a written agreement to drive them out. [...] It leaked out, and the shocked and harrified [sic] normal Americans stayed away[.] Very few attended [...]. So many Canadians came that they far outnumbered the few Americans. They did not understand the English language so [they] prevented the few Americans from doing ANYTHING by shouting the minority for anything [sic] and everything.³³⁹

Even before the Champoege Meetings, public opinion was split between integrating and separating the Oregon Country. Next to private debates, newspaper commentaries, op-ed columns became a stage where actors weighted arguments regarding the spatial formatting of the still sparsely populated region. In February 1839, an article titled “Present Condition and Future Prospects of Oregon” appeared in *The Oregonian and Indian’s Advocate*.³⁴⁰ In the opinion piece, the author (who remains anonymous, only identifying himself as “W.”) argues that the Oregon Country was destined to form an independent republic, perhaps together with California.³⁴¹ “Whoever holds Oregon”, W. announces, “rules the North Pacific, and whoever rules the North Pacific, governs Eastern Tartary, and checks the encroachments of Russia upon South Eastern Asia”.³⁴² After the Napoleonic Wars and weakening of the French and Spanish empires, the two remaining powers competing over Oregon “are those of Russia and Great Britain”. Although the HBC and NWC effectively controlled all trade in the Pacific Northwest, W. asserts that “[i]t is in vain that [they] have established themselves in Oregon [...]. The moment the Hudson Bay Company commences military operations, their trade is ruined and their capital begins to waste; their forts are destroyed, their traders cut off, and all their resources wasted”.³⁴³ The

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ C. Allen, “A Pacific Republic”, *The Oregon History Project*, 17 March 2018, <https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/a-pacific-republic/>. The *Advocate* was a short-lived journal published by the Boston-based Oregon Provisional Emigration Society whose mission statement proclaims: “Our Object, the Elevation of the Indian Race – Our Means, a Christian Settlement in Oregon” (ibid.).

³⁴¹ Regarding the author’s gender, a disclaimer at the end of the article states that “[w]e do not wish to be considered at all responsible for the opinions or statements of our correspondent, in the preceding article. He speaks for himself, and will defend his own views” (W., “Present Condition”, p. 149).

³⁴² As was common at the time, W. likely uses the reference to “Eastern Tartary” as a blanket term for the uncharted regions of Central and Inner Asia, believed to contain a cornucopia of natural resources to be distributed among colonial powers in the future.

³⁴³ W., “Present Condition”, p. 146.

author here perhaps alludes to the lessons about the fragility of ecosystems and commercial networks that the PFC had to learn during John Jacob Astor's unsuccessful attempts of (re)ordering the Oregon Country.

In a lucid assessment of the geopolitical situation, the author goes on to speculate that British policy “endeavors to keep between her possessions and those of the Autocrat [i.e. the Russian Tsar], some third power which may answer as a washer to prevent too much friction”.³⁴⁴ American annexation of the Oregon Country, W. thus foresees, would actually serve British interests by establishing a buffer to its Russian rival in Alaska and simultaneously relinquish political responsibility for future conflicts over Oregon to the diplomatically inexperienced Americans. With Britain seeking “a washer to prevent too much friction” and the Tsar struggling with a disjointed and corrupt administrative system and indigenous resistance in Alaska, only two alternatives remain: Either “Oregon will fall into the limits of the United States, or an independent transmontane nation will be raised up”.³⁴⁵

Apart from cunning schemes concocted by Britain imperialists, the author mentions additional barriers that might frustrate the acquisitive intentions of American policymakers. First, economically by asking: “What would the great majority of American merchants care for the North West Coast? They have no trade there, no interest of any kind there”. And second, concerning the nation's (in)ability to control territorial sprawl and thus the Manichean question of expansion versus consolidation that haunted Americans since the Louisiana Purchase. For W., however, this question has already been answered by popular consensus: “It is in every one's mouth, ‘We have territory enough, what do we want of more?’”³⁴⁶ As a result of these hurdles, he lays down an alternative version of manifest destiny in which the Far West and its adverse topography are not conquered as part of a triumphal nation-building performance. Instead, physical barriers like the Rocky Mountains become the preordained limits of the nation's expansionist impulses, naturally dividing the continent into two discrete spheres destined to be governed separately from one another:

Nature itself has marked out Western America for the home of an independent nation. The Rocky Mountains will be to Oregon, what the Alps have been to Italy, or the Pyrenees to Spain. The nation which extends itself across them, must be broken in the centre by the weight of the extremities. When we merely glance at a map, it seems absurd to suppose that Oregon is to belong to a nation whose capital is on the Atlantic seaboard. What! must the people of that land be six months journey from the seat of Government? Must

344 Ibid.

345 Ibid., p. 147.

346 Ibid., pp. 147–148.

they send their delegates four thousand miles to represent them in the legislature of a nation with whom they can have but few common interests or sympathies?³⁴⁷

For W., Oregon's future detachment from the eastern seats of power is moreover underlined by political divisions over the United States' "peculiar institution" that had already begun to destabilize the integrity of its own spatial order. "The North and the South are well nigh asunder by their sectional feelings", he explains, "but what is the party strife between these compared to that which must arise between the East and the West, when the East is on the Bay of Fundy, and the West at Nootka Sound?"³⁴⁸ In addition, W. imagines nature and natives working together to frustrate American annexation of the Far West as

several hundred thousand hostile Indians lie between [Oregon] and the United States, [and] for centuries the populations of the East and West cannot meet, however rapidly the tide may flow on, and that there must, therefore, be so long an uncultivated and savage land lying between them; that a lofty mountain chain has been reared by the God of Nature, as if to break the force of eastern ambition, and mark the limits of dominion.³⁴⁹

W.'s geographic vision shares with expansionist agendas the concept that Native Americans are a part of nature, on the one hand as a timeless civilization transfixed in the chronotope of unchanging traditions; yet also, on the other hand, as "human shields", able to absorb the violent movements of eastern expansionism and western separatism. In this manner secured from transmontane encroachment, developments at the West Coast would favour regional cooperation between Oregon and California, engendering a common spatial identity of "one people [that] must have trade and constant intercourse with each other. The herds of the South must supply the plains of the North, and the products of the Columbia must feed the Californians". Regional interdependence in turn forges affective human geographies as "people will blend together [and] will become one in feeling, in sympathy, in interests; and having been thus socially united, the political compact will follow as an easy consequence".³⁵⁰ This alliance of convenience grows organically according to its interests and needs, requiring no ideological or metaphysical linkage between regions separated by the undeniable spatial ordering of nature itself and its inbuilt limitation of mobility and agency, irrespective of nationality or ethnicity. Eventually, W. ponders, "Oregon and California will be united in a common cause and destiny. Then will come the realization of the event which Mr. Jefferson predicted, and the whole extent

³⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 148.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 149.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

of that coast will be covered with free and independent Americans, unconnected with us, but by the ties of blood and friendship”.³⁵¹

Six years after the publication of W.’s article and only months before the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, a Democratic congressman once again brought up the question of an autonomous Pacific republic. Oregonian independence, he proposed, would be advisable to consolidate the overstretched boundaries of the nation that was growing too fast to be controlled and defended, particularly against its southern neighbour. *The Morning Post*, a conservative mouthpiece of the British court, later printed parts of his speech. “Where is Oregon?”, the congressman asks, and goes on to answer his own question:

On the shores of the Pacific, three thousand miles from us, and twice as far from England. Who is to settle it? Americans mainly; some settler undoubtedly from England, but all Anglo-Saxon – all men educated in notions of independent government, and all self-dependent. And now let me ask if there be any sensible man in the whole United States who will say for a moment than when fifty or a hundred thousand persons of that description find themselves on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, that they will long consent to be under the rules either of the American Congress or the British Parliament. They will raise a standard for themselves, and they ought to do it. [...] I believe that it is in the course of Providence and human destiny, that a great state is to arise, of English and American descent, whose power will be established over the country on the shores of the Pacific: and that all those rights of natural and political liberty, all those great principles that both nations have inherited from their fathers, will be transmitted through us to them, so that there will exist [...] a great Pacific Republic, a nation where our children may go for a residence, separating themselves from this Government, and forming an integral part of a new government, half way between England and China, in the most healthful, fertile, and desirable portion of the globe, and quite too far remote from Europe and from this side of the American continent to be under the control of either country.³⁵²

After Oregon’s admission to the Union in 1859, discursive strands of the Pacific republic resurfaced in various moments of crisis. At the brink of the Civil War, its spatial semantics shifted from formerly positively connoted terms such as autonomy and independence towards the spectres of secession and slavery as acute threats to the integrity of the nation’s overall spatial order. In January

³⁵¹ Ibid., p. 148.

³⁵² Qtd. in “Relative to the Oregon Question. Conclusive Views of the Administration”, *The Morning Post*, 1 December 1845, p. 2, <https://newspaperarchive.com/london-morning-post-dec-01-1845-p-2/>. Published from 1772 to 1937, *The Morning Post* gained international notoriety when it printed a forged antisemitic pamphlet titled *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in 1920, which prompted theories about a Jewish world conspiracy and propped up fascist movements in Europe. The assassins of Walter Rathenau, for instance, were convinced that the German politician was an Elder of Zion (N. Levin, *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry, 1933–1945*, New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1968, p. 39).

1861, the *Weekly Oregon Statesman* printed a fervent editorial under the headline “Madness Rules the Hour”, whose uncredited author set out to debate “[t]he paramount question of our existence as a nation”. For him or her, the Pacific republic has turned into a spatial format that can no longer be framed alongside terms of equal coexistence. Instead, the impending collapse of republican unionism also unravels the epistemic groundwork of Oregon’s imagined independence, replacing it with the menace of war among “discordant, independent States [which] would be at once a hopeless night of despair to all who have indulged a faith in the power of the American people to govern themselves”.³⁵³ Secession and war consequently replace independence and cooperation as the semantic fulcrum of far western spatial semantics. For the author of the *Statesman* article and many Oregonians, ideas about separation became obsolete as soon as they could be juxtaposed with the secessionist reordering of the South into an autonomous, slave-holding Confederacy, leaving “a Pacific republic [as] the object of [...] stupid, unprincipled ambition”.³⁵⁴ Changing gears towards loyalty to the Union did not even spare Oregon’s state motto *Alis Volat Propriis* (she flies with her own wings) that had expressed its independent spirit and history of grass-roots democracy. During the war, a more straightforward vow of national allegiance replaced the motto and plainly declared: “The Union”.³⁵⁵

In the two-party system of the Reconstruction Era, autonomous spatial configurations like those on the West Coast became shibboleths in the strife over the spatial semantics of union and disunion. Accompanied by a host of partisan newspaper editorials, Republicans and Democrats accused each other of working towards undermining the Union. The author of a piece titled “Pacific Republic!” chastises Democratic politicians like John Birch and Harry George who “advocated the formation of a ‘Pacific Republic,’ in the event that the Republican party should continue to hold the reins of government”. The essay accuses Democrats of abusing the imaginative potential of Oregon and other potentially independent regions to score political points with disgruntled southerners, implying they would rather welcome another violent breakup of the Union than see the South’s slave-based spatial order reformatted by “progressive” Jim Crow laws. “Disunion”, the author warns, creates “a division of our country into two, three or four Confederacies or Republics [and] is the great objective point which many

³⁵³ “Madness Rules the Hour”, *Weekly Oregon Statesman*, 14 January 1861, p. 2, <https://news.papers.com/image/81516962/>.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ “The Union” was officially adopted as Oregon’s state motto in 1957, but 30 years later changed back to *Alis Volat Propriis* as legislators felt it better reflected the state’s penchant for innovation and independent thought.

Democrats, foiled in their last attempt at national destruction, are now looking forward to”.³⁵⁶ Apart from partisan conflicts rooted in the struggles of southern Democrats to stay relevant, the commentator evokes hemispheric connections that draw attention to the exposed position and military weakness of far western states, whose survival he deems unlikely outside the framework of the nation-state:

A Pacific Republic! Think of it. Leaving out of consideration the treasonable idea that the suggestion conveys to every patriotic mind, how absurd is the scheme. The population of the Pacific States and Territories was less than three-quarters of a million when the last census was taken [i.e. 1870]; our seaboard is nearly two thousand miles in length, and we would be about as impotent to make a successful defense in case of war with even one of the weakest powers as would be the Sandwich Island or Iceland.³⁵⁷

In yet another example of the pushes and pulls in the Pacific republic’s imaginative regime, the American pioneer, historian, and newspaper editor Harvey W. Scott advocates Oregon’s independence in *History of Portland, Oregon* (1890). In the book, he claims that Portland would soon become a window to the Asian-Pacific hemisphere that mirrored the function of New York’s projection of American power into the transatlantic space. For Scott, the paradigm shift towards the Pacific in fact made the eastern metropolis redundant. In an allegory that confounds the Roman Empire and Shakespeare, he states that “[t]he Roman Empire without Rome would be like Hamlet without Hamlet. But America without New York City would still be America, lacking only some million and a half people.”³⁵⁸ Scott invites readers to join him in averting the nation’s gaze from the eastern seaboard and instead “focalize our view” on Oregon by asking

if we draw a line from the Gulf of California to Mt. St. Elias in Alaska, by this chain of valleys and waterways, where do we find a cross line opening from the ocean to the Rocky Mountains, and allowing trade and travel to pass east and west as well as north and south? This cross line has been determined by the channel of flowing waters drawn from the Rocky Mountains across the Cascade and Coast Ranges to the Pacific – the Columbia River. A line of two thousand miles, a cross line of five hundred miles – these will ever be the thoroughfares of commerce for the commercial metropolis of the region. At the point of intersection of the two this is the geographical position of Portland. Although on the banks of the Willamette, she is also, practically on the banks of the Columbia, her business portion constantly extending towards the imperial river. This,

356 “Pacific Republic!”, *Petaluma Weekly Argus*, 3 November 1876, p. 2, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/275395315/>.

357 Ibid.

358 H. W. Scott, *History of Portland Oregon*, Syracuse: D. Mason & Co, 1890, p. 53.

then is the most comprehensive description of Portland's geographical situation – at the crossroads of a natural depression from California to Alaska and of the pathway of the Columbia from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.³⁵⁹

Locating Portland at an imagined intersectional “cross line” between regional and continental epistemes, “Scott is here both a loving regionalist and a universalist [who] stress[es] the uniqueness of the Pacific Northwest’s physical character and the perfect geographical position of Portland within that microcosm. Much like the nineteenth-century French, taught to believe their country was a perfect hexagon”.³⁶⁰ What clearly shines through in Scott’s spatial imagination, however, are the roots of the United States’ increasingly expansionist and chauvinistic formatting of the Asian-Pacific hemisphere as an extension of a continental homeland, often subsumed under the umbrella term New Imperialism. “Note our situation on the Pacific seaboard”, Scott urges in a journal article that underscores “the changes of recent times [that] virtually made the Pacific an American sea. The active theatre of the world’s new effort is now in Asia and Western America. The two hemispheres, heretofore in communication only across the Atlantic, are now rapidly developing an intercourse over the Pacific”.³⁶¹ This statement demonstrates that for Scott and many of his contemporaries around the turn of the century, the Pacific was firmly circumscribed as part of the nation’s sovereign territory and in their minds had therefore already become “an American sea”.

At the same time, Scott’s remarks also emphasize that this new conceptualization of global ordering no longer respected the traditional division of spaces separated by vast distances and natural barriers. Bolstering this notion of unbounded transoceanic interconnectedness, Scott “daily read the most timeless and placeless writer, William Shakespeare, drowning himself in what he considered the playwright’s ‘oceanic’ mind”.³⁶² As trains and steam-powered ships diminished the distances of a subjectively de-magnified world, they concurrently inspired the discursive enmeshment of geographically and culturally disparate spaces like the transpacific and circum-Caribbean into a single, homogenous extension of the continental heartland. On 15 August 1914, this trans-hemispheric spatial imagination, whose allure perhaps first became latent in

³⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

³⁶⁰ R. D. Gastil and B. Singer, *The Pacific Northwest: Growth of a Regional Identity*, Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2010, pp. 44–45.

³⁶¹ H. W. Scott, “The Pioneer Character of Oregon Progress”, *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 18 (1917) 4, pp. 245–270, at 258.

³⁶² Gastil and Singer, *The Pacific Northwest*, p. 45.

the spatialization projects surrounding the Oregon Country, materialized itself in the opening of the Panama Canal.³⁶³

Almost 100 years later, *Time* magazine published an article about the “Top 10 Aspiring Nations” that outlines ongoing pushes for independence in regions such as the Basque Country, Kurdistan, and Tibet. Included in this list is the Republic of Cascadia as an aspiring nation that aims to “bring together Washington State, Oregon and British Columbia. Proponents of the new country [...] say the approximately 14 million residents of ‘Cascadia’ should demand their freedom from the oppressive governments of Canada and the U.S.”³⁶⁴ The movement focalizes the spatial format of the bioregion through Cascadia as a space defined not by legal bordering (e.g. at the 49th parallel) but through the identification of regionally shared features.³⁶⁵ The Cascadian community thus defines itself through common environmental, climatic, and topographic features that together establish a habitat delimited by rivers and watersheds. Its calls for independence hence are not based on (imagined) “personal” communalities like genealogies or ethnicity but from the formats of the bioregion and biome as “natural” placemaking parameters.³⁶⁶

363 The Panama Canal also reified much older visions of hemispheric connectedness whose discursive strands are traceable well beyond American imperial projects. In his encyclopaedia *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), the English philosopher-physician Thomas Brown speculates “that some Isthmes have been eat through by the Sea, and others cut by the Spade: And if policie would permit, that of *Panama* in *America* were most worthy the attempt: it being but few miles over, and would open a shorter cut unto the *East-Indies* and *China*” (T. Brown, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: Or, Enquiries Into Very Many Received Tenents, and Commonly Presumed Truths*, London: Edward Dod, 1658 [1646], p. 394).

364 K. Webley, “The Republic of Cascadia”, *Time*, 10 January 2011, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2041365_2041364_2041373,00.html. Cascadia’s name stems from the “cascading waters flowing from the Pacific to the western slopes of the Rockies and Cascades where water cycles back to the Pacific” (A. Baretich, “A Definition of Cascadia”, *The Microfreedom Index*, 11 February 2015, <http://www.angelfire.com/nv/micronations/cascadia.html>).

365 Bioregions signify spaces “whose limits are naturally defined by topographic and biological features (such as mountain ranges and ecosystems)” (“Bioregion”, *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bioregion> [accessed 23 April 2020]). Buell et al. explain that bioregionalism “holds that the planetary future hinges on strengthened allegiance to the ecological unit, often defined [...] as against the jurisdictional unit – an allegiance that entails commitment to bioregion as personal habitat [...] in cognizance of the interdependences between one’s particular ecosystem and the wider world” (Buell, Heise, and Thornber, “Literature and Environment”, p. 420).

366 According to *Merriam-Webster* a biome represents “a major ecological community type (such as tropical rain forest, grassland, or desert)” that has formed within a shared physical

Cascadia's map consciously disregards national, state, or county borders and spans across parts of Oregon, California, Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah. This bioregion is imaginatively formatted not based on political demarcation but because "it is geographically, culturally, economically and environmentally distinct from surrounding regions and has unique flora and fauna, topography, and geology. These natural, geographical borders create the Cascadia bioregion".³⁶⁷ Concurrently, Cascadia is set apart from eastern regions by the isolating mountain ranges of the Rocky Mountains, positioning it as a conservatory of a unique biodiversity that houses such rare species as the northern spotted owl, Pacific tree frog, geoduck, and giant Pacific octopus. The bioregional visions of CascadiaNow are closely linked to social activism and aimed at implementing alternatives vis-à-vis dominant spatial narratives that – explicitly or implicitly – build upon histories of conquest and ethnic hierarchies. For its proponents, Cascadia therefore materializes predicated on

the realization that those borders are based on nation-state concepts and imperialism. This realization is that these lines on a map are dictated by the conquerors and oppressors who have destroyed so much diversity. This comes to an awakening that Cascadia the bioregion is based on watersheds or river drainage systems that flow all the way to the Rockies or continental divide. Then a deeper layer of consciousness hits that the flow of water is crucial to a bioregion and that life is based on that water. After that comes the realization that Cascadia or any bioregion is not just a place, but a living complex of interactions and interconnectedness to many communities, human and nonhuman. That at that realization we are not a human in a vacuum separated from Nature, but are extensions of each other and dependent on the health and dynamic interactions with each other. It becomes a consciousness of living dynamic being and is no longer stuck in banal nationalism, but is an awakening to being part of a bioregion which is part of the biosphere which is the living Earth (Gaia).³⁶⁸

One of Cascadia's key texts, Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975) envisions the emergence of a fictional new nation assembled from the secessionist states of Washington, Oregon, and northern California. Told from a first-person perspective, the novel chronicles the journey of an investigate journalist named William Weston who works for the imaginary *Times-Post* from a dystopian, economically depressed United States into the titular ecotopian nation. As he crosses the border, Weston encounters a space of social experimentation

climate ("Biome", *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/biome> [accessed 24 April 2020]).

367 CascadiaNow! "About Cascadia & Bioregionalism", <https://www.cascadianow.org/bioregionalism> (accessed 24 April 2020).

368 Baretich, "Definition of Cascadia".

designed to reveal and remedy the abuses of the nation-state in terms of race, class, and gender. Early on, the reporter realizes that Ecotopia represents a counter-imagination that strikes at the heart of manifest destiny and the frontier thesis because it “poses a challenge to the underlying national philosophy of America: ever-continuing progress, the fruits of industrialization for all, a rising Gross National Product”.³⁶⁹ In posing this challenge, *Ecotopia*’s literary respatialization equates bioregional independence with practices of sustainable development and steady-state economics, making the book a vital influence for the West Coast’s counterculture and green movement.

Displacing the dominant spatial framework from political towards ecological ordering, ecotopian bioregionalism puts emphasis on the agency, diversity, and interactivity among environmental and individual vectors, implying “that we not only live in cities, towns, villages or ‘the countryside’; we also live in watersheds, ecosystems, and eco-regions”.³⁷⁰ Cascadia’s flag signals the meaningful cohesion between natural features that define it as an exceptional space in the imagination of its advocates. The banner’s conscious use of colours and symbols integrates human activity with spaces of longing and belonging. As one of the movement’s founders, the Portland native Alexander Baretich explains: “Prior to the design and its popularity, the idea of Cascadia, specifically the bioregion, was pretty much an abstract concept reserved for radical geographers, hip sociologists, devoted ecologists and ‘radical’ environmentalists”. Unlike “[t]he bioregional congress ‘movement’ [that] was an echo of the alternative culture of a bygone generation”, the translation of abstract concepts into evocative and implicitly performative representations takes centre stage in the formatting of Cascadia through its flag:

What the flag has done is convey something far more tangible than an abstract concept of demarcation of space. The flag gave access to the idea of Cascadia that was not limited to scholarly research or having the privilege of money and time for a camping trip on the other side of the continent. [...] [T]he blue of the flag represents the moisture-rich sky above, and the Pacific Ocean, along with the Salish Sea, lakes, and inland waters. Our home is a place of continuous cascading waters flowing from the Pacific to the western slopes of the Rockies and Cascades where water cycles back to the Pacific. The white represents snow and clouds, and the green represents the evergreen forests and fields of the

369 E. Callenbach, *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston*, Berkeley: Banyan Tree Books, 2004, p. 4.

370 D. C. Wahl, “Bioregionalism”, *Age of Awareness*, 30 September 2017, <https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/bioregionalism-4e15f314327>.

Pacific Northwest. The lone-standing Douglas Fir symbolizes endurance, defiance, and resilience. All these symbols come together to symbolize what being Cascadian is all about.³⁷¹

As a non-profit organization, CascadiaNow is chiefly driven by community-organized projects and local arts and music events in the Seattle and Portland areas that expressly work towards minority inclusion. In its mission statement, the organization seeks to “provides space for indigenous, POC, and traditionally marginalized communities, and of course the millions of amazing Cascadians who live here, to [...] break down boundaries which are harmful and negative”.³⁷² Apart from rallies and social events, Cascadia’s bioregional identity is also performed in the virtual space of the internet, sometimes in the form of memes and viral images that ironically use regional stereotypes and position Cascadia as a multilayered semiotic assemblage. The semi-official seal of Cascadia’s Diplomatic Corps, for instance, shows the mythical Sasquatch holding a salmon in one hand and gripping a tree with the other. The cryptozoological pastiche is complemented by the Chinook slogan *Hyiu Tillicum Snookum*, which can be translated as “many good friends” or more broadly as “the importance of a big family”.³⁷³

In the Pacific Northwest, Cascadia has become a pop-cultural phenomenon with local sports teams brandishing its flag and microbreweries offering a beer brand called Secession IPA. The organization sponsors its own “national” soccer league in the Cascadia Association Football Federation (CAFF) with the goal to form a mixed-gender team.³⁷⁴ CascadiaNow sells flags, maps, artworks, and authentically-looking passports in the “hope to inspire people to begin to think locally, bioregionally and globally, as both a citizen of their watershed – and the world”.³⁷⁵ Heterogenous placemaking performances such as these, however, make it difficult to ascertain if Cascadia’s spatial entrepreneurship aims to

371 A. Baretich, “The Cascadian Flag: A Transformative Icon”, *Free Cascadia*, 10 November 2014, <http://freecascadia.org/the-cascadian-flag-a-transformative-icon/>.

372 Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, “No Hate Policy”, <https://deptofbioregion.org/no-hate-policy> (accessed 24 April 2020).

373 D. D. Robertson, “The Thunder Bird Tootooch Legends”, *Chinook Jargon*, 25 August 2016, <https://chinookjargon.com/2016/08/25/the-thunder-bird-tootooch-legends/>.

374 Cascadia’s team competes in the Swedish-based Confederation of Independent Football Associations (CONIFA) as a league “of People, Nations, Minorities and geographically or sportingly isolated territories, which not yet are affiliated to the FIFA” (Confederation of Independent Football Associations, “CONIFA Constitution”, 6 July 2013, <http://www.conifa.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/conifa-constitution.pdf> [accessed 24 April 2020]). The non-profit organization houses teams from various unrecognized regions such as Kurdistan, Somaliland, or the Donetsk People’s Republic.

375 Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, “Cascadia Passport”, <https://deptofbioregion.org/department-of-bioregion-2/cascadia-passport> (accessed 24 April 2020).

ironically deconstruct the symbols of a national order perceived as unjust and exclusionary, or if it merely attempts to substitute national with regional exceptionalism. Despite its symbolic and performative reconfiguration of borders and human geographies, Cascadia's discursive spatialization takes cues from the narrative hallmarks of American placemaking discussed throughout this book. Some of these cues reverberate in the tunes of Skookum Tamanawis' song "Cascadia Forever: Anthem for a New Nation":

Underneath the Skies of Cascadia
Where the Mountain Woodlands Meet the Sea
E'vry Living Being in Cascadia
United in Diversity
From the Rocky Mountain Highlands
To the Wide Pacific Shore
We Will Take Our Stand to Preserve the Land
And Its Biome Evermore
Voices Rise in Song for Cascadia
A Light for All the World to See
As We Lift Our Pray'r for Cascadia
"Kwan-E-Sum Chinuk Ill-A-Hee!"³⁷⁶

First, the line "A Light for All the World to See" takes conscious recourse to John Winthrop's vision of a City Upon a Hill as formulated in his lecture "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630). It stresses the panoptical exposure of exceptional spaces and the subsequent need of displaying proper morality because "[t]he eyes of all people are upon us".³⁷⁷ The second line that stands out in the anthem's lyrics frames Cascadia as a space that is oxymoronicallly "United in Diversity". This statement subverts the notion that effective placemaking hinges on the homogeneity of communities formatted alongside parameters such as race, religion, or binary gender identities. Cascadians in this manner appropriate Unionism as a byword and linchpin of the United States' spatial order, only to deconstruct and reframe it in the service of their own bioregional respatialization project. In another example of narrative ambiguity, the movement embraces the slogan "Illahee, illahie, illi'i –

³⁷⁶ S. Tamanawis, "Cascadia Forever: Anthem for a New Nation", 9 November 2009, <https://youtu.be/OGJpXcShGSM> (emphasis added). *Kwan-E-Sum Chinuk Ill-A-Hee*, more commonly spelled as *Kwanesum Chinook Illahee*, is the motto of Cascadia meaning "land of the Chinook forever". Apart from this orchestral hymn, the folk song "O' Cascadia" makes for another "official" anthem of Cascadia (see L. Vivola, "O' Cascadia", 30 May 2018, https://youtu.be/TW6_Do815_Q).

³⁷⁷ J. Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity", J. Beardsley (ed.), 1997 [1630], p. 9, <https://www.casa-arts.org/cms/lib/PA01925203/Centricity/Domain/50/A%20Model%20of%20Christian%20Charity.pdf>.

Land, country, earth, soil – in both physical and political senses; [...] a network of peoples arranged through the interweaving of family, blood marriages, allies. [...] Home. Family”.³⁷⁸ This message, however, seems reminiscent of “blood and soil” ideologies that use similar environmentally deterministic arguments in their demands for a diametrically opposed spatial order centred around ethnically homogenous spaces shaped by chauvinistic nationalism. Juxtaposing heritage, soil, and identity, Cascadians apply a similar lens, albeit to position bioregionalism as a counter-draft to the formats of nation and empire, arguing that its rooting in natural diversity represent authentic and lived realities instead of ideologically crafted and exclusionary communities. In other words, the Cascadian ecotopia embraces a spatial “philosophy that connects people and ideas into place [...] in ways that are sustainable, democratic and just”. This scaled-down perspective “which work[s] watershed by watershed” then becomes a strategy of tackling the complexities and contradictions of increasingly global conditions “by using bioregions to break large issues down to a local level, creating or magnifying solutions already being practiced in a community, and create accessible pathways for every person living in a region to be able to get active about issues they care about”.³⁷⁹

Despite its claims of merely reflecting an overarching “natural order”, bioregional spatial formatting therefore remains a constructivist exercise whose in-built environmental determinism makes it prone to criticism. Additionally, its attempt to ontologically stabilize a confusing global order by introducing scaled-down, empirically measurable spatial units (i.e. bioregions) appears particularly doubtful in a time of accelerating climate change. Cascadia’s drive to dissolve the nature-culture binary by conjuring the female goddess Gaia as a superordinate, planetary ordering force aligns itself with second-wave ecocritical scholarship that “has tended to reject the validity of the nature-culture distinction”.³⁸⁰ This approach, to be sure, becomes a powerful spatialization strategy with the potential of dismantling metanarratives through direct social action as well as symbolic performances. At the same time, breaking down social and ethnic boundaries can appear contradictory in light of the movement’s ingrained determinisms that derive personal values from topographical features through “the blending of the natural integrity and the sociocultural unity”.³⁸¹ These opposing vectors culminate in a regional biopolitics that is supported by its contrasting

³⁷⁸ Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, “Cascadia, A Name”, <https://deptofbioregion.org/cascadia-the-name> (accessed 24 April 2020).

³⁷⁹ Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, “What is Bioregionalism?”, <https://deptofbioregion.org/what-is-bioregionalism> (accessed 24 April 2020).

³⁸⁰ Buell, Heise, and Thornber, “Literature and Environment”, p. 419.

³⁸¹ CascadiaNow! “About Cascadia”.

exclusion of national or regional Others who refrain from ordering the world via bioregional parameters and thus are implicitly perceived as less inclusive and progressive than the “spatially exceptional” Cascadians.

But Cascadian ecotopians are not the only contemporary actors that pursue the reformatting of far western regions. In *The Elusive State of Jefferson*, Peter Laufer relates that “[t]oday, travelers racing up Interstate 5 toward Yreka from Sacramento [...] cannot miss the huge letters screaming STATE OF JEFFERSON painted on the roof of a hay barn that faces oncoming freeway traffic”.³⁸² Frustrated by the underrepresentation of their rural counties in state governments, a group of young men staged a coup in October 1941. Armed with hunting rifles, they set up roadblocks, stopped cars, and handed out typescripts declaring that “Jefferson is now in patriotic rebellion aganst [sic] the States of California and Oregon. Patriotic Jeffersonians intend to secede each Thursday until further notice”.³⁸³ The motives of these radical spatial actors, however, were not entirely – as the name may suggest – driven by Jeffersonian idealism, but instead rooted in economic issues. Most of the activists were unemployed youths who complained that policymakers in Sacramento and Salem impeded regional development by preventing the extracting of its natural wealth in copper ore. After weeks of protesting and media attention, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor effectively put an end to the movement as the following surge of patriotism made secessionism a less than popular subject.

Recently, the movement experienced a resurgence by positioning its imagined state against organizations like CascadiaNow or CalExit, the latter of which renewed their calls for California’s secession from the Union following Donald Trump’s election and controversial immigration policies. If California were to become an independent nation, the 23 rural Republican counties in southern Oregon and northern California that would form the State of Jefferson have pledged to appeal to Congress for their incorporation as the 51st state, similar to

³⁸² P. Laufer, *The Elusive State of Jefferson: A Journey Through the 51st State*, Lanham: TwoDot Books, 2013, p. 2. In US history, several local and regional independence campaigns have assumed the names of Jefferson, Lincoln, or Washington. Selecting the right namesake and making use of “proper” spatial semantics played an often under-appreciated role in the success and popularity of movements that sought statehood or independence. Perhaps the most notable example is today’s state of West Virginia, whose previous nomenclature included Franklin, West Sylvania, Kanawha, and Columbia.

³⁸³ Qtd. in T. D’Souza, “State of Jefferson Dreams were Dashed by Pearl Harbor”, *Mount Shasta Herald*, 2 July 2012, <https://www.mtshastanews.com/article/20081211/NEWS/312119971>.

how West Virginia separated itself from the Confederacy during the Civil War.³⁸⁴ On 15 March 2018, the State of Jefferson once again declared its independence. However, this time not from the United States but from California and Oregon, whose policies regarding undocumented immigrants and sanctuary cities its proponents view as an “open rebellion and insurrection against the government of the United States”.³⁸⁵

This symbolical (and legally not binding) act seems noteworthy because it directly counters the goals of West Coast separatists that seek autonomy from the nation-state. The State of Jefferson in turn declares its loyalty to the Union and thus understands itself as a beacon of righteousness, surrounded by lawlessness and threats of ethnic diversity emanating from Democratic majority areas on the seaboard. According to its website, the State of Jefferson has received hundreds of thousands of donations towards its cause, making it an example of spatial entrepreneurship that far exceeds the realms of fantasy. This money is needed as the movement’s attempts of reformatting a confederacy of counties into an independent state are met with legal hurdles and costly court proceedings, while its progenitors in 1941 were “libertarians [who] didn’t bother with the legal formalities of getting either the federal government’s or the state Legislature’s approval”.³⁸⁶ Against this background, it seems particularly fitting that the State of Jefferson’s official seal depicts a mining pan that, instead of golden nuggets, contains a double X “designed to represent Sacramento and Salem double-crossing” their spatial vision of a loyalist Pacific republic.³⁸⁷

This last example demonstrates that various regional spatialization projects imagine the formatting of Oregon and California through utterly different epistemic

384 State of Jefferson Formation, “Declaration of Unity”, <https://soj51.org/unity-declaration/> (accessed 24 April 2020).

385 State of Jefferson Formation, “Declaration of Independence!”, 15 March 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20181002103037/http://soj51.org/> (accessed 24 April 2020). Jefferson’s argument for statehood is based on the subordination of state rights under federal law and California “harboring and shielding illegal aliens, a felony under federal law. Governor Brown and the above named criminals are in violation of Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4 U.S. that clearly gives Congress lawful jurisdiction over immigration. Governor Brown and the above named politicians are in violation of California Constitution, Article 3, Section 1, which states that California is an inseparable part of the United States, and the United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land” (ibid.).

386 T. Holt, “A Modest Proposal – Downsize California!” *SFGate*, 17 August 2003, <https://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/A-modest-proposal-downsize-California-2574603.php>.

387 Laufer, *Elusive State of Jefferson*, p. 3; see A. Koseff, “State of Jefferson Supporters plan Bill seeking Independence from California”, *The Sacramento Bee*, 6 January 2016, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article53355675.html>.

lenses, motivated by vastly different agendas, and operating on different scales. They regularly try to set themselves apart from the discursive vectors of a superordinate spatial order by framing regional identity through spatial formats, ranging from ecotopian bioregions to law-abiding Republican islands in defence of the constitution. Regionalist placemaking practices draw from a host of themes that compound, extend, or delimit certain spaces and challenge the status quo of spatial orders based on social, cultural, political, economic, environmental, and ethnic variables. One of the commonalities among spatial entrepreneurs such as CascadiaNow and the State of Jefferson, nonetheless, appears to be their ultimate failure and their tendency to remain in the realms of the imagination. None have garnered nearly enough popular support that would make their visions of transforming the overall spatial order come true.

Engaging with ongoing and alternative spatialization practices and their discursive origins nonetheless proves vitally important. It makes visible how movements provide actors with tools that enable them to point out and criticize perceived injustices and opaque power dynamics of overarching spatialization processes. It furthermore underlines the resilience and significance of regional placemaking practices and identities vis-à-vis increasingly globalized cultural spaces. In their combination, these insights cast doubts on three seemingly unequivocal historical and contemporary spatial axioms: First, the metanarrative of the ever-more unified American nation-state and its manifest destiny to incorporate the continent from coast to coast, which in light of the alternative conceptions discussed above appears more artificial and quixotic than ever. Second, the contemporary mantras of globalization, internationalization, and neoliberal corporatism as the pillars of global discourses that continue to shore up the nation-state as a dominant spatial format. And finally, the inference that regionalism and local differences become obsolete as they are subjugated to the homogenizing and synthetic compounds of universal, incessantly repeated, yet ultimately artificial and ephemeral sites of global cultures and identities.

Conclusion: Reimagining the American West

*And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

T. S. Eliot¹

*There's nothing more unsettling than the continual movement
of something that seems fixed.*

G. Deleuze²

Looking at the nineteenth-century American West's literary and cultural landscapes through the lens of spatialization processes has produced a multitude of crucial insights. The analysed discourses reveal that various alternative spatial imaginations existed and regularly collided with dominant spatial formats such as the frontier and manifest destiny. As a result, the West functioned and continues to function as a mental template through which local, regional, national, and global parameters of space are imagined, formatted, and ordered. Spatial imaginations of western peripheries, it becomes clear, provided vital tools for spatial entrepreneurs such as authors, policymakers, emigrants, and minorities. Spatial heuristics allow for the articulation and historicization of analytical results, as well as to contextualize and compare them with other regions and historical periods. The materials examined throughout this book included established works of literature but also spatial discourses found in adventure stories, poems, paintings, newspaper articles, and other sources. An ancillary scrutiny of previously unstudied diaries and travel journals added a vital layer of human geography that underscored the workings of spatialization processes at a grassroots level. These sources also served as a litmus test that enabled the critical comparison of established texts with discourses that developed largely outside of aesthetic and commercial considerations.

Together, the examined materials provide access to a wealth of (alternative) spatial imaginations and cultural geographies that confirm, subvert, synthesize, yet in any case complicate the epistemologies of authoritative interpretative patterns suggested by the frontier thesis and manifest destiny that celebrate character-shaping and preordained nation-building, as well as myopic (post)modern historiographies that highlight the exploitation of regions and peoples but neglect their underlying dynamics. Scrutinizing the American West through the nuanced

¹ T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding", *Four Quartets*, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971 [1941], p. 53.

² G. Deleuze, *Pourparlers [Negotiations, 1972–1990]*, M. Joughin (trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 [1990], p. 157.

methodological framework of spatialization processes makes clear that this long-standing dichotomy of the West as either a character-shaping process or arena for conquest, exploitation, and racism falls short in capturing the extent of its actual complexity and diversity. While both perspectives offer sensible explanations – some of which reflect themselves in the analysed materials – they also represent uniform and ideologically coloured approaches to western (literary) histories.

In contrast, the lens and language of spatialization processes can render visible opaque relationships and interactions between dominant and alternative spatial discourses. Alternative or aberrant spatial imaginations, it becomes clear, regularly emerged within spaces that were previously under the control or influence of other colonial powers such as France, Spain, or Russia. Collisions of opposing visions in regions like French Louisiana and the Oregon Country commenced in tandem with the implementation of racial hierarchies and the displacement of indigenous peoples and Others, whose spatial visions and practices threatened to undermine the expansionist ordering of the United States. The introduction of more economically and racially segregated regimes in the guise of Americanization impacted lived realities and mobility of non-white people and other subalterns. These insights prompt further questions about the ongoing narrowing of imaginational diversity that coincided with the ascendancy of the nation-state and its imperial extensions.

The findings of this book emphasize that contemporaries often viewed the supposedly organic transition towards a unified national order neither as natural nor as predetermined. Particularly during the antebellum period, a multitude of real-and-imagined spaces existed independent from the national, regional, or frontier formats as parts of actual, imagined, or hybrid discursive configurations and assemblages. The Old Northwest, as shown in the first chapter, turned into a utopian site of democratic and religious revivalism which authors like James Hall populated with the prototypical figure of the backwoodsman as an unwitting curator of the nation's "western heart". Hall's "The Backwoodsman" highlights the significance of regional placemaking performances as seemingly uncorrupted and archetypal patterns for the nation's future ordering, as well as their important role in exceptionalist narratives. Being aware of these connections also adds to the comprehension of current political discourses, for instance those that imaginatively transpose the purer values of a midwestern heartland into the corrupt epicentres of power in order to "drain the swamp".

Margaret Fuller's travelogue *A Summer on the Lakes* in contrast imagines the Old Northwest as a feminist counter-utopia in which progressive, emancipatory ideals might come to fruition if individuals are willing to transcend hyper-masculine and violent spatial practices. Fuller's personal approximation of

native people and western landscapes as well as her psychological struggles in trying to apprehend them in an unbiased manner make plain that the West draws much of its discursive power from processes of simulation that relentlessly reproduce its most visceral tropes. Paul Laurence Dunbar's poetry further complicates the discursive dynamics of the Old Northwest. Contrasting the local colour melancholy and black vernacular of poems like "Goin' Back" with the orthodox meters of poetic triumphalism during the Reconstruction period emphasizes the spatial dimensions of issues like double consciousness and passing that confronted and continue to confront people of colour in the US and elsewhere. Dunbar's writings demonstrate how symbols that are usually confined to their literary interpretation can work towards spatial formatting, for instance how writing poetry in standard English symbolically enables the region to pass into the nation's spatial ordering by wearing the masks of manifest destiny, exceptionalism, and Jim Crow.

After its purchase in 1803, American policymakers and authors worried about the integration of the Louisiana Territory into a spatial order that embraced republican principles but was equally reliant on racial and economic hierarchies. As shown in the second chapter, incorporating this vast area sparked fears about ethnic Otherness and the loss of the Early Republic's fragile identity. Unlike the social frontiers of the Old Northwest, incorporating this macro-region presented uncertain and open-ended challenges that required preformatting Louisiana's human geographies. Hall's "The French Village" lays bare the dominant strategies designed to tame this unfamiliar West, depicting Louisiana's colonial populations as static and anachronistic actors, transfixed in the chronotope of a pre-democratic bubble. Hall suggests that introducing the United States' "progressive" order could remedy the French population's lack of spatial agency through, among other things, strict racial hierarchies based on the Black Code. Discussing the fate of Native Americans in the territory, George Catlin lays down his vision of a museal space that is destined to vanish under the wheels of progress and should be archived in the nation's cultural memory. Through his writings and paintings, Catlin creates awareness for the plight of native peoples and establishes the West as an affective space, yet concurrently works on its dissolution as he forcefully extracts artefacts and provokes intertribal wars as a result of his spatial performances.

The Oregon Country comes into view as the supposedly final destination of the nation's transcontinental preordination. Scrutinizing Francis Parkman's widely-read book *The Oregon Trail* through the optics of spatialization processes undermines its conventional readings as an ode to white mobility and manifest

destiny. His textual encounters with partly opposing, partly overlapping imaginations of subalterns, emigrants, traders, natives, and the Mormon kingdom of Deseret destabilize views of the Oregon Trail as a straightforward path to an American Empire. Additionally, the book's blending of the incommensurable West with Europe and New England unveils the contradictions between the transatlantic trajectories of American exceptionalism and the paradigm changes necessitated by the nation's movement towards the Asian-Pacific hemisphere. In turn, Washington Irving's *Astoria* relates more deep-seated issues than John Jacob Astor's and Thomas Jefferson's dreams of an American commercial empire in the Far West. Fort Astoria's failure, it becomes apparent, was not only a result of the War of 1812 but was augmented by a host of regional formats and practices that integrated the Oregon Country with adjacent spaces. This integration hinged on interethnic cooperation and trade networks that contested the implementation of racial and economic hierarchies that propped up societies east of the Rocky Mountains. The imagined empire of Astoria instead collided with opposing ideas and practices of Native American, Russian, and Hawaiian actors who undermined its economic mobility and placemaking agency.

Historical and contemporary imaginations of the Oregon Country further emphasize the significance of "minor" spatial actors in criticizing superordinate narratives and ordering processes through their advocacy of regional autonomy. Examples range from historical revisions of democratic myth-making at the Champoege Meetings, the ecotopian formatting of the Cascadian bioregion, to loyalist counties that imaginatively uphold the constitution against illegal immigration. Engaging with these grassroots actors puts emphasis on the weaknesses of contemporary universalist narratives that frame spatial ordering alongside concepts of globalization and neoliberal commodifications of regional difference. These findings substantiate the West as a discursively highly contested arena that is by no means "complete" but remains in constant flux as part of ongoing and open-ended processes of spatial formatting and ordering.

The metaphorically driven landscape of the West became the focus of this book's interrogations, which in their attempts to map spatial imaginations draw attention to their inbuilt fluidity and connectedness to scalable knowledges and discourses. Spatial imaginations as cultural vectors of spatial formats and spatial orders, it turns out, are not static but relational; they rarely pit binary formats – for instance global integration versus local autonomy – against each another but more often disassemble and reassemble particular parameters in order to advance or critique specific narratives. Their study thus calls for intertextual, intersectional, interactive, and interdisciplinary approaches that understand "literary space as a mobile category that materialises at the

intersection of author, text and reader”.³ Any discussion of spatial imaginations must make itself aware of these dynamics, but also of the fact of its own constructivist tendencies that privilege certain perspectives and voices over others that might appear “less spatial”. Acknowledging these issues means bridging the pitfalls of anything-goes theory and concurrently loosening the ubiquitous shackles of presentism. To reach these goals, the methods of critical regionalism, new historicism, and the fusion of horizons were vital instrumental in the engagement with the polysemous and transitory nature of spatialization processes.

The introduction and exemplary application of a new spatial metalanguage represents a stepping stone towards a more spatially literate humanities that for the longest time has confined itself to focusing on issues of race, class, and gender. While spatial turn scholarship suggests revising this analytical triangle with the methods of literary and human geographies, practising this revision is no effortless and straightforward task. Instead, it regularly leads to junctions, detours, and into dead ends. Navigating spatialization processes therefore calls for openness, flexibility, and a healthy amount of curiosity and willingness to experiment with disciplinary conventions. While the present book does not propose the dismissal of these conventions, it drives home that “talking spatially” always includes a reappraisal of previous research that centres around conventional categories. In this manner exploring the epistemic borderlands of cultural and literary studies can be immensely rewarding and productive, but can also become a daunting task that opens itself up to criticism from those who have made their homes within these categories. In the words of Gilles Deleuze: “There’s nothing more unsettling than the continual movement of something that seems fixed”.⁴

Finally, creating spatial literacy means entering a dialogue, in the case of this book with the epistemologies of the American West. This dialogue is guided by the objective of bridging perspective differences through the fusion of historical horizons and results in what Edwards calls *décalage*, namely “the reestablishment of a prior unevenness or diversity [by] the taking away of something that was added in the first place, something artificial”. As the subject of literary and cultural spatialization processes is itself a “virgin territory”, connecting historically disparate perspectives amounts to “a process of linking or connecting across gaps – a practice we might term *articulation*”.⁵ In exploring the largely

3 S. Luchetta, “Literary Mapping: At the Intersection of Complexity and Reduction”, *Literary Geographies* 4 (2018) 1, pp. 6–9, at 6.

4 Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 157.

5 Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*, pp. 14; 11.

uncharted dynamics between textuality and spatiality, articulation means finding one's own voice with the help of spatial semantics.

Articulating the finding of this book leads to the realization that the American West is not a place *sui generis* that can be fixated on mental or actual maps and thus be recognized in its entirety. The West is also not a lost state of mind, whose archetypal fragments can, like a broken vase, be glued together in an exercise of "discursive archaeology". If anything, the American West resembles a multilayered assemblage of real-and-imagined places, histories, practices, discourses, and knowledges that are imagined, formatted, and ordered via interconnected, intercultural, and intertextual spatialization processes. These processes reveal the West as a set of mental templates that are constantly reproduced and readjusted within various contexts that make it experienceable and imaginable. The West therefore perpetually inspires actors to create, broadcast, or subvert narratives according to their own agendas and beliefs and thus to perpetually de- and reconstruct the West on local, regional, national, and global scales and at the intersections between them.

While many of these dynamics originated in nineteenth-century discourses and thus warrant an analytical focus on the cultural productions of this period, they continually inform present-day debates about border regimes, regional differences, separatist movements, migration flows, or geopolitical power relations. In the end, there is no single American West that wondrously appears before our eyes through geographical measurements, empiricism, metaphors, or the composition of grand ideological narratives. Although we do not, as D. H. Lawrence promised, "know the place for the first time", interfacing the West with a wide spectrum of spatialization processes has led to a better understanding of its workings.⁶ Advancing spatial literacy has exposed many strata of palimpsestic complexity hidden underneath the most visible and dominant narratives of the nation's westering, thus providing ample potential for comparisons with other global contexts and a productive point of departure for future research.

6 Eliot, "Little Gidding", p. 53.

List of Abbreviations

AFC	American Fur Company
ASA	American Studies Association
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
LDS	Latter Day Saints
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NWC	North West Company
PFC	Pacific Fur Company
RAC	Russian-American Company
US	United States
WHA	Western Historical Association

List of Figures

All images are in the public domain.

- Fig. 1** Clipper card advertising passage to San Francisco on the *David Crockett*, circa 1858 — **104**
- Fig. 2** Advertisement for B. T. Babbitt's Best Soap proclaiming "Cleanliness is the Scale of Civilization", circa 1883 — **119**
- Fig. 3** Map showing US territorial acquisitions including the Louisiana Territory, 1919 — **143**
- Fig. 4** G. Catlin, *Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going To and Returning From Washington*, 1837–1839 — **173**
- Fig. 5** G. Catlin, *The Cutting Scene, Mandan O-kee-pa Ceremony*, 1832 — **180**

Bibliography

- 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.
- C. H. Adams, *The Narrative of Robert Adams, A Barbary Captive*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 [1816].
- R. Adams, "The Worlding of American Studies", *American Quarterly* 53 (2001) 4, pp. 720–732.
- G. Agamben, *Stato di Eccezione [State of Exception]*, K. Attell (trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 [2003].
- J. A. Agnew and S. Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*, London: Routledge, 1995.
- 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.
- C. Allen, "A Pacific Republic", *The Oregon History Project*, 17 March 2018, <https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/a-pacific-republic/>.
- B. Allmendinger and V. J. Matsumoto, "Introduction", in: B. Allmendinger and V. J. Matsumoto (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 1–14.
- R. Andersen, "Nature Has Lost Its Meaning", *The Atlantic*, 30 November 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2015/11/nature-has-lost-its-meaning/417918/>.
- B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Brooklyn: Verso Books, 1983.
- 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>.
- G. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987.
- P. A. Appel, "The Louisiana Purchase & the Lewis and Clark Expedition: A Constitutional Moment?", in: K. Fresonke (ed.), *Lewis & Clark: Legacies, Memories, and New Perspectives*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, pp. 87–116.
- J. Applegate, "Views of Oregon History", Yoncalla, 1878, P-A 2, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- L. Arave, "This Is the Place Monument Isn't Quite at Actual 'Place'", *Deseret News*, 24 July 2009, <https://www.deseret.com/2009/7/24/20330678/this-is-the-place-monument-isn-t-quite-at-actual-place>.
- K. J. R. Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785–1847*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965.
- S. Aron, "The Making of the First American West and the Unmaking of Other Realms", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 5–24.
- R. G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986.
- M. Augé, *Non-lieux: Introduction à une Anthropologie de la Surmodernité [Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity]*, J. Howe (trans.), Brooklyn: Verso Books, 1995.
- J. C. Baez, "The Wagoner's Lad", *Joan Baez, Vol. 2* 1961, <https://open.spotify.com/track/7Ev33ukFRmyEf53iN3cPCY>.

- 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.
- M. M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel", *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, M. Holquist (ed.), C. Emerson and M. Holquist (trans.), Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981 [1975], pp. 84–258.
- L. W. Banks, "Too Tough to Die! From Arkansas to Washington, Western Towns Welcome the World to their Historic Downtowns to Immerse in and Celebrate the Glories of the American West", *True West Magazine*, 4 January 2019, <https://truewestmagazine.com/too-tough-to-die-towns/>.
- A. Baretich, "The Cascadian Flag: A Transformative Icon", *Free Cascadia*, 10 November 2014, <http://freecascadia.org/the-cascadian-flag-a-transformative-icon/>.
- A. Baretich, "A Definition of Cascadia", *The Microfreedom Index*, 11 February 2015, <http://www.angelfire.com/nv/micronations/cascadia.html>.
- J. Barlow, *The Columbiad: A Poem*, Philadelphia: Fry and Kammerer, 1807.
- 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.
- J. N. Barry, "How Oregon Was Acquired", Portland, 1936, P-W 15, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- J. N. Barry, "Letter to Eloise Ebert", Portland, 13 January 1960, fol. 1016, Boise State University Library.
- R. Barthes, "*La mort de l'auteur*" ["The Death of the Author"], S. Heath (trans.), *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana, 1977, pp. 142–148.
- J. Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations", in: M. Poster (ed.), *Selected Writings*, Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988, pp. 166–184.
- J. Baudrillard, *America*, C. Turner (trans.), Brooklyn: Verso Books, 1989.
- C. Becker, "'Every New Land Demands Blood': 'Nature' and the Justification of Frontier Violence in *Hell on Wheels*", *aspeers* 10 (2017), pp. 21–37.
- S. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, New York: Vintage Books, 2015.
- E. Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000 to 1887*, London: Icon Books, 2005.
- S. F. Bemis, "Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence", *American Historical Review* 39 (1934) 2, pp. 250–268.
- H. Bergenthum, *Weltgeschichten im Zeitalter der Weltpolitik. Zur populären Geschichtsschreibung im Wilhelminischen Deutschland*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004.
- Berkeley Historical Society, "Why is Berkeley Called Berkeley?", <http://berkeleyhistoricalsociety.org/history-notes/bishop-george-berkeley.html> (accessed 21 April 2020).
- G. Berkeley, "Verses by the Author, on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in *America*", in: G. Berkeley (ed.), *Miscellany, containing several Tracts on various Subjects*, Dublin: George Faulkner, 1752, pp. 185–186.
- R. Bernstein, "Unsettling the Old West", *The New York Times*, 18 March 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/03/18/magazine/unsettling-the-old-west.html>.
- H. K. Bhabha, "The Other Question ...: Homi K. Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse", *Screen* 24 (1983) 6, pp. 18–36.
- R. A. Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage*, Kolkata: Scientific Book Agency, 1960.
- R. A. Billington, *Limericks: Historical and Hysterical*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1981.
- "Biome", *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/biome> (accessed 24 April 2020).

- “Bioregion”, *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bioregion> (accessed 23 April 2020).
- C. Birkle, “Travelogues of Independence: Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau”, *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 48 (2003) 4, pp. 497–512.
- R. Blackburn, “Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution”, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63 (2006) 4, pp. 643–674.
- S. Blair, “Cultural Geography and the Place of the Literary”, *American Literary History* 10 (1998) 3, pp. 544–567.
- J. G. Bleak, *Annals of the Southern Utah Mission, 1847–1877*, P-F 335, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- A. Böger, “Envisioning Progress at Chicago’s White City”, in: K. Benesch and K. Schmidt (eds.), *Space in America: Theory, History, Culture*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005, pp. 265–284.
- P. de Boisfleury Grégoire, “The Origins of Marshal Lyautey’s Pacification Doctrine in Morocco from 1912 to 1925”, Master thesis, Fort Leavenworth, 2010, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/boisfleurythesis.pdf>.
- D. J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, New York: Random House, 1973.
- B. A. Botkin (ed.), *A Treasury of American Folklore: Stories, Ballads, and Traditions of the People*, New York: Crown, 1944.
- P. J. Bowler, “The Whig Interpretation of Geology”, *Biology and Philosophy* 3 (1988), pp. 99–103.
- P. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- H. M. Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana; Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Mississippi River, in 1811*, Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear, and Eichbaum, 1814.
- K. Brandon, “Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients”, *The White House: President Barack Obama*, 30 July 2009, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2009/07/30/presidential-medal-freedom-recipients>.
- W. Breidert, “On the Early Reception of Berkeley in Germany”, in: E. Sosa (ed.), *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley*, Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2012, pp. 231–241.
- V. Bright, “The Folklore and History of the ‘Oregon Fever’”, *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 52 (1951) 4, pp. 241–253.
- M. Brosseau, “The City in Textual Form: *Manhattan Transfer*’s New York”, *Cultural Geographies* 2 (1995) 1, pp. 89–114.
- T. Brown, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: Or, Enquiries Into Very Many Received Tenents, and Commonly Presumed Truths*, London: Edward Dod, 1658 [1646].
- M. Brückner, *The Social Life of Maps in America, 1750–1860*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- M. Brückner and H. L. Hsu (eds.), *American Literary Geographies: Spatial Practice and Cultural Production, 1500–1900*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007.
- L. Buell, U. K. Heise, and K. Thornber, “Literature and Environment”, *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 36 (2011), pp. 417–440.
- J. Burbank and F. Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- C. Burgess, “The Boatload of Trouble: William Maclure and Robert Owen Revisited”, *Indiana Magazine of History* 94 (1998) 2, pp. 138–150.
- J. M. Burns, *The American Experiment: The Vineyard of Liberty, The Workshop of Democracy, and The Crosswinds of Freedom*, New York: Open Road Media, 2013.

- R. L. Bushman, *Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- J. Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theatre Journal* 40 (1988) 4, pp. 519–531.
- E. Callenbach, *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston*, Berkeley: Banyan Tree Books, 2004.
- N. Campbell, *The Rhizomatic West: Representing the American West in a Transnational, Global, Media Age*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- C. Capper, "Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer: The Conversations in Boston", *American Quarterly* 39 (1987) 4, pp. 509–528.
- J. A. Cardwell, "Emigrant Company", Jackson, 1878, P-A 15, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- A. Carew-Miller, "The Language of Domesticity in Crèvecoeur's 'Letters from an American Farmer'", *American Literature* 28 (1993) 3, pp. 242–254.
- L. W. Carlson, *Seduced by the West: Jefferson's America and the Lure of the Land Beyond the Mississippi*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003.
- 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.
- "The Carousals of Count Baranoff", *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* 7 (1838) 343, p. 247.
- P. Cartwright, *The Backwoods Preacher: An Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, London: Alexander Heylin, 1858.
- Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, "Cascadia, A Name", <https://deptofbioregion.org/cascadia-the-name> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, "Cascadia Passport", <https://deptofbioregion.org/departement-of-bioregion-2/cascadia-passport> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, "No Hate Policy", <https://deptofbioregion.org/no-hate-policy> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- Cascadia Illahee Department of Bioregional Affairs, "What is Bioregionalism?", <https://deptofbioregion.org/what-is-bioregionalism> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- CascadiaNow! "About Cascadia & Bioregionalism", <https://www.cascadianow.org/bioregionalism> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- W. Cather, *My Ántonia*, Boston: Mariner Books, 1995.
- G. Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. 2, New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844 [1841].
- G. Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. 1, Philadelphia: Willis P. Hazard, 1857 [1841].
- J. W. Caughey, "The American West: Frontier and Region", *Arizona and the West* 1 (1959) 1, pp. 7–12.
- R. A. Caulfeild, *The French Literature of Louisiana*, Gretna: Pelican, 1929.
- K. E. Chamberlain, "Bolton, Herbert E.", in: K. Boyd (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, vol. 1, Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 1999, pp. 105–106.
- N. Chomsky, "Modern-Day American Imperialism: Middle East and Beyond", Lecture, Boston University, 24 April 2008, <https://chomsky.info/20080424> (accessed 21 April 2020).
- 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/>.
- S. A. Clarke, "Pioneer Days: A Life Sketch of F.X. Matthieu, of Marion, a Pioneer of 1842", *The Morning Oregonian* 5 (1886) 39, p. 2.

- 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.
- S. J. Collier, "Global Assemblages", *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 (2006) 2/3, pp. 399–401.
- S. J. Collier and A. Ong, "Global Assemblages, Anthropological Problems", in: S. J. Collier and A. Ong (eds.), *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2005, pp. 3–21.
- Confederation of Independent Football Associations, "CONIFA Constitution", 6 July 2013, <http://www.conifa.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/conifa-constitution.pdf> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- J. F. Cooper, *The Pioneers, or The Sources of the Susquehanna; a Descriptive Tale*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1899.
- G. Copway, *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation*, Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey and Company, 1851.
- C. Cornwall, "The Suicide Bomber of Clayoquot Sound, Revived", *The Tyee*, 14 March 2008, <https://thetyee.ca/Life/2008/03/14/SuicideIn1811/>.
- B. Cox and L. Pundt, "Living My Life", *Fading Frontier*, 2015, <https://open.spotify.com/track/33yMYketlcAicQ9bEgryw1>.
- R. S. Cox et al., "The Shortest and Most Convenient Route: Lewis and Clark in Context", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 94 (2004) 5, pp. 3–255.
- R. K. Crallé (ed.), "Speech on the Reception of Abolition Petitions, Feb. 6, 1837", *The Works of John C. Calhoun*, vol. 2, New York: Russell & Russell, 1851, pp. 625–633.
- T. Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004.
- T. Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World*, London: Routledge, 2006.
- J. H. de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904 [1782].
- W. Cronon, G. A. Miles, and J. Gitlin (eds.), *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1992.
- C. L. Crow, "Introduction", in: C. L. Crow (ed.), *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003.
- R. H. Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911.
- T. M. Davis, *Southscapes: Geographies of Race, Region, & Literature*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- C. Dejung, "Transregional Study of Class, Social Groups, and Milieus", in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 74–81.
- G. Deleuze, *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* [*The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*], T. Conley (trans.), London: Athlone, 1993.
- G. Deleuze, *Pourparlers* [*Negotiations, 1972–1990*], M. Joughin (trans.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1995 [1990].
- G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- D. DeLillo, *White Noise*, New York: Penguin, 1986.
- E. M. DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007.
- J. Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* [*Of Grammatology*], G. C. Spivak (trans.), Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976 [1967].
- C. Dick, "The Trek 探", <https://www.chandick.hk> (accessed 22 April 2020).
- D. Dickenson, *Margaret Fuller: Writing a Woman's Life*, New York: St. Martin's, 1993.

- A. Dietze and M. Middell, "Methods in Transregional Studies: Intercultural Transfers", in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 58–66.
- V. Dindyal, *Guyanese Achievers, USA & Canada: A Celebration*, Bloomington: Trafford, 2011.
- F. Dostoyevsky, *Bésy [Demons]*, R. Pevear and L. Volokhonsky (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 2006 [1871].
- A. Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.
- D. Drabelle, "'Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire' by Peter Stark", review of *Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival*, by P. Stark, *The Washington Post*, 21 March 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/astoria-john-jacob-astor-and-thomas-jeffersons-lost-pacific-empire-by-peter-stark/2014/03/21/61c53796-a2dd-11e3-a5fa-55f0c77bf39c_story.html.
- 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.
- J. D. Drake, *The Nation's Nature. How Continental Presumptions Gave Rise to the United States of America*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011.
- P. L. Dunbar, *Oak and Ivy*, Dayton: United Brethren, 1893.
- P. L. Dunbar, *The Fanatics*, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1902.
- P. L. Dunbar, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*, New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1913.
- R. Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, Boston: Beacon, 2014.
- U. Eco, *Foucault's Pendulum*, New York: Random House, 2014 [1988].
- B. H. Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- L. E. Edwards, "What is the Anthropocene?", *Eos*, 30 November 2015, <http://eos.org/opinions/what-is-the-anthropocene>.
- 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.
- B. Eisler, *The Red Man's Bones: George Catlin, Artist and Showman*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2013.
- T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding", *Four Quartets*, San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971 [1941].
- B. E. Ellis, *Less Than Zero*, New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 1985.
- A. Emerson, "The Early American Novel: Charles Brockden Brown's Fictitious Historiography", *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 40 (2006–2007) 1/2, pp. 125–150.
- R. W. Emerson, "The Poet", *Essays and Lectures*, New York: Library of America, 1983 [1844], pp. 445–468.
- U. Engel, *Regionalismen*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018.
- P. d'Errico, "Jeffery Amherst and Smallpox Blankets", *University of Massachusetts*, 2017, http://people.umass.edu/derrico/amherst/lord_jeff.html.
- 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, <https://www.humangeographie.uni-mainz.de/files/2017/10/JB-16-Beitrag-Escher-et-al.pdf>.

- J. Eue, *Die Oregon-Frage: Amerikanische Expansionspolitik und der Pazifische Nordwesten, 1814–1848*, Münster: LIT, 1995.
- The Famous Sheffield Shop, “Green River Knife”, https://www.sheffield-made.com/acatalog/Green_River_Knife.html (accessed 24 April 2020).
- E. W. Farnham, *Life in Prairie Land*, New York: Harper, 1846.
- N. Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, New York: Penguin, 2005.
- S. F. Fishkin, “Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies”, *American Quarterly* 57 (2005) 1, pp. 17–57.
- J. Fiske, “Francis Parkman”, *The Atlantic Monthly* 73 (1894) 439, pp. 664–674.
- Fort Bridger Rendezvous, 2020, <https://fortbridgerrendezvous.net> (accessed 30 April 2020).
- M. Foucault, “*Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?*” [“What Is an Author?”], J. V. Harari (trans.), in: P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984 [1969], pp. 101–120.
- M. Foucault, “*Des Espace Autres*” [“Of Other Spaces”], J. Miskowiec (trans.), *Diacritics* 16 (1986) 1 [1967], pp. 22–27.
- M. Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison* [Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison], A. M. S. Smith (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 1995 [1975].
- M. Foucault, *L’archéologie du Savoir* [The Archaeology of Knowledge], A. M. Sheridan Smith (trans.), London: Routledge, 2002 [1969].
- M. Foucault, “*Le langage de l’espace*” [“The Language of Space”], G. Moore (trans.), in: J. W. Crampton and S. Elden (eds.), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2007 [1964], pp. 163–167.
- K. Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance”, in: H. Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Seattle: Bay Press, 1983, pp. 16–30.
- “Francis Xavier Matthieu Dead: Pioneer Last Champoege Patriot: His Vote Saved Oregon to Union”, *The Oregon Daily Journal*, 4 February 1914, pp. 1; 4, <https://newspapers.com/image/77159068/> (accessed 10 May 2020).
- “Francis Xavier Matthieu, Pioneer of the Northwest”, *The San Juan Islander*, 13 February 1914, <https://newspapers.com/image/201668514/> (accessed 10 May 2020).
- M. van Frank, “Creation of the Utah Territory”, *The Beehive Archive*, 17 September 2010, <https://www.utahhumanities.org/stories/items/show/196>.
- M. Fuller, *A Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1844.
- H. G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* [Truth and Method], W. Glen-Doepel (trans.), London: Continuum, 2004 [1960].
- W. Gallagher, “On the Western Press”, *The Hesperian* 1 (1838) 1, pp. 90–94.
- 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>.
- H. Gannett (ed.), *Statistical Atlas of the United States, Based Upon the Results of the Eleventh Census*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898, <https://loc.gov/item/07019233>.
- M. Garbus and N. Brenner, “Coast to Coast”, *I can feel you creep into my private life*, 2018, <https://open.spotify.com/track/4yX5P4BUapVsFjbMEKtJrB>.
- B. Gardner, *The Quest for Timbuctoo*, Newton Abbot: Readers International, 1969.
- C. S. Garrett, S. Feyock, and M. Lohaus, “The ‘transatlantic Frankenstein’”, in: M. Sus and F. Pfeifer (eds.), *European Union in the World 2025: Scenarios for EU Relations with its Neighbours and Strategic Partners*, Dahrendorf Forum, 2016, pp. 9–12, <https://dahrendorf.org>

- dorf-forum.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Dahrendorf_Analysis_European-Union-in-the-World-2025.pdf.
- R. D. Gastil and B. Singer, *The Pacific Northwest: Growth of a Regional Identity*, Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2010.
- C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- H. George, "Jefferson and the Land Question", in: A. E. Bergh (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 16, Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907, pp. i–xiv.
- M. Geyer and C. Bright, "World History in a Global Age", *The American Historical Review* 100 (1995) 4, pp. 1034–1060.
- P. Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- N. Glick Schiller and A. Çağlar, "Displacement, Emplacement and Migrant Newcomers: Rethinking Urban Sociabilities within Multiscalar Power", *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 23 (2016) 1, pp. 17–34.
- W. H. Goetzmann, *New Lands, New Men: America and the Second Great Age of Discovery*, New York: Viking, 1986.
- S. G. Goodrich, *Peter Parley's Universal History, on the Basis of Geography*, New York: Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, & Company, 1876.
- S. B. Gordon, "Law and the Contact of Cultures", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 130–142.
- B. Gough, *First Across the Continent: Sir Alexander Mackenzie*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- D. Gregory, "Imaginative Geographies", *Progress in Human Geography* 19 (1995) 4, pp. 447–485.
- D. Gregory et al. (eds.), *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2009.
- M. Gross, "Lessons From the Frugal Grand Tour", *The New York Times*, 5 September 2008, <https://frugaltraveler.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/05/lessons-from-the-frugal-grand-tour>.
- J. Guldi, "What is the Spatial Turn?", *Spatial Humanities: A Project of the Institute for Enabling Geospatial Scholarship*, 2011, <http://spatial.scholarslab.org/spatial-turn/what-is-the-spatial-turn/>.
- S. Günzel, "Raum – Topographie – Topologie", in: S. Günzel (ed.), *Topologie. Zur Raumbeschreibung in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2007, pp. 13–29.
- A. H. Guyot, *Earth and Man, Lectures on Comparative Physical Geography, in Its Relation to the History of Mankind*, C. C. Felton (trans.), Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1853 [1849].
- A. Hall, "William T. Coggeshall – State Librarian and Lincoln Bodyguard", *State Library of Ohio*, 2011, <http://web.archive.org/web/20110627185333/http://www.library.ohio.gov/marketing/Newsletters/TheNews/2011/February/CoggeshallLibrarianBodyguard>.
- J. Hall, "Preface", *Illinois Monthly Magazine* 1 (1830), pp. 1–4.
- J. Hall, "To the Reader", *The Western Monthly Magazine* 1 (1833), pp. 1–5.
- J. Hall, "Preface", *Tales of the Border*, Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1835, pp. 9–12.
- J. Hall, "The French Village", *Tales of the Border*, Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1835, pp. 102–128.
- J. Hall, "Preface", *Legends of the West*, New York: T. L. Magagnos and Company, 1854, pp. vii–xiv.
- J. Hall, "The Backwoodsman", *Legends of the West*, New York: T. L. Magagnos and Company, 1854, pp. 237–266.

- S. Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance", in: UNESCO (ed.), *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, Paris: UNESCO, 1980, pp. 305–345.
- S. Hall, "Culture, Community, Nation", *Cultural Studies* 7 (1993) 3, pp. 349–363.
- P. Hämäläinen, "What's in a Concept? The Kinetic Empire of the Comanches", *History and Theory* 52 (2013), pp. 81–90.
- J. Hanebeck, *Understanding Metalepsis: The Hermeneutics of Narrative Transgression*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017.
- E. B. Hanna, "Diary of a Journey from Pittsburgh to Oregon City", Oregon City, 1878, P-A 313, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- D. J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London: Routledge, 1991.
- G. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- S. Hargreaves, "The Richest Americans in History", *CNN Money*, 2 June 2014, <https://money.cnn.com/gallery/luxury/2014/06/01/richest-americans-in-history>.
- D. Harper, "Frontier", *Online Etymology Dictionary*, 2019, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/frontier>.
- 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.
- D. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- D. Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1990) 3, pp. 418–434.
- D. Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- J. A. Hijiya, "Why the West is Lost", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51 (1994) 2, pp. 276–292.
- R. V. Hine and J. M. Faragher, *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.
- 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.
- A. D. Holan, "In Context: Hillary Clinton and the 'Basket of Deplorables'", *Politifact*, 11 September 2016, <https://www.politifact.com/article/2016/sep/11/context-hillary-clinton-basket-deplorables/>.
- K. L. Holmes, *Best of Covered Wagon Women*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008.
- T. Holt, "A Modest Proposal – Downsize California!" *SFGate*, 17 August 2003, <https://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/A-modest-proposal-downsize-California-2574603.php>.
- A. Honcharenko, *Alaska Scrap-Book: 1868–1876*, San Francisco, 1909, P-K 10–11, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- M. Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno, "Kulturindustrie: Aufklärung als Massenbetrug", *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, Amsterdam: Querido, 1947, pp. 144–198.
- R. Hornsby, "What Heidegger Means by *Being-in-the-World*", <http://royby.com/philosophy/pages/dasein.html>.
- J. K. Howat, "Washington Crossing the Delaware", *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 26 (1968) 7, pp. 289–299.
- S. Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- S. P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs* 72 (1993) 3, pp. 22–49.
- 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/>.

- A. F. Hyde, "Transients and Stickers: The Problem of Community in the American West", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 304–328.
- N. Inman, "'A Dark and Bloody Ground': American Indian Responses to Expansion during the American Revolution", *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 70 (2011) 4, pp. 258–275.
- W. Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies*, London: John Murray, 1832.
- W. Irving, *Astoria*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1836.
- W. Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.*, New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1904 [1837].
- M. Isserman and J. S. Bowman (eds.), *Across America: The Lewis and Clark Expedition*, New York: Facts on File, 2005.
- F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
- B. Jarvis, *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- T. Jefferson, "To John Melish", in: A. E. Bergh (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 16, Washington: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1907 [31 December 1816], pp. 93–95.
- K. Johnson (ed.), *Unfortunate Emigrants: Narratives of the Donner Party*, Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996.
- S. L. Johnson, "'Domestic' Life in the Diggings: The Southern Mines in the California Gold Rush", in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 107–132.
- W. Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- G. Jones, *American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in U.S. Literature, 1840–1945*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- 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>.
- C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, London: Routledge, 2016 [1921].
- J. T. Juricek, "American Usage of the Word 'Frontier' from Colonial Times to Frederick Jackson Turner", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110 (1966) 1, pp. 10–34.
- 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.
- S. Kaplan, "Joe Medicine Crow, a War Chief, Historian and the Last Link to the Battle of Little Big Horn, Dies at 102", *The Washington Post*, 4 April 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/04/04/joe-medicine-crow-a-war-chief-historian-and-the-last-link-to-the-battle-of-little-big-horn-dies-at-102/>.
- P. J. Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- P. J. Kastor, "What Are the Advantages of the Acquisition? Inventing Expansion in the Early American Republic", *American Quarterly* 60 (2008) 4, pp. 1003–1035.
- C. Keely, "Relative Ways", *Source Tags & Codes*, 2002, <https://open.spotify.com/track/69Up0rtQOEzLnvd8dfELS>.
- F. Kelleter, "Transnationalism: The American Challenge", *Review of International American Studies* 2 (2007) 3, pp. 29–33.

- D. M. Kennedy, "We Enjoy Pushing Rivers Around", *The New York Times*, 23 February 1986, sec. 7, p. 7, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/02/23/books/we-enjoy-pushing-rivers-around.html>.
- J. Kennings, *Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks*, New York: Scribner, 2012.
- M. Kimaid, *Modernity, Metatheory, and the Temporal-Spatial Divide: From Mythos to Techne*, London: Routledge, 2015.
- C. King, "The True-Life Horror That Inspired Moby-Dick", *Smithsonian Magazine*, 1 March 2013, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-true-life-horror-that-inspired-moby-dick-17576/>.
- K. L. Klein, "Reclaiming the 'F' Word, or Being and Becoming Postwestern", *Pacific Historical Review* 65 (1996) 2, pp. 179–215.
- A. Koenen, "Little Maison on the Prairie", *aspeers* 10 (2017), pp. 93–103.
- A. Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- A. Kolodny, "Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of the American Frontiers", *American Literature* 64 (1992) 1, pp. 1–18.
- B. Korf and C. Schetter, "Räume des Ausnahmezustands: Carl Schmitts Raumphilosophie, *Frontiers und Ungoverned Territories*", *Peripherie* 32 (2012) 126/127, pp. 147–170.
- A. Koseff, "State of Jefferson Supporters plan Bill seeking Independence from California", *The Sacramento Bee*, 6 January 2016, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article53355675.html>.
- M. Kowalewski, "Contemporary Regionalism", in: C. L. Crow (ed.), *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 7–24.
- S. Krause, "Mount Coffin – Ein bemerkenswerter Fels", *Rostock University*, 3 September 2016, <https://www.iaa.uni-rostock.de/forschung/laufende-forschungsprojekte/american-antiquities-prof-mackenthun/project/places/mount-coffin/>.
- J. H. Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- V. M. Kutzinski, "Borders and Bodies: The United States, America, and the Caribbean", *CR: The New Centennial Review* 1 (2001) 2, pp. 55–88.
- A. J. Langguth, *Union 1812: The Americans Who Fought the Second War of Independence*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.
- P. Larkin, "Landscape Sailing to a New World: British Romantic Poetry and the Unsettling of America", *Coleridge Bulletin* 17 (2001), pp. 39–57.
- M. D. Lassiter and J. Crespino (eds.), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- P. Laufer, *The Elusive State of Jefferson: A Journey Through the 51st State*, Lanham: TwoDot Books, 2013.
- H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2005.
- Z. Leonard, *Adventures of Zenas Leonard: Fur Trapper and Trader 1831–1836*, W. F. Wagner (ed.), Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1904 [1839].
- N. Levin, *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry, 1933–1945*, New York: T. Y. Crowell, 1968.
- M. W. Lewis, "American Geographical Illiteracy and (Perhaps) the World's Worst Atlas", *GeoCurrents*, 30 April 2014, <http://www.geocurrents.info/geographical-thought/american-geographical-illiteracy-perhaps-worlds-worst-atlas>.
- J. Leyda, *American Mobilities: Geographies of Class, Race, and Gender in US Culture*, American Culture Studies, Bielefeld: transcript, 2016.

- P. N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1987.
- P. N. Limerick, "Region and Reason", in: E. L. Ayers et al. (eds.), *All over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 83–104.
- P. N. Limerick, "Seeing and Being Seen: Tourism in the American West", in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 15–31.
- P. N. Limerick, C. A. Milner, and C. E. Rankin (eds.), *Trails: Toward a New Western History*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991.
- W. Lippmann, *Men of Destiny*, Piscataway: Transaction, 2003 [1927].
- J. M. Logsdon, *John F. Kennedy and the Race to the Moon*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- S. Luchetta, "Literary Mapping: At the Intersection of Complexity and Reduction", *Literary Geographies* 4 (2018) 1, pp. 6–9.
- R. MacMullen, *Roman Government's Response to Crisis: A.D. 235–337*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- "Madness Rules the Hour", *Weekly Oregon Statesman*, 14 January 1861, p. 2, <https://newspapers.com/image/81516962/>.
- C. S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- J. Malpas, "Hans-Georg Gadamer", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 3 March 2003, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/>.
- T. A. Maroney, "Emotional Common Sense as Constitutional Law", *Vanderbilt Law Review* 62 (2009), pp. 851–917.
- J. H. Martin, "Saints, Sinners and Reformers: The Burned-Over District Re-Visited", *The Crooked Lake Review*, Fall 2005, http://crookedlakereview.com/articles/136_150/137fall2005/137martin.html.
- J. Martínez-Saldaña, "La Frontera Del Norte", in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 370–384.
- S. Marung, "Imaginations and Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition", *TRAFO: Blog for Transregional Research*, 22 May 2018, <https://trafo.hypotheses.org/9655>.
- 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.
- L. Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- D. Massey, *For Space*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008.
- J. Matteson, *The Lives of Margaret Fuller*, New York: W. W. Norton, 2012.
- J. A. Matthews and D. T. Herbert, *Geography: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957.
- F. X. Matthieu, "Refugee, Trapper and Settler", Salem, 1878, P-A 49, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- A. Mbembe, "Necropolitics", *Political Culture* 15 (2003) 1, pp. 11–40.
- A. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, London: Routledge, 1995.

- 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].
- 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>.
- D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History Vol. 2: Continental America, 1800–1867*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- H. Melville, “Mr. Parkman’s Tour”, *The Literary World* (1849) 113, pp. 291–293.
- H. Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851.
- A. N. de Menil, *The Literature of the Louisiana Territory*, St. Louis: St. Louis News Company, 1904.
- B. J. Metcalf, “Four Things to Know about the Journey of the Mormon Battalion: An Expedition of Faith and Sacrifice”, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, 24 January 2018, <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/historic-sites/journey-of-the-mormon-battalion>.
- M. L. Meyer, “American Indian Blood Quantum Requirements: Blood Is Thicker than Family”, in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 231–249.
- M. Middell, “Raumformate – Bausteine in Prozessen der Neuverräumlichung”, SFB Working Paper 14, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019.
- M. Middell and U. Wardenga, “Spatial Formats: Introduction”, in: M. Middell (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*, London: Routledge, 2019, pp. 147–150.
- L. L. Mielke, *Moving Encounters: Sympathy and the Indian Question in Antebellum Literature*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008.
- C. A. Milner, “America Only More So”, in: C. A. Milner, A. M. Butler, and D. R. Lewis (eds.), *Major Problems in the History of the American West: Documents and Essays*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989, pp. 33–41.
- J. Milton, *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books*, Boston: Timothy Bedlington, 1820 [1667].
- M. Möhring, G. Pisarz-Ramirez, and U. Wardenga, *Imaginationen* (= Dialektik des Globalen. Kernbegriffe, no. 5), Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.
- Mojave Muleskinners, 2020, <https://www.mojavemuleskinners.com> (accessed 23 April 2020).
- D. Morris, *The Sense of Space*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013.
- K. G. Morrissey, *Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
- M. Murphy, “Making Men in the West: The Coming of Age of Miles Cavanaugh and Martin Frank Dunham”, in: V. J. Matsumoto and B. Allmendinger (eds.), *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 133–147.
- A. P. Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785–1804*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.
- National Library of Scotland, “Broadside Ballad Entitled ‘Cheer Boys, Cheer!’”, *The Word on the Street*, 2004, <https://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=16731> (accessed 23 April 2020).
- E. Nettels, *Language, Race, and Social Class in Howells’s America*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988.
- 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>.
- 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>.

- D. L. Nicandri, "Lewis and Clark: Exploring under the Influence of Alexander Mackenzie", *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 95 (2004) 4, pp. 171–181.
- 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.
- W. Nugent, "Where Is the American West? Report on a Survey", *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 42 (1992) 3, pp. 2–23.
- E. J. Nygren and B. Robertson, *Views and Visions: American Landscape Before 1830*, Washington: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986.
- M. O'Brien, "Imperialism", *Placing the South*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007, pp. 48–52.
- S. D. O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- J. L. O'Sullivan, "Annexation", *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review* 17 (1845), pp. 5–10.
- C. Olson, *Call me Ishmael*, New York: Grove, 1947.
- J. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009.
- S. Oswalt, "The United States in a Global Context", US Department of Agriculture, 2014. "Pacific Republic!", *Petaluma Weekly Argus*, 3 November 1876, p. 2, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/275395315/>.
- R. J. Papp Jr., "America Is an Arctic Nation", *The White House: President Barack Obama*, 2 December 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2014/12/02/america-arctic-nation>.
- E. B. C. Park, "Letters to His Wife", 1849, P-W 26, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- R. D. Parker, "Jane Johnston Schoolcraft", *Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Bamewawagezhikaquay, 1800–1842*, <https://thesoundthestarsmake.com>.
- F. Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*, New York: Charles E. Merrill Company, 1910.
- H. Paul, "Critical Regionalism and Post-Exceptionalist American Studies", in: W. Fluck and D. E. Pease (eds.), *Towards a Post-Exceptionalist American Studies*, Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2014, pp. 397–423.
- H. Paul, *The Myths That Made America: An Introduction to American Studies*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2014.
- L. S. Peavy and U. Smith, *Pioneer Women: The Lives of Women on the Frontier*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.
- S. Pietsch, "Raumbezogene Imaginationen der Arktis im Kontext und Nachleben der dritten Franklin-Expedition 1845–1848", *Historische Geographien: Ein Forum für historische Perspektiven in der Geographie*, 8 November 2018, <http://historische-geographien.de/raumbezogene-imaginationen-der-arktis-im-kontext-und-nachleben-der-dritten-franklin-expedition-1845-1848/>.
- G. Pisarz-Ramirez and S. Wöll, *Periphere Räume in der Amerikanistik* (= Dialektik des Globalen. Kernbegriffe, no. 3), Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019.
- G. Pisarz-Ramirez, S. Wöll, and D. Bozkurt, *Spatial Fictions: Imagining (Trans)national Space in the Southern and Western Peripheries of the Nineteenth Century United States*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2018.

- D. E. Pitzer (ed.), *Robert Owen's American Legacy: Proceedings of the Robert Owen Bicentennial Conference*, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1972.
- D. E. Pitzer (ed.), "The Original Boatload of Knowledge Down the Ohio River", *Ohio Journal of Science* 89 (1989) 5, pp. 128–142.
- D. Pizer, "Jack London's 'To Build a Fire': How Not to Read Naturalist Fiction", *Philosophy and Literature* 34 (2010) 1, pp. 218–227.
- E. A. Poe, "Astoria", in: N. P. Willis and J. R. Lowell (eds.), *The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe*, vol. 4, New York: Redfield, 1857, pp. 420–447.
- J. K. Polk, *The Diary of James K. Polk During His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, M. M. Quaife (ed.), vol. 1, Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company, 1910.
- D. R. Powell, *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge, 1992.
- Public Broadcasting Service, "Joe Medicine Crow", September 2007, http://www.pbs.org/the-war/detail_5177.htm (accessed 21 April 2020).
- D. D. Quantic, "The Great Plains", in: C. L. Crow (ed.), *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 213–230.
- 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.
- L. U. Reavis, *A Change of National Empire; or Arguments in Favor of the Removal of the National Capital from Washington City to the Mississippi Valley*, St. Louis: J. F. Torrey, 1869.
- "Relative to the Oregon Question. Conclusive Views of the Administration", *The Morning Post*, 1 December 1845, p. 2, <https://newspaperarchive.com/london-morning-post-dec-01-1845-p-2/>.
- E. Rhodes, "Beyond the Exceptionalist Thesis, a Global American Studies 2.0", *American Quarterly* 64 (2012) 4, pp. 899–912.
- M. Ridge, "The American West: Frontier to Region", *New Mexico Historical Review* 64 (1989) 2, pp. 125–141.
- W. E. Riebsame and J. J. Robb, *Atlas of the New West: Portrait of a Changing Nation*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1997.
- B. R. Roberts and M. A. Stephens (eds.), *Archipelagic American Studies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- D. D. Robertson, "The Thunder Bird Tootooch Legends", *Chinook Jargon*, 25 August 2016, <https://chinookjargon.com/2016/08/25/the-thunder-bird-tootooch-legends/>.
- K. K. Robinson, "My Journey From Louisiana to Havana, and Back Again", *The Nation*, 15 July 2016, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/my-journey-from-louisiana-to-havana-and-back-again/>.
- J. P. Ronda, *Astoria & Empire*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
- J. P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
- J. P. Ronda, "Passion and Imagination in the Exploration of the American West", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 53–76.
- M. Ronda, "Mourning and Melancholia in the Anthropocene", *Post45*, 10 June 2013, <http://post45.org/2013/06/mourning-and-melancholia-in-the-anthropocene>.
- T. Roosevelt, "The Duties of American Citizenship", Speech, Yale University, Buffalo, 26 January 1883, <https://glc.yale.edu/duties-american-citizenship>.
- T. Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1, New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1904 [1889].

- F. Rosell et al., "Ecological Impact of Beavers *Castor Fibre* and *Castor Canadensis* and their Ability to Modify Ecosystems", *Mammal Review* 35 (2005), pp. 1–29.
- H. K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998.
- B. Russell, *Philosophie des Abendlandes: Ihr Zusammenhang mit der politischen und sozialen Entwicklung*, Darmstadt: Holle, 1954.
- E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- E. W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- E. W. Said, "Invention, Memory, and Place", in: W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp. 241–259.
- D. Salkeld, "New Historicism", in: C. Knellwolf and C. Norris (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 59–70.
- L. Sandlin, *Wicked River: The Mississippi When It Last Ran Wild*, New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- S. Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- K. Schuette, "New Harmony, Indiana: Three Great Community Experiments", *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 26 (2014) 2, p. 45.
- S. Schulten, "Maps for the Masses: 1880–1900", in: S. Schulten (ed.), *The Geographical Imagination in America: 1880–1950*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, pp. 17–44.
- H. W. Scott, *History of Portland Oregon*, Syracuse: D. Mason & Co, 1890.
- H. W. Scott "The Pioneer Character of Oregon Progress", *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 18 (1917) 4, pp. 245–270.
- P. M. Segura, "The Capture of the Bluff of Baton Rouge", *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 17 (1976) 2, pp. 203–209.
- E. Senaha, "Manhood and American Literary History: An Overview with Selected Bibliography of Masculinities and Men's Studies", *The Annual Report on Cultural Science* 118 (2006), pp. 95–118.
- R. Siegle, "Capote's 'Handcarved Coffins' and the Nonfiction Novel", *Contemporary Literature* 25 (1984) 4, pp. 437–451.
- R. Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800–1890*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.
- N. Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008.
- R. G. Smith, *Baudrillard Dictionary*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010.
- E. W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996.
- T. D'Souza, "State of Jefferson Dreams were Dashed by Pearl Harbor", *Mount Shasta Herald*, 2 July 2012, <https://www.mtshastanews.com/article/20081211/NEWS/312119971>.
- N. Spitzer, "The Story Of Woody Guthrie's 'This Land Is Your Land'", *National Public Radio*, 15 February 2012, <https://www.npr.org/2000/07/03/1076186/this-land-is-your-land>.
- F. K. Stanzel, *Europäischer Völkerspiegel: Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts*, Heidelberg: Winter, 1999.
- P. Stark, *Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival*, New York: HarperCollins, 2014.
- State of Jefferson Formation, "Declaration of Independence!", 15 March 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20181002103037/http://soj51.org/> (accessed 24 April 2020).

- State of Jefferson Formation, “Declaration of Unity”, <https://soj51.org/unity-declaration/> (accessed 24 April 2020).
- N. Steinbach-Hüther et al., *Geographiegeschichtsschreibung und Digital Humanities. Neue Methoden für Zeitschriftenanalysen*, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019.
- B. Sterling, “A Statement of Principle”, *Electronic Frontier Foundation*, 30 September 1992, <https://www.eff.org/effector/3/6>.
- K. Struve, “Third Space”, in: D. Götsche, A. Dunker, and G. Dürbeck (eds.), *Handbuch Postkolonialismus und Literatur*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 2017, pp. 226–229.
- 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.
- A. R. Sumpter, “Segregation of the Free People of Color and the Construction of Race in Antebellum New Orleans”, *Southeastern Geographer* 48 (2008) 1, pp. 19–37.
- 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>.
- S. Tamanawis, “Cascadia Forever: Anthem for a New Nation”, 9 November 2009, <https://youtu.be/OGJpXcShGSM>.
- J. D. Thomas, “The Black Code of Louisiana, 1806”, *Accessible Archives*, 25 August 2011, <https://www.accessible-archives.com/2011/08/the-black-code-of-louisiana-1806/>.
- H. D. Thoreau, *Walden*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989 [1854].
- G. B. Tindall and D. E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 7th edn, vol. 1, New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.
- N. Tonkovich, “Traveling in the West, Writing in the Library: Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes*”, *Legacy* 10 (1993) 2, pp. 79–102.
- R. Tregaskis, *The Warrior King: Hawaii’s Kamehameha the Great*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1973.
- D. Trend, “Worlding: Identity, Media, and Imagination in a Digital Age”, 30 November 2012, <https://davidtrend.com/?p=140>.
- R. W. Tucker and D. C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- G. Tuflly, “Correspondence”, 1855, P-G 263, Bancroft Library Western Americana Collection, University of California, Berkeley.
- F. J. Turner, “The Problem of the West”, *The Atlantic Monthly* 78 (1896) 367, pp. 289–297.
- F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920.
- G. Tweedale, *Sheffield Steel and America: A Century of Commercial and Technological Interdependence 1830–1930*, Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- C. Ubbelohde, “History and the Midwest as a Region”, *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 78 (1994) 1, pp. 35–47.
- US Census Bureau, “11th Census 1890 Overview”, *Through the Decades*, 18 July 2017, https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1890.html (accessed 22 April 2020).
- US Census Bureau “Growth in Urban Population Outpaces Rest of Nation, Census Bureau Reports”, https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html (accessed 22 April 2020).
- US Census Bureau, “New Harmony Town, Indiana”, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?g=16000000US1852974&tid=ACSDP5Y2016.DP05&q=DP05> (accessed 22 April 2020).

- US Department of the Interior, "History and Educational Resources: The Oregon Trail", *National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center*, <https://www.blm.gov/learn/interpretive-centers/national-historic-oregon-trail-interpretive-center/history-and-educational-resources>.
- US Department of State, "Webster-Ashburton Treaty, 1842", *Milestones: 1830–1860*, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/webster-treaty> (accessed 22 April 2020).
- J. Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, London: Routledge, 2001.
- F. Usbeck, *Ceremonial Storytelling: Ritual and Narrative in Post-9/11 US Wars*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2019.
- H. A. Veesser, "Introduction", in: H. A. Veesser (ed.), *The New Historicism*, London: Routledge, 1989, pp. ix–xvi.
- W. H. Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*, Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Company, 1891.
- C. Vevier, "American Continentalism: An Idea of Expansion, 1845–1910", *The American Historical Review* 65 (1960) 2, pp. 323–335.
- F. F. Victor, *The River of the West: Life and Adventure in the Rocky Mountains and Oregon*, New York: Columbian Book Company, 1871.
- L. Vivola, "O' Cascadia", 30 May 2018, https://youtu.be/TW6_Do815_Q.
- V. J. Vogel, *Indian Names in Michigan*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986.
- W., "Present Condition and Future Prospects of Oregon", *The Oregonian, and Indian's Advocate* 1 (1839) 5, pp. 146–149, https://oregonhistoryproject.org/media/uploads/indians_advocate_r2fZN0n.pdf.
- D. C. Wahl, "Bioregionalism", *Age of Awareness*, 30 September 2017, <https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/bioregionalism-4e15f314327>.
- D. Wallace-Wells, "Puritan Inc", *The New Republic*, 23 November 2011, <https://newrepublic.com/article/75603/puritan-inc>.
- M. Walsh, *The American West: Visions and Revisions*, Cambridge: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- H. Warnecke-Berger and G. Pizarz-Ramirez (eds.), *Processes of Spatialization in the Americas: Configurations and Narratives*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2018.
- S. B. Warner Jr., *The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- B. Watson, "George Catlin's Obsession: An Exhibition at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C. asks: Did his Work Exploit or Advance the American Indian?", *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2002, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/george-catlins-obsession-72840046/>.
- B. A. Watson, "John Marshall and Indian Land Rights: A Historical Rejoinder to the Claim of 'Universal Recognition' of the Doctrine of Discovery", *Seton Hall Law Review* 36 (2006) 481, pp. 481–549.
- W. P. Webb, *The Great Plains*. Waltham: Blaisdell, 1939.
- K. Webley, "The Republic of Cascadia", *Time*, 10 January 2011, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2041365_2041364_2041373,00.html.
- B. Werlen, "Festvortrag", Leipzig, 25 May 2016.
- H. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

- 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.
- R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- T. Widmer, "Draining the Swamp", *The New Yorker*, 19 January 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/draining-the-swamp>.
- R. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- J. Wills, "Red Dead Redemption 2: Can a Video Game be too Realistic?" *The Conversation*, 2 November 2018, <https://theconversation.com/red-dead-redemption-2-can-a-video-game-be-too-realistic-106404>.
- M. Wills, "The Free People of Color of Pre-Civil War New Orleans", *JSTOR Daily*, 20 February 2019, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-free-people-of-color-of-pre-civil-war-new-orleans/>.
- R. Wilson, *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- W. E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent: The Story of New Harmony*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967.
- J. Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity*, Harrisburg: Capital Area School for the Arts, 1997 [1630], <https://www.casa-arts.org/cms/lib/PA01925203/Centricity/Domain/50/A%20Model%20of%20Christian%20Charity.pdf>.
- H. A. Wise, *Los Gringos: or, An Inside View of Mexico and California, with Wanderings in Peru, Chili, and Polynesia*, New York: Baker and Scribner, 1849.
- S. Wöll, "Inertia and Movement: The Spatialization of the Native Northland in Jack London's Short Stories", *GeoHumanities* 3 (2017) 1, pp. 65–87.
- A. F. Wood, "1893 World's Columbian Exposition: Romancing the City", *Wood Valley*, 2005, <https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/wce.html>.
- A. F. Wood, "Communication in the Age of Mobility", *Wood Valley*, 2005, <https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/wooda/195/syllabus5rothman.html>.
- D. Worster, *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- J. K. Wright, "Terrae Incognitae: The Place of the Imagination in Geography", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 37 (1947) 1, pp. 1–15.
- D. M. Wrobel, "The Literary West and the Twentieth Century", in: W. Deverell (ed.), *A Companion to the American West*, Hoboken: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 460–480.
- J. Wylie, "Landscape", in: J. A. Agnew and D. N. Livingstone (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011, pp. 300–315.
- M. Wyman, *The Wisconsin Frontier*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- H. Zapf, *Amerikanische Literaturgeschichte*, Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2010.

Index

- Acadia 68. *See also* New France
- Adams-Onís Treaty, (1819) 27
- aesthetic 10, 12, 22, 39, 56, 58, 63, 65, 87, 92, 94, 115, 117, 132, 159, 178, 206, 207, 261
- affect 3, 63, 79, 80, 101, 107, 108, 112, 116, 119, 124, 128, 135, 153, 165, 177, 239, 240, 246; affective spaces 120, 181, 263
- Africa 91, 131, 149, 225; North 77, 88
- African-American 4, 34, 72, 82, 106, 108, 125–127, 131, 133, 145, 149. *See also* Dunbar, Paul Laurence; Jim Crow; slavery
- agrarianism 27, 38, 41, 75, 96, 130, 144, 150–151, 193. *See also* Jefferson, Thomas
- Alaska 7, 8, 27, 80, 195, 228, 230, 245, 249, 250, 252; Russian Alaska 228–230, 233. *See also* Russian-American Company
- Alaskan Purchase 21, 230. *See also* Russia
- Allmendinger, Blake 9–11, 104
- Alps 126, 196, 245
- Alta California 211, 226. *See also* New Spain
- American Adam 35, 38, 86. *See also* backwoodsman
- American Empire. *See* Empire
- American Fur Company (AFC). *See* companies
- American Studies 13–15, 38, 40, 48, 51
- Americanness 14, 85, 92. *See also* patriotism
- Amherst, Jeffrey 3, 70
- Appalachians, Appalachian Mountains 2, 3, 20, 32, 68, 70, 128, 130. *See also* agrarianism
- Applegate Trail 189
- archipelago 12, 28, 49, 185, 226, 234–235. *See also* Roberts, Brian Russell
- Arctic 49, 184, 226. *See also* Blum, Hester
- aristocracy 127, 144, 145, 170, 195, 220, 239, 241
- articulation 5, 17. *See also* Hall, Stuart
- Asian-Pacific (hemisphere) 5, 26, 186, 195, 197, 216–219, 223, 234, 235, 241, 249, 250, 264. *See also* Pacific Ocean
- Asian-Pacific trade 145, 183
- assemblage 55, 61, 62, 65, 72, 75, 85, 88, 121, 125, 126, 134, 136, 151, 176, 198, 200, 203, 206, 208, 211, 254, 262, 266
- Astor, John Jacob 208, 217–219, 221–224, 226, 236, 240, 241
- Astoria, Fort 218–222, 224, 225, 227, 228, 230, 235–237, 241, 264. *See also* Astor, John Jacob; Irving, Washington
- Athearn, Robert 29, 30
- Atlantic Ocean 26, 32, 34, 41, 96, 170, 185, 223, 245, 250
- Augé, Marc 22
- autonomy 194, 234, 241, 247, 258, 264. *See also* Cascadia; Pacific republic; State of Jefferson
- Aztlán 28, 29. *See also* borderlands; Mexico
- backwoodsmen 86, 97, 98, 103, 124, 145, 161, 170. *See also* frontier; Hall, James; masculinity
- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich 158, 161
- Baranov, Alexander Andreyevich 229, 230, 233. *See also* Russian-American Company
- Baretich, Alexander 253
- Barlow, Joel 4
- Barnhart, Terry A. 82
- Barry, J. Neilson 243
- Barthes, Roland 64, 65
- Battle of Little Big Horn 62
- Baudrillard, Jean 110
- Bauman, Zygmunt 135
- Bentham, Jeremy 75
- Berkeley, George 1, 2, 58, 133; *Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way* 1, 4, 58, 133
- Billings, Frederick 1, 2
- Billington, Ray Allen 36, 37; *America's Frontier Heritage* 37

- bioregionalism 241, 251, 253, 256. *See also* Callenbach, Ernest; Cascadia; ecocriticism
- Bird, Robert Montgomery 88
- Birkle, Carmen 116, 123
- Blair, Sarah 51
- Bleak, James Godson. *See* Emigrants and travellers
- Blum, Hester 49
- Boone, Daniel 2, 69, 95
- borderlands 10, 29, 43, 48, 49, 61
- Boyer, Paul 233
- Bozeman Trail 198. *See also* Oregon Trail
- Brackenridge, Henry Marie 140, 149, 157, 162, 163; *Views of Louisiana* 23
- British Columbia 251, 252
- British Empire. *See* Empire
- Brown, Charles Brockden 153
- Brown, Jerry 258
- Buffalo Bill 100, 102. *See also* Oakley, Annie
- Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show 30, 100
- buffalo 31, 146, 169, 174, 179, 192, 196, 200–201, 206, 230. *See also* Catlin, George
- burial site 238, 239. *See also* Mount Coffin
- Butler, Judith 66
- California 21, 39, 61, 80, 103, 126, 186, 192, 196, 216, 233, 240, 244, 246, 249, 250, 252; coast 228, 229; emigration to 158, 200, 203, 204, 207, 211; gold mines 120, 144, 191; independence 60, 130, 194, 257, 258; Mormons in 212–214; trans-Mississippi state 8; University of 1
- California Trail 198. *See also* Oregon Trail
- Callenbach, Ernest 252; *Ecotopia* 252
- Campbell, Neil 59, 128, 129; *The Rhizomatic West* 59
- Canada 16, 19, 49, 72, 91, 100, 115, 139, 140, 145, 185, 187, 191, 218, 220, 226, 242, 252; British Canada 3; French-Canadian 67, 68
- Cape Disappointment 190, 225
- Cape Horn 185, 224, 225, 231. *See also* Dana, Richard Henry
- capitalism 27, 38, 40, 47, 53, 65, 74, 76, 83, 99, 101, 115, 119, 129, 150, 157, 161, 178, 190, 208, 214, 220, 238. *See also* Williams, Raymond
- Cardwell, James A. *See* Emigrants and travellers
- Caribbean 12, 131, 140, 147, 164, 250
- Cascadia, Cascadians 4, 251–257, 264. *See also* Baretich, Alexander; Ecotopia
- CascadiaNow 60, 252, 254, 255, 257, 259. *See also* Callenbach, Ernest
- Cather, Willa 106; *My Ántonia* 106
- Catholic 68, 161, 165, 185, 226, 243
- Catlin, George 5, 8, 90, 112, 151, 167–183, 199, 206, 239, 263
- Cavelier, Robert 139
- ceremony 139, 179–181, 208. *See also* Catlin, George; Mount Coffin
- Champoeg Meetings 242–244, 264. *See also* Oregon; Barry, J. Neilson
- Chesnutt, Charles W. 128
- Chicago 23, 45, 71, 108, 125. *See also* Sinclair, Upton
- Chicago World Fair (1893) 30
- China 6, 23, 27, 247, 251; American trade with 191, 218, 220, 234, 240
- Chomsky, Noam 4
- Chopin, Kate 128, 134
- chronotope 3, 158, 164, 177, 182, 246. *See also* Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich
- Church, Frederic 38
- circuit rider 77, 155. *See also* Hall, James
- City Upon a Hill 20, 35, 75, 222, 255. *See also* Winthrop, John
- Civil War 23, 28, 45, 102, 125, 130, 131, 134, 242, 247, 258
- civilization 26, 28, 31–33, 36, 43, 86, 88, 93, 101, 114, 117, 119, 121, 150, 159, 169, 180, 193, 197, 201, 206, 215, 223, 246; American 81, 156; western 118, 195, 199, 200, 236
- Clark, Julia 147
- Clark, William 2, 21, 145, 146, 169, 181, 184, 190, 222, 224, 226
- Clarke, James Freeman 108
- Clarke, Sarah Anne 108, 117, 118
- climate 7, 27, 35, 36, 49, 140, 146, 214, 256
- Clinton, Hillary 45
- Cockaigne 29, 89. *See also* Garden Eden

- Code Noir/Black Code 149, 263. *See also* Jim Crow; Louisiana
- Cody, William Frederick. *See* Buffalo Bill
- Coggeshall, William Turner 82, 83
- Cold War 167
- colonial powers 6, 70, 183, 186, 225, 228, 241, 244, 262; colonialism 17, 42, 47, 52, 60, 119; colonies, colonial possessions 9, 16, 20, 25, 29, 68, 69, 117, 131, 140, 148, 149, 163–165, 187
- colonies, thirteen 3, 31, 69–71, 81
- Colorado 8, 80, 126, 190, 196, 209, 214
- Columbia River 184, 188, 190, 218, 225, 243, 249
- commodification 20, 127, 141, 178, 239, 264. *See also* Catlin, George; Fuller, Margaret
- companies 188, 189, 191, 209, 220, 226, 234; American Fur Company (AFC) 172, 189, 191, 192, 209, 220; East India Company 220; Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) 185, 188, 189, 191, 219, 220, 244; North West Company (NWC) 191, 219–221, 228, 244; Pacific Fur Company (PFC) 218, 220, 224, 228, 230, 233–235, 237, 241, 244; Russian-American Company (RAC) 228, 229, 230
- contact zone 31–33, 88. *See also* frontier
- continentalism 22. *See also* exceptionalism, American
- Cooper, James Fenimore 24, 88, 105, 112, 231; *The Pioneers* 231
- Copway, George 82, 130
- Corps of Discovery 145, 146, 153, 175, 189, 190, 219. *See also* Clark, Julia; Clark, William; Lewis, Meriwether
- cotton kingdom 71, 150. *See also* Johnson, Walter
- coureurs des bois* 69, 144. *See also* French-Canadians
- Crespino, Joseph 51
- Cresswell, Tim 19, 48
- critical regionalism 13, 52, 55, 265. *See also* Crespino, Josep; Frampton, Kenneth; Lassiter, Matthew; Paul, Heike; Tzonis, Alexander
- criticism 9, 52, 64, 65, 256, 265. *See also* Salkeld, Duncan; Soja, Edward
- Crockett, Davy 102–104. *See also* masculinity
- Cronon, William 39
- Crow, Charles 55, 93
- Crow, Joe Medicine. *See* Native Americans
- Cuba 3, 7, 25, 27, 28, 68, 150. *See also* Roosevelt, Theodore
- cultural studies 12, 57. *See also* American Studies; Williams, Raymond
- Cumberland Gap 69, 71. *See also* Boone, Daniel
- Dakota 36; North 179; South 201
- Dana, Richard Henry 227
- Darwinism 27, 32, 205. *See also* Catlin, George
- Social 27, 96, 200. *See also* Catlin, George
- Darwin, Charles 27
- de Crèvecoeur, Michel Guillaume Jean (Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur) 86, 95, 99, 130, 144, 240; *Letters from an American Farmer* 144
- de Menil, Alexander Nicolas 141, 159, 160, 162; *The Literature of the Louisiana Territory* 159
- décalage 16, 17, 49, 59, 62, 163, 265. *See also* Edwards, Brent Hayes
- deconstruction 5, 49, 52. *See also* criticism
- Deep South 19, 149. *See also* slavery
- definition of the West 7
- Deleuze, Gilles 1, 5, 128
- Dell, Floyd 71
- demographic 7, 8, 31, 99, 165
- Derrida, Jacques 66
- Deseret, Mormon empire of 197, 211–213, 264. *See also* LDS Church; Mormons
- determinism, environmental, 95, 160, 256; bio-spatial, 25; geographical 207
- Detroit 71, 125. *See also* New France
- Dickinson, Emily 132
- disease 70, 140, 156, 163, 181, 199, 201. *See also* smallpox

- Disneyland 100, 110. *See also* Baudrillard, Jean
- Dixon, Thomas 28
- domesticity 107, 117, 118, 187. *See also* Kolodny, Annette
- Drake, Daniel 77, 83, 85, 216
- Dunbar, Paul Laurence 5, 72, 125, 131, 137, 263; *Oak and Ivy* 131–133
- Durand, Asher 38
- Dust Bowl 36, 44. *See also* Steinbeck, John
- East Coast 34, 73, 94, 128, 133, 148, 164, 169, 181, 185, 187, 193, 195, 205, 207, 214, 216, 218–220, 222, 241. *See also* New England
- East India Company. *See* companies
- ecocriticism 44, 62, 256. *See also* Webb, Walter Prescott; Cascadia
- Ecotopia 4, 252, 257, 259. *See also* Callenbach, Ernest
- Edwards, Brent Hayes 16, 17, 49, 59, 163, 265
- El Dorado 29, 192. *See also* Cardwell, James A.
- Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) 41
- Eliot, Thomas Stearns 261
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo 41, 87, 108, 125
- emigrants and travellers: Abernethy, Anne 105, 157; Ammons, Edith 201; Applegate, Jesse 185, 189, 191, 235; Bleak, James Godson 213, 214; Cardwell, James A. 103, 158, 191, 192; Hanna, Esther Belle 8, 89, 90, 93, 105, 106, 129, 158, 192–194, 204; Matthieu, François Xavier 91, 105, 115, 192, 242, 243; Park, Edmund Botsford Calvin 103, 204; Tufly, George 104
- Empire, American 28, 186, 209, 217, 219, 241, 264; British 2, 68, 123, 184, 187, 190, 218, 220, 224, 242, 245; French 139; Mongol 6; Roman 198, 199, 249; Russian 184, 228, 231; Spanish 131, 141, 184
- Enlightenment 24, 47, 153
- Errand into the Wilderness 12, 19, 35. *See also* Puritans
- Etulain, Richard 13
- Euroamericans 93, 196, 198
- Europe 1, 2, 20, 28, 31, 34, 50, 68, 100, 121–123, 140, 141, 149, 171, 182, 186, 191, 193, 195, 198, 216–218, 220, 229, 233, 236, 247, 264
- exceptionalism, American 1, 6, 7, 8, 14, 24, 28, 33, 35, 36, 83, 124, 137, 186, 195, 197, 217, 255, 262–264
- Far West 4, 131, 151, 171, 182, 184, 189, 194, 197–200, 202, 208, 212, 216, 219, 222–224, 226, 236, 240, 245. *See also* California; Oregon
- Farnham, Eliza 82, 106, 107, 115; *Life in Prairie Land* 106
- Faulkner, William 133
- female 98, 104, 106, 107, 112, 115, 116, 118–120, 122–124, 159, 162, 165, 231
- feminism 47, 52, 72, 107, 108, 125, 262
- Fisher-Fishkin, Shelley 48
- Fiske, John 197
- Florida 3, 11, 68, 130, 139–141, 148, 169, 241. *See also* New Spain
- Floyd, John 190, 191
- Foucault, Michel 22, 27, 47, 53, 65, 66, 169; “Of Other Spaces” 111
- Frampton, Kenneth 51
- France 10, 23, 34, 62, 68, 139–142, 156, 158–160, 164, 165, 220, 262. *See also* French-Canadian; Haiti
- free people of colour 147, 149. *See also* Louisiana; slavery
- Fremont, John Charles 191
- French and Indian War 3, 68, 69, 141. *See also* Seven Years’ War
- French-Canadian 69, 144, 147, 166, 187, 188, 191, 192, 196, 242
- frontier 8, 10–13, 19, 26, 30–38, 40–44, 50, 51, 67, 71, 77, 81, 84, 88, 89, 97, 100, 102, 105, 107, 127, 130, 150, 156, 164, 170, 178, 184, 195–197, 200, 201; as spatial format 237, 261, 262;

- history 34, 43, 45; narratives 5, 6, 98, 151, 206; violence 12, 103
- frontier thesis 11, 12, 30, 31, 35–37, 40, 41, 43, 137, 169, 253, 261. *See also* Turner, Frederick Jackson
- Fuller, Margaret 5, 72, 101–125, 169, 176, 180, 199; *A Summer on the Lakes* (1843) 5, 101, 108, 109, 112, 118, 123, 165, 262
- fur trade 32, 91, 100, 129, 140, 145, 185, 188–190, 208, 218, 219, 221–224, 226, 227, 239. *See also* Astor, John Jacob
- fur trade companies. *See* companies
- fusion of horizons 5, 54, 55, 61, 265.
See also Gadamer, Hans-Georg; methodology
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg 54
- Gadsden Purchase 27. *See also* Mexico
- Gallagher, William 83
- Garden Eden 19, 39, 80, 89, 107, 108, 113.
See also utopia
- Geertz, Clifford 52
- gender 12, 13, 19, 27, 37, 50, 53, 57, 62, 104, 105, 107–109, 116, 119, 202, 253, 254, 265; identities 26, 66, 255; roles 5, 102, 124
- geography, cultural 13, 35, 46, 47, 57, 77, 113, 128, 149, 224, 261
- George III, King of Great Britain 3
- Germany 1, 2, 34, 73, 121, 218
- global condition 10, 58, 151, 167, 194, 224, 256
- globalization 4, 52, 60, 259
- gold rush 29. *See also* Cardwell, James A.
- Golden Gate 1, 2. *See also* Berkeley, George; Dana, Richard Henry
- Goodrich, Samuel Griswold 21, 23
- Grand Canyon 8, 110, 154
- Grant, Madison 28
- Great Awakening, Second 87, 210. *See also* religion
- Great Britain 1, 3, 10, 68, 107, 140, 235, 244
- Great Depression 36, 203
- Great Lakes 3, 67, 69, 71, 72, 108, 169, 218, 220
- Great Plains 8, 35, 91, 130, 145, 158, 169, 193, 208
- Great Small-pox Chief of Astoria (Duncan McDougall) 237, 238
- Grey, Zane 26
- Griffith, David Wark 28
- Guam 27
- Haeckel, Ernst 27
- Haiti 142, 148
- Hall, James 5, 72, 77–102, 105, 114, 124, 135, 151–168, 183, 199, 207, 216, 262; “The Backwoodsman” 5, 77–100, 262; “The French Village” 5, 151–168, 263
- Hall, Stuart 17, 26
- Hamilton, Alexander 144
- Hanna, Esther Belle. *See* Emigrants and travellers; “Diary of a Journey from Pittsburgh to Oregon City” 8, 90, 93, 105, 158, 194, 204
- Harris, Wilson 51
- Harrison, Joseph 182
- Harrison, William Henry 165, 166
- Harvard University 109, 195
- Harvey, David 40, 64
- Hawaii 8, 25, 27, 185, 218, 220, 224, 226, 234, 235, 241, 264
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel 24, 38
- Higginson, Thomas Wentworth 109
- Hogue, Bev 67
- homeland 7, 250. *See also* continentalism
- homestead 86, 201, 203. *See also* squatting
- Hudson River School 38, 87
- Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC).
See companies
- hyperreality 110. *See also* simulacrum; Baudrillard, Jean
- Illinois 36, 67, 68, 72, 77, 78, 108, 199, 210, 211, 241
- immigration 84, 98, 122, 162, 264;
Chinese 187; European 131; Jewish 28
- Indian Removal Act (1830) 3
- Iowa 212, 241

- irony 1, 131, 134, 154, 164, 254
- Irving, Washington 89, 111, 112, 148, 183, 184, 188, 189, 217–241; *Astoria* 5, 156, 217–241, 264
- Islam 91, 179, 210
- Israel 211, 213, 233
- Italy 126, 141, 245
- Jackson, Andrew 115, 171, 174, 185
- Jameson, Fredric 136
- Japan 10, 93, 257
- Jefferson, Thomas 3, 41, 96, 130, 141, 142, 144, 145, 148, 150, 157, 163, 175, 189, 193, 218–220, 223, 241, 246, 257, 264
- Jewett, Sarah Orne 128
- Jim Crow 17, 137, 263, 248. *See also* Code Noir/Black Code
- Johnson, Lyndon B. 164
- Johnson, Susan Lee 120
- Johnson, Walter 150
- Jones, Gavin 202
- Kamehameha 234. *See also* Hawaii
- Kansas 60, 147, 196, 198, 241
- Kaplan, Amy 118, 129
- Kastor, Peter 149
- Kennedy, John F. 40
- Kipling, Rudyard 118, 236
- Kirkland, Caroline 105
- Klein, Kerwin 44
- Knight, Amelia Steward 204
- Kolodny, Annette 15, 79, 107
- Krause, Stefan 239
- Kunstler, James 19
- Kruzenshtern, Ivan Fyodorovich 228. *See also* Russia
- Lallande Poydras, Julien de 160
- language 34, 42, 43, 86, 98, 110, 116, 123, 124, 148, 158–163, 185, 244; barriers 159, 229; native 116, 146; of spatialization processes 17, 59, 60, 160, 262, 265
- Larkin, Peter 240
- Lassiter, Matthew 51
- LDS Church (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) 209, 210, 213. *See also* Mormons
- Lefebvre, Henri 15, 47, 57
- Leonard, Zenas 181, 187, 189
- Leutze, Emanuel 1, 2, 4, 6, 58; *Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way* 1, 2, 58, 133
- Lewis, Meriwether 145, 146
- Leyda, Julia 23
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson 9, 42, 51, 111, 127
- Lippmann, Walter 7
- literary canon 10, 14, 50, 216. *See also* objectivity
- Livingston, Robert 142, 144
- local colour 3, 98, 101, 125, 134, 166. *See also* Dunbar, Paul Laurence
- Locke, John 153
- London 171, 182, 218, 220, 227, 229
- London, Jack 26, 231
- Los Angeles 110
- Louisiana 60, 68, 71, 130, 139–142, 144, 145, 147–151, 156, 160, 161, 190; French Louisiana 139, 157, 262; Louisiana Purchase 21, 27, 142, 144, 158, 159, 161, 162, 245, 263; Louisiana Territory 5, 58, 105, 139–153, 155, 156–159, 164, 167, 175, 182–184, 188, 190, 192, 242, 263
- Lovecraft, Howard Phillips 28
- Mackenzie, Alexander 145, 189, 190
- Madison, James 3
- Malpas, Jeff 54
- manifest destiny 6, 11, 12, 22, 27, 35, 41, 44, 49, 50, 98, 103, 125, 137, 170, 182, 185, 186, 191, 194, 195, 197–199, 205–207, 216, 217, 223, 237, 241, 242, 245, 253, 259, 261, 263. *See also* O'Sullivan, John Louis
- mapmaking 24, 25, 32, 110, 136, 219
- Marx, Karl 236
- Marx, Leo 38, 40
- Marxism 15, 43, 46, 52, 54, 98
- masculinity 19, 26, 102, 103, 105, 107, 113, 120, 122, 147, 154, 164, 188
- Massachusetts 124, 126, 195

- massacres 28, 68, 131, 191, 210, 220, 227.
 See also Wounded Knee
 Massey, Doreen 57
 Matthiessen, Francis Otto 122
 Matthieu, François Xavier. *See* Emigrants
 and travellers
 McClintock, Anne 117
 McNally, Rand 25
 Mediterranean 23, 77, 121, 126
 Melville, Herman 24, 38, 196, 197, 216, 228,
 231
 methodology 47, 51, 53, 57, 59. *See also*
 American Studies; critical regionalism;
 new historicism
 Mexican-American War 27, 29, 194, 211, 242,
 247
 Mexico 3, 29, 49, 68, 141. *See also*
 New Spain
 Meyer, Melissa 157
 Middell, Matthias 10, 59
 middle ground. *See* spatial formats
 Midwest 34, 72, 116, 206. *See also*
 Turner, Frederick Jackson
 migration 49, 50, 61, 147, 152, 198, 202,
 203, 205, 206, 209, 266; Great
 Migration 125
 Miller, Alfred Jacob 117
 Milner, Clyde A. 8, 49, 154
 missions 1, 26, 36, 116, 148, 185, 226, 228,
 230
 Mississippi River 8, 37, 68, 71, 72, 80, 90,
 97, 121, 128, 140–142, 144, 145, 150, 156,
 160, 166, 170, 184, 218, 220. *See also*
 Twain, Mark
 Missouri 196–200, 210, 240, 241; Missouri
 River 181, 218, 220, 239
 mobility 2, 4, 11, 19, 32, 90, 91, 103, 124,
 127, 130, 146–148, 158, 161, 164, 175,
 182, 188, 197, 198, 200, 202, 205, 207,
 208, 211, 212, 217, 225, 228, 234–238,
 241, 242, 246, 262, 263; economic 29,
 128, 163, 168, 264; social 37, 203
 Mormons 89, 197, 204, 209–214, 217
 Mormon Trail 198. *See also* Oregon Trail
 Mormon War, Illinois 210
 Mormon War, Missouri 210
 Morrison, Toni 72
 Morrissey, Katherine 80, 81
 Mount Coffin 238, 239
 Muir, John 38
 Murphy, Mary 103
 Myth and Symbol school 38, 40. *See also*
 American Studies; Marx, Leo
 Nash, Henry 38
 national parks 8, 169
 nationalism 2, 6, 25, 26, 34, 44, 67, 72, 73,
 125, 132, 135, 207, 252, 256
 nation-building 6, 11, 20, 24, 42, 67, 79, 99,
 101, 164, 172, 184, 203, 245, 261
 nation-state 4, 7, 22, 27, 44, 48, 67, 81, 83,
 92, 126, 134, 137, 151, 169, 186,
 189, 193, 194, 212, 216, 217,
 249, 252, 253, 258, 262. *See also* spatial
 format; American 12, 78, 216, 259;
 emergence of 50, 60, 262; integration
 into 5, 28, 29, 141, 148, 243
 Native American communities 3, 32, 68, 120,
 188
 Native American territories 8, 113, 118, 168,
 171, 174, 177, 183
 Native Americans 1, 16, 29, 62, 69, 84, 88,
 93, 100, 108–110, 119, 146, 147, 149,
 150, 156, 165, 167, 178, 181, 187, 192,
 196, 197, 217, 224, 226, 230, 236, 238,
 241, 246, 263, 264; Arapaho 207, 208;
 Arikara 208; Assiniboine 171, 175, 208;
 Big White/Gros Blanc 175; Black Hawk/
 Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak 121;
 Blackbird 239; Caddo 60, 162;
 Cheyenne 208; Chinook 254, 255;
 Choctaw 162; Cowlitz 238; Crow 208;
 Dakota 177, 178, 206, 208;
 Delaware 216; Hunkpapa 181, 182; Joe
 Medicine Crow 62; King Philip 206;
 Lakota 131, 146, 196; Mah-to-tchee-ga/
 Little Bear 181; Mandan 145, 175,
 179–181, 208; Mohawk 207;
 Nootka 227; Oglala 196, 205;
 Ojibway 82, 109; Omaha 239;
 Ottawa 70, 109; Pontiac 3, 70, 120,
 206; Saukie 121; Schoolcraft, Jane

- Johnston/O-bah-bahm-wawa-ge-zhe-go-qua 116; Shawnee 166, 200; Skillute 238, 239; Snake 117; Tecumseh 120, 166, 206; Tla-o-qui-aht 227; Tushepaw 238; White Shield 205; Wi-jún-jon/Pigeon's Egg Head 171–176, 178
- Nebraska 80, 106, 196
- Neutral Ground of Texarkana 60
- New England 4, 79, 108, 112, 133, 144, 211, 214–216. *See also* East Coast
- New France 68, 148, 161. *See also* Louisiana
- New Harmony, Indiana 73–77. *See also* Robert Owen
- new historicism 5, 13, 52, 55. *See also* Geertz, Clifford; Salkeld, Duncan; Veesser, Harold Aram
- New Mexico 8, 141, 213, 214
- New Orleans 68, 140, 144, 164, 220
- New Spain 3, 226. *See also* Mexico
- New York City 23, 29, 175, 185, 191, 218, 220, 224, 235, 241, 249
- New York State 71, 91, 108, 123, 210
- Niagara Falls 108, 110–112, 125, 154, 180
- Nietzsche, Friedrich 91, 96, 132
- non-place 236. *See also* Augé, Marc
- North Africa. *See* Africa
- Northwest Ordinance (1787) 71
- nostalgia 52, 72, 92, 96, 98, 125, 127, 134. *See also* Dunbar, Paul Laurence
- Novo-Arkhangelsk 228–230, 234. *See also* Russian-American Company
- O'Sullivan, John Louis 185, 186
- Oakley, Annie 100. *See also* Buffalo Bill
- objectivity 53, 54, 154
- Olson, Charles 187
- Oregon 2, 5, 8, 91, 93, 103, 105, 115, 129, 130, 145, 157, 183–200, 204, 207, 211, 212, 216, 219, 221, 222, 224–226, 231, 235, 236, 240, 241–249, 251, 252, 257, 258, 262–264; Oregon fever 183, 196, 198; Oregon Trail 104, 129, 184, 189, 196, 198, 201–205, 207–209, 211, 212, 216, 217, 221, 223, 238, 242, 243, 264. *See also* Parkman, Francis; Oregon Treaty (1846) 186
- Orient 24, 91, 22, 236
- Orientalism 24, 45, 236
- Otherness 110, 112, 144, 151, 154, 157, 161, 163, 176, 197, 199, 207, 216, 263
- Owen, Robert 74, 75, 81
- Owenite 75, 76, 81, 84. *See also* Socialism; utopia
- Pacific Fur Company (PFC). *See* companies
- Pacific Northwest 21, 60, 90, 187, 188, 195, 197, 198, 220, 223, 242, 244, 250, 254
- Pacific Ocean 2, 8, 12, 23, 32, 41, 8, 145, 146, 170, 175, 177, 183–187, 191, 193, 195, 196, 208, 217, 218, 224, 227, 234, 247, 249, 250, 253
- Pacific republic 242, 247–249, 258
- Panama 7
- Panama Canal 185, 224, 251
- pan-tribal movement 3, 121, 131, 149, 162, 163, 166, 206. *See also* Native Americans
- Parkman, Francis 195–210, 212, 214–217, 241, 263; *The Oregon Trail* 5, 36, 89, 184, 189, 195–217, 263
- patriotism 20, 71, 78, 126, 163, 189, 190, 197, 200, 207–209, 220, 223, 242, 249, 257
- Paul, Heike 40, 52
- Pearl Harbor 257. *See also* Hawaii
- Peterson, Charles 80
- Philippine-American War 28
- Philippines 7, 25, 27, 131, 187
- Pilgrim Fathers 81
- Pisarz-Ramirez, Gabriele 11
- placemaking 46, 81, 95–97, 107, 117, 127, 134–136, 159, 160, 175, 176, 189, 202, 208, 234, 236, 251, 254, 264; American 37, 92, 178, 230, 255; dynamics 10, 12, 95; female 115, 118; function of 22; literary 52, 94; masculine 102, 122; regional 92, 129, 259, 262; transatlantic 171
- Poe, Edgar Allan 222
- poetry, poetic 1, 2, 5, 9, 3, 67, 82, 87, 111, 116, 118, 124–126, 128, 131–133, 135, 137, 160, 187, 233, 240, 263. *See also* Berkeley, George; Dunbar, Paul Laurence; Whitman, Walt

- Polk, James 211, 212, 242
 Pontiac's Rebellion (1763) 3
 postmodernism 39, 47, 51, 100, 111
 poverty 202. *See also* subalternity
 Pratt, Mary Louise 33
 Puerto Rico 25, 27
 Puritans 19, 20, 26, 55, 75, 79, 87, 89, 144, 154
 purity 10, 37, 98, 107, 113, 115, 118, 121, 206
- Quebec 68. *See also* Canada
- race, racialism 4, 5, 13, 16, 17, 25, 27, 28, 34, 35, 37, 53, 62, 69, 70, 109, 115, 117, 121, 124, 129, 131, 174, 179, 184, 185, 188, 208, 230, 244, 253, 255, 265
 railroad 23, 31, 32, 98, 126, 127, 147, 149, 203, 213; transcontinental 198, 211, 223, 243
 Rapp, Johann Georg 73–75, 81
 Rappites 73–76
 Rathenau, Walter 247
 Reagan, Ronald 233
 regionalism 67, 82, 134, 206, 259; American literary 128; critical 13, 51, 52, 55, 265; western 72, 73
 religion 26, 27, 33, 42, 73, 75, 87, 88, 90, 91, 94, 159, 187, 209, 210, 255, 262. *See also* Great Awakening; LDS Church
 Republican 45, 153, 248, 257, 259. *See also* Rappites
 respatialization 69, 76, 108, 117, 119, 122, 125, 149, 163, 166, 178, 193, 211, 226, 230, 253, 255
 rhizome 43, 59. *See also* Campbell, Neil
 Rhodes, Evan 14
 Roberts, Brian Russell 49
 Rocky Mountains 130, 142, 147, 170, 177, 184, 189, 193, 196, 211, 217–220, 223, 245, 249, 250, 252, 264
 Rome 121, 199, 206, 249
 Roosevelt, Theodore 28, 102, 197
 Russia 2, 4, 6, 25, 49, 68, 75, 76, 184, 187, 220, 224, 228, 230, 233, 241. *See also* Alaska
 Russian-American Company. *See* companies
- Said, Edward 14, 50, 57. *See also* Orientalism
 Saint-Domingue. *See* Haiti
 Salem 243, 257, 258
 Salkeld, Duncan 52
 Salt Lake City 210, 212, 214. *See also* LDS Church
 Samoa 27
 San Francisco 2, 23, 104, 226, 230
 Schulten, Susan 20, 23, 25
 Scotland 74
 Scott, Harvey Whitefield 249, 250
 Second Barbary War 77, 88
 semiotics 61, 95, 254
 settler 3, 19, 23, 26, 27, 29, 37, 40, 68–70, 79, 81, 84, 92, 106, 114, 121, 141, 152, 158, 166, 185, 192, 200, 210, 238, 240–243, 247; settler colonialism 12, 42, 108, 151, 182, 202, 238
 Seven Years' War 68. *See also* French and Indian War
 Shakespeare, William 249, 250
 Shaw, Quincy 196
 Siberia 231. *See also* Russia
 Sierra Nevada 203
 Simms, William Gilmore 88
 simulacrum 110. *See also* Baudrillard, Jean
 Sinclair, Upton 71
 slavery 71, 106, 126, 148, 149, 165, 213, 242, 247, 248
 slaves 101, 125, 148–150, 155, 200, 239; runaway 11, 72, 148
 Slotkin, Richard 29
 smallpox 70, 181, 237. *See also* disease
 Smith, Joseph 210, 211. *See also* LDS Church; *The Book of Mormon* (1830) 211
 Smith, Neil 38
 Smithsonian Institution 171, 178, 182
 soap 117, 119. *See also* civilization
 Socialism 74–76. *See also* Marxism; Owenite; utopia
 Soja, Edward 47
 South America 182, 191
 Spain 60, 68, 141, 142, 148, 159, 160, 220, 245, 262

- Spanish-American War 131, 187
- spatial actors 11, 14, 56, 80, 93, 140, 141, 148, 190, 194, 205, 208, 210, 224, 229, 231, 236, 237, 257, 264
- spatial entrepreneurs 11, 56, 58, 60, 63, 85, 92, 99, 168, 171, 175, 188, 194, 198, 214, 228, 240–242, 254, 258, 259, 261
- spatial format, formatting 4, 5, 58–61, 63, 64, 71, 93, 98, 108, 112, 114, 124, 150–152, 156, 167, 186, 190, 197, 200, 202, 217, 217, 223, 237–239, 241, 242, 244, 248, 251, 256, 259, 264; empire 10, 28, 224; frontier 261; manifest destiny 261, 263; middle ground 68, 157, 166; nation-state 1, 28, 55, 60, 61, 132, 224, 259
- spatial imaginations 1, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18–20, 22, 24, 25, 39, 45, 49, 51, 55, 58, 63, 64, 66, 73, 75, 76, 81, 84, 93, 95, 97, 100, 110, 124, 128, 134, 135, 141, 156, 160, 161, 168, 178, 181, 213, 217, 221–223, 233, 264, 265; divergent 151, 197, 209, 225, 241, 242, 261, 262
- spatial order, ordering 3, 12, 28, 33, 42, 44, 58–61, 63, 64, 68, 69, 75, 76, 82, 84, 87, 92, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 126, 129, 130, 133, 135, 140, 145, 150, 160, 164, 167, 172, 175, 177, 183, 184, 186, 188, 195, 199, 200, 203, 206, 213, 214, 223–226, 233, 239, 242, 246–248, 255, 256, 259, 263, 264; bygone 121, 125, 134; Native American 238
- spatialization (processes) 6, 9–15, 26, 31, 50, 51, 58–66, 70, 73, 81, 89, 93, 95, 112, 113, 118, 129, 135, 155, 157–159, 167–170, 182, 186, 187, 194, 202, 216, 217, 223, 224, 238, 241, 242, 251, 258, 259, 261, 262, 263, 265, 266; discursive 255; dynamics 100, 112, 175; literary 17, 59, 63, 65, 66, 72, 79, 103, 113, 123, 159, 176, 196; strategies 67, 90, 114, 125, 176, 190, 256
- Spencer, Herbert 27
- Spengler, Oswald 28
- squatting 71, 166. *See also* colonialism
- St. Louis 23, 78, 80, 91, 144, 148, 171–172, 187, 193, 198
- State of Jefferson 242, 257–259
- Steinbeck, John 36, 133
- Stephens, Michelle Ann 49
- Stewart, Catherine 105–106
- structuralism 47, 52, 53
- subalternity, subalterns 7, 14, 91, 108, 120, 133, 149, 199, 202, 217, 226, 237, 242, 261, 262, 264
- Switzerland 126
- Syria 210
- Taine, Hippolyte 28
- Talleyrand-Périgord, Charles Maurice de 142
- Taylor, Zachary 194, 212
- terra nullius 20, 70, 89, 144, 181. *See also* Puritans
- Texarkana. *See* Neutral Ground of Texarkana
- thick description 52, 56, 66. *See also* Geertz, Clifford
- thirdspace 43. *See also* Soja, Edward
- Thoreau, Henry David 24, 38, 41, 86, 87, 109, 123
- Thorn, Jonathan 225, 227
- Tillman, Benjamin 28
- Tonkovich, Nicole 109
- tourism 11, 23, 72, 76, 77, 98, 111, 121, 126, 226
- transatlantic 24, 40, 122, 123, 126, 151, 171, 197, 217, 249, 264
- transcendentalism 29, 39, 67, 72, 81, 87, 108, 114, 115, 125, 167. *See also* Fuller, Margaret
- transcontinental railroad. *See* railroad
- transnational 1, 43–45, 50, 51, 58, 61; transnational turn 48
- transpacific 131, 187, 250. *See also* Pacific Ocean
- trappers 2, 32, 36, 69, 100, 130, 140, 184, 188, 189, 242
- Treaty of Ghent (1815) 221
- Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) 27, 212
- Treaty of Paris (1763) 68
- Treaty of Paris (1783) 71
- Treaty of San Ildefonso, Third (1800) 141

- tribes 60, 62, 70, 71, 90, 109, 140, 145, 148, 156, 165, 169, 170, 172, 175, 176, 178, 184, 196, 200, 205, 207, 209, 220, 228, 230, 232, 237, 238. *See also* Native Americans
- Trump, Donald 45, 46, 130, 242, 257
- Turner, Frederick Jackson 30, 41, 44, 72, 197
- Twain, Mark 38, 80, 128, 131, 133
- Tzonis, Alexander 51
- Ubbelohde, Carl 72
- Underground Railroad 72. *See also* slavery
- Urry, John 117
- Utah 8, 89, 209, 211, 213, 214, 252
- utopia, agrarian 38, 41, 151; Owenite 74–76, 81, 84; of the Old Northwest 5, 67, 72, 73, 76, 83, 100, 102, 105, 122, 164, 262; Puritan 20
- Vancouver Island 227. *See also* Canada
- Veeser, Harold Aram 53
- Victor, Frances Fuller 235
- video games 154, 155, 204
- Vietnam War 42, 164
- W. (“Pacific Republic”) 5, 241, 242, 244–249
- War of 1812, 77, 121, 206, 221, 241, 264
- Washington State 8, 198, 238, 240, 251, 252
- Washington, D.C. 1, 130, 171, 175, 185, 190, 208
- Washington, George 3, 25, 131, 174, 257
- waterways 71, 140, 145, 46, 165, 249
- Watson, Bruce 171
- Webb, Walter Prescott 35, 36, 44
- Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842) 71
- Wells, Merle 80
- Werlen, Benno 48
- westernness 13, 79, 121, 124, 155, 168, 195
- westward expansion, movement 2, 27, 31, 34, 37, 49, 71, 82, 87, 90, 95, 108, 129, 161, 183, 196, 197, 202, 203, 204, 242
- White Man’s Burden 118, 187, 236. *See also* Kipling, Rudyard
- Whitman, Walt 38, 132, 240
- wilderness 19, 26, 31, 34, 36, 43, 71, 74, 84, 89, 90, 107, 116, 144, 147, 148, 154, 156, 159, 160, 164, 168, 184, 195, 199, 211, 215, 220, 236, 237. *See also* Errand into the Wilderness; hostile 88; intact 8, 81; untouched 2, 37, 38, 43, 85, 93
- Willamette Valley 193, 198, 204, 243, 249. *See also* Oregon
- Williams, Raymond 55
- Winthrop, John 20, 35, 75, 255
- Wise, Henry Augustus 203
- Wittfogel, Karl August 44
- World War I, 31
- World War II 13, 36, 43
- Worster, Donald 44
- Wounded Knee 131
- Wyoming 8, 93, 193, 196, 210
- Young, Brigham 210–214. *See also* LDS Church

