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Dwelling in Possibility: American Literature, Architecture, and Domestic Innovation, 1850-1900

DISSERTATION

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by

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DEDICATION

To

my family of voracious readers,

Ed, Cathi, and Lisa

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dwelling in Possibility: American Literature, Architecture, and Domestic Innovation, 1850-1900

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Doctor of Philosophy in English

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Professor Brook Thomas, Chair

In my dissertation, *Dwelling in Possibility: American Literature, Architecture, and Domestic Innovation, 1850-1900*, I read fictional houses as material culture objects whose design, fabrication, and patterns of use make visible changing social relations at particular historical moments. Challenging teleological accounts of nineteenth-century domesticity as a coherent precursor against which modern experimentation defined itself, I locate innovative transformations of domestic space that emerge from and alter particular architectural forms and the social practices they generate and maintain. To flesh out the social and architectural context of literary lodgings, I have assembled an archive of materials from Historic American Buildings Survey photographs to U.S. Census data on changing residential patterns. My four chapters distinguish emergent forms of dwelling that imagine new, but not necessarily positive, possibilities for remaking social relations within existing domestic spaces.

My first chapter argues that the titular house in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) is a converted boarding-house that refashions an extendable family unit out of intimate, mixed domestic-commercial space. In Chapter 2, I examine how Tom Sawyer's interactions with light in McDougal's Cave raises questions about the power of narrative to

domesticate the truly innovative during encounters with the unknown in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). My third chapter contends that the pueblo-cottage-haciendas in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1885) envision a multicultural California even as their repeated seizure indicates a dooming inability to repel an Anglo-American incursion. Finally, I argue that the middle-class cottage owned by free people of color in Charles W. Chesnutt's *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900) iterates the class and racial hierarchies its plantation-style architecture was designed to enforce. By taking overlooked details of dwelling seriously, my project challenges progressive accounts of American domesticity, extends the canon revisions of the domestic novel, and develops new rapport between literary and material culture studies.

INTRODUCTION

Buildings tell many stories, as Nathaniel Hawthorne knew well. In July 1842, Hawthorne and his new bride, Sophia, moved into the Old Manse, a pre-Revolutionary era house in Concord, MA, that the newlyweds rented from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Hawthorne's notebook entries about his first month in residence, which later furnished material for "The Old Manse" in *Mosses From an Old Manse* (1846), demonstrate how buildings accrue meaning in context. Old buildings speak about our past, new ones articulate our aspirations for the future, and renovations explore the intersection of the two. In his entry for 8 August 1842, Hawthorne describes the house in detail as being "two stories high, with a third story of attic chambers in the gable-roof," a "spacious hall or entry, occupying more space than is usually devoted to such a purpose in modern times" on both stories, and rooms full of "ante-Revolutionary furniture" (*Notebooks* 323; 324). Hawthorne muses that it "required some energy of imagination to conceive the idea of transforming this musty edifice . . . into a comfortable modern residence. However, it has been successfully accomplished." Although "[e]xternally the house presents the same appearance" as it did for the previous inhabitants, the Hawthornes altered room decoration and function to suit their preferences (*Notebooks* 325–326). In accordance with mid-nineteenth-century conventions that separated upstairs private spaces from downstairs public spaces, the "old Doctor's sleeping-apartment (which was the front room on the ground-floor)" was "converted into a parlor," and the Hawthornes chose to locate "our own bed chamber" upstairs (*Notebooks* 323–324). Hawthorne notes that his study, a "little room" in "the rear of the house . . . has witnessed the intellectual labors of better students than myself," and adds his own story to the accumulated ones by redecorating the room with "the furniture of my bachelor-room in Boston" as well as vases of flowers that bespeak "the hand and heart of woman" befitting his new marital role

(*Notebooks* 324–5). Yet, for Hawthorne, "Notwithstanding all we have done to modernize the old house," the structure articulates multiple trajectories, for it "is evident that other wedded pairs have spent their honeymoons here, though none so happily as ourselves—that children have been born here, and people have grown old and died in these rooms and chambers; although, for our behoof, the same apartments have consented to look cheerful once again" (*Notebooks* 325). In his fiction, Hawthorne would explore not only multiple diachronic trajectories of dwelling, but transformations of dwelling spaces far more extensive than his and Sophia's conversion of a widower's domain into a newlywed "Paradise" (*Notebooks* 320).

Buildings, and the stories we tell about them, structure our experience of individual and social identity, community position and membership, ownership and occupancy, and transgression and enclosure. In *Dwelling in Possibility,* I examine how domestic space shapes gender, class, and ethnic identities and relations, and I locate moments of innovation in which new possibilities for social relations are worked out through creative use of dwelling spaces. For Gaston Bachelard, to understand the phenomenology of human habitation "is not a question of describing houses, or enumerating their picturesque features and analyzing for which reasons they are comfortable" (Bachelard 13). Bachelard sees little significance in architectural detail; he acknowledges that a "geographer or an ethnographer can give us descriptions of very varied types of dwellings," but he dismisses differences in actual physical form between dwellings because he is interested in locating "primary virtues, those that reveal an attachment that is native in some way to the primary function of inhabiting" beneath what he sees as mere surface dissimilarities (Bachelard 13). Scholars have looked beyond the "felicitous spaces" on which Bachelard focuses to explore spaces of crisis, deviance, exclusion, and illusion that Foucault takes up in his 1967 essay, "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias" (Bachelard xxxi). Yet, they have

largely replicated Bachelard's dismissal of architectural specifics in order to read houses mythically, symbolically, or psychologically. I do not wish to diminish such readings, for they have deeply informed my own approach to American domestic spaces. Houses certainly lend themselves to be read as metaphors for character, nation, and artwork. Bachelard's reading of interior via domestic space fits comfortably with Lincoln's understanding of the nation as a "house divided" and Henry James's image of the "house of fiction" through whose many windows the author peers. Yet, attention to regional architectural detail and spatial practice is central to works of fiction by, among others, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Charles W. Chestnut; authors whose works explore alterations to the relationships between characters and their everyday settings.

My approach is more aligned with material culture studies, which, among other branches of inquiry, explores how domestic spaces were made and remade by human action, and how such actions were afforded and circumscribed by material conditions. I read fictional houses as material culture objects whose design, fabrication, and patterns of use make visible changing gender, class, and race relations at particular historical moments. I draw my approach to fictional houses in part from scholars of the built environment such as Henry Glassie, Fred Kniffen, Dell Upton, Gwendolyn Wright, and Dolores Hayden. Attention to the specifics of historical and literary houses can prevent assumptions of domestic homogeneity on a material and social level. As Dell Upton asserts, the "architecture of the United States is astonishingly diverse, shaped by a dizzying variety of architectural practices, building processes, regional expressions, and cultures, the disparate experiences of class, gender, and ethnicity, as well as the idiosyncrasies of personality" (Upton, *Architecture* 11). Attention to the materiality of built space opens a host of potential sites of inquiry. Jay Fliegelman has explored the material contexts of famous scenes in

Early American political thought such as the State House Assembly Room, and Graham Wilson has examined the office space of walls and screens that composes the "Story of Wall Street" in Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" (Fliegelman 70–73; Thompson 3–20). In contradistinction to this fruitful focus on public spaces, I attend to private dwellings in fiction. Additionally, rather than focus on monumental works of aesthetic accomplishment such as Thomas Jefferson's Monticello or George Washington's Mount Vernon, I focus on the design and creative reuse of local, everyday, and vernacular architectures to examine the social relations that unfold in these reconfigured spaces.[1]

As the "spatial turn" of the last few decades has shown, space is not a mere container of social relations, but rather is constitutive of them. For Tim Cresswell, "Class, gender, and race have so often been treated as if they happened on the head of a pin. . . . they happen in space and place. By taking space and place seriously . . . we can provide another tool to demystify and understand the forces that affect and manipulate our everyday lives" (Cresswell 27).[2] Upton suggests that architecture engineers social relations via narrative as "an art of social storytelling, a means for shaping American society and culture and for 'annotating' social action by creating appropriate settings for it" (Upton, *Architecture* 11). Attention to material conditions can illuminate the social relations that occur "not only *in*, but *with* and *through space*" (Benesch and Schmidt 15). Yet, Henri Lefebvre reminds us that social relations both produce and are shaped by material spaces and structures; the *production* of space involves the physical, mental, and social

[1] Breaking from the elite and monumental buildings that had previously been the subject of academic study, "vernacular" architecture studies examines everyday buildings not erected by trained architects, which do not follow academic rules of design, and which encompass the vast majority of the world's architecture.

[2] Additionally, Bill Brown's "Thing Theory," Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*, and other works in the growing field of materialist criticism have opened avenues for attention to human-object interactions in literature and culture. While the question of object agency has assumed high importance in much materialist criticism, my approach is anthropocentric, and I am primarily concerned with arriving at a clearer understanding of human social relations via close attention to material conditions and spatial practices.

aspects of space as it is conceived, perceived, represented, and lived. The space of social relations is not static, and the simultaneity of space's physical, mental, and social aspects mean that social relations might change without a perceptible shift in physical space. For Michel de Certeau, human narratives coordinate and disrupt material space: "stories . . . every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories . . . regulate changes in space" (de Certeau 115). Drawing on de Certeau's attention to the spaces of everyday life, Doreen Massey envisions space as "the product of interrelations" that is "always in the process of being made," which "gives us simultaneous heterogeneity . . . holds out the possibility of surprise; it is the condition of the social in the wildest sense" (Massey 15; 105). Space, for Massey, produces multiple coexisting trajectories, while its ongoing production suggests that the future is open to change.

Changes in the everyday built environment and spatial practice merit attention, for, as David Harvey suggests, "transformations of space, place, and environment are neither neutral nor innocent with respect to practices of domination and control" (Harvey 44). Narratives located in a particular time and place have an important role to play in illuminating the shaping power of architectural form, and in making visible moments at which familiar structures lose the appearance of natural logic. Because narratives brings stories and structures to life as a string of words unfolding sequentially (and metonymically) in time, linguistically-constructed dwellings incorporate a crucial temporal element in a represented space not available in static media such as blueprints, photographs, or extant houses themselves. While some modifications of domestic space leave material signs (for instance, room additions and decorative renovations), significant alterations to the way that a space is *used* do not always produce physical traces. Literature invests an object or a place with action, depicting it as it exists in time. Experimental

domesticities may fade or be covered over by the palimpsest of architectural history, but fiction captures the spatial practices such experiments yield.

"Dwelling" in my title brings into conversation those houses, the activity of living in them, and the close attention authors give to the verbal construction of houses in their works. "Dwelling"—noun and verb, a mutually constitutive place and activity—articulates the relationship by which an inhabitant's locale and actions can reflect and shape each other, and through which one's spatial practices can remake one's environment. My titular quote, drawn from Emily Dickinson's poem "657" (circa 1855), illustrates the aims—not always achieved—of the transformative uses of space in my anchoring novels. Dickinson's poem begins "I dwell in Possibility—/ A fairer House than Prose—" and describes the experience of a spacious domestic environment that affords "spreading wide my narrow Hands / To gather Paradise—" by the poem's end (Dickinson 327). Dickinson envisions a harmonious relationship between "dwelling" as location and act that facilitates higher order living. The culmination of such dwelling as a "gathering" of Paradise anticipates philosopher Martin Heidegger's account in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1951) of "dwelling" as the fundamental human state of being, that which enables the "gathering" or "preserving" of the "fourfold" of environmental elements (Heidegger 354). The innovative dwelling practices in my novels aspire at a local level to the ideal of the fulfilling relationship between human and environment limned by Dickinson and Heidegger. Yet, innovation does not guarantee a happy outcome, and the domestic innovations in my final two chapters incur the risk of worsening dwelling conditions despite the ambition to reorganize the existing environment in favorable ways.

Literary depictions of domestic spaces in flux necessarily involve issues of domesticity. Over the course of the nineteenth century, cultural authorities consolidated a domestic ideology

of separate spheres, which held that the woman's place was in the private sphere of the home, as opposed to in a masculine public sphere. Nina Baym objects in *Woman's Fiction* to the elision of the terms "domestic fiction," "woman's fiction," "sentimental fiction," and "domestic sentimentalism" in part because the association of women with the domestic and, especially, the sentimental, "puts the emphasis on a presumed ambience in the fiction rather than on the implications of the basic plot" (Baym, *Woman's Fiction* 24). Conversely, I would argue that the elision also furnished genre expectations that led critics to overlook writing by male and non-white writers that also deals with important distinctions in domestic settings.

Scholarship on literary domesticity over the last fifty years has worked to redefine and expand "domestic fiction" from its traditional focus on narratives about a white protestant single family home authored by and for women. Ann Douglas's pioneering study, *The Feminization of American Culture*, argued that sentimental fiction offered clergy and newly leisured middle-class women "well-nigh dictatorial power over their culture" in compensation for diminished political and economic power (Douglas 275). Jane Tompkins, in *Sensational Designs,* responded to Douglas's theory that sentimental fiction advanced consumerism and the status quo by positing sentimental literature as a "political enterprise" that had been denigrated by twentieth-century critics (Tompkins xiv). In *Domestic Individualism*, Gillian Brown responded to Douglas's assertion that nineteenth-century domestic ideology presented an alternative to competitive individualism by arguing that domestic values of interiority, order, privacy, and enclosure associated with the home influenced the shape of "individualism" for both men and women.

More recently, critics have brought attention to the class- and race-inflected aspects of American domesticity. Amy Kaplan argued in "Manifest Domesticity" that domesticity had an important role to play in the expansion of American empire. Ann duCille has explored how the

"coupling convention" in novels by African-American women writers strategically adopted and revised key aspects of predominantly white middle class domesticity. Lora Romero's antebellum-focused *Home Fronts* challenged the "equation of a 'feminine' mass culture and blind allegiance to the status quo" by examining "difference, contradiction, and dissent within the culture of domesticity" in works by black women writers and white writers of both genders (Romero 7). My focus on domestic spaces themselves contributes to a growing field of criticism that examines the intersections between literature and architecture.[3] In particular, Elizabeth Klimasmith and William Gleason have introduced attention to architecture to the study of long-nineteenth-century literary domesticity. Klimasmith's *At Home in the City* focuses on urban domesticity in spaces like tenements and luxury hotels, and Gleason's *Sites Unseen* traces representations of race and architecture in American literature; both Klimasmith and Gleason find examples to illustrate representative norms of urban and racial domesticities. In contrast, I identify moments of domestic innovation in the nineteenth century that contested, stretched, or redirected the emergent culture of domesticity. In doing so I hope to bring attention to domestic spaces in transition that interrogate, perturb, and extend the existing canon American literary domesticity.

Examined from a material culture studies perspective, houses might contain and consist of discrete or portable material objects; they are also themselves large and complex material entities in which we live, socialize, work, and play. Within a narrative, objects of material culture might

[3] Recent works that have opened new fields of inquiry between literature and material culture studies, architectural history, and cultural geography—which have influenced my approach to such intersections in nineteenth-century domestic fiction—include William Gleason's *Sites Unseen*, Elizabeth Klimasmith's *At Home in the City*, Bridget Heneghan's *Whitewashing America,* Victoria Rosner's *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life*, David Spurr's *Architecture and Modern Literature*, Diana Fuss's *The Sense of an Interior*, and Adam Sweeting's *Reading Houses and Building Books*. Studies of literature and architecture in which houses are read primarily on symbolic, mythic, and psychological registers include Ellen Frank's *Literary Architecture,* Bettina Knapp's *Archetype, Architecture, and the Writer,* Judith Fryer's *Felicitous Space*, Marilyn Chandler's *Dwelling in the Text,* Douglas

be simple or complex; made by machine or by hand or never made; rare or ubiquitous; reserved for special occasions or used every day; static or mobile; new or old; cherished, discarded, or never noticed; visited, inhabited, travelled through, or passed by. To flesh out the social and architectural context of famous literary lodgings, I have assembled an archive of materials on New England, Midwestern, Southwestern, and Southern regional architectures from Historic American Buildings Survey photographs to U.S. Census data on changing residential patterns.

The history and trajectory of material culture studies has important implications for my study of linguistically-constructed houses, as I draw on foundational social histories of architecture for my characterization of typical usages and meanings for specific building forms, as well as on more recent microhistorical methods to identify innovative fictional spatial practices. The interdisciplinary study of architecture as material culture encompasses many fields of the social sciences and humanities, including cultural anthropology, cultural geography archaeology, folklife studies, sociology, and architectural history. In the early twentieth century, architectural antiquarians developed functionalist typologies to classify seventeenth-century New England and Chesapeake houses. Advances in the social and behavioral sciences on the relationship between people and environment led one mid-century group of cultural geographers and folklife scholars to seek out patterns in common buildings that might describe a culture's experience of the built environment. Structuralism had a strong impact on folklife scholar Fred Kniffen and his student Frank Glassie, who classified early American houses according to form, function, material, and siting to extrapolate their social, cultural, and symbolic meaning. Carl Lounsbury illustrates drawbacks to these pioneering cultural typologies using Glassie's influential *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia,* which traces changes between one- and two-story

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Anderson's *A House Undivided*, William Ruzicka's *Faulkner's Fictive Architecture*, Taimi Olsen's *Transcending Space,* Susan Bernstein's *Housing Problems,* and Duncan Faherty's *Remodeling the Nation*.

frame houses in Virginia to attribute a shift in form—from dwellings with irregular floorplans in which the entrance opened into the primary living quarters to symmetrical forms with a central passage entryway—to a late eighteenth-century shift in social relations from close-knit community to that of a nascent rational political nation. As Lounsbury points out, Glassie misdates many of the central passage houses he studies, which were built as early as the second quarter of the eighteenth century (Lounsbury 497–98). Glassie ignored data that conflicted with his overarching social history, but more recent cultural theorists have used microhistorical approaches that foreground the significance of agency, contingency, ambiguity, and the plurality of meanings. My dissertation classifies fictional houses based on the prevalent typologies of foundational architectural history, but also examines innovations in the social relations that unfold within the familiar forms to explore the spatial context of power, gender, class, and racial relations at particular historical moments.[4]

Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798) is a useful case study to explore the benefits and limitations of using material culture studies to read linguistically-constructed buildings. The novel follows the Wieland family on an estate in Pennsylvania some time between the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. Siblings Clara and Theodore inherit the property after their father spontaneously combusts in a temple he has built on the land, and convert the temple into a summerhouse. Theodore lives with his wife and children in the main house, and Clara chooses to live alone in an outlying farmhouse until Pleyel, the childhood neighbor she loves, takes up residence in her guest room. A stranger, Carwin, uses his talent of ventriloquism to hide his presence on the estate and to test Clara's fearlessness in her solitary dwelling. Carwin's ventriloquism wreaks havoc on the tight-knit circle, and the story culminates in

[4] My discussion of these relationships is informed by the arguments about material culture and vernacular architecture studies history laid out in Tilley 1–6, Hicks and Beaudry 1–5, and Lounsbury.

Theodore's incarceration for the murder of his wife and children based on the delusion that a divine voice commanded the killings. Clara refuses to leave her dwelling, the site of her sister-in-law's murder, until it burns down, at which point she moves to France, reconciles with Pleyel, and marries him.

Although much of *Wieland's* Gothic action is structured by the particularities of built space, no accounts place Clara Wieland's house (the novel's key dwelling) in its architectural or material culture context. This is partly because William Dunlap's early biography emphasizes Brown's enthusiasm for classical and Gothic architectures, and, following Alan Axelrod, scholarship on *Wieland*'s buildings tends to focus on Brown's education in neoclassical architecture and the neoclassical temple turned summerhouse. When critics attend to the house itself, it is generally only in passing and with limited attention to detail.[5] Yet, Brown includes an incredible amount of architectural specificity in the novel, in part because the house's layout structures much of the plot. When Clara is awoken at night by the sound of voices in her locked closet, she reviews the possibilities for entry by making a detailed mental sketch of her dwelling:

> My habitation was a wooden edifice, consisting of two stories. In each story were two rooms, separated by an entry, or middle passage, with which they communicated by opposite doors. The passage, on the lower story, had doors at the two ends, and a stair-case. Windows answered to the doors on the upper story. Annexed to this, on the eastern

[5] Jennifer Harris writes in passing and somewhat inaccurately that Clara's house suggests "Georgian architecture, which would come to be known post-Revolution as the Federal style"; she is correct in her summation that such architecture aims for the "order and balance" and "reifies the class divide," but is incorrect in her evidence that it does so because "her servant, Judith, sleeps a floor below her" when Judith clearly sleeps on Clara's floor in a room that communicates with the guest bedroom Pleyel occupies (Harris 203). Lisa Norwood's brief account in her article on the construction of place in *Wieland* critiques Clara's description for reading "like a blueprint" of a dwelling that lacks details that would show the "sentimental or domestic value" of the home, and ignores Clara's extreme attachment to the house as well as the context for the description, which occurs as Clara attempts to reason through the opportunities for ingress into her locked closet (Norwood 96). Even Duncan Faherty's excellent chapter on Brown, architecture, and American identity in *Remodeling the Nation* accords just two paragraphs to Clara's house

> side, were wings, divided, in like manner, into an upper and lower room; one of them comprized a kitchen, and chamber above it for the servant, and communicated, on both stories, with the parlour adjoining it below, and the chamber adjoining it above. The opposite wing is of smaller dimensions, the rooms not being above eight feet square. The lower of these was used as a depository of household implements, the upper was a closet in which I deposited my books and papers. They had but one inlet, which was from the room adjoining. There was no window in the lower one, and in the upper, a small aperture which communicated light and air, but would scarcely admit the body. (*Wieland* 56–57)

Brown's scrupulously detailed descriptions of Clara's house allow us to sketch a speculative floor plan and identify the type of dwelling. Attention to Pennsylvania vernacular architectural history reveals that Clara's house is likely a two story, central-hallway, wood-frame Georgian single-pile house (often called an I-house) that includes a rear kitchen ell addition with a corresponding servant's chamber above connected by a staircase, and an additional smaller rear storage room with a closet above. Clara's emphasis on the presence of the central passage suggests that the house is not of ancient colonial origin, but was likely built sometime after the 1820s when such features became popular as a way to "separate living and circulation space and give the facade a clearer . . . Georgian symmetry" (Burns 165). Georgian houses were meant to make an impression. Architectural historians express distaste for the term "Georgian" because it is a fairly vague catch-all, but it is useful to sketch a family resemblance between houses characterized by their approach to form over function, which were designed to impress, presenting the largest possible configuration of rooms, a two by two block, toward the road, and organizing that square with a symmetry lacking in earlier houses. No perfect extant example of a

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as generically "vernacular" architecture, and provides somewhat inaccurate evidence to support his claim that while house "separates the public from the private," the novel undermines the design's supposed rationality (Faherty 55–6).

house like Clara's exists, in part because of Brown's particular specifications for the additions, and in part because, like Clara's wooden house, nearly every early eighteenth-century freestanding frame house in Pennsylvania has burned, decayed, or been razed to make room for new structures.

The order and stability Georgian central-hallway houses were designed to articulate are continually challenged in Brown's novel at the level of everyday spatial practice by the covert intrusions and ventriloquism that produce the novel's Gothic effects. Even before the villainous Carwin appears, Pleyel reveals that he has used his access as houseguest to spy on Clara in an effort to evaluate her character as a potential future bride and housekeeper. Indeed, even if Pleyel very properly requests "three minutes conversation with you in the parlour" to excoriate Clara for her seeming liaison with Carwin, the houseguest habitually abuses his access to the house's interior to "not[e] down, in writing, every particular of your conduct" down to "the arrangements of your breakfast-table and your toilet," and even steals into her chamber unnoticed to observe what she writes in her diary (133; 136). The house may separate the parlor downstairs from the upstairs living chambers, but the guest room where Pleyel stays connects to Judith's chamber (which also connects to the kitchen below and its exterior door), and also to the passageway and Clara's room via doors "usually unfastened" even if the lower doors were locked (57). In another Gothic novel, we might imagine Pleyel's surveillance and violation of hospitality and courtship norms leading to trouble either for Clara or for her servant, Judith, trapped in the chamber adjoining the guest room.

To be sure, even Brown's precise architectural renderings lack the detail needed to take advantage of the scientific techniques at the heart of much cutting-edge twenty-first century

material culture study.[6] However, even if literary scholars cannot personally use such scientific techniques on fictional houses, there is still the potential to draw on enhanced understanding of material, production, and use of particular objects that populate fictional worlds, and on new microhistories of domestic spaces that challenge monolithic social histories. But when they, like Brown, do provide that detail, it is a readerly obligation to dwell on it.[7] In those instances material culture studies provides invaluable resources. The novel has not been read as a domestic novel in part because its author is male, but also because Clara, as a single female homeowner who decides not to reside with her brother's family, creates and controls a domestic space that does not fit with assumptions about Revolutionary era domesticity. Disaster is visited upon the Wielands because of Carwin's perturbation at Clara's form of single female domesticity, and his determination to challenge Clara's decision to live alone by provoking fear of intrusion, murder, and rape. He explains that she became a target because he was intrigued that she "took no precautions against robbers. You were just as tranquil and secure in this lonely dwelling, as if you were in the midst of a crowd. Hence a vague project occurred to me, to put this courage to the test" (210). Carwin scorns the typical approaches to a Georgian house, and never enters either through front door or parlor but via ladder, the unlocked kitchen door, or the cellar. Nearly every male figure in Clara's life urges her to leave her house and put herself under their protection, but

[6] Some architectural historians have advocated a movement from classifying houses based on architectural and decorative details—which I use to estimate the likely history of fictional houses based on their similarity to historical prototypes—because typing can be imprecise if a house was renovated to match later trends, or was built using an already outmoded aesthetic. In the past decade, scholars of material culture have increasingly turned to scientific techniques such as chemical tests, X-ray fluorescence, and spectrographic analysis to date an artifact's construction and alteration (Weismantel and Meskell 236; Jones 184).

[7] Of course, not all authors provide the architectural detail that Brown does. In Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), for instance, Rowson's heroine is installed by her seducer in a fatally remote "small house a few miles from New-York," but the house's layout and setting are sketched in only the vaguest terms (Rowson 67). The house's architecture is of far less significance for Rowson than its isolation and the fact that it is a rental; a pregnant Charlotte gets evicted during a snowstorm, falls ill while trying to walk from her remote house to New York, and dies tragically in childbirth. Thus, the lack of architectural material for material culture studies to draw upon corresponds to a lack of significance in the hazily described domestic setting.

Theodore's delusional murder of his family does not argue that heterosexual married domesticity is a much more stable state than Clara's heretofore untroubled single female domesticity. In Brown's novel, threats to single female domesticity end up annihilating the nuclear family altogether. Like Pleyel, Clara's servant, Judith, and Carwin, who go to great lengths to observe Clara in her domestic space, literary critics, by learning about a fictional house's historical prototypes, can identify and understand the ways that authors draw upon and reorganize the practices and meanings associated with particular domestic architectural forms.

Each chapter in *Dwelling in Possibility* examines an innovative, but not necessarily positive, dwelling practice that emerges from and alters a particular domestic architectural form and the social relations it generates and maintains. My first chapter, "Boarding-House Fiction and the American Family in the Boarding-*House of the Seven Gables*" argues that the titular dwelling in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) refashions an extended family unit out of the intimate, integrated domestic-commercial space of the boarding-house. The Pyncheon mansion's ahistorical architectural stasis has led Hawthorne scholarship to overemphasize the importance of the downstairs cent-shop. I contend that Hepzibah Pyncheon renting a room to paying stranger Holgrave Maule is an earlier opening of the house involving economic exchange that both initiates the market's penetration of a private domicile and draws the aristocratic Pyncheons into the public. A comparison with "Taking Boarders" (1851), T.S. Arthur's cautionary tale about the publicity and danger of boarding, highlights how Hawthorne's boarding-house expands the possibilities for "family" at a time when cultural venues from Webster's *American Dictionary* to the U.S. Census were attempting to limit the term. Arthur and boarding-house fiction more generally portray boarding-houses as making economic relationships of what should, ideally, have been social relationships free of moral contamination from the market.

However, labors of love and the rise of affection between residents in Hawthorne's story offer a model of the extended (and extendable) boarding-house family as an alternative to foundational structures of blood-based aristocratic self-sufficiency or alienating cent-shop economic relations.

In chapter two, "Domesticizing the Unknown in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,*" I attend to dwelling as process that familiarizes one's surroundings in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). A comparison between Aunt Polly's fictional house and Mark Twain's Boyhood Home in Hannibal, MO, highlights how Polly's house departs from typical compartmentalized middle-class Missouri homes to collapse room function into a single, multipurpose room. Twain's novel is structured episodically around Tom's cyclical movement between his Aunt's condensed domestic space and the town's outskirts; Tom's trajectory repeatedly invokes the Manifest Destiny inflected dime novel frontier plot that proceeds from familiar territory to domesticate the wilderness, and then returns to the familiar. In contradistinction to the stark contrast between known and unknown places in dime novel adventures such as Edward S. Ellis's *Seth Jones: Or, the Captives of the Frontier* (1860) and in the majority of Tom's adventures in St. Petersburg, Tom's interactions with light in the cave highlights the confluence of known and unknown in moments of innovation. Tom's exploration in the variably familiar cave with his flickering candle troubles an implicit assumption of the adventure narrative: that humans have internalized the illuminatory qualities of metaphoric truth, and that our mere presence illuminates and elucidates the darkness.

"Surveillant Haciendas and Multicultural Domestic Spaces in *Ramona*" contends that the unorthodox pueblo-cottage-haciendas constructed by the titular protagonist of Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1885) fuse vernacular multicultural Californian architectures in an ultimately futile attempt to create support for marginalized populations out of a Spanish Colonial architectural tradition designed to consolidate institutional power. Unlike the isolated stock images of Spanish

influence in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Florida memoir and travel guide*, Palmetto Leaves* (1873), Jackson's complexly-rendered Spanish architecture evokes racial tensions and competing land claims in an already multiracial American periphery. The novel's iconic open-air architecture affords communication and conspicuousness in the fictional Moreno hacienda, paradoxically promoting deadening conformity through architecturally-enhanced surveillance that encodes residues of the policed Indian labor that made such splendid residences possible. Scots-Indian Ramona rebels against the hacienda's architectural and cultural dominion by creating dwellings that synthesize beneficial aspects of Spanish, Indian, and Anglo-American architectural features and dwelling practices. Yet, while Ramona's hopeful architectural conglomerations imagine the construction of a harmonious California, their repeated confiscation registers the inability of either Californios or Indians to repel an incursion of Anglo-American squatters by renovating the inherited surveillance culture of the feudal Mission and *encomienda* landholding systems.

My final chapter, "Free People of Color, the Carolina Cottage, and Slavery's Architectural Legacies in *The House Behind the Cedars*," situates efforts by African Americans in Charles W. Chesnutt's *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900) to transform an architectural sign of concubinage and illegitimacy permeated by the spatial legacies of slavery into a domestic space that lays claim to middle-class respectability. Chesnutt inverts and urbanizes the conventional seduction novel trope of the "cottage in the country" by locating the titular house—given to free black Molly Walden by her wealthy white lover in the 1830s—within easy access to kin and community on Patesville, North Carolina's residential outskirts. The cedar-bordered house conjures the psychosexual legacies of the plantation slave cabin via its position downhill from the wealthy white quarter. Yet, it also complicates simplistic racial identification by replicating characteristics of the "big house" in its relation to the backyard cabin of the slaves sent to serve their white

owner's black mistress. The house's position in Patesville's shifting cultural geography reveals the fragile configuration of privilege and restriction accompanying free status for blacks, and the resulting fraught dynamics not only between freedmen and slaves, but also between two castes of antebellum free people of color that persist, along with the architecture that supported them, into the postbellum world.

Dwelling in Possibility examines the broader architectural consciousness of four novels that capture ephemeral innovations; innovations that reorganize the practices and meanings generated by particular domestic architectural forms. By focusing on spaces and practices of dwelling, I bring together novels that open up innovative spaces that do not necessarily conform to preconceived domestic paradigms, but which instead reveal fruitful contradictions, conflicts, and instabilities as inhabitants work out new ways of dwelling in existing material conditions. Examining overlooked spaces and interactions in familiar texts and forms, *Dwelling in Possibility* challenges progressive accounts of American domesticity, extends the canon of the domestic novel, and develops new rapport between literary and material culture studies.

CHAPTER 1

Boarding-House Fiction and the American Family in the Boarding-*House of the Seven Gables*

Early in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), financial need drives Hepzibah Pyncheon, an elderly spinster living in genteel poverty in her ancestral mansion, to reopen a cent-shop created nearly a century before in a downstairs gable by an impecunious ancestor. By "leaving the entrance free—more than free—welcome, as if all were household friends—to every passer-by" or "housebreaker," the cent-shop opens Hepzibah to the outside world (40; 42). Critics have read that opening in three ways: as the market's penetration into the private realm, as drawing the aristocratic Pyncheons out of their isolating "circle of gentility" and into the public, or as an allegory of the author's need to accommodate his house of fiction to the reading public that will buy his book (44).[8] But for all the attention critics have given the cent-shop, they overlook an earlier opening of the house involving economic exchange. "About three months back" Hepzibah rented a room to Holgrave Maule (29). Taking in a lodger also provides Hepzibah with a source of income, but it entails a different type of economic exchange than occurs in the much-discussed cent-shop. Hepzibah and Holgrave occupy the roles of landlady and lodger, but Hepzibah refuses to sell her wares to Holgrave. Instead, she gives him the bread he wants to purchase free of charge, and avows that a "Pyncheon must not, at all events, under her forefather's roof, receive money for a morsel of bread from her only friend!" (45). Between family isolation and market intrusion, boarding surprisingly produces neither a "customer" nor a "housebreaker," but a "friend," and eventually a family member by marriage

[8] For a representative cross-section, see Gilmore 97–100, Bush 36, Travis 110, Herbert 90–94, and Jackson 33. In fact, Hepzibah's conspicuous *re*opening of the cent-shop is not particularly revolutionary. A Pyncheon ancestor had

(42; 40; 45). Hepzibah's opening of the house to a boarder allows Hawthorne to imagine a new possibility for social relations that is neither overwhelmed by the market nor withers away in genteel isolation.

To read Hawthorne's most famous house of fiction as a boarding-house is to bring together different strands of Hawthorne criticism to reevaluate some assumptions about nineteenth-century domesticity that have caused scholarship to overlook the lodger within the home. Attention to Hepzibah's reopening of the cent-shop in these and other works grows out of a critical tradition initiated in very different ways by Michael T. Gilmore and Walter Benn Michaels that explores the relationship of literature to the marketplace. Rather than lead to a conclusive account of literature's relation to the market, this tradition yields two seemingly contradictory readings. On the one hand, the cent-shop makes way for the intrusion of the marketplace into the privacy of the domestic sphere. On the other, it signals the Pynchon family's need to establish commerce with the public to avoid decline resulting from isolation and inbreeding. In order to see how Hawthorne resolves this seeming contradiction, we must turn to two other strands of criticism. For Robert Levine, the Pyncheons' hereditary decline is not so much a comment on their relation to the marketplace as it is an indication of Hawthorne's racial politics. Drawing on Brook Thomas's argument that Hawthorne's romance demystifies myths of national origins, Levine responds to Jonathan Arac's criticism of Hawthorne for his passive stance on the issue of slavery by claiming that *Seven Gables* is a "genealogical fiction" that "expose[s] the pure white bloodlines touted by white nationalists as little more than fictions, thereby encouraging readers . . . to develop a skeptical relationship to mythified stories of foundings" (Levine 121). Hawthorne works on founding myths, but he is less interested in the

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gone into shopkeeping generations in the past, and her cousin Jaffrey Pyncheon, a prosperous businessman, is not stigmatized.

Pyncheon family's white bloodlines than in their pretentions to aristocratic status that go against the grain of democratic American ideals. As important as the debate over slavery was in the early 1850s, for a mildly anti-slavery Northern Democrat like Hawthorne the issue of class trumped that of race. Hawthorne's clear criticism of the Pyncheons' aristocratic pretensions would seem to support critics who read Hepzibah's opening of the cent-shop as a necessary correction to the Pyncheons' isolation. But Democrat that he was, Hawthorne was far from an unabashed proponent of the commercial marketplace. On the contrary, Judge Pyncheon, a bank director and the book's villain, is identified with the commercial elite who have political designs. To be sure, Hawthorne's response to the majority of men living "lives of quiet desperation" in a commercially driven economy was not that of Thoreau, whose advocacy of economic self-sufficiency led him to occupy an isolated cabin near Walden Pond. Hawthorne was, as T. Walter Herbert has shown, much more interested in the constitution of the family than in Thoreau's bachelor self-reliance. Herbert's argument that Hawthorne's works were instrumental in shaping the middle-class family by dramatizing the cult of domesticity's separate spheres ideology would seem to support critics who see the cent-shop as rendering the domestic sphere vulnerable to the marketplace. As social historians have shown, the antebellum period witnessed the rise of separate spheres with a newly defined nuclear family seen as a haven in a heartless commercial world. While it may be convenient to see Hawthorne as complicit with the gendered politics of separate spheres, recent revisionary readings of *Seven Gables* by scholars like Holly Jackson and Chris Castiglia consider how the novel works against the bourgeois ideal of family.[9] Similarly, I argue that to understand the house of the seven gables as a boarding-house is to recognize the extent to which Hawthorne tried to imagine alternatives to the middle class family based on ties

[9] Holly Jackson argues that *Seven Gables* disrupts hereditary property ownership in favor of property in whiteness. Chris Castiglia writes about the Pyncheon garden as illustrating "romance's democratically queer sociality" that

of kinship.

In this chapter I read the fictional seven-gabled house alongside its much-renovated historical architectural prototype and popular culture depictions of boarding-houses to show how Hawthorne's boarding-house offers a more flexible and diverse possibility for "family" at a time when cultural venues from Webster's *American Dictionary* to the US Census were attempting to limit the term. The novel is often read, understandably, in the gothic and sentimental traditions.[10] But it also should be considered in a less well-known tradition, that of boarding-house fiction.[11] As Wendy Gamber has shown in *The Boarding-House in Nineteenth-Century America,* American magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Putnam's, Godey's Lady's Book,* and *Harper's Monthly* published scores of short stories and serialized novels that depicted boarding-house life as fundamentally anti-domestic through the travails of widows and housewives who, having fallen upon hard times, take to "keeping a few genteel boarders," to borrow the title of Mrs. H. Seeley Totten's 1845 piece in *Godey's*.[12] During its publication run from the 1830s to the 1870s, *Godey's* alone featured over two hundred tales about boarding and lodging. As Gamber describes them, these boarding-house tales have a recognizable set of genre conventions.

"exists apart from the conventional division of public and private life" (Castiglia 264; 284).

[10] For *Seven Gables* and the Gothic, see Martin and Britton. For *Seven Gables* and sentimental fiction, see Nina Baym's "Again and Again, the Scribbling Women." For a comparison of conventions of both genres at work in the novel, see Hutner.

[11] Despite Holgrave's clear introduction as Hepzibah's lodger, Hawthorne scholarship has neither clearly recognized the Pyncheon mansion as a boarding-house, nor made the house's boarding-house qualities a central object of study. The rare mentions of Holgrave as a lodger in Hawthorne criticism tend to address his penetration of the house or rise from tenant to owner by the end of the novel through his marriage to Phoebe Pyncheon, but do not account for boarding as the mechanism that leads to their growing intimacy and eventual wedding. See, for example, Michelson 176-8, Shamir 170, and Jackson 33.

[12] Gamber summarizes T. S. Arthur's "Taking Boarders" as representative of the boarding-house fiction genre along with his "Blessings in Disguise" (1841) about a couple whose son dies of malaria when they choose to rent rooms in a boarding-house to economize, and Sarah Josepha Hale's *Keeping House and House Keeping* (1845), in which the fear of housework leads a couple into the horrors of boarding until the wife learns the joys of keeping her own house. Further, Gamber offers a range of evidence of a cultural shift against boarding-houses as anti-domestic from the 1840s through the 1860s, including Catharine Beecher's decision to omit an anecdote about a successful boarding-housekeeper in her 1869 update to her domestic advice book, *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) and

The boarding-house plays a central and sustained, and not a merely incidental or brief, role in the development of the plot. They tend to open with a family in desperate financial straits, and they include sketches of the lodgers and their interactions. They illustrate the dangers that may attend life in a boarding-house, such as lack of privacy from overcrowding, the introduction of moral contagion from seemingly genteel strangers, and the seduction of young household women by unscrupulous boarders. They typically conclude with the proprietors and/or their boarders escaping the perils of boarding-house life to find domestic felicity in a single-family home.[13]

Hawthorne both draws upon and revises conventions of boarding-house fiction to imagine a future in which base economic ties can be transmuted by spatial proximity into affective ties of preference. As it would in a conventional boarding-house tale, the opening of the cent-shop effectively illustrates Hepzibah's grave financial situation. Yet, the cent-shop itself makes up relatively little of the story after its initial introduction. Instead, like other boarding-house fiction, the novel's present day action revolves around the growing familiarity among the seven-gabled house's motley inhabitants: aged spinster Hepzibah; her brother, Clifford Pyncheon, emotionally damaged by decades of wrongful imprisonment; her visiting teenaged country cousin, Phoebe Pyncheon; and her lodger, Holgrave Maule, revealed to be the disguised descendent of the Pyncheons' ancestral enemies. In his exploration of domestic formations outside of the monogamous single-family household and unsavory depictions of the violent founding of the architectural and genealogical house of Pyncheon, Hawthorne performs what Cindy Weinstein calls the "interrogation and reconfiguration of what constitutes a family" characteristic of the period's sentimental novels. According to Weinstein, the prevalence of

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Walt Whitman's columns for the *Brooklyn Eagle* about boarding-houses a species of "wicked architecture" (Gamber 1–9; 58–63).

surrogate families in sentimental novels "demands that the possibilities for who counts as family be expanded," and that the "generic goal is the substitution of freely given love, rather than blood, as the invincible tie that binds together individuals in a family" (Weinstein 9). If these sentimental works challenge a blood-based definition of the family, they still adhere to the doctrine of separate spheres with the private family constituted by relations connected by sentiment and love and the public marketplace constituted by commercial relations. Like the women writers he notoriously dismissed as a "damned mob of scribbling women" in part because they captured the literary marketplace more effectively than he did, Hawthorne offers a looser and more diverse understanding of the American family, but he does so in the domestic-commercial hybrid space of the boarding-house.

I. The Boarding-House and the American Family

The domestic ideology that separated workplace from home found itself threatened by the increasing prevalence of boarding-houses that blended domestic with commercial space in ostensibly private upstairs chambers as well as in street-level rooms like Hepzibah's cent-shop. It is important to note that the rise of the cult of domesticity was coeval with the rise of the boarding-house, and that both were responses to a series of related economic transformations in the early nineteenth century—the spread of commercial agriculture, the beginning of industrialization, and growth of a wage-based working class—that drew an influx of people into urban hubs.[14] The market revolution that prompted a countering ideology of separate spheres and the associated rise of the bourgeois single family home also drove the rise of the domestic-

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[13] For a more sanguine view of the boarding-house, see Faflik's *Boarding Out*. Faflik does not restrict himself to boarding-house fiction as Gamber defines it, but instead treats a wide range of boarding-houses and communal living situations in American fiction.

[14] My discussion of these relationships is informed by the arguments laid out in Sellers's *The Market Revolution* and Larson's *The Market Revolution in America* 47–90. On the market revolution's impact on boarders and boarding-houses (and vice versa), see Gamber and Faflik. On the postbellum decline of boarding-houses, see Peel.

commercial boarding-house needed to house workers in increasingly crowded city centers (Gamber 3). For instance, although Hawthorne's native Salem, Massachusetts famously declined as a seaport in the early nineteenth century, over one third of Salem's increasing population in the 1850s could be considered transients who had been drawn to the town by the increase in local industry (Doherty 52–3).

Growing urban populations of transient workers required increased residential density, and David Faflik argues that boarding became "for a short historic interval the most popular form of city domesticity in the United States" (Faflik 6). Boarding was so prevalent an American phenomenon that around one in five rural or urban antebellum households included lodgers, and between thirty and fifty percent of nineteenth-century urban residents either boarded in their youth or took in boarders later in life (Modell and Hareven 472).[15] When middle-class adherents to the ideology of separate spheres fled crowded city centers for single-family homes on the urban peripheries, the aging seventeenth- and eighteenth-century city mansions they left behind provided a residential infrastructure ready-made for boarding (Faflik 47). Diminishing lots like the Pyncheon mansion's dwindling parcel which "had formerly been very extensive, but was now contracted within small compass" and "infringed upon by other enclosures" (86; 26) were a symptom of the decline of the single-family urban home and the need for increased residential density during the market revolution. Formerly opulent homes like Hawthorne's seven gabled house were large enough that each structure could be converted into individual boarding-house rooms to house incoming migrants from rural areas and overseas who could not or chose not to

[15] A more precise number is difficult to ascertain, particularly for the years before 1880, which marked the first time census data explicitly recorded the relationship between members of a household and thus registered "lodgers" and "boarders." Many sociological and historical analyses of boarding focus on the latter half of the nineteenth century because of the wealth of new data provided by 1860 census's record of occupations for both genders (recording female boarding-house keepers for the first time) and the 1880 census's record of family relationships.

live in a "home" of their own.[16]

In this chapter, I use the terms "lodger" and "boarder," as well as "lodging-house" and "boarding-house," interchangeably, although the latter implies that the landlady provides meals as well as a bed for payment. In doing so, I follow the lead of Tamara Modell and John Hareven, who argue that the usage was "less distinct" in the mid-nineteenth-century (Modell and Hareven 1).[17] "Lodging" is technically the correct term to describe Holgrave's situation, and is the one that Hawthorne employs. However, lodging and boarding share most salient characteristics deriving from the invitation of paying strangers into one's home, and Holgrave habitually breaks bread with the Pyncheons in the garden arbor. Indeed, too strong a focus on the exchange of meals for payment as indicative of boarding can disguise the important economic exchange in *Seven Gables*. Faflik's excellent *Boarding Out* which includes a chapter on the utopian community in Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) as a sort of boarding-house, mentions *Seven Gables* only once in a list of non-boarding-house domestic narratives in which "the city was little more than an afterthought" (Faflik 83).

The fact that Hawthorne's seven-gabled boarding-house has been so long overlooked is actually in keeping with the particular type of boarding-house he depicts. In the category of "boarding-houses," Wendy Gamber includes smaller, middle-class houses that took in only one or two boarders. It was common for such small-scale establishments to attempt to hide the household's economic relationships by calling themselves "private families" to differentiate

[16] Similar changes taking place in older neighborhoods are noted by the personified boarding-house narrator in Cornelia Carolla's series of sketches entitled "The Autobiography of a Boarding-House" that appeared in *Graham's Magazine* in 1852. The first sketch explains that "Like most old things, I have 'seen better days;' but I am strong and firm as in my youth. The misfortune that reduced me to 'taking boarders' was a change in the fashion. When I was built, the part of the town which I inhabit, was the residence of the 'ton'—emphatically the West End! But as the city enlarged its limits, they gradually deserted my neighborhood and removed to more remote situations. Besides, the large, airy houses of the past generation do not suit the degenerate taste of the present day" (Carolla 390).

[17] For an argument against using the terms interchangeably, but which focuses on postbellum America, see Peel 814–816.

themselves from larger working-class boarding-houses associated with vice and crime even if, as Gamber notes, this "'privacy' was an elastic concept that conferred an aura of respectability on otherwise 'promiscuous' households" (Gamber 15). Such linguistic evasiveness arose in part because the cult of domesticity made the monogamous single-family dwelling its precondition and fulfillment, and boarding-houses particularly threatened the definition of "family" by making economic relationships of what should, ideally, have been social relationships free of the moral contamination of the market. Part of the menace that nineteenth-century boarding-houses presented for bourgeois ideals stemmed from their role as social equalizers and promoters of diversity. Though middle class boarding-houses might exclude a wide range of potential inhabitants on the basis of race, class, and religion, within such limits they fostered social interaction between people who otherwise might never have met. Because houses "with rooms to let for ladies only" were assumed to be brothels, genteel establishments carefully cultivated mixed-gender households to allay suspicion (Gamber 30). The resulting heterosocial living environment, though essential to maintain respectability, created opportunities for young single people to meet even as it fueled the establishment's associations with sin and vice.

Yet, counting non-kin members like servants, orphans, apprentices, journeymen, and lodgers as part of a household was a common practice in the US long before the ascendency of home as a cultural icon in the 1830s and 1840s recast living arrangements outside of the nuclear family as a social problem. The curtailment of the definition of "family" between the first edition (1828) and second edition (1841) of Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* articulates an emergent impulse to deny more inclusive households that fell outside the monogamous single-family home. The definition of "family" in the 1828 *American Dictionary* takes common household residence, and not kin relation, as the arbiter of inclusion to encompass

remunerated employees and paying lodgers within the family circle: "The collective body of persons who live in one house and under one head or manager; a household, including parents, children and servants, and as the case may be, lodgers or boarders." The 1841 edition's definition retains identical wording with the 1828 edition, but reflects mid-nineteenth-century efforts to limit "family" to kin with its significant omission of the final two clauses extending familial status "as the case may be [to] lodgers and boarders." The secondary definition of "family" in the 1828 *American Dictionary* makes common genealogical descent a deciding factor, but democratically extends the definition to encompass the entirety of the "human family" by the entry's end: "Those who descend from one common progenitor; a tribe or race; kindred; lineage. Thus the Israelites were a branch of the family of Abraham. . . . The whole human race are the family of Adam, the human family." The 1841 edition excises the biblical example that introduced the "human family," and the definition reads simply: "Those who descend from one common progenitor; a tribe or race; kindred; lineage." Webster's changing definitions point to a cultural shift aligned with anti-boarding-house sentiment; one which moves away from a more inclusive definition of family toward one that privileges kinship over diverse and evolving household relationships.

The 1850 census highlights historical difficulties that followed the curtailment of ideologically-loaded terms like "family" in a world of transitory living arrangements. While the 1850 US Census Bureau's "Instructions to Marshals and Assistant Marshals" makes allowance for occasions when "the house is of a public nature," such as "Hotels, poorhouses, garrisons, hospitals, asylums, jails, penitentiaries, and other similar institutions," houses that kept boarders were not classified as "public" and thus required no special designation (US Census Bureau 9). Yet, because the 1850 census only recorded occupations such as "boardinghouse-keeper" for

males, female-run boarding-houses or households that contained lodgers but might not have self-identified as boarding-houses were invisible to the census except through a looser and more diverse concept of "family" like the ones found in the 1828 *American Dictionary* definitions.[18] Economically-based relationships between family and lodgers are further obscured by the fact that while the 1850 Census was the first to record the names of all household occupants, it did not record their relationships to one another.

Conflicting census criteria for defining "family" would lead to trouble when trying to make a record of the amalgamated, transient household of Hawthorne's seven-gabled mansion. In the 1850 "Instructions," Heading 2 defines "family" by common means of support:

> either one person living separately in a house, or a part of a house, and providing for him or herself, or several persons living together in a house, or in part of a house, upon one common means of support, and separately from others in similar circumstances. A widow living alone and separately providing for herself, or two hundred individuals living together and provided for by a common head, should each be numbered as one family. (US Census Bureau 9)

Under these criteria, boarding-houses should comprise numerous families paying rent from different sources of support. Phoebe, Hepzibah, and Clifford Pyncheon would form a family based on their communal income from female labor in the house and shop. We might expect Holgrave Maule to be listed as a second family, as he occupies an apartment in the house with its own entrance and relies upon his own labor.

The Heading 2 "common support" criterion conflicts with the instructions given under Heading 3, which states that enumerators should record "the name of every person whose usual

[18] Beginning in 1860, census takers noted women's occupations as well, but boarding-house-keeping remained an undercounted female occupation because many women running households with boarders chose not to self-identify

place of abode on the 1st day of June, 1850, [who] was in this family" starting with the ostensible head of family, then children by age, and lastly "the other inmates, lodgers and boarders, laborers, domestics, and servants" (US Census Bureau 9–10).[19] Under these criteria, boarding-houses would include only one heterogeneous family, which would include boarders listed at the end. Hepzibah, who holds a life-estate in the house, might be recorded first, though Clifford's position as eldest man might grant him the top listing. Holgrave, as "lodger," would clearly be listed at the bottom. There would have to be some conversation about whether cousin Phoebe's "visit of a week or two, which might be indefinitely extended" (73)—prompted by her mother's second marriage and the implication of her unwelcome status in her reconstituted household—actually represents a change of residence. Each of the tenuously lodged members of Hawthorne's fictional household would, in their own way, stretch the ability of census enumerators to judge what constitutes a family. More importantly, both census classifications of family, which are based on communal dwelling or support instead of blood kinship, make family an extendable concept at a time when cultural authorities were increasingly idealizing the monogamous single-family home.[20]

The boarding-house family was not only extended by the common lodging criteria outlined in the 1828 dictionary definition and census, but also by affective ties developed by spatial proximity. Hawthorne himself had positive associations with boarding-houses and with

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as running a boarding-house.

[19] Heading 3 further clarifies that "Those only who belong to such family, and consider it their home or usual place of abode, whether present or temporarily absent on a visit, journey, or a voyage, are to be enumerated."

[20] The uncertain place of the boarder within the newly defined census "family" means that when perusing census records, one must often guess at which members might be extended family, lodgers or servants within a given family. For instance, 1850 Census records for Salem list a single family in one dwelling as including William Goodhue (aged 67) and Elizabeth Goodhue (70), Margaret Parsons (38), Charlotte Matilda Brooks (50), and Mary Dover (22) (1850 U.S. Census 5). While Mary Dover's illiteracy and Irish birthplace strongly imply that she was a domestic servant, it is impossible to know whether the two middle-aged women (who, like the Goodhues, are from Massachusetts, but who do not share their surname) are visiting kin, widowed daughters, or boarders. Are they listed

the gratifying connections their communal spaces made possible between the landlady's family and a diverse array of non-kin residents.[21] In fact, the connection between boarding and *Seven Gables* reaches back to the 1830s when Hawthorne favorably described a boarding-house immediately prior to an account of a visit to the decaying Knox mansion, a prototype for the novel's history and setting. In his notebook entry for 12 August, 1837, the thirty-three year old Hawthorne records a trip to Thomaston, Maine, during which he stayed several days in "a nice, comfortable boarding-house tavern" (*Notebooks* 65). The entry portrays the boarding-house not as a pit of vice, but as a site of fulfilling interaction. Hawthorne sketches his fellow residents and a pleasant experience in the common areas, including "Music in the evenings, with a song by a rather pretty, fantastic little devil of a brunette, about eighteen years old . . . I talk with everybody: to Mrs. Trott, good sense,—to Mary, good sense, with a mixture of fun,—to Mrs. Gleason, sentiment, romance, and nonsense." Of particular interest is his fleeting romance with a member of the household: "A frank, free, mirthful daughter of the landlady, about twenty-four years old, between whom and myself there immediately sprang up a flirtation, which made us both feel rather solemncholy when we parted on Tuesday morning. She is capable, I know, of strong feelings; and her features expressed something of the kind, when we held out our hands for a parting grasp" (*Notebooks* 65–66). The emotional ties in the "solemncholy" parting testify

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as part of the family according to Heading 3 because they are boarders, or according to Heading 2 because they share a common source of support with the Goodhues?

[21] Though he is associated with venerable, now-monumental houses like the Old Manse in Concord and the Turner-Ingersoll house in Salem, Hawthorne himself lived a geographically mobile life, only sometimes occupying a single-family dwelling in the years leading up to the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables*. Hawthorne rented or was a guest in houses in Concord, Boston, Salem, and Lenox in the 1840s and 1850s, somewhat like the transitory Holgrave. Hawthorne himself was a boarder, according to David Faflik, in 1839 while working as customs officer in Boston, at Brook Farm in 1841, at the Old Manse he rented from Emerson in 1842, and again in Boston in 1850 before the author moved his family to the Lenox farmhouse (Faflik 52). In the last instance, Faflik likely refers to a situation that does not seem, to me, to be an instance of boarding: the Hawthornes' relocation in Sophia's last months of pregnancy with Julian to Sophia's sister's Boston home while Mary and Horace Mann were out of town for the summer, though it is possible that they paid rent to the Manns (Wineapple 197). Certainly, Hawthorne experienced the trials of making a home out of an itinerant household that did not strictly uphold the domestic ideology of his day.

to the power of proximity in dwelling to turn bare economic relationships into possibilities for intimacy between relative strangers.

Hawthorne's glowing boarding-house passage immediately precedes his account of the Knox mansion, which Thomas M. Griffiths has argued was a key source for *Seven Gables*. In the entry, Hawthorne describes the rise and fall of the pretentious owners of the "large, rusty-looking edifice of wood, withsome grandeur in the architecture," and muses that "the whole tract covered by Knox's patent, may be taken as an illustration of what must be the result of American schemes of aristocracy. It is not forty years since this house was built, and Knox was in his glory; but now the house is all in decay" (*Notebooks* 65–67). Griffiths indicates that Hawthorne learned the Knox history from conversations at the Trott boarding-house (Griffiths 443). Thus the tale of failed attempts at aristocratic genealogical and architectural permanence must be rooted not only in the aging mansion, but also in the intimate boarding-house common room in which it was conveyed. Though Hawthorne's notebook entry juxtaposes the deteriorating Knox family estate and the vibrant Trott boarding-house common room, he was prepared to imagine a notable structure in Salem as his fictional mansion turned boarding-house. And imagine it he did.

II. The Evolving Turner-Ingersoll House and the Static Pyncheon Mansion

In his preface to *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Hawthorne's narrator pretends to establish the authenticity of his tale through the commonplace fiction that the author found and published a historical manuscript written by another. In his preface to *Seven Gables*, the narrator makes the opposite claim. "The personages of the tale," he tells us, "though they give themselves out to be of ancient stability and considerable prominence—are really of the author's own making." He goes on to insist that the book has "a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex" (3). In both cases the effect is the opposite

of what the narrator claims. In *The Scarlet Letter*, we immediately recognize the book as a fiction. In contrast, after reading *Seven Gables,* several offended descendants of the Salem Pynchons demanded revisions to the unfavorable portrayal of a character who shared their ancestor's name (Fields 57–9). As early as the 1890s the search for prototypes of Hawthorne's seven gabled house spawned a tourist boom in Salem.[22] So keen is this interest in the historical underpinnings of the novel that the Turner-Ingersoll house at 54 Turner St in Salem, Massachusetts currently marketed as "The House of the Seven Gables" has been remodeled to include a cent-shop with a shop-bell to deepen the connection.

Readers are advised, however, to read between the two extremes of fiction and history. As Brook Thomas argues, to tie Hawthorne's story completely to "history" would be to deny it the possibility to imagine alternatives. To sever it completely from "history" would turn it into a world of fantasy with little chance of altering the "real world" (Thomas 195–8). Indeed, raising and then dismissing the possibility that a "reader may perhaps choose to assign an actual locality to the imaginary events of this narrative" immediately invites readers to seek a connection and then distances them from too close an identification, "bringing his fancy-pictures almost," but not quite, "into positive contact with the realities of the moment" (3). If to "assign a locality" to his story and tie it to history leads to "an inflexible and exceedingly dangerous species of criticism," the middle ground between the two extremes allows one to dwell in romance's realm of the possible, and not in the "inflexible" past of history or the impossible realm of fantasy (3).

While the desire to link the novel's events to history has been a boon to the Salem tourist industry, few have seriously explored the important divergences between the history of the Pyncheon house and that of Salem's famous Turner-Ingersoll house. Attention to the Turner

[22] For accounts of potential historical prototypes of the Pyncheon house, see Griffiths, Robinson, Idol, and Swanson.

house's architectural history illuminates how Hawthorne emphasizes, alters, and elides well-known historical building and dwelling practices in a novel that evokes much of Salem's history. He does so both to demystify standard myths about the Puritan founding fathers and to create his own myth about alternative possibilities for dwelling in America.

Apocryphally, the title of *The House of the Seven Gables* draws its origins from a visit Hawthorne made in the 1840s to Susan Ingersoll, his elderly second cousin and the owner of the Turner-Ingersoll house (Moore 221). Horace Conolly, Ingersoll's adopted son, recounts that Ingersoll told Hawthorne that the house formerly had seven gables during a visit spent discussing her father's renovations to the house (see figures 1 and 2). The party then climbed to the attic, where Ingersoll showed her interested visitor the beams and mortises where the missing gables had been attached.[23] According to Conolly, Hawthorne later wrote that "The expression [seven gables] was new and struck me very forcibly," and that "I think I shall make something of it" (Hawthorne qtd in Moore 221).[24] Years later, in a letter to his publisher, James Fields, Hawthorne wrote "I am beginning to puzzle myself for a title for the book. The scene of it is one of the old projecting-storied houses familiar to me in Salem. . . . I think of such titles as 'The House of Seven Gables,' there being that number of gable-ends to the old shanty; or 'The Seven-Gabled House'; or simply 'The Seven Gables'" (quoted in Fields 55).

[23] Ingersoll's renovations were extensive. When Hawthorne started visiting his elderly second cousin in the 1840s, her father had already removed the kitchen ell and two of the decorative gables, and had created a modern flat front by extending the first story front wall to meet the seventeenth-century jetty overhang of the second floor. Reverend William Bentley, the famous Salem diarist, noted in 1794 that Ingersoll had the "Back part," presumably the kitchen ell and lean-to, of the "Old House of Col. Turner… taken away, and the House repaired" (Bentley 463).

[24] Scholars have registered some doubts as to the authenticity of the letter from Hawthorne to Conolly, but the story of Hawthorne being shown the remains of the gables has been spread widely since the late nineteenth century. See, for instance, architect Arthur Little's 1887 *Early New England Interiors,* in which the story is recounted alongside Little's rendering of a notable cupboard in the Turner-Ingersoll house.

Figure 1. Turner-Ingersoll House missing three gables (c1890), as Hawthorne would have seen it. Photograph, LC-D4-11986 [P&P], Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The changing numbers of gables on his cousin's house may have inspired his title, but Hawthorne does not base the backstory of his fictional mansion on the architectural history of the much-renovated Turner-Ingersoll house that served as its prototype.[25] Although the Pyncheon mansion and the Turner-Ingersoll house share many architectural features, a close look at the Turner house's history shows that Hawthorne's fictional house differs significantly from the actual one.

[25] The early American practice of renovation would have been common knowledge in the nineteenth century. In 1859, Henry David Thoreau visited the seventeenth-century Hunt house in Concord when it was being demolished, and noted that "the eastern two-thirds of the main house is older than the western third, for you can see where the west part has been added on" (quoted in Cummings 10).

Figure 2. Turner-Ingersoll House (c1910) restored to early-nineteenth-century seven-gabled façade. Photograph, LC-D4-78016 [P&P], Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The Turner-Ingersoll house, like most homes constructed in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, was altered as families and economic conditions changed.[26] Houses grew with periods of increased prosperity and larger households; they were remodeled to match changing architectural tastes; and they changed owners (or became boarding-houses) during periods of decline. Salem historian Frank Cousins notes that the "picturesque many-gabled houses of Salem, which have been immortalized by Nathaniel Hawthorne" acquired their "rambling" quality over generations: "these quaint houses were not originally built in their final

condition," but instead "represented the result of successive additions to meet the needs of growing families and other requirements" (Cousins 3–4). The Turner house, built in 1668 by shipping merchant John Turner, has been noted by Abbot L. Cummings as "one of [Essex County's] most ambitious houses" (Cummings 73). Yet, while the Turner house became exceptional in Salem for its massive scale, it exemplifies typical regional building practices both in its modest original floor plan and in the series of renovations that led to its eventual notable size. Turner's house initially had a mere two gables, and consisted only of a low-beamed hall and parlor with two corresponding chambers above. As the Turner family grew in size and wealth over 150 years, the Turners added a kitchen ell, constructed a high-ceilinged new parlor, converted the old hall into a shop and then an accounting room, and turned the old parlor into a hall and then a business office (Goodwin 42–4; 79–85). The house stayed in the Turner family until financial difficulties led John Turner III to sell it to the Ingersolls in 1782 (Goodwin 108). The house changed hands twice more before Caroline Emmerton purchased it in 1908 for preservation as a literary landmark and had it restored to its late-seventeenth-century, post-medieval façade and floorplan. Hawthorne's fictional house, however, has a very different backstory, one much closer to the history he imagines the Knox mansion had.

Rooted in aristocratic pretensions of permanence, the Pyncheon mansion is unusually resistant to the common types of remodeling that allowed subsequent generations to remake existing structures to suit changing family needs. Hawthorne has his seventeenth-century patriarch "erect a family mansion—spacious, ponderously framed of oaken timber, and calculated to endure for many generations of his posterity—over the spot first covered by the log-built hut of Matthew Maule," whom Colonel Pyncheon has had executed as a wizard in order

[26] Hawthorne was also tangentially related to the Turners. His paternal great-great-grandfather, Justice John Hathorne (1641-1717), the famous Salem witch trial judge, married Captain John Turner's half sister, Ruth, around

to appropriate his land (8-9). Rather than growing haphazardly like the Turner house, Pyncheon's mansion is designed and constructed in its entirety by Matthew Maule's son, Thomas Maule, who serves as both the "architect of the House of the Seven Gables," and its "head carpenter" (10). Most seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay architect-carpenters were British-born, and built houses like the Turner house: the traditional East Anglian hall and parlor houses with which they had grown up (Cummings 4–5). In Hawthorne's tale, the American-born son of the Pyncheon enemy plans and erects a structure meant to perpetuate a New World class feud based on land theft. The house Thomas Maule designs is already massive and idiosyncratic: at the housewarming party, the colossal structure includes "seven gables pointed sharply towards the sky," a rambling "sisterhood of edifices" connected by a central chimney, a "kitchen" a distance from "the statelier rooms," and, as we later learn, a hidden compartment in the parlor that conceals the Pyncheon deed to vast lands in Maine's Waldo County (10; 11-12; 317). By the nineteenth century the structure is virtually unchanged but for signs of decay: a weathered façade, moss on the roof, and chambers turned dusty with disuse.[27]

Hawthorne creates a house that is preternaturally resistant to alteration, but susceptible to deterioration, to demystify standard myths glorifying an unalterable national foundation, and to show that being unable to renovate inherited physical, genealogical, and national structures leads to decline. The static nature of the founding Pyncheon's architectural achievements draws attention to his concomitant genealogical aims: to have his "race and future generations fixed on a stable basis, and with a stately roof to shelter them for centuries to come" (17). The frozen

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1674. Nathaniel Hawthorne is directly descended from John and Ruth Hathorne (Moore 33).

[27] The features to which Hawthorne's narrator repeatedly calls attention—the gables and pronounced jetty overhangs—describe an architectural style that would be immediately recognizable as dating from the seventeenth century, though these features were already old-fashioned at the time of construction. The intentionally archaic New England houses followed the East Anglian hall and parlor house plan typical of the post-medievalist period, which Cummings attributes both to the presence of British-trained carpenters and to the desire of young men in a new

house becomes the instrument by which the progenitor may work his will, that ghostly remnant of oneself, on his genealogical house for generations after his death. Such attempts at permanence are unnatural in the world of the novel, and work against the "inherent instability of human affairs" that Hawthorne's narrator characterizes as the fundamental human condition (17). With the Pyncheons, Hawthorne creates the stereotype of a conservative family that insists on clinging to established practices in the past without constant revision. Indeed, Colonel Pyncheon's attempts to secure his bloodline's enduring ownership by decreeing in his will that his portrait must "remai[n] affixed to the wall of the room in which he died" actually prevents his descendants from realizing the dream of becoming landed gentry on a larger scale, as the Indian Deed molders for generations behind the portrait in a secret compartment of architect Maule's design (17).

In the novel's nineteenth-century present, Hepzibah Pyncheon's limited control over the stagnant dwelling is further diminished by the "life-estate by the will of the old bachelor" that gives her the right to occupy the house without giving her title to it (24). Hepzibah's restricted right to the house by life estate is a common legal tool that precludes would-be heirs, often female heirs, from modifying their surroundings to match changing needs.[28] A life estate grants an interest in the land that lasts only for holder's lifetime, and prevents the holder from selling or willing the real estate to another person ("Life Estate"). It also restricts the holder from "waste," which is any action that would damage or devalue the land and prevent the next person in line from putting the property to full use (in this case, her devious cousin, Judge Pyncheon). Sargent

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country to project a more stately venerability with an older-looking structure (Cummings 13–14).

[28] Gillian Brown's "Hawthorne, Inheritance, and Women's Property" offers a comprehensive discussion of women's property law reform in *The Scarlet Letter,* but does not bring up the thorny lack of ownership in life-estates, another common legal way to restrict women's control over an estate and to side-step the problem of female inheritance. The problems inherent in life-estate also surface in Albion Tourgée's *Bricks Without Straw* (1880), in

Bush notes a similarity between the destitute heirs in Hawthorne's short story, "Peter Goldthwaite's Treasure," and *Seven Gables*, and suggests that "Hepzibah Pyncheon and Peter Goldthwaite are lineal descendants of their houses' original owner, though both are so far fallen from the prosperity of their forebears that they are forced to take what amount to desperate measures—Hepzibah to open a shop and Peter to tear down most of his home in search of ancestral treasure" (Bush 36). Bush is right to draw such a parallel, but there are vastly divergent scopes within which these inhabitants can enact "desperate measures" to turn their lone asset, a house, into a source of subsistence. As the house's inheritor, Peter Goldthwaite exercises his right to demolish the house in an effort to uncover its legendary treasure. Then, when that treasure proves worthless, he sells his valuable land to his former business partner for a princely sum. Though Hepzibah once optimistically mentions to Phoebe that along with the Indian Deed, "there was undoubtedly an immense treasure of English guineas hidden somewhere about the house, or in the cellar, or possibly in the garden" (84), the prohibition on "waste" would ban such exploratory demolition. Even if she had desired to sell the house as a last resort, Hepzibah's life estate denies her the right to sell as Goldthwaite and even John Turner III do.

Further, Hepzibah's life-estate does not guarantee that she will be able to continue living in her ancestral home if she cannot find means to provide for herself. *Seven Gables* repeatedly raises the threat of economic hardship leading to dislodgement and that lowest form of communal living, the poorhouse, through aging Uncle Venner, who speaks euphemistically throughout the book of his eventual retirement to "my farm, which most folks call the workhouse" (64). Displacement to the "great brick farm-house" also threatens Hepzibah, who mentions the possibility that she "should, by and by, find it convenient to retire with you to your farm" if she

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which an African American character is defrauded in his attempt to buy land because the seller holds only a life-estate.

cannot support herself and Clifford (63). Hepzibah's life-estate also makes Clifford's future residence in the house uncertain; should Clifford outlive his aged sister, Judge Pyncheon may evict his cousin when he inherits the mansion. The restrictions of life-estate leave both Pyncheon siblings, at best, precariously lodged in the house of the seven gables.

Inhabiting a house that resists alteration and limited by the bounds of her life-estate from making use of her sole asset to alleviate her desperate financial situation, Hepzibah illustrates the inadequacy of rigid, aristocratic, blood-based exclusivity and resistance to change as a set of values and expectations with which to govern a changing nation. Of course, economic stagnation inside the decaying hulk also drives one "unworthy ancestor" to the sole recorded alteration of the function of an existing room: the ignominious conversion of "the basement story of the gable fronting on the street" into a cent shop (34). Yet, the deadening routine and meager interactions possible across the counter of Hepzibah's cent-shop do not suggest that impersonal capitalist market relations will provide a viable successor to corrupt aristocracy. Hawthorne does not, however, leave us in a void between too much tradition and too much change. Hawthorne's boarding-house creates a new myth that opens the house to new ways of dwelling within severe structural and legal constraints. Rather than an imprisoning emblem of the Pyncheon family's increased isolation and decline, the seven-gabled boarding-house becomes a site where new possibilities for family are worked out from tenuous living situations and seeming decay. The transformation of the house of the seven gables does not come from additions and alterations to the physical structure as with the Turner-Ingersoll house. It comes instead from accommodating it to a new set of social relations that require a form of labor different from that of a carpenter. Those changes are initiated by admitting a stranger as a boarder.

III. "Taking Boarders" and Labors of Love

When Hawthorne's narrator lists "setting up a petty shop," becoming "a seamstress," and opening "a school for little children" as the limited "resource[s] of women, in circumstances at all similar to those of our unfortunate recluse" (38), his omission of boarding-house-keeping as a likely occupation for genteel women in dire financial straits is understandable in light of boarding's unsavory connotations, but surprising given the prevalence of boarding in the antebellum period. It is also surprising in light of the national conversation about the questionable morality of boarding-house life taking place in print culture alongside his own works.[29] In fact, in March 1851, the month that *Seven Gables* arrived on bookshelves, *Godey's Lady's Book* published Hawthorne's short story, "The Witches, A Scene From Main Street" alongside the third installment of "Taking Boarders" by T. S. Arthur, a prolific writer of boarding-house fiction. *Godey's Lady's Book* and its typical fare were clearly on Hawthorne's mind while he wrote *Seven Gables*, for he has Holgrave boast that his stories have graced the pages of "*Graham* and *Godey*" (185). A comparison between *Seven Gables* and Arthur's cautionary tale about the publicity of boarding shows how Hawthorne evokes and then resolves moralistic boarding-house fiction's key conventions to make the boarding-house family a viable paradigm for a transient American society.

Much like *Seven Gables*, "Taking Boarders" concerns potential occupations for the genteel older woman. Widowed Mrs. Darlington, hoping to avoid the "dreadful exposure" of shopkeeping or teaching, reasons that "in taking boarders we only increase our family, and all goes on as usual" because "to the eye there will be little change, and the world need never know how greatly reduced our circumstances have become" (Arthur, "Boarders" Jan, 14–16). The

[29] For an illustrative but abbreviated list of boarding-house fiction in popular periodicals and newspapers (though it omits *Godey's* altogether), see Faflik 322–27. For notable works of late nineteenth-century fiction that treat boarding and boarding-houses, see William Dean Howells' *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), Pauline Hopkins' *Contending Forces* (1900), and Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905).

ability to conceal gainful employment within the home comes at the price of introducing the corrosive influence of strangers into the family circle. One such stranger seems likely to bolster the house's teetering respectability, for he is a "tall, fine-looking man, who wore a pair of handsome whiskers and dressed elegantly. He gave his name as Burton, and agreed to pay eight dollars. Mrs. Darlington liked him very much. There was a certain style about him that evidenced good breeding" (Arthur, "Boarders" Jan, 20). Although their other boarders are so boorish that the "only man who really behaved like a gentleman was Mr. Burton; and the contrast seen in him naturally prepossessed the family in his favor," his evident attentions toward the youngest Darlington daughter prompt her mother to muse that "Burton was an entire stranger to them all, and there were many things about him that appeared strange, if not wrong" (Arthur, "Boarders" Jan, 19–20). Young Miriam Darlington reluctantly agrees to elope with the urbane boarder on his promise that he will "lift her [mother] out of her present embarrassed position, and settle upon her an income sufficient for herself and family" to make boarding-house proprietorship unnecessary (Arthur, "Boarders" Feb, 86). When the Darlingtons learn that Burton is a bigamist, "a man of the vilest character, and a gambler" posing as a rich gentleman, they barely manage to prevent the disastrous marriage in time (Arthur, "Boarders" Mar, 161). By the story's end the loss of nearly all of Mrs. Darlington's meager capital, her daughter's near ruin, and her son's temptation into gambling and drink by older male boarders are but some of the "evils [that have] come through this opening of our house for strangers to enter" (Arthur, "Boarders" Mar, 165). The morality tale concludes by promoting teaching as the only form of female employment that maintains the divide between home and market, one which allows the Darlingtons to "come together as one family, and shut out the intruding world" when "the day's work is done" (Arthur, "Boarders" Mar, 161; 164). Arthur's story tests Webster's 1828 definition that extends familial

status “as the case may be, lodgers or boarders,” and ultimately upholds the 1841 edition’s curtailment of the term to exclude paying household members. For Arthur, boarders cannot be integrated into the family, and remain “strangers” who expose an ideally insular domestic sphere to worldly contagion.

Seven Gables has much in common with “Taking Boarders,” including the desire of the boarding-house proprietors to conceal the fact that they run a boarding-house. When Phoebe asks Hepzibah how Holgrave came to live in the Pyncheon house, the narrator explains that “as he seemed to be a well-meaning and orderly young man, and in narrow circumstances, [Hepzibah] had permitted [Holgrave] to take up his residence in one of the seven gables” (85). The description of Hepzibah “permitting” Holgrave to live in her large, empty home uses a common boarding-house euphemism to downplay her commercial transaction with him. Along with calling their establishments “private families,” middle class households with a few boarders often tried to hide the economic relationship and retain respectability by claiming that lodgers were friends on an extended visit (Gamber 36). Few middle-class households who took in lodgers wanted to advertise the fact, which contributed to the invisibility of female-run boarding-houses in the 1850 US Census. Hepzibah’s evasion, as well as her earlier exclamation she cannot sell her wares to her “only friend,” fits with the vague or oblique terminology used by “respectable” proprietors to disassociate themselves from lower-class boarding-houses and the market in general.

The revelation that a seemingly respectable boarder is actually a scoundrel is a staple of boarding-house fiction, and Holgrave’s fluctuating characterization as respectable man and alarming reformer fits neatly into the stereotype. Holgrave, like Arthur’s Mr. Burton, initially seems an ideal boarder. He enters the cent-shop and the story “with rather a grave and thoughtful

expression for his years, but likewise a springy alacrity and vigor," and is "marked as a gentleman" by the "rather remarkable whiteness and nicety of his clean linen" (42). Holgrave supports his landlady's positive assessment that he seems a "well-meaning and orderly young man," by making pleasant conversation during her first vexing hour in the shop and wishing her well upon his departure (85). Although Hepzibah calls Holgrave her "only friend" during their morning conversation in the shop, by afternoon she describes her lodger to Phoebe as keeping company with "the strangest companions imaginable," men whose "long beards," "new-fangled and ill-fitting garments," and supposed occupations as "reformers, temperance lecturers, and all manner of cross-looking philanthropists" would hardly aid the Pyncheon house's tottering reputability (85). He even threatens to bring disorder and evil into the house itself, for Hepzibah "suspect[s] him of studying the Black Art up there in his lonesome chamber" (86). Holgrave's abrupt transformation from upright boarder to dangerous rogue evokes the fear that boarders are unassimilable embodiments of the dangerous outside world invading the home.

As we have seen in "Taking Boarders," the marriage plot often takes a sinister turn in boarding-house fiction, with unscrupulous lodgers attempting to seduce young ladies in their own homes. The boarding-house allows unusual opportunities for close contact between men and women in common spaces, and Hawthorne includes a seduction scene in which Holgrave has the potential to overpower a vulnerable Phoebe. Finding himself alone with Phoebe, Holgrave tells her the tale of Alice Pyncheon, a young woman who was humiliated and eventually killed while under the psychic control of the mesmeric carpenter Matthew Maule (211). Under the influence of Holgrave's story, Phoebe grows passive and pliable. Hawthorne describes her lassitude with the language of infatuation: a "veil was beginning to be muffled about her, in which she could behold only him, and live only in his thoughts and emotions" (211). There is a moment of danger

in which Holgrave might "complete his mastery over Phoebe's yet free and virgin spirit: he could establish an influence over this good, pure, and simple child," for there is, we are told, no "idea more seductive to a young man than to become the arbiter of a young girl's destiny" (212). But Holgrave declines to take advantage of Phoebe because he does not, in fact, fit the dangerous boarder stereotype. Hawthorne's seduction scene does not reveal the stranger to be a fundamentally dangerous scoundrel like Arthur's Burton, but rather to be a man with "integrity" and "reverence for another's individuality" that makes him a boon to the household (212).

Indeed, far from showing the transient boarder to be unassimilable into the domestic, Hawthorne's family circle contains transient members as well. Holgrave, with his habit of "continually changing his whereabout . . . putting off one exterior, and snatching up another, to be soon shifted for a third," exemplifies a particularly American trajectory of geographic mobility and self-making that led directly to the rise of the US boarding-house (175). Though Phoebe has been rightly noted as a force for domesticity and as having a typically Pyncheon preference for stability, her omnipresent cheerfulness and industry obscure a precariousness of situation much like that of the Pyncheons' "homeless" lodger (175).[30] The teenaged country girl comes to "visit" her poor, elderly cousin to escape circumstances "resulting from the second marriage of her mother" that, as the narrator delicately puts it, "made it desirable for Phoebe to establish herself in another home" (73). The unexplained reasons behind Phoebe's need to find a new residence following her mother's remarriage imply a family too little determined by consanguinity; a daughter is displaced from her mother's home when a stranger enters the household, which leaves the young woman in a potentially dire position as a transient searching

[30] Holgrave's mobility has been well noted, and is often attributed to his plebian Maule ancestry and contrasting with Phoebe's law-abiding conservative Pyncheon ways. For an account of Holgrave as exemplifying typical young male mobility, see Michaels 96–8. For accounts of Phoebe as a force for domesticity and/or Pyncheon stability, see Baym, "Hawthorne's Holgrave"; Gallagher 6–7; Erlich 102–3; Brown *Domestic Individualism* 76–80.

for a place with her urban relatives. In Hepzibah's house, shared blood is at first an excuse for a living arrangement that grows into a surrogate family, not the root cause of such a family. Although we might consider Phoebe's labors eventually cleansed and spiritualized by kinship, it is important to remember that she arrives as a relative stranger to her elderly kin. Judge Pyncheon, for instance, has difficulty recalling her name when he meets her in the cent-shop (117). Hepzibah initially creates formal distance between them, resolving that "she must have a night's lodging, I suppose; and to-morrow the child shall go back to her mother" (68), but after a period of developing acquaintance, she allows Phoebe to stay (97). In her charge to make a long visit to unknown kin, Phoebe is, in some ways, a female counterpart to Robin, a young man who leaves home to seek advancement from a powerful family member in Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (1832). Robin discovers that his formerly influential kinsman has been tarred and feathered, and the story concludes with an offer of lodging and a surrogate family from a man Robin has met during the wearying night. The man proposes "if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world, without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux" (Hawthorne, "Molineux" 87). Robin finds neither a home nor advancement with his disgraced kinsman, and if he is to succeed he most likely will board with strangers, at least temporarily. Phoebe, by contrast, does find shelter with her kinswoman, but not promotion; she lacks Robin's independence as a young single man. Instead, *Seven Gables* imagines the new family it delineated at the end of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," one in which members of a transient population can find a home in a boarding-house.

In her reading of *Seven Gables* in *Domestic Individualism*, Gillian Brown sees Hawthorne as being complicit with the doctrine of separate spheres by transforming women's domestic labor into leisure and thereby making it invisible. Yet, she mentions Holgrave as

"Hepzibah's lodger" only once in passing, and thus fails to factor the intrusion of a paying household member into her account of the cult of domesticity (G. Brown, *Individualism* 78). Hawthorne's relationship to separate spheres ideology is much more complicated. If conventional boarding-house fiction reinforced the cult of domesticity by seeing boarders as a threat, Hawthorne's revision of the conventions uses the commercial and communal relationship of boarding to reimagine the family. In the process, rather than making domestic labor invisible, he highlights it as a labor of love that is neither opposed to commercial relations nor completely reducible to a cash-nexus.

It is important to note that Hawthorne's novels imagine a variety of household formulations beyond the monogamous single-family dwelling. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne explores the family without a father in the private space of Hester's cottage. In *The Blithedale Romance,* he imagines the extension of the family to an entire utopian community that fails. Between these two extremes, *Seven Gables* imagines a household less private than the residents of Hester's cottage and less public than Blithedale; an extended family that is itself constituted by a labor of love made possible by the domestic-economic relations of boarding.

With a "natural magic" that attracts housework "to herself, by the magnetism of innate fitness" (71; 76), Phoebe enacts what Jeanne Boydston calls the "pastoralization" of housework that understood women's housekeeping as a way of being rather than as productive labor (Boydston 142–163). In the context of boarding, the "homely witchcraft" that allows Phoebe to "ma[k]e a home about her" with "the easy and flexible charm of play" is in some sense a survival response to her transient status as well as a palliative for fears about the toll of increased housework performed for non-kin in establishments that house lodgers (72; 140; 82). Crucially, the beneficial effects of Phoebe's labors of love are not limited to her kin, for the Pyncheons'

lodger benefits as well: “Without such purpose on her part, and unconsciously on his, she made the House of the Seven Gables like a home to him, and the garden a familiar precinct” (180). Phoebe’s homemaking abilities have been widely documented, but her ability to extend domesticity beyond the bounds of kinship is particularly notable in a genre that emphasized the impossibility of “home” in a boarding-house either for the principal household members or for paying strangers like Holgrave.

Holgrave performs an outdoor, masculine version of Phoebe’s “pastoralized” female housework, a labor of love that transforms social relations within the framework of the boarding-house. When he takes the long overgrown Pyncheon garden in hand for “recreation” as well as to provide “good, honest kitchen vegetables . . . to enrich Miss Hepzibah’s table,” he makes a community affair of the lodger-landlady relationship (93-4). As with many things in the ambiguously-worded tale, it is not clear whether the vegetables are payment, charity, or a gift that marks a growing fondness toward his landlady. The homegrown produce does establish the garden as a key site of community and, given the labor’s kitchen-table focus, of surrogate family that blurs the relationships of landlady, lodger, and friend.

Thus, it is both fitting and perplexing to learn midway through the book that Holgrave and aged neighborhood handyman Uncle Venner “had made such repairs on the roof of the ruinous arbor, or summer-house, that it was now a sufficient shelter from sunshine and casual showers” (144). Much like Phoebe’s domestic work, the arbor repair is described after the fact as a completed action with no mention of motive, toil, or remuneration despite the fact that Uncle Venner makes his meager living doing odd jobs for local families. With the reconstruction of the open-air bower, Hawthorne imagines the economic relationships of lodger and handyman becoming ties of preference that encourage collective endeavors. The nebulous economic

relationships between the young lodger, the elderly neighbor, and the household they have improved are naturalized as labors of love, to be perpetuated by communal gatherings motivated by love.

Although Holgrave does not officially board at the Pyncheons' table, he habitually shares in family meals and conversation. In the common space of the arbor that blurs the boundaries of interior and outdoor, Hepzibah, Clifford, Phoebe, Holgrave, and Uncle Venner habitually gather during "quiet little meetings of a Sabbath afternoon" that create a sort of surrogate family out of the motley household and their ancient neighbor (147). The habit of friendly intercourse develops, and one particular "little banquet" is described in the most glowing domestic terms: "the yellow richness of the declining sunshine still fell into the open space of the garden, Phoebe brought out a loaf of bread and a china bowl of currants, freshly gathered from the bushes, and crushed with sugar" (156). Unlike a typical boarding-house meal, in which the landlady or her cook provides food to paying guests, many members of the household contribute to the simple repast: Holgrave has probably grown the currants served in Hepzibah's china bowl, and Phoebe has likely baked the bread. The shared evening meal provides an opportunity for the residents to converse, and the lodger acts as a cohesive force in this interlude: "Holgrave took some pains to establish an intercourse with Clifford… he applied himself to the task of enlivening the party; and with so much success, that even dark-hued Hepzibah threw off one tint of melancholy" (156-7). A scene in which food and company are shared by kin and non-kin would be a near impossibility in boarding-house fiction, but Hawthorne creates a pleasant domestic setting out of the domestic-commercial hybrid space of the boarding-house and the labors of love it occasions.

After the cozy banquet scene, Holgrave's protestations of indifference to his landlady's plight might seem to support boarding-house fiction's stance that establishments lodging

strangers for money cannot create necessary emotional bonds from an economic relationship. In *Seven Gables*, it is not simply commercial ties that must be overcome to create an extended boarding-house family, but also generations-old antipathy. Although Holgrave, like Burton, is a lodger with a secret, the boarding situation that Hawthorne presents—in which the Pyncheons unknowingly invite their disguised familial enemy, and not simply somewhat disreputable strangers, to live in their home—is more dangerous than anything in Arthur's stories. The narrator repeatedly emphasizes Holgrave's calculations during ostensibly pleasant conversations with household members, qualifying his enjoyment as "seeming" earnest and his expression as "not sinister, but questionable; as if he had some other interest in the scene than a stranger, a youthful and unconnected adventurer, might be supposed to have" (156). After the "little banquet," during which Holgrave impresses Phoebe with his contributions to the group's enjoyment, he bluntly tells the horrified girl that while he does feel a "kindly interest" in Hepzibah and Clifford, it "is not my impulse, as regards these two individuals, either to help or hinder; but to look on, to analyze, to explain matters to myself, and to comprehend the drama" (216). For Phoebe, and for readers of boarding-house fiction, to remain a distant stranger without emotional ties to one's household is a threatening indication that lodging is a solely and damningly economic relation.

Yet, Holgrave's growing intimacy with the Pyncheons is at odds with the sinister analytical motives that first prompted him to take up residence with his ancestral foes. To understand Holgrave's reluctance to recognize the gradual alteration of his feelings for the Pyncheons and a larger possibility for boarding-house family, we must briefly look to his youthful philosophy of radical reform, which holds no place for incremental change. Holgrave famously tells Phoebe that he desires to live in a time "when no man shall build his house for

posterity" but when, instead, "each generation [would be] allowed and expected to build its own houses" upon the crumbling footprints of the past generation's edifices (181). Hawthorne derides revolutionary sentiments similar to Holgrave's in an 1837 notebook entry that records a meeting with his elderly uncle Eban Hathorne. Although the lifelong bachelor's "pride of ancestry" seems rather a Pyncheon trait, his many tales of "matters of birth, pedigree, and ancestral pride" devolve to "give vent to the most arrant democracy and loco-focoism, that I have happened to hear." Even the Locofocos, a radical faction of the Democratic party organized in 1835, likely never advocated Eban's view that "nobody ought to possess wealth longer than his own life, and that then it should return to the people &c," an opinion that resembles Holgrave's youthful philosophy. Hawthorne dismisses Eban's revolutionary sentiments as "queer," and mocks them in *Seven Gables* (Hawthorne, *Notebooks* 75).[31]

Holgrave's views are not, however, identical to Eban's. The obverse of Holgrave's longing to obliterate the past appears later in their conversation, when, in a contented moment, he exclaims at the evening's beauty, declaring that they live in "a good world" with:

> nothing really rotten or age-worn in it! This old house, for example, which sometimes has positively oppressed my breath with its smell of decaying timber . . . Could I keep the feeling that now possesses me . . . it would be like a bower in Eden, blossoming with the earliest roses that God ever made. Moonlight, and the sentiment in man's heart responsive to it, are the greatest of renovators and reformers. (213)

Holgrave's shift in perspective that makes continued dwelling in the old house feel like dwelling in Eden might seem a radical revision of his earlier desire that the Pyncheon house "be purified

[31] It is likely that this 1837 conversation was source material for Holgrave's radicalism, for Hawthorne immediately shifts the topic to note that Eban indicated that "Susy" Ingersoll has a "great fund of traditions about the family," which may have led to Hawthorne's important visit to the Turner-Ingersoll house in the 1840s. For a consideration

with fire,—purified till only its ashes remain" (181-82). Yet, what he describes is not the work of "renovators and reformers," but an impossible reversion to a lost prelapsarian ideal likely to "prove no better than moonshine" (182). He neither imagines renovations to the old to create a better world, nor envisions new possibilities within the old, but instead requires a veil of moonlight to soften unpalatable reality. Holgrave the "reformer" cannot imagine incremental change, but only absolute changes between old and new that must either erase or revert to what has come before.

Holgrave's sentiments should not be taken as Hawthorne's, for earlier in the episode, Hawthorne's narrator contextualizes Holgrave's revolutionary views as a manifestation of "that beautiful spirit of youth" stemming from "his premature experience of life," and likely to change with age. His desire for radical change is *youthful* philosophy, for "Man's own youth is the world's youth; at least, he feels as if it were, and imagines that the earth's granite substance is something not yet hardened, and which he can mould into whatever shape he likes" (178). Yet, the narrator corrects, "his error lay in supposing that this age, more than any past or future one, is destined to see the tattered garments of Antiquity exchanged for a new suit, instead of gradually renewing themselves by patchwork" (178-9). Hawthorne's image of a patchwork, which can encompass old and new by degrees, quite accurately describes the uncomfortable simultaneity of Holgrave's older dislike of his ancestral enemies and a growing fondness developed through prolonged contact with his landlady and her brother. It is as a patchwork that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century structures like the Turner-Ingersoll house grew to their eventual size, encompassing elements of old and new centuries. The boarding-house extended family might also function as a patchwork in which old and new members coexist to form a household. Under

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of this notebook entry in terms of aristocracy in a democracy and of Eben as a prototype for Clifford, see Davis 154–157.

the pressure of Phoebe's disapproval, Holgrave amends his original intention to be a "mere observer" of his co-residents, avowing that although Providence "sends me only as a privileged and meet spectator," if he "were really aware of any secret, the disclosure of which would benefit your friends,—who are my own friends, likewise,—you should learn it before we part" (216-17). For the most surprising "inmate of this old Pyncheon House," spatial proximity and shared labor not only creates friendship and a surrogate family out of the bare acquaintance of boarding strangers, but also reconciliation out of ancient enmity (178).

IV. The Extended and Extendable Boarding-House Family

"Taking Boarders" ends with the Darlingtons' devastating loss of five hundred dollars in the undertaking of a boarding-house, and their subsequent turn to keeping a school that enables them to police the borders of the nuclear family. In *Seven Gables*, the intimacy occasioned by boarding leads to the engagement of co-residents Holgrave and Phoebe that resolves the novel's founding class feud between plebian Maule and aristocratic Pyncheon; it also maintains the extended family unit that was once the most prevalent form of American domesticity, and adapts it to modernity. The tale's concluding events come rapidly after the revelation of sinister Judge Pyncheon's death: Holgrave and Phoebe become engaged, the familiar Pyncheons inherit the Judge's wealth, and the affianced couple departs with Hepzibah, Clifford, and even Uncle Venner to take up shared residence in Judge Pyncheon's country-house. Critics disagree about whether the happy ending should be read ironically or in earnest, and I suggest that we be wary of Holgrave's proclaimed conversion into a "conservative" who threatens to reenact Colonel Pyncheon's original error of patriarchal pride in the family bloodline. When planning their future on the Judge's country estate, Holgrave wonders that the Judge "should not have felt the propriety of embodying so excellent a piece of domestic architecture in stone, rather than in

wood" so that "every generation of the family might have altered the interior, to suit its own taste and convenience; while the exterior, through the lapse of years, might have been adding venerableness to its original beauty, and thus giving that impression of permanence which I consider essential to the happiness of any one moment" (316). Unlike "yonder portrait" of Colonel Pyncheon, "a model conservative, who, in that very character, rendered himself so long the evil destiny of his race" with his attempts to preserve his genealogical and physical house, Holgrave supports the alteration of the house's interior to match the unknown needs of changing generations (316). Gone, certainly, is his youthful radicalism that could only recognize cataclysmic change, and which required the reversion to or replacement of the old. He aims not for unnatural stability of the Pyncheon house frozen for years by its dead patriarch's will, but instead for the "impression of permanence" offered also by the post-medieval aesthetic of the much-remodeled Turner-Ingersoll house whose floorplan and room functions were altered to fit changing generations. Holgrave's concluding sentiments praise the admixture of transience and permanence, publicity and privacy, familiarity and strangeness that inhere with boarding.

Gordon Hutner has noted that the happy ending's "exuberance may come from the relief of telling an obsessive secret, but the closure inadvertently creates more secrets" and cannot not "put aright" many of the troubles suffered by his characters (Hutner 66). Certainly, the ending fails to resolve many of the social problems raised earlier in the novel, such as the very real threat of a less palatable form of communal living in the workhouse for aged Uncle Venner without the generosity of the miraculously affluent Pyncheons. Hawthorne's romance does not pretend to be social realism. Situated between the inflexible past of history and the impossible realm of fantasy, Hawthorne's story leaves open possibilities for how the new family will function. The novel concludes with the amalgamated household enroute to their country abode,

and we never see the country seat itself or learn what dwelling practices this reconstituted family will create.

Noting the lodger in the household and attending to the details of domestic life can help us to avoid projecting our assumptions about nineteenth-century domesticity backward onto texts created when the conditions underlying such assumptions were still emerging. Boarding-house fiction became popular during an antebellum cultural shift from an extended family to a nuclear family that demonized boarding-houses, and the motley household in *Seven Gables* is Hawthorne's resistant response to such a shift. The threat certainly exists that Holgrave and Phoebe, in taking possession of the Judge's estate and vast wealth, will repeat the original Pyncheon sin of greed and family pride. Yet, the structure of the household differs notably from that of the founding Pyncheon. Though Holgrave and Phoebe might have chosen to live by themselves after their marriage, the amalgamated, cross-class family they create instead enables the book's childless bachelors and spinsters to preside over a household that produces the hope for a new generation. Once the new heirs take up residence, the country estate could be called a "single-family" dwelling only by extending the idea of family to include elderly extended kin who also occupy the roles of former landlady and former enemies, and the working-class neighborhood handyman whose honorific "uncle" is turned into an actual family connection through future shared residence. Rather than Arthur's threatened "breaking up of the family, and a separation of its members" that attends domestic arrangements outside the single-family domestic ideal, Hawthorne's fairy-tale ending of wealth and success proposes that the integration of domestic space with commercial space, public with private, sentiment with the marketplace, and labor with love is a hopeful one that imagines incidental economic *and* blood ties being transmuted into affective ties by the labors of love occasioned by boarding-house life.

Hawthorne may not have overturned the ideal of a nuclear family unit that came to dominate the cult of domesticity, but non-nuclear families were not uncommon in in postbellum American novels. A reconstituted family with unclear kinship ties is also at the center of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and Tom's movement between Aunt Polly's domestic space and the town's outskirts constitutes the novel's episodic structure. Tom's adventures raise the question of what role the familiar plays in encounters with the unknown, and of the validity of Western assumptions that the light-wielding explorer has internalized the illuminatory qualities of truth.

Chapter 2

Domesticizing the Unknown in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Mark Twain was renowned for his autobiographical writings about his experiences as a cub pilot on the Mississippi and as a journalist out West, but domestic settings make for some of the most vivid sections of his *Autobiography*. In an extended section that recalls childhood visits to his uncle's farm in Florida, Missouri, Twain renders with meticulous detail the "family room" and the diverse family activities that took place in the multipurpose space:

> I can see the farm yet, with perfect clearness. I can see all its belongings, all its details; the family room of the house, with a "trundle" bed in one corner and a spinning-wheel in another. . . . the lazy cat spread out on the rough hearthstones; the drowsy dogs braced against the jambs and blinking; my aunt in one chimney corner, knitting; my uncle in the other, smoking his corn-cob pipe . . . half a dozen children romping in the background twilight; "split"-bottomed chairs here and there, some with rockers; a cradle—out of service, but waiting, with confidence; in the early cold mornings a snuggle of children, in shirts and chemises, occupying the hearthstone and procrastinating—they could not bear to leave that comfortable place. (*Autobiography* 213)

The family room occasions interactions by centering disparate family activities in the same, shared space. Twain notes especially the "trundle bed" and "'split'-bottomed chairs," which would have been typical, if nostalgic, indications of antebellum rural domesticity in which rooms served multiple functions of sleeping, socializing, and childcare; the empty cradle "waiting, with confidence" anticipates future additions to the "snuggle of children."[32] Filled morning and night,

[32] Sally McMurry notes that in antebellum farmhouses, young children might sleep near the parents in "family bedroom" or "family room," but a trundle-bed was an eighteenth-century relic of a time before rigid sexual mores encouraged farming families to split children's sleeping quarters by gender (McMurry 180).

the "family room" hearth is the center of domestic life. Yet, Twain follows the paragraph that illustrates this tranquil domestic scene with the recollection that he used to put snakes "in Aunt Patsy's work basket for a surprise; for she was prejudiced against snakes," which would certainly have enlivened the family gathering when his aunt reached for a new skein of wool from her position in the "chimney corner" (*Autobiography* 213). The prank is not incompatible with or separable from the cozy gathering of animals and an extended family of different kinship ties, but instead combines with them to form a domesticity in which peaceful harmony is valued, but is not rigidly opposed to more confrontational interactions.

As his recollections in the *Autobiography* suggest, Mark Twain's views on domesticity are complex. On the one hand, he depicts freedom as escape from domestic spaces in much of his fiction. In the first pages of *Domestic Individualism,* Gillian Brown uses *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) to exemplify what she identifies as an "androcentric, if not misogynistic, account of American culture, [in which] literature records the battle between the masculine desire for freedom and the feminine will toward civilization: the runaway Huck Finn versus the 'sivilizing' Widow Douglas" (G. Brown, *Individualism* 5). On the other hand, Twain believed strongly in domesticity, and was tremendously sentimental about it as it involved his wife and daughters.[33] Laura Skandera Trombley details Twain's habit while at Quarry Farm in Elmira, New York, of writing alone in a detached office during the day, and then reading his day's work aloud on the porch in the evenings and eliciting critiques from his family and domestic servants (Skandera Trombley 25–27). Skandera Trombley emphasizes the importance of Twain's domestic life, arguing that "home and family constituted the core of his life, and with

[33] Just as Harriet Beecher Stowe once defended the reputation of Lady Byron, Twain made an impassioned defense of Percy Shelley's abandoned first wife, Harriet in the *North Atlantic Review* in 1894. Twain ardently countered Shelley biographer Edward Dowden's attempts to blame Harriet's supposed shortcomings as a homemaker for her husband's desertion.

the stability and s.ecurity they provided he was free to create. It was during the period in which his female family unit was intact, between 1876 and 1895, that Clemens produced much of what are considered to be his best writings," beginning with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) (Skandera Trombley 25–27). To understand Tom's adventures, it is necessary to examine the domestic space from which he departs and to which he returns as well.

In his 2001 essay "Mark Twain and Literary Domesticity," Michael Kiskis called for Twain scholars to attend more closely to Twain's work on personal relationships in home and community. Kiskis suggests that "[w]hereas power, the lust for it and the failure to achieve it, is a focal point of many of Mark Twain's tales, he is at his best in those pieces that focus on domestic relationships: the childhood bluster at the opening to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer;* the raft episodes in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"* (Kiskis 26). To complicate our understanding of domesticity in Twain's novel of boyhood, I will attend both to how the specificities of domestic space shape and are shaped by Tom's and Aunt Polly's relationship, as well as how Tom's domestic life inflects his "adventures" on the town's outskirts.

Critical accounts that involve what Henry Nash Smith termed "the matter of Hannibal" have largely split over whether Tom's "adventures" are enacted in opposition to or in emulation of St. Petersburg social mores; in this divide, Aunt Polly serves as a useful litmus test (H. N. Smith 74). One camp sees Tom's adventures as complicit with and indulged by Aunt Polly and the larger St. Petersburg community. For Judith Fetterley, the clashings between Polly and Tom are mutually fulfilling: "Aunt Polly, like the rest of St. Petersburg, loves Tom because he makes her laugh and gives variety to her life," while "Tom knows that Aunt Polly's thimble on his head . . . is an index of the place he holds in her heart" and "that it is her resistance, her posture of disapproval, which creates his pleasure" (Fetterley, "Rebel" 295). Forrest G. Robinson locates

Tom's actions within a culture of "bad faith," a "spectrum of unacknowledged and sublimated deceits that a society tolerates as the price of stability and equanimity," and offers detailed readings of Tom's pleasurable "games" with Polly to argue that Tom is the superior gamesman in a community that thrives on duplicity and spectacle (F. G. Robinson 26). Elizabeth Peck also sees Tom's and Polly's relationship as mutually constitutive within St. Petersburg's formation of respectability via performance and spectacle; for her, Tom's and Polly's "relationship of loving antagonism provides the basis for mutual support and definition. By breaking rules, Tom gains his aunt's appreciation of his cleverness and proves his need for her guidance; by enforcing rules, Aunt Polly expresses her belief in conventional morality and shows her concern for Tom" (Peck 226). In each of these readings, Tom's "adventures" form what Peck would call "juvenile emulations" of adult values and practices (Peck 225).

A second camp views Aunt Polly and the domestic primarily as a locus of violence and punishment from which Tom seeks to flee. Gillian Brown suggests that "Twain presents Tom's adventures as a series of games and usual play being invaded by adult violence. When Tom pretends to be sick, Aunt Polly roughly pulls out his tooth" (G. Brown, "Child's Play" 95–96). For Tom Towers, "St. Petersburg['s] very name suggests authoritarian repression. Without doubt, Aunt Polly loves Tom, yet she conceives of her love chiefly as a duty to bend him to the customs of a spiritually dead society . . . [Tom] seeks freedom by trying, through a variety of strategies, to escape from or to transcend the stultification of St. Petersburg" (Towers 509–10). Cynthia Griffin Wolff offers a detailed catalog of the buildings in St. Petersburg that constitute a "nightmare vision of American boyhood," which includes "houses, church, school" that, as part of a stifling matriarchal society, are "places from which an average, energetic male youth is expected to flee: 'his' world, the world to be explored and conquered, lies beyond—in lush

Edenic woods, a river" (Wolff 638). Yet, such accounts of Tom's adventures presume a too-rigid divide between the domestic sphere of women and a boy's world "to be explored and conquered" that "lies beyond" and in opposition to the domestic.

Twain certainly satirizes many middle class conventions in his depiction of Polly and her home, but by eliding Aunt Polly's domestic space so completely with "civilization" as exemplified by the extra-domestic institutions of church and school, critics flatten the complexity of Tom's domestic life. Additionally, in seeking either to identify Tom's actions with those of St. Petersburg or to oppose the two, both groups of critics do not make a crucial distinction between Tom's different kinds of adventures. Horace Digby makes a reference to *Tom Sawyer* in his article on *Huckleberry Finn* as a travel book that exemplifies a critical tendency to homogenize all of Tom's adventures. Digby compares Tom's homebody brand of make believe to Huck's experiences on the river: "In his indisputably non-travel book, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Twain takes us on journeys of another sort. We are pirates, we are grave robbers, we are spelunkers, we are detectives, we are discoverers of lost treasure, we are heroes, we are villains, we are alive, and we are dead . . . all of it in Hannibal, Missouri" (Digby 36). Tom's "journeys of another sort" are a particular kind of role-play structured by the predictable literary conventions that influence Tom's imagination, as well as by the process of familiarizing the outskirts of St. Petersburg. Placed alongside "pirates" and "grave robbers" on Digby's lighthearted catalogue of "alternative" travels, "spelunkers" has been wrongly categorized as one of such imaginative journeys. Tom *is* a spelunker during the cave episode, and his exploratory experiences in the cave differ in significant ways from the other adventures on Digby's list. Tom's experiences in the caves bring into sharp relief the role of the familiar in Tom's excursions by replicating and then altering the structure of his typical predictive adventures.

Tom repeatedly departs Aunt Polly's house to have adventures on the town's wooded outskirts, and the repetition establishes a dialectical movement between the familiar and the unknown that makes his adventures possible.[34] To illuminate how Tom's domestic life inflects his adventures, as well as to differentiate the cave episode from other adventures, I will read *Tom Sawyer* against the conventions of early frontier dime novels. Most of Tom's adventures evoke the dime novel plot that enacts the trajectory of Manifest Destiny by proceeding from familiar territory to domesticate the wilderness, and returning once again to the familiar. In contradistinction to the stark contrast between known and unknown places in dime novel adventures such as Edward S. Ellis's *Seth Jones: Or, the Captives of the Frontier* (1860) and in the majority of Tom's adventures in St. Petersburg, the cave episode highlights the confluence of known and unknown that inheres with innovative forms of dwelling. The cave scene in which Tom and Becky are lost together raises the possibility that Tom and Becky might some day create a domestic space of their own but that Twain, with his emphasis on "adventures" in both this book and *Huckleberry Finn* has problems integrating such possibilities for new domestic dwelling spaces into his narrative. In *Huckleberry Finn*, for instance, when both Huck and Jim escape their domestic situations, they create a floating mobile dwelling on the raft with a wigwam that evokes the alleged mobility of Native American tribes. But that space cannot be integrated into the shore world. Indeed, when Huck and Jim end up at a new domestic space on the shore—the Phelps farm—the narrative comes almost to a halt as Tom and Huck try to create adventures from its imprisoning space. In the cave scene, Twain anticipates this narrative dilemma by having Tom and Becky's quest to escape the tomblike dwelling of the cave point to the limits of narratives of discovery and enlightenment. Tom's interactions with light in the cave

[34] It is interesting to note that Tom's vacillation between family life and independent creation has much in common with Twain's evenings with the extended household on the Quarry Farm porch, which structured the hours he spent

troubles an implicit assumption of the frontier adventure narrative: that humans have internalized the illuminatory qualities of metaphoric truth, and that our mere presence illuminates and elucidates the darkness. In doing so, it raises questions about the power of narrative to domesticate the truly innovative during encounters with the unknown.

I. Twain's Boyhood Home and Polly's Multipurpose Domestic Space

The Clemens dwelling at 206 Hill Street in Hannibal, MO, has been considered the historical prototype for Aunt Polly's house in *Tom Sawyer* since Twain identified the structure as his childhood home during a 1902 visit to the town (see figure 3). As Hilary Lowe points out, several editions of *Tom Sawyer* used the Hill Street house as the direct model for illustrations, and as a result, the "house, in effect, is as tied to the fiction of Mark Twain as much as it is to the life of the young Sam Clemens" (Lowe 56). Currently preserved as "Mark Twain's Boyhood Home," the house draws thousands of tourists each year looking for connections between Hannibal and Twain's fictional St. Petersburg. If readers and literary tourists identify the fictional house with the historical one, they may succeed because a significant lack of evidence about both buildings obscures important differences in function.[35]

The Clemens family built and moved into the house sometime in 1844. Years of undocumented renovations and alterations changed the house considerably by the time Twain returned to the site in 1902, but the Boyhood Home was restored in 1990-1991 to the original floorplan of three lower rooms and four upper rooms arranged in a single line. Twain writes in

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constructing adventures in his isolated office.

[35] Ron Powers, a Hannibal native and Twain's biographer, illustrates the ease with which people misread the historic house. Powers writes in *Mark Twain: A Life* that "Toward the end of 1843, the Clemenses moved out of the Virginia House and into a residence of their own. Marshall had it built on a twenty-foot-wide lot for $330 . . . . It was an ordinary two-story wood-frame building . . . Pamela and Orion enjoyed separate rooms; Sammy and Henry shared a small bedroom on the second floor, facing the street. Sammy often awakened at night to the soft catcalls of his friends. Easing himself out of the window, he would creep along the roof of the ell, drop onto the top of a woodshed and then to the ground and his waiting gang" (Powers 34). Yet, if Sam's bedroom is in the front of the house, and the "ell" in the rear, from which window does he climb?

Figure 3. Mark Twain in front of his childhood home in Hannibal, MO, in 1902. From: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ds-04480.

the *Autobiography* that "in 1849 . . . I was fourteen years old, then. We were still living in Hannibal, Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi, in the new 'frame' house built by my father five years before. That is, some of us lived in the new part, the rest in the old part back of it—the 'L'" (*Autobiography* 155).[36] There is some overlap between Twain's descriptions of his childhood home in the *Autobiography* and the spatial practice in *Tom Sawyer*. Tom's upstairs bedroom allows him to escape the house at night by going "out of the window and creeping

[36] Archaeological and architectural evidence uncovered during the 1990-1991 renovation of the home suggests that Twain misremembers the location of the "old" and "new" portions, for the studs and wood type of the front and rear sections suggest that the front two story section and rear downstairs room were built at the same time, and that the rear upstairs room may have been added to the house plan at the tail end of the original construction (Sweets 14). Even without the archaeological evidence, Twain's use of "L" to describe the "old" section of the house would be unusual, as an "ell" was typically a newer wing addition that was perpendicular to the length of a house that takes its name from the shape of the letter "L."

along the roof of the 'ell' on all fours . . . then jumped to the roof of the woodshed and thence to the ground" (129). Such an escape has much in common with a story Twain tells about being "sent up to bed early" as a young man and daring Jim Wolf, a visiting apprentice whose room had a "window [that] looked out on the roof of the L annex" to crawl onto the roof and stop two cats from fighting, though Jim's "perilous" procession across the frozen roof "on all-fours" is far less deft than Tom's escape from his second story bedroom (*Autobiography* 159–160). Twain describes Tom pelting Sid with dirt clods as Sid was "starting up the outside stairway that led to the back rooms on the second floor" (34). An identical "ambush" on a "stairway outside the house, which led up to the rear part of the second story" occurs in the *Autobiography*; Sam attacks his brother Henry when the younger boy had "climbed the stairs and was near the landing and couldn't escape" (*Autobiography* 351). Yet, Twain recounts remarkably few incidents that take place inside the house, and none that occur in the parlor, kitchen, dining room, or his bedroom, which makes exact room function and placement difficult to establish (*Autobiography* 159–60).[37]

In her description of a 1995 trip to Hannibal, Sally Fisher Fishkin condemns Hannibal for obscuring the history of slavery present in Twain's novels and in the town's history, but praises the Boyhood Home for its historical accuracy.[38] She mentions "the bedroom Sam had shared

[37] There is some controversy over the house's history, due partly to a lack of evidence available before the 1990-1991 restoration opened the house and its foundation to scrutiny. The 1938 Historic American Building Survey report on the structure registers two phases of construction in 1844 and around 1851, but does not identify which sections were built in each period or how the 1851 date was determined for the renovation (Historic American Buildings Survey 2). The National Register of Historic Places Nomination report states that the lower floor was constructed in 1844 as "one story containing three rooms," and was enlarged by Twain's brother, Orion, around 1851 (after Twain's father's death) to include "a second story, also containing three rooms . . . to increase living space" (National Register of Historic Places, *Twain House* 2). This hypothesis has been overturned by the 1991 restoration, which established that the front two story section and the first story of the rear section were constructed at the same time, and posited that the second rear story may have been added at the very end of the original construction.

[38] The omission of slavery and the character of Jim has since been somewhat rectified by the inclusion of material about slavery in the Tom Blankenship house, which serves as a model for Huck Finn's cabin.

with his brother Henry, the family's kitchen, the parlor—all beautifully restored in 1990 when each room was fitted with reconditioned nineteenth-century hardware, painted with the kind of paint that was used in Hannibal when Clemens lived there, and furnished with authentic period pieces resembling those that the Clemens family was known to have owned" (Fishkin 30). The house, one room wide and several rooms deep on a narrow city lot, has been set up to indicate how a typical middle-class Missouri family like the Clemenses would have lived in the 1850s and 1860s (see figure 4). The Boyhood Home illustrates the common preference for separating upstairs private rooms from downstairs semi-public ones. There are three rooms in a row on the ground floor; the front first floor room is decorated as a parlor or sitting room, the middle first floor room as a dining room, and the rear downstairs room as a kitchen with a large fireplace for cooking. All of the bedchambers are upstairs; the front upstairs room contains a double bed to suggest the parents' bedroom (or fictional Aunt Polly's room), the small connecting room contains a wardrobe and trunks to suggest a storage space, the third room back is portrayed as Twain's sister Pamela's room (or Mary's room), and the back bedroom is indicated as Sam and Henry's (or Tom and Sid's) shared room (Sweets 14–15).[39] It is important to note that the house was originally designed to increase privacy the further one gets from the front door: all bedrooms are upstairs, and the room sequence on the ground floor increases in intimacy from parlor to dining room to kitchen.

The setup of the Boyhood Home as a house museum that recreates common mid-nineteenth century living practices of families like the Clemenses is a useful benchmark against which to evaluate fictional Aunt Polly's house. In Aunt Polly's house, one would expect Tom's

[39] I am indebted to Boyhood Home Executive Director, Henry Sweets, for explaining in detail the architectural history of the house uncovered during renovation, for giving me an exhaustive list of how each room has been decorated, and for furnishing several useful photographs and maps of the house.

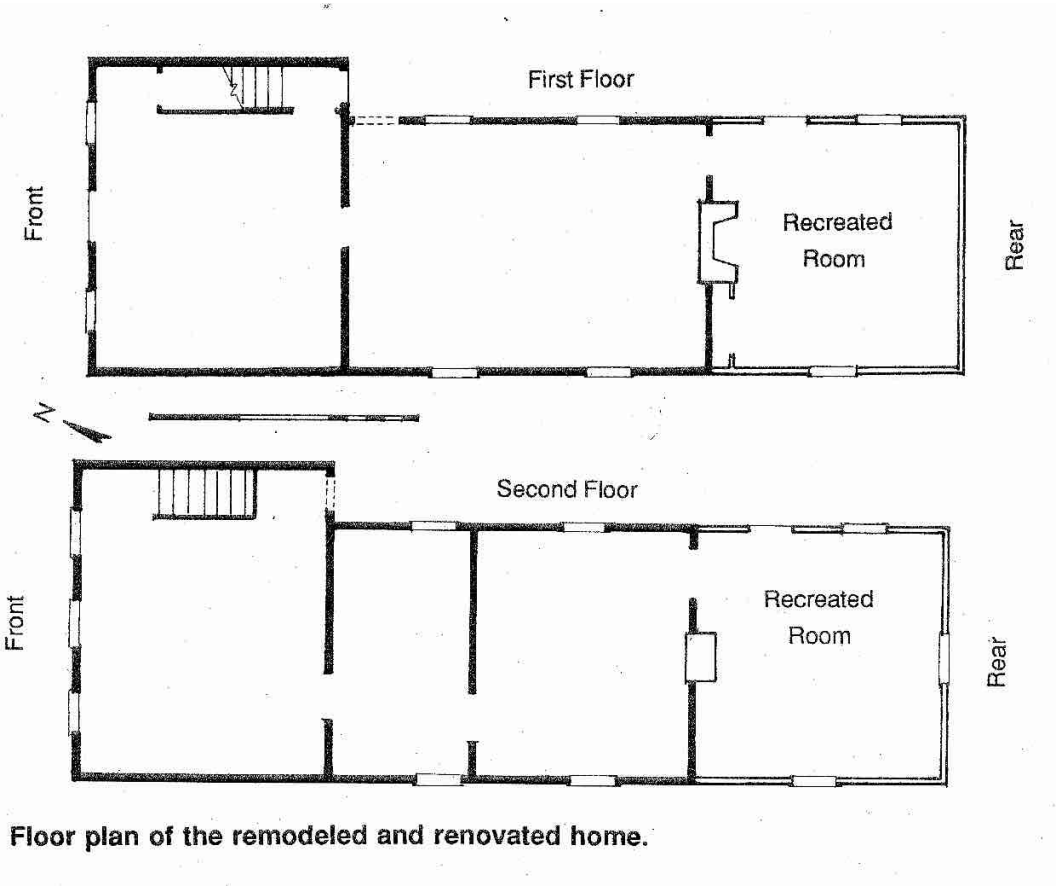

Figure 4. Boyhood Home floor plan after 1990 reconstruction, as it likely would have been in Twain's youth. First floor left to right: parlor, dining room, kitchen. Second floor left to right: Marshall and Jane's bedroom, storage, Pamela's bedroom, Sam and Henry's bedroom. Courtesy of the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum.

household interactions to occur in several rooms: sleeping in and sneaking out of his upstairs bedroom, listening in on Aunt Polly's conversation with Mrs. Harper in the parlor, stealing sugar and being dosed with Pain-Killer in the dining room, and hearing Aunt Polly's prayer for him in her upstairs bedroom. Instead, Twain's fictional house both fits and diverges from Victorian middle class sensibilities that separated downstairs public spaces from upstairs private spaces. The placement of Tom's shared upstairs bedroom accords with the common practices illustrated by the Boyhood Home of locating sleeping quarters on the second floor.[40] However, Aunt Polly's

[40] True Williams's illustrations of the house for the first edition include some inconsistencies. The illustration that accompanies Tom's midnight escape across the ell in chapter nine shows Tom crawling along the apex of a shingled roof, but the illustration of his return to his room in chapter three shows him climbing in a ground floor window. Williams was working from partial manuscripts, and did not incorporate knowledge of the later passage confirming

unorthodox room collapses the functions of several rooms in the Boyhood Home as a multipurpose "pleasant rearward apartment" that is "bedroom, breakfast-room, dining-room, and library, combined" (33).[41] The room also contains a door that "looked out [on] the tomato vines and 'jimpson' weeds that constituted the garden" and a "closet" pantry in the wall across from the door that holds apples, jam, doughnuts, and other provisions Tom attempts to steal (17-18). Although the house must have a front room that marks the "rearward" position of Aunt Polly's room, the "sitting room" or "parlor" function for hosting visitors is displaced onto Aunt Polly's bedroom as well.[42] When Tom sneaks back from Jackson's Island to leave a note for Aunt Polly, he climbs over "his aunt's back fence . . . approached the 'ell,' and looked in at the sitting-room window, for a light was burning there. There sat Aunt Polly, Sid, Mary, and Joe Harper's mother, grouped together, talking. They were by the bed, and the bed was between them and the door" (129). By the mid-nineteenth century, homeowners would not have received guests in the

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the location of Tom's room on the second story into his earlier illustration. The illustration of the famous whitewashing scene has Tom painting a horizontal rail fence, rather than "thirty yards of board fence, nine feet high" described in the novel (30). Barbara Schmidt points out that Williams was working from an early draft when he made the original illustration, and did not alter it to fit Twain's later draft. Williams did take the opportunity to revise the whitewashing illustration years later; in an 1890 collection of biographies of contemporary writers and orators, *Kings of the Platform and Pulpit,* Williams submitted a new image of Tom whitewashing a vertical plank fence similar to the one outside the Hannibal house (Schmidt 19–21).

[41] This obfuscation of room function is mirrored to an extent by the extended family that occupies it. Family connections are difficult to establish in *Tom Sawyer.* Aunt Polly describes Tom as "my own dead sister's boy," but his mother's and father's names are never mentioned. Tom lives with his "half-brother" Sid, and his "cousin," Mary, neither of whose relationship to Aunt Polly is clearly established. Mary might be Aunt Polly's daughter, but there is no indication in the novel that Polly has ever been married or had children. Mary's obfuscated kinship relation confused even William Dean Howells, who mistakenly refers to her as Tom's "sister" in his review of the novel (Howells 621). If Tom and Sid are half-brothers, which parent do they share? If their mother is Aunt Polly's sister, then Sid's surname would likely not be "Sawyer" as it is stated in Chapter 33 of *Huckleberry Finn*. Whatever trauma would be associated with the loss of Tom's mother, father, and step-parent (who is parent to Sid) does not ever surface in the novel. There is no way to resolve this hazy family relation because Twain likely did not take the trouble to clearly establish the relationships in Polly's household (Rasmussen 501–504). This confusion of family roles affects Forrest G. Robinson's otherwise meticulous chapter on *Tom Sawyer* in *In Bad Faith*. Robinson wrongly assumes that "Sid and Mary Sawyer" are siblings, and refers to her as Sid's "sister, Mary" (F. G. Robinson 22; 68). Robinson correctly refers to Sid as Tom's "half-brother" as often as he refers to Sid as his "step-brother" (F. G. Robinson 59; 66; 69; 70; 60; 61; 62).

[42] Parlors are not absent from the novel. The first room mentioned in the cave is, fittingly, "The Drawing-Room," and the narrator makes note of Widow Douglas's "drawing-room" (236; 262).

intimate space of a bedroom if they could possibly help it. But for the "kitchen" mentioned once in passing, this six or seven room house is functionally only two rooms (37).

Part of this concentration of spatial function could be attributed to narrative expediency. It is somewhat convenient in the opening scene to have Polly search for Tom and rule out an indoor space and an outdoor space before turning around to find him sneaking jam in the closet pantry. It is also convenient to give Tom access from a single hiding place to the laudatory conversation between Aunt Polly, the family, and the visiting Harpers, and then to Polly's touching prayers when she thinks herself alone in her room. I do not, however, think that two instances of narrative convenience enough to explain the dramatic departure from typical Missouri domestic arrangements in a novel that William Dean Howells praised as being "realistic in the highest degree, and which gives incomparably the best picture of life in that region as yet known to fiction" (Howells 621).

Instead, the constriction of rooms serves to bring the family together, pushing all of the members into Aunt Polly's company while in the house. The room is somewhat reminiscent of the "family room" at Twain's uncle's farm, but there are no tranquil scenes of domestic harmony in *Tom Sawyer.* Tom once finds Polly "nodding over her knitting," but Twain does not depict her engaging in any work—domestic or non-domestic. The only time Polly picks up a broom is to thrust it under the bed to flush Tom out. Polly's primary purpose appears to be raising the children: getting them off to school, feeding them meals, and keeping them healthy. However, she is no "angel in the house" and her home is no "haven in a heartless world." Dinners in Polly's room involve Tom "stealing sugar as opportunity offered" and Polly asking Tom "questions that were full of guile, and very deep—for she wanted to trap him into damaging revealments" (19-20). Polly is troubled by her role as enforcer of community social mores, and

bemoans her inability to discipline Tom as she feels she should. A forerunner of Huck's conflict between what Twain would later call a "sound heart and a deformed conscience," Aunt Polly laments that despite her belief in the adage, "Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says," she has difficulty disciplining Tom because he is "my own dead sister's boy, poor thing, and I ain't got the heart to lash him, somehow. Every time I let him off, my conscience does hurt me so, and every time I hit him my old heart most breaks" (19). Unlike Huck's vacillating treatment of Jim, Polly's determination to "d[o] my duty by that boy" makes for a consistently loving but adversarial relationship. Polly's actions in the novel revolve around Tom: searching for him, seeking to catch him doing mischief, and agonizing over his loss all in the same room. Feeling guilty for failing to discipline Tom adequately, Polly actively searches for evidence of misdoing that would justify a punishment she thinks would do them both good.

It not by accident that Tom is an orphan in the novel, and that Polly is a is not a nurturing "True Woman." Tom and his aunt may humorously square off in the unconventional domestic space she has created, but Twain is far too sentimental to allow a mother and son to do and say such things to each other. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), when enslaved Roxy switches her light-skinned baby for her master's baby, much of the outrage and scandal that takes place in the whitewashed Driscoll house stems from the whitened "Marse Tom Driscoll's" mistreatment and abuse of the slave woman who the reader knows to be his mother.

Twain satirizes conventional moral dictums in his depiction of Polly's household, but maintains the deep affection between Tom and Polly that underlies their verbal sparring; Polly admits that "He 'pears to know just how long he can torment me before I get my dander up, and he knows if he can make out to put me off for a minute or make me laugh" (19). Aunt Polly's well-intentioned efforts to control and civilize Tom create a complex, if not ideal, domesticity

that structures the explorations he undertakes in the woods. John Whitley, in a comparison between Tom and Huck, characterizes Tom as a homebody and likens him to "one of those small rubber balls attached, by a length of elastic, to a wooden bat. No mater how hard the ball is hit it still returns" (Whitley 63). Unlike Huck, Tom never leaves St. Petersburg for good, and always returns to Polly's chivying but affectionate care. Twain's novel is structured around Tom's cyclical departure from and return to the domestic; a trajectory that has much in common early frontier dime novels. Tom's adventures on St. Petersburg's outskirts are neither in opposition to, nor identical with, the domestic; they occur in dialectical relationship with domesticity's familiarizing structures.

II. Frontier Dime Novels and Tom's Predictive Adventures

As one might expect in a novel entitled *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* Tom spends much of the story in the process of exploring or discovering. Tom's adventures have been understood in the context of stories by Cervantes and Dumas, which explicitly structure his imprisonment of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn*. They also owe much to the sensationalist dime novels that pervaded the literary market when Twain was composing the novel.[43] J. Randolph Cox begins his introduction to *The Dime Novel Companion* with a scene from Tom Sawyer: "In 1876 Tom Sawyer dreamed of running away to sea to return in glory as 'Tom Sawyer the Pirate—The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main!'" and Twain "could be certain of one thing: [his] readers would recognize the source behind the humor to be a form of popular literature known as the

[43] For accounts of several of Twain's works in the context of dime novels, see Thomas Kent on *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn,* Gregory Pfitzer on *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court,* and Michelle Abate on the short story "Hellfire Hotchkiss." Pamela Bedore's chapter on Twain and Faulkner in *Dime Novels and the Roots of American Detective Fiction* briefly mentions *Tom Sawyer,* but focuses on Twain's works with an explicit crime or mystery plot including his short detective fiction, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and *Tom Sawyer, Detective.* Alfred Stone reads *Tom Sawyer* in the context of "Bad Boy" books, but he examines the influence of dime novels on Twain's later works about childhood such as *The Prince and the Pauper, Connecticut Yankee,* and the unfinished *Tom and Huck among the Indians*.

dime novel" (Cox xiii).[44] The term "dime novel" originally was a brand name, and referred to the series *Beadle's Dime Novels,* which published 321 numbered novellas with sensational, melodramatic plots from 1860 to 1874 (Cox xiii–xiv). As Cox explains, the frontier looms large in the popular conception of dime novels in part because "[u]ntil the 1880s, most of the Beadle publications contained frontier and western stories" that "were often imitations of James Fenimore Cooper's stories, his sea stories as well as his Leatherstocking saga. The quantity and popularity of frontier and western stories was such that the *genre* seemed to represent all dime novels" (Cox 110; xiv). Tom's adventures draw heavily on dime novel conventions not only for their content, but also for their form.

Dime novels take place a Manichean world, and Cox proposes that "the basic theme of the dime-novel western is the conflict between good and evil set in the American West. The story opens with a description of the setting: a forest, the plains, or a town that the frontier hero enters on foot or horseback. . . . The conflict that follows might include a fight with guns or fists" (Cox 110–11). Thomas Kent compares *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* to both "Bad Boy" books and the dime novel convention of clearly demarcating heroes and villains (Kent 108–110; 117–118).[45] The same demarcation occurs between the familiar and unknown in dime novels, most often represented by domestic spaces and the wilderness. Edward S. Ellis's *Seth Jones; Or, the Captives of the Frontier* (1860), number 8 in *Beadle's Dime Novels,* exemplifies this divide of known and unknown. Purported to be a favorite of Abraham Lincoln, the story has gained

[44] I find Cox's link between Tom Sawyer's pirate adventure and the dominant western/frontier genre of the dime novel convincing. Also worth noting is Bedore's somewhat specious connection between *Tom Sawyer* and the detective fiction subgenre of the dime novel. She does not elaborate on her passing suggestion that Tom "recalls Allan Pinkerton's colorful tales, especially in the parallels between Pinkerton's first real-world detective adventure, in which he discovered counterfeiters on an island by observing their lights in the nighttime sky, and Tom's pirate play on the island in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer"* (Bedore 153).

[45] When *Tom Sawyer* is read in the context of contemporary popular literature, it is usually with "Good Boy" and "Bad Boy" literature such as Jacob Abbott's stories about model boy Rollo and Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *The Story*

considerable critical attention as the first of the prolific author's works published with Beadle, and for being representative of genre conventions. *Seth Jones* takes place on New York's western frontier shortly after the Revolutionary War, and the plot centers on the capture of a teenaged girl by Mohawk Indians and her rescue by Seth Jones, a backwoodsman scout. For my purposes, it is useful to outline the typical trajectory between familiar and unfamiliar spaces that forms the plot. Manifest Destiny provides the occasion for Ellis's tale, and his introductory paragraph assumes an inexorable process of Western civilization domesticating the American wilderness and expelling inassimilable indigenous peoples: the farmer "Haverland saw that the tide of migration was rolling rapidly and surely to the west, and, ere many year; the villages and cities would take the place of the wild forest, while the Indians would be driven farther on toward the setting sun" (Ellis 5). *Seth Jones*, like *Tom Sawyer,* begins in a domestic space; in this case, on the remote and vulnerable Haverland farm. The farmhouse "was such as are generally found in new settlements. A number of heavy logs, placed compactly together, with an opening for a door, and one for a window, were all that could attract attention from the outside. Within, were two apartments, the lower and upper. The former was used for all purposes except that of sleeping, which, of course, was done in the upper" (Ellis 11). Ellis describes a "one over one," a common frontier dwelling type with upstairs sleeping quarters and a single downstairs room for cooking, dining, and socializing.[46] Jones warns the family that the Mohawks have attacked a nearby settlement, and Indians kidnap the beautiful teenaged Ina Haverland during the family's attempt to pack and flee. Jones and another scout leave the farm to pursue the kidnappers into the wilderness, and most of the novel's conflict involves moving from known territory to unknown wilderness as they track

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of a Bad Boy (See Stone 58–91; G. Brown, "Child's Play"; Fetterley, "Rebel"; Prchal, "The Bad Boys and the New Man").

[46] The interjection "of course" to describe the upstairs sleeping quarters in an eighteenth-century two-room frontier dwelling indicates how unusual Aunt Polly's antebellum downstairs bedroom would have been.

the Indians through the forest to rescue Ina. In the process, the unknown becomes known. The novel concludes with a return to civilization in the form of a New York settlement, where the Haverlands have been given a house and land to settle. In *Seth Jones*, as in the other *Beadle* dime novels, the action is structured around a departure from and return to familiar domestic space that extends the implicit illumination of Western civilization outward to familiarize unknown places.

Tom's adventures also proceed from the domestic to the forested outskirts and then back to Polly's house. Tom's "make believe" exploits fill much of the book and serve to structure Tom's (and our own) experiences with St. Petersburg and its environs. If, for Fetterley, Tom's "genius lies in his capacity to create brilliant situations in response to the immediate circumstances" in *Tom Sawyer,* a correlative genius lies in his ability to convert the conditions of his "immediate circumstances" into narratively "brilliant situations" (Fetterley, "Disenchantment" 70). Many instances of discovery at play are predictive explorations in which Tom imaginatively generates an expected discovery and then conceives of a narrative that will make such a discovery possible. When Tom hears a tin trumpet during a seemingly desultory stroll through the woods, we find that he must have had a prearranged but unvoiced objective, for he is standing next to "the rotten log" containing "a rude bow and arrow, a lath sword and a tin trumpet" with which he and Joe Harper have clearly planned to play (83). Tom and Joe have marked out this section of woods to store the props for their rendition of Robin Hood, and by doing so, have familiarized it. Robin Hood in the woods is not so different from an earlier adventure that takes place in "the public square of the village, where two 'military' companies of boys had met for conflict, according to previous appointment" (35). The boys enact a preplanned discovery of each other in the woods: "'Hold! Who comes here into Sherwood Forest without my pass?' 'Guy of Guisborne wants no man's pass. Who art thou that—that—' 'Dares to hold

such language,' said Tom, prompting" (83). With the exception of the nettle that undermines Robin Hood's death scene, there are very few surprises in such play that proceeds "'by the book,' from memory." Much of the satisfaction in this adventure comes from fulfilling familiar roles within a familiar narrative that concludes in a predictable way: rereading a dime novel about exploration like *Seth Jones* rather than living it firsthand. As many critics have pointed out, the boys trade the roles of hero and villain—and victor and corpse—but this variation in role takes place within strictly demarcated conventional limits. Such controlling structures are not, of course, absolute; much of the humor and the pathos in the episodes of make-believe derive from moments when the immediate circumstances of homesickness, a torrential storm, or an unexpected nettle impinge on the "brilliant situations" that Tom uses to structure his experiences.

When Tom, Huck, and Joe explore Jackson's Island as "Tom Sawyer, the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main . . . Huck Finn the Red-Handed, and Joe Harper the Terror of the Seas," it is not only the grandiose titles that Tom "furnished . . . from his favorite literature" (115). Tom's understanding of literary conventions gives the boys rules to structure the unfamiliar experience of living away from home for the first time. As Whitley notes, "the Island is always close to home, so that Tom can nip back to St. Petersburg and hear Aunt Polly bewailing his death" (Whitley 63). Tom incorporates the departure from home into the pirate narrative he constructs. While he uses "his imagination to remove Jackson's Island beyond eye-shot of the village, and so he 'looked his last' with a broken and satisfied heart," he retains his positional hold as an explorer who has left a home to which he will return (117). They structured the process of learning about the island around the narrative conventions of an "exploring expedition" (123). Although the boys "discove[r] that the island was about three miles long and a quarter of a mile wide," and encounter "plenty of things to be delighted with," they find "nothing to be astonished

at" that would be truly new and noteworthy (123-124). Of course, after a few days, a "sort of undefined longing crept upon them. This took dim shape, presently—it was budding homesickness" (124). The role playing conventions that structure their typical movement between home and adventure surface, and Joe explains that even "[s]wimming's no good. I don't seem to care for it, somehow, when there ain't anybody to say I sha'n't go in. I mean to go home" (124). When Tom convinces Joe to wait another day and to surprise St. Petersburg by appearing at their funeral, he once again incorporates his "immediate circumstance" into a "brilliant situation" and fits their dramatic homecoming into the narrative of departure and return.

III. Adventure and Discovery in McDougal's Cave

Tom's early adventures may serve to render us less sensitive to the novelty and variety of his experiences inside McDougal's cave, but the changing way that "discovery" is experienced in the cave involves a more complex type of role-playing than exists in his daylight, and even moonlight, excursions. While much critical attention has been paid to the terrifying materialization of Injun Joe's candle-bearing hand as a significant moment in *Tom Sawyer*, readers of the novel tend to overlook as inevitable the other shocking appearance of illumination in darkness: Tom's discovery of the lighted hole beyond his kite-line affixed near a spring within the cave. Tom's escape from McDougal's cave is more than an expedient way to move on to other adventures.[47] Tom and Becky create a temporary, tomblike dwelling within the half-known

[47] Across the many compelling accounts of the cave episode in *Tom Sawyer*, there exists a common tendency to skip over the details of Tom's escape itself. Once Tom's or the cave's function has been fulfilled, Twain has Tom spot daylight and escape with Becky post haste. Wolff—interested in Tom's "selves" in St. Petersburg and relation to Injun Joe—quotes the long passage from Chapter 32 that details Tom's escape, immediately concludes the paragraph with "Born again on his beloved river, Tom has earned his reward," and moves on to Tom's heroic reception in town (Wolff 649–650). Robinson writes that once the children have been realigned into adult relationships, "it is a relatively simple matter to bring the children, now subtly but profoundly transformed by their descent, back home" (F. G. Robinson 98). James Johnson, in *Mark Twain and the Limits of Power*, writes that after Tom's encounter with Injun Joe, "Twain chooses to do again what he has done before—save Tom from any real

space of the cave, but Twain cannot reconcile this possible future domestic space with the adventure narratives that structure his tale. Instead, he uses the intricacies of the escape from the cave itself invite a reconsideration of the relation between narrative and enlightenment. By placing Tom between string and light, the cave scene plays with two of the most important traditional Western metaphors: light as truth and Ariadne's thread within the labyrinth as narrative, spinning a tale.[48] Tom's varied experiences in the cave illuminate the mechanics of human relations with "unknowable" spaces, as well as moments when changes in such spaces and in those relations strain the stock "discoverer" role meant to contain them. In the deeper recesses of the cave, narrative can be seen not only as a form of mimesis, a mode of discovery that sheds light on what is already known, but also as a form of invention in which we learn something truly new. Twain does not simply celebrate the latter, for while invention can lead to positive knowledge (in this case, a route of escape), it can also lead to disaster and death.[49] Contrasting sharply with other instances of discovery in the novel, narrative strategies surrounding Tom's "rescue" defer, deflect, and obfuscate the tenuousness of the explorer in his capacity to convert unknown to known—a tenuousness that fits poorly into Tom's, the novel's, and the nation's "wonderful adventure" narrative (249).

To explore is to put oneself into contact with the unknown, and to call oneself an explorer is to put one's potentially unsettling interactions with the unknown into the comforting and structuring role of converting the unknown into the familiar. Considering discovery to be the

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unpleasantness, and save at the same time his own vision of an empowered, benevolent child. Tom escapes from the cave, and again gathers to himself the homage of the multitude" (Johnson 69). In this chapter, I attend closely to what Tom undergoes and achieves in the moments between despair and salvation.

[48] See Hans Blumenberg's "Light as a Metaphor for Truth" and J. Hillis Miller's *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines.*

[49] Twain was both an ardent follower and active participant in the technological boom of the late nineteenth century, though the outcome of discovery and of invention was far from positive. He patented inventions of his own with a very limited degree of commercial success, but also invested to the point of financial ruin in the temperamental Paige typesetting machine.

"bringing to light of that which was previously unknown" (as the OED idiomatically puts it), Tom's dwelling practices and interactions with light in the cave's labyrinthine darkness dramatize the unsettling confluence of known and unknown in illuminatory moments. Edmundo O'Gorman's *The Invention of America* offers a specialized definition of "discovery" in contradistinction to "invention": "every discovery is a finding, but not every finding is a discovery. 'Discovery' implies that the nature of the thing found was previously known to the finder; i.e., that he knows that objects such as the one he has found can and do exist, although the existence of that particular one was wholly unknown" (O'Gorman 9). In O'Gorman's account, Columbus does not "invent" America as "new world" because he believed that he had instead achieved his aim of "discovering" the eastern shores of Asia, a place that he already knew existed. Thus, discovery in O'Gorman's sense is an experience that constitutes exposure to the unknown within a familiarizing schema. Twain's famous quip in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* about Columbus, "October 12, the Discovery. It was wonderful to find America, but it would have been more wonderful to miss it," expresses his skepticism about revisionist narratives of Columbus' discovery of America and the Manifest Destiny they imply and generate (*Pudd'nhead* 141). Tom's encounters with the known and unknown in the caves are structured by the narrative conventions that accompany the "discoverer" role he explicitly assumes in Chapter 31. Tom's experiences in the cave also dramatize the work he must do to fit incongruous "immediate circumstances" within the cave into the "brilliant situation" of exploration and discovery he intends to construct.

The caves are a rich setting for working out the mechanisms of discovery, elucidation, and narrative, as candle-wielding tourists quite literally "bring" heretofore-unseen things "to light." Candles make the cave legible in a variety of ways. The children illuminate "the familiar

wonders of the cave," whose named referents grow in size and exoticism from "'The Drawing-Room,' and 'The Cathedral,'" to "'Aladdin's Palace,' and so on" (252). For Robert Tracy, "the Cave suggests that visit to the underworld which is part of the adventures of Dante, Aeneas, Odysseus, and other epic heroes, an underworld ruled over by a devil." Tracy's treatment of the cave's resonance with hostile mythic underworld spaces leads him to read the cave as inhibiting communication and understanding: "[t]he word *labyrinth* is often used, and the Cave's echoes turn cries for help into meaningless peals of laughter . . . The cave is dark and meaningless and unexplored. It is the place of horror and death" (Tracy 536). While the dark and dangerous aspects of the cave ought not be ignored, Twain's use of "labyrinth" also invokes the mythic space of Daedalus' elaborate maze, which imprisons the Minotaur on Crete and from which Theseus escapes using Ariadne's spool of thread. The cave's labyrinthine interconnectivity functions like Theseus's "clew" of thread to aid navigation, for the cave affords visible and audible "clues" to tie the sightseers to the known.

Initial descriptions of the children's visit to familiar highlights emphasize the cave's horizontal networked geography. The children playing hide and seek—and the later adult search party looking for Tom and Becky—evade and encounter each other in a system of passages through which candlelight can be seen and voices heard. Note the singular usage of "labyrinth" and the emphasis on the horizontal in the following description of the children's playspace: "McDougal's cave was but a vast labyrinth of crooked aisles that ran into each other and out again and led nowhere" (220). The passages of this labyrinth interweave and "lead nowhere" because they are endlessly self-referential. Within these caves, an exploration is always a possible return to a place previously discovered within the network. So, too, for the adults traversing this labyrinth in search of the lost Tom and Becky, for during the hunt:

> wherever one wandered through the maze of passages, lights were to be seen flitting hither and thither in the distance, and shoutings and pistol-shots sent their hollow reverberations to the ear down the sombre aisles . . . now and then, in the cave, a far-away speck of light would glimmer, and then a glorious shout would burst forth and a score of men go trooping down the echoing aisle—and then a sickening disappointment always followed; the children were not there; it was only a searcher's light. (235)

The "far away speck of light" in this scenario proves repeatedly to be the candlelight of other searchers, as this upper level of the caves delivers the adults continually back to the group. Though they do not find the children, the cave's physical properties actually aid the mechanisms of discovery here, and enable the searchers to build a network of visible and audible connections stretching from "remotenesses of the cavern . . . that had never been visited before" back to the known spaces "usually traversed by tourists" (219).

Twain's *Autobiography* describes the historical McDowell's cave "three miles below Hannibal" as a dangerous and confusing "tangled wilderness of narrow and lofty clefts and passages. It was an easy place to get lost in; anybody could do it including the bats" (*Autobiography* 213–214). Yet, like its fictional counterpart in *Tom Sawyer*, the branching tunnels of McDowell's cave enable communication and aid discovery in the event of disaster. Twain describes a time when "I got lost in it myself, along with a lady, and our last candle burned down to almost nothing," but light still remains when "we glimpsed the search party's lights winding about in the distance" and were rescued (*Autobiography* 214).

McDougal's cave is neither a uniformly nightmarish nor an unvaryingly comforting networked space. Close attention to the cave's effects reveals distinctive sections with differing qualities made manifest in the human experience of exploration, discovery, and dwelling. The

famous pronouncement that "No man 'knew' the cave. That was an impossible thing" does not occur until an additional confounding vertical dimension is introduced to the maze:

> It was said that one might wander days and nights together through its intricate tangle of rifts and chasms, and never find the end of the cave; and that he might go down, and down, and still down, into the earth, and it was just the same—labyrinth under labyrinth, and no end to any of them. No man 'knew' the cave. That was an impossible thing. (220)

Away from the "familiar wonders" adjacent to the main entrance, exploration in McDougal's cave can run in three dimensions: toward and away from the sun as well as laterally across the earth's plane. A possibly knowable "labyrinth" that "leads nowhere" because it leads endlessly into itself grows to become "labyrinth under labyrinth" with multiple unknowable conclusions "and no end to any of them." The danger of the cave is that one might be adjacent to the known, but below rather than alongside it, and too far down to know it.

Tom and Becky do not set out with the intention of becoming explorers, but instead grow tired of hide and seek and wander away from the group to read names written on the rock in candle smoke. Caught up in conversation and evidently unaware of their foray into new territory, "they scarcely noticed that they were now in a part of the cave whose walls were not frescoed" and "smoked their own names" in an unfamiliar part of the caves (236). In fact, Tom experiences discovery rather belatedly when he brings to light a new feature of the cave, "a laced and ruffled Niagara in gleaming and imperishable stone" and "squeeze[s] his small body behind it in order to illuminate it for Becky's gratification." It is not until he finds a "sort of steep natural stairway" behind the Niagara rock formation that "at once the ambition to be a discoverer seized him." The newly named and familiarized wonder of the stone Niagara and the stairway it conceals spark Tom's determination to play the role of "discoverer" and thus to go further "in search of

novelties to tell the upper world about" (237). Such a trajectory would fit neatly into the dime novel form of proceeding into the unknown with the aim of returning once the conflict had ceased. Discovery and narrative are inseparable for Tom. When Tom adopts the "discoverer" role, he immediately begins to fit his "immediate circumstances" into an imagined "brilliant situation" in which he attracts an audience back in St. Petersburg with tales of the "novelties" he encountered underground. Tom's search for expected "novelties" produces "discoveries" in O'Gorman's sense, in which one encounters an unknown entity of a "nature . . . previously known to the finder."

Given his focus on documenting new features for an audience back home, Tom's oft-quoted regret that "I was such a fool! Such a fool! I never thought we might want to come back!" is not technically correct (240). Tom and Becky move from a secure and familiar position to familiarize each unknown space literally and figuratively by marking it (as they do with candle smoke) or by planning to remark on it when they are back in St. Petersburg. When Tom heads down the "stairway" that opens "labyrinth under labyrinth," he extends the interconnectivity of the upper caves into lower levels by making a series of "smoke-mark[s] for future guidance" (237; 220). As the children travel, Tom and his candle do indeed bring to light previously hidden qualities of the cave, notably a "spacious cavern, from whose ceiling depended a multitude of shining stalactites of the length and circumference of a man's leg" and "a bewitching spring, whose basin was incrusted with a frostwork of glittering crystals" (237). Tom spends his exploration spinning a narrative to be retold when he returns home, a narrative that ties each encounter with an illuminated novelty back to a familiar St. Petersburg audience.

IV. Dwelling, Invention, and the Limits of Narrative

Indeed, all might have fit neatly into the out and back structure of the dime novel frontier narrative had Tom and Becky not disturbed the colony of bats that makes them flee "into every new passage that offered" and lose their system of smoke marks (238). After their flight, Tom laments that without their smoke-mark trail "I can't find the way. It's all mixed up," and fears that they are beyond audible range of the networked caves above, for "we are away down below them—and I don't know how far away north, or south, or east, or whichever it is. We couldn't hear them here" (239; 240). The mechanics of unknown space in the cave shift noticeably after the bat episode. Encounters with "familiar wonders" and "novelties to tell the upper world about" give way to a mixture of the familiar and the unknown in a sort of "half-known" space. Unable to reference the cardinal points away from visible landmarks, they can only be certain of their vertical position below salvation and away from visual and auditory signals.

A similar situation occurs in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* when the protagonist wakes up to learn that he has sleepwalked into a cave and fallen in a pit. Huntly, desperate with hunger, escapes the pit, kills and eats a panther, and lies prone for hours with severe indigestion. When he regains strength, he reasons that to "remain where I was was manifestly absurd. Whether I mounted or descended, a change of place was most likely to benefit me," but cannot dispel of the knowledge that "wandering at random, I might never reach the outlet of this cavern, or might be disabled, by hunger and fatigue, from going farther than the outlet" (C. B. Brown, *Huntly* 114). Brown's decision to keep moving pays off, and he does eventually happen upon an exit from the cave.

Tom abandons the system of smoke marks they had previously used to keep track of their movements, and the pair search their immediate surroundings for traces of their previous route, "glancing at each new opening, to see if there was anything familiar about the look of it; but they

were all strange." The unsuccessful semi-methodical inspection devolves into indiscriminate wandering in the hope of stumbling upon their initial trail; Tom and Becky "began to turn off into diverging avenues at sheer random, in desperate hope of finding the one that was wanted" (239). Tom and Becky know the danger of ceasing movement as well, for "it was dreadful to think of sitting down when time was grown to be so precious, moving, in some direction, in any direction, was at least progress and might bear fruit; but to sit down was to invite death and shorten its pursuit" (241). One would expect that the same "adventurous, trouble-some ways" that provoke Tom to sneak out of his Aunt's loving but constricting household would be a boon in a situation that required exploration to locate a means of escape. Yet, this disaster inverts Tom's usual habits. Although Tom knows that to cease searching means certain death so far down in the cave, he insists on setting up a meager camp at a spring they illuminate and refuses to leave it. Becky wisely suggests that they continue exploring, but she "was surprised to hear Tom dissent. She could not understand it. They sat down, and Tom fastened his candle to the wall in front of them with some clay" (242). The cave camp anticipates the domestic space Tom and Becky might build together, but it is a doomed space in this book of adventures. Tom insists that "we must stay here" because of the abundance of one resource and the scarcity of another: "there's water to drink. That little piece is our last candle!" (243). Bruce Michelson glosses Tom's actions in the cave as demonstrating that he "[u]nderstand[s] fully and soberly the fate that impends" when he "comforts the shattered Becky and makes sensible forays to find and conserve their candles and hunt for a way out" (Michelson, *Mark Twain on the Loose* 103). Yet, in affixing their light source to the cave, rather than using it to illuminate new parts of the cave in hopes of finding an exit or aid, Tom makes a potentially dooming decision to dwell by the now-familiar spring. Although the water is a useful provision, without food they can last only a few

days. Tom does his best to husband their limited resources, using a single candle and apportioning the "wedding-cake" that is their only source of food. Tom's longing for the familiar—for *the* way out, and failing that, for the spring they have located—precludes finding an unknown source of succor or escape.

Tom begins a new phase of exploration after their last candle flickers out and he loses his source of illumination for bringing unknown spaces to light. It is not until their food and candles are exhausted that the pair venture forth again, for the "idea struck" Tom that it "would be better to explore some" of the "side passages" to ease "the weight of heavy time in idleness," though without much hope of salvation (244). In darkness, Tom secures his kite-line to a projection near the spring he and Becky have discovered, and he and Becky "grope" along (244). While Tom exploring the labyrinth with his kite-string is certainly a Theseus figure, he has attached string to an arbitrary protrusion near a dark and provisionless spring. Anchored within the cave itself, the kite-string cannot offer the same comfort as Theseus' "clew" of thread leading to the mouth of the maze, or, indeed, as "the twine clews" Judge Thatcher's search party "had strung behind them," which eventually allow them to be "tracked out, in the cave" and informed of the great news" of Tom's and Becky's escape by happy townspeople (250).

Importantly, the thread does not lead only to salvation. The narrative follows closely and sequentially the twofold discovery of Injun Joe, who has a vendetta against Tom for testifying against him in court. Tom "on his knees" comes to a chasm (the ominously-named "jumping-off place") and feels "as far around the corner as he could reach. . . . at that moment, not twenty yards away, a human hand, holding a candle, appeared from behind a rock! Tom lifted up a glorious shout, and instantly that hand was followed by the body it belonged to—Injun Joe's!"

(245).[50] In this double event of discovery, we are alerted to what happens "at that moment" of the first recognition of the candle "instantly" followed by the unwelcome revelation of the candle-holder's identity. Tom becomes at once a "discoverer" and a searcher fearful of discovery. His elation at the discovery of a light source (and certain rescue) turns swiftly to fear that the dangerous wielder of the light might instead discover him. At risk of being "brought to light" himself, Tom reveals an implicit assumption in the narrative thread connecting him to the "upper world": that humans themselves control the illuminatory properties of metaphoric truth, and that our mere existence elucidates the darkness. That one may become illuminated within the unknown dark becomes a terrifying condition of the subterranean space in the few short paragraphs that conclude Chapter 31 after Tom meets Injun Joe. Tom's encounter with the candle revealed to be Injun Joe's not only makes future sources of illumination suspiciously malevolent, but also introduces menace into as yet unknown spaces of the cave as well as into the familiarized space of their anchor at the spring, which lies a mere kite-line length away from Joe's last known whereabouts.

In *Edgar Huntly*, Brown introduces a similar complication of light as salvific when the first "two objects [that] were distinctly seen" in the dark cave "resembled a fixed and obscure flame," but are revealed to be the eyes of the panther Huntly kills and consumes (C. B. Brown, *Huntly* 111). Yet Brown gives a fairly straightforward account of Huntly's escape from the cave, for as he wanders he is "eagerly observant if any the least glimmering of light should visit this

[50] It is important to note that Tom's encounter with Injun Joe is not face to face, as Bruce Michelson assumes when he writes about "the two of them, boy and grown villain, gazing with shock into each other's candle-lit faces," because Tom is without a source of illumination (Michelson, *Mark Twain on the Loose* 101). Joe hears, but does not appear to see Tom. Tom's position on his knees mostly shielded by rock and by darkness affords him a unique vantage of Joe walking with hand outstretched. Tom is filled with wonderment "that Joe had not recognized his voice and come over and killed him . . . but the echoes must have disguised his voice" (245). This suggests that Tom, at least, believes that Joe has only distorted auditory evidence of another person, rather than visual confirmation of Tom's identity as a vulnerable child. Tom reveals himself audibly in the echoing cave, but is not visually "brought to light" by Joe's candle.

recess. At length, on the right hand, a gleam, infinitely faint, caught my attention. It was wavering and unequal. I directed my steps towards it. It became more vivid and permanent. It was of that kind, however, which proceeded from a fire, kindled with dry sticks, and not from the sun." Shortly, "I found myself at the entrance of a cave. I quickly reached a station, when I saw a fire burning" and emerges into battle between local colonists and Indians (114). Brown's narration follows the clear sequence of events that make up the discovery of a light source, the identification of the source as fire, and the welcome revelation that the source indicates an exit from the cave. Unfortunately for Huntly, the firelight ends up belonging to a foe, but unlike Joe's illumination from within the cave itself, it still reliably guides him toward an exit.

Confined to the spring after the encounter with Injun Joe, Tom and Becky appear to be in desperate straits with no likelihood of aid. The abrupt transformation of hope to despair so shocks Tom that "[h]e said to himself that if he had strength enough to get back to the spring he would stay there, and nothing should tempt him to run the risk of meeting Injun Joe again." Tom and Becky sit briefly at the spring, but hunger and "wretchedness" goad Tom into exploring a different chasm with the kite-line (probably a hundred or so feet in length) tied to the same projection. Chapter 31 ends with the grave pronouncement that with a "choking sensation in his throat, [Tom] made a show of being confident of finding the searchers or an escape from the cave; then he took the kite-line in his hand and went groping down one of the passages on his hands and knees, distressed with hunger and sick with bodings of coming doom" (246). At this point, one might expect Tom's exciting discovery of a sign of salvation to unfold moment-by-moment as it does in the revelation of Injun Joe's candle three paragraphs earlier. Instead, True Williams' striking headpiece to Chapter 32 depicts Tom's grinning face emerging from a foliaged and vaginally-inflected hole in the ground (see figure 5). This striking illustration of Tom's

"rebirth" into daylight provides a visual pre-confirmation of Tom's escape even before the narrative strategies employed in Chapter 32 substantially diminish the drama and tension of Tom's last exploratory foray in the caves. If we read as somewhat earnest Twain's comment in a letter to Howells that True Williams' "genius" is that he "takes a book of mine, and without suggestion from anybody builds no end of pictures just from his reading of it" (quoted in David 236), then Williams neglecting to illustrate Tom's discovery of light might point to a similar elision in the narrative itself.[51]

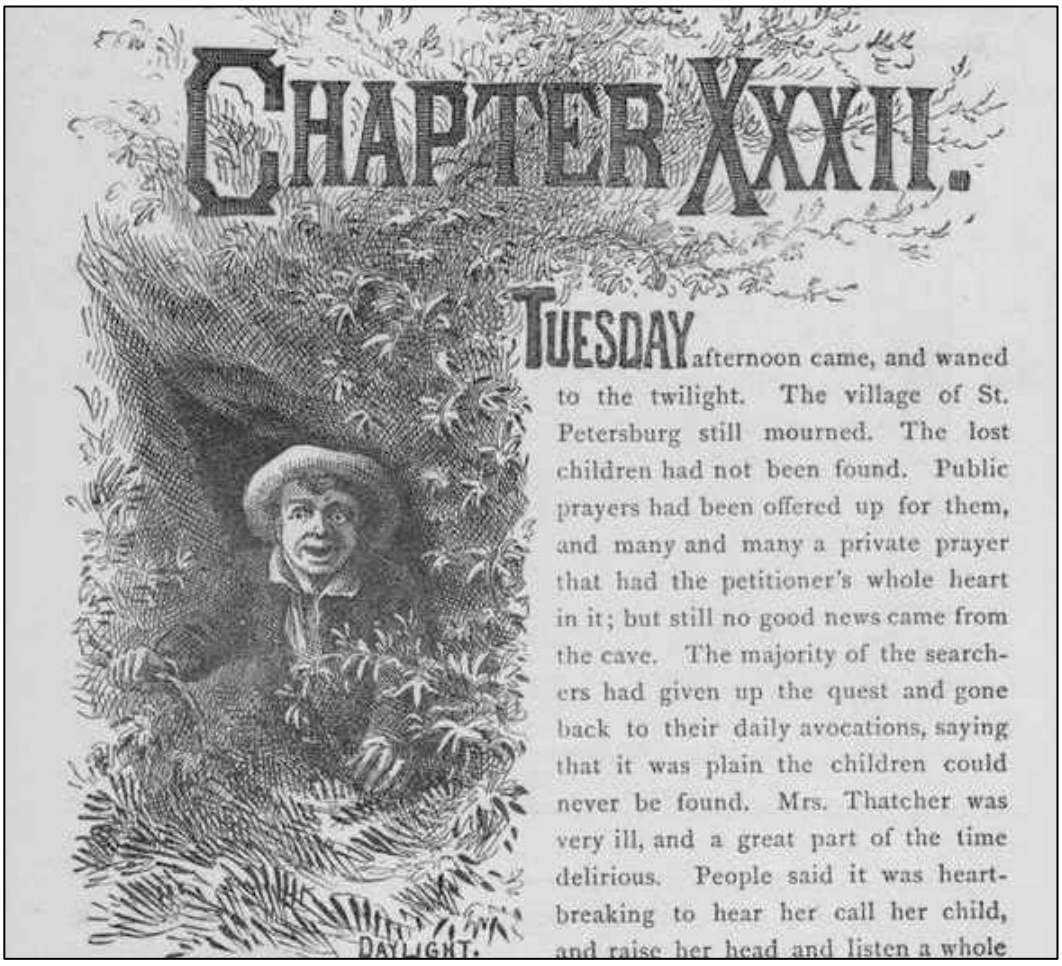

Figure 5. "Daylight" Headpiece to Chapter 32 of *Tom Sawyer.*

[51] The lack of a vivid light source during the underground portions of Tom's escape might seem a deterrent to illustration of the scene, yet Williams' Chapter 31 head piece depicts black bats flying against a dark gray background in presumed darkness.

There are certainly many reasons why Tom's second unexpected encounter with light in the caves has garnered less attention than his encounter with Injun Joe, but one cause comes from the narrative gap that occurs when Twain skips forward in time in Chapter 32 and cursorily relates the events after the fact and framed by Tom's bombastic retelling. The narrative attends closely to the unfolding visible terrors of the cave earlier in the novel, but shifts unexpectedly to the relative safety of St. Petersburg when recounting Tom's escape:

> Tom lay upon a sofa with an eager auditory about him and told the history of the wonderful adventure, putting in many striking additions to adorn it withal; and closed with a description of how he left Becky and went on an exploring expedition; how he followed two avenues as far as his kite-line would reach; how he followed a third to the fullest stretch of the kite-line, and was about to turn back when he glimpsed a far-off speck that looked like daylight; dropped the line and groped toward it, pushed his head and shoulders through a small hole, and saw the broad Mississippi rolling by! (249)

Up to this point, the narrative has jumped fairly regularly between Tom and Becky's story, the town's reactions, and Huck's adventures. Such shifts move backward and sometimes forward in time to take up each strand where it had left off, but Chapter 32 skips over the action itself. Tom's final, momentous "exploring expedition" is leeched of much of its dramatic tension by Tom's secure place "on the sofa" in front of an "eager auditory" for the tale of his "wonderful adventure;" a group that ostensibly includes the reader.

These kinds of narrative inconsistencies in *Tom Sawyer* have been widely noted. William M. Gibson finds that "whenever the narrator spoke to the adult reader about his young characters he tended to weaken these parts of the book; whereas in the strong episodes he presented the boys' actions—both overt and psychological—dramatically, without editorial comment" (Gibson

99). Clark Griffith voices concerns about the striking shift in narration: "Why not dramatize this episode, so that coming out of the dangerous place is worked up with the same suspense, high drama, and vividness, the same air of mystery and struggle, the same immediacy and great wealth of concrete descriptions that going in had occasioned? Why . . . spoil it by reducing it to a passage of inert and rather clumsy exposition?" (Griffith 135). Griffith finds in Twain's peculiar narrative strategy evidence of a "Tom-behind-a-curtain" punished with "flat and lifeless expository" summary when his "romantic," "preternatural or even supernatural role[s]" become "grounded in reality or presumed to affect the circumstances and outcome of some actual situation" (Griffith 136). While I agree with Griffith's assessment of the "conspicuous shift in narrative manner," the passage should not be so quickly discounted as "inert and rather clumsy exposition." The narration of Chapter 32 might fall into what John Bird calls conventional "Author" persona who "show[s] the dominant culture the hollowness and deadness of its prized language" (Bird 59). And yet, Tom's voice pushes through the narrator's stark reprise of the events. Even within the flattened "wonderful adventure" narrative of finding "novelties to tell the upper world about," traces of the disquieting experience of Tom's final exploratory venture creep into the stock language of adventure. The extended experience of discovery resists Tom's efforts to bend it to the conventions of a straightforward "exploring expedition" (249) narrative in which one converts the unknown to the known as a light-wielding explorer. Instead, the language of Tom's escape reveals a fraught moment immobilized between two versions of the half-known within the cave. The dangers of exploring according to a narrative that predicts and then justifies itself with its successes cannot be entirely banished from the "wonderful adventure." The narrator glosses over the "many striking additions" Tom provides to "adorn" his story, but the "clos[ing] description" of the escape cannot fully square his final desperate foray with the tales

of "novelties" that precede it. In darkness at the end of his kite-line and "about to turn back" yet again, Tom does not experience an epiphanic moment of discovery.

Note that the long quoted passage from 249 is a single, multi-clause sentence. Even framed by Tom's grandiose retelling, the breathless piling of clause upon clause at once rushes toward the expected salvation and repeatedly defers such a moment. We, like Tom, remain suspended in the uncomfortable and untenable space of the half-known, the somewhat-familiar—a space with the capacity both for hope and for despair. On one hand, quite literally, is the familiar kite-string connecting him to now-familiar darkness, a despondent Becky, and the doomed domestic space they have created by the spring. On the other is the tellingly ambiguous "far-off speck that *looked like* daylight" (249, my emphasis), but which could prove as lethal as the candlelight supplied by Injun Joe. It is significant that Tom must "drop" his anchoring line and "grope" further into the darkness if he is to confirm the nature of the speck of light—he cannot maintain the "discoverer's" positional hold on the familiar when he confronts the unknown space before him. Unlike Tom's discovery of Injun Joe's candle, which unfolds in a way that mimics Tom's sequential experiences of discovery and then discoverability, Tom's encounter with the questionable speck of daylight encompasses both hope and despair simultaneously.

If his account makes it clear in context that the light turns out to be daylight, the description that he "dropped the line and groped toward it, pushed his head and shoulders through a small hole, and saw the broad Mississippi rolling by!" (249) completely omits the moment that establishes the daylight as salvific rather than threatening. Tom's retrospective account of the escape shows how we can domesticate the truly innovative—but frightening and dangerous—moment in which narrative can lead to invention, not simply discovery. Miller, in

Ariadne's Thread, is interested in narrative knots. Twain, however, gives us a narrative gap: the thread will not reach the light. Tom at the end of the kite-line is at the limits of narrative, which is where invention occurs. Ben Franklin, the great American inventor, discovered electricity by launching a kite to make contact with lightning, but Tom's kite string does not make the connection to the light. Instead, it points to an unknown light, never quite reaching it. Tom's imagination must fill in the gap, conceptualizing light not as self-evident truth, but as the unknown itself. Rather than "bringing *to light* the unknown," here the light itself is an unknown and suspect element. This "far-off speck" illuminates the double nature of such moments of "enlightenment": the tenuousness between the seemingly opposing roles of "discoverer" and "discovered." Tom's escape dramatizes the troubling fact that in illuminating discoveries, one always risks finding oneself illuminated as well.

The association of light with Western imperialist enterprises appears briefly in *Tom Sawyer* during a minister's sermon that begins with a prayer the local church and expands to include prayers "for the oppressed millions groaning under the heel of European monarchies and Oriental despotisms; for such as have the light and the good tidings, and yet have not eyes to see nor ears to hear withal" (56). The double nature of Tom's "enlightenment" in the cave anticipates Twain's most famous anti-imperialist piece, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness." In that 1901 satire, Western imperialist efforts to enlighten the dark people of the world are exposed for their blindness; its narrative, attempting to bring light to the unknown, binds the "unenlightened" in an exploitative way. With its focus on "extending the Blessings of Civilization to our Brother who Sits in Darkness," the colonizing West seems incapable of imagining the possibility that the person sitting in darkness might himself be an unknown source of light ("Person" 161). Within the cave, Tom himself exhibits a dangerous lack of inventiveness when he refuses to leave the

spring he has illuminated to seek out new possibilities in the caves, and when he declares that he has "lost *the* way" back to the entrance because "it's all mixed up" and cannot be distinguished from the unknown (240, my emphasis). Such myopic focus on a single known path to light will later doom Injun Joe to die of thirst scratching at a sealed door when his hiding place, as Henry Nash Smith notes, is near Tom and Becky's spring and their exit (H. N. Smith 84). Relying only on the familiar path—the known narrative—might preclude one fortuitously discovering (or inventing) an illuminated source of escape within the unknown, as Tom eventually does. In stark contrast to the many predictive role-playing games that populate the novel, the cave episode rewards an imperiled Tom for casting off the comforting role of light-bearing discoverer for a position within the darkness from which he can acknowledge alternative sources of illumination.

Tom's encounter with the unknown at the limits of the thread of narrative in McDougal's cave does not, of course, put him off adventuring. Twain sends him down the Mississippi to torment Jim on the Phelps farm in *Huckleberry Finn*, which ends with Huck seeking "howling adventures amongst the Injuns" in "the Territory ahead of the rest." The next chapter takes up the question of the American assimilationist enterprise to "civilize" indigenous peoples in California through allotment, and Helen Hunt Jackson's efforts in *Ramona* to incite action against the devastating effects of "the rest" of the homesteaders traveling West to settle on Indian lands.

CHAPTER 3

Surveillant Haciendas and Multicultural Domestic Spaces in *Ramona*

In April, 1882, Helen Hunt Jackson wrote to William Hayes Ward about her "most interesting winter" spent travelling around Southern California conducting research for a set of articles on the missions for *The Century Magazine*. During the trip, she had formed the opinion that "[a]s for California of the present day, I think one should live here at least two years to even see it!—We have grown too much accustomed to the idea of its size, to realize what is involved in that one mere fact.—It is an empire in itself" (Jackson in Mathes 227). Jackson, born in Amherst, Massachusetts, and a classmate of Emily Dickinson, was a New Englander who moved West to Colorado and California late in life. She offhandedly characterizes California as being "an empire in itself" in her letter, but in her travel and research on the mission system she would discover common ground between the government-supported Anglo-American settlement of lands occupied by ex-mission Indians and the displacement of other Indian tribes against which she had fought for years. Jackson famously exposed government abuses against Indians in *A Century of Dishonor* (1881), a copy of which she mailed at her own expense to every member of Congress. Although *A Century of Dishonor* gained her the title of Interior Department agent reporting on Indian affairs, the dry tome did not spur the kind of action to protect Indians that Jackson had desired. In her official 1883 "Report on the Conditions of the Mission Indians," Jackson and her coauthor Abbot Kinney advocated that the US Government act to secure protected land for local Indians, arguing that that "by resurveying, rounding out, and freeing from white settlers the present reservations, adding to them all Government lands now actually in occupation by Indians, there will be, according to the best of our judgment, nearly land enough

for the accommodation of all the Mission Indians" (Jackson and Kinney 8).[52] To agitate public opinion in favor of reforming current US Indian policies that had led to widespread Indian dispossession, Jackson decided to write a sentimental social protest novel, *Ramona* (1884), "in a way to move people's hearts" by depicting systematic Indian displacement through a love story set in an Arcadian Southern California landscape (Jackson in Mathes 298–9).

The novel did move people's hearts, but not exactly in the direction Jackson had intended. Although it is much less widely read today, the love story between the titular heroine and the Indian Alessandro made *Ramona* a runaway bestseller in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sixty-eight percent of US libraries held the novel in 1893. The Los Angeles Public Library was circulating 105 copies of *Ramona* in 1914 with a long waiting list, and by 1946 the library had purchased more than 1,000 copies of the novel (Moylan 225–6). Following *Ramona*, California became a major tourist destination and enjoyed a tremendous land boom. Droves of literary tourists mailed postcards celebrating Spanish-style buildings across Southern California presented as "Ramona's Home" and "Ramona's Marriage Place" (DeLyser 65–67). Jackson's story garnered critical praise as well. In a famous review of the novel, Albion W. Tourgée called it "unquestionably the best novel yet produced by an American woman," rating it even above Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Tourgée 246). José Martí was so moved by Jackson's depiction of Indians that he translated the novel into Spanish. Although

[52] Although Jackson was not a California native, she spent several long stretches of time in the state on assignment for magazines and, later, the US Department of Indian Affairs. Jackson toured California in the early 1880s on commission from Richard Watson Gilder to write four articles on California for the *Century*. She was later accompanied by her *Century* illustrator, Henry Sandham, and Abbot Kinney, an Indian rights advocate and a fluent speaker of Spanish. In 1882, Jackson wrote to Secretary Teller offering to join an investigative commission and write an official report on the Mission Indians. Indian Commissioner Hiram Price formally appointed her in July to visit Mission Indians, locate suitable lands within the public domain as permanent reservations, and furnish detailed descriptions of all lands. Jackson returned to California in 1883 to document the conditions of more Indian villages (Mathes 208). This research and travel is important to understanding the popular novel that followed, for it was only "since writing out for our report the full accounts of the different bands of Indians there, that I have felt that I dared undertake the writing of a long story," which became *Ramona* (Jackson in Mathes 293).

Jackson was pleased by the novel's favorable reviews, she was dissatisfied with critics' focus on the novel's romantic setting rather than on her message about Indian displacement. A few months after the novel's publication, she complained to Charles Dudley Warner, then the editor of *Harper's Magazine* that "nobody except you, & the N. Y. Tribune critic has seemed to care a straw for the Indian history in it.— I am sick of hearing that the flight of Alessandro & Ramona is an 'exquisite Idyl' & not even an allusion to the ejectment of the Temecula band from their homes" (Jackson in Mathes 338).

The disparity between Jackson's aims for *Ramona* and the novel's dramatic impact on the California landscape bring us to two paradoxes. The first is that *Ramona* so effectively created an idyllic picture of California that it spurred a tourist industry and land boom that encroached on the very land Jackson wanted reserved for the Indians. The second is that *Ramona* successfully exposed the wrongs committed against native populations, but from a perspective that today seems shortsighted in its suggestions for remedy. In this chapter, I will focus on how descriptions of architecture and the California landscape formed an essential part of Jackson's political argument.

Romantic depictions of Southern California's open-air haciendas and missions in *Ramona* contributed directly to an early twentieth-century vogue for Mission Revival architecture still visible in the red-tiled strip malls and faux bell towers that dot the present-day California landscape. Carey McWilliams, who calls *Ramona*, "one of the most widely read American novels of the time," has argued that the novel was "almost solely responsible for the evocation of [Southern California's] Mission past," disseminated a romantic "version of the Indians, the Spanish Dons, and the Franciscans," and "firmly established the Mission legend in Southern California" (C. McWilliams 73; 71; 81). Kevin Starr has suggested that Jackson's

novel was so successful in part because it put a history for California into circulation that was centered not on Northern gold rush opportunism, but on a glamorized Spanish mission and hacienda culture (Starr 58–61).[53] Starr's argument that Jackson's romantic depiction of the Moreno Rancho "consolidated a myth of Southern California" around "health and romantic nostalgia" that drove a tourist and Revival architecture boom has become an interdisciplinary critical commonplace in scholarship on *Ramona* and Southern California (Starr 54).[54]

There are challenges to this critical assumption, notably Phoebe Kropp's argument that *Ramona* was hardly the first or only attempt to romanticize the region, and that Jackson herself relied on idealized retellings of bygone days by Californios (Kropp 19–20). Kropp attributes to the California testimonials a "strategic" motive to "respond to and oppose their displacement" via "social critique . . . embedded within otherwise largely nostalgic texts that are reminiscent of Jackson's dreamy portrait" (Kropp 28). Yet even Kropp, who identifies the possibility of social critique within romantic nostalgia, does not challenge the conventional understanding of Jackson's portrayal essentially and uncritically pastoral, romantic, and appealing. I seek to locate that social critique within Jackson's depiction of Spanish architecture and the social practices it affords and constricts.

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[53] It is Tourgée who first makes this argument in his review of *Ramona*, though he of course does not do so from Starr's vantage looking backward to trace the causes of California's early twentieth-century land boom. Tourgée writes that "Hitherto, fiction has treated California only as the seat of a new civilization. It has been delineated as the gold-digger's paradise, the adventurer's Eden, the speculator's El Dorado. 'Ramona' pictures it as the Indian's lost inheritance and the Spaniard's desolated home" (Tourgée 249).

[54] Jackson's Southern California has been read as romantic across disciplinary boundaries. Dydia DeLyser's account of the booming Southern California *Ramona* tourist industry characterizes the novel as romanticizing California Mission and hacienda architecture and lifestyle. Literary criticism on the novel by Susan Gillman (Gillman 106), Ann Goldman (Goldman 39–41), Robert McKee Irwin (Irwin 156), and Jesse Alemán (Alemán 60–61) among many others, include at least a footnote on the novel's popularity and its effects on Southern California. Histories of California by Maynard Geiger and Clement Meighan (Geiger and Meighan 46), David Weber (Weber 248), Kevin Starr (Starr 55–62), James Sandos (Sandos 183), and Phoebe Kropp (Kropp 19–47) all carefully bring up Jackson's popular romanticism and its outcomes. No architectural history of California worth its salt would omit a mention of Jackson, from Harold J. Kirker's early teleological account that aims to counter Jackson's romantic depictions (Kirker 8–14) to David Gebhard's account of Mission Revival architecture (Gebhard 137–38) to Elizabeth Kryder-Reid's recent work on Mission gardens (Kryder-Reid 384).

Jackson's presentation of the Spanish/Mexican Moreno rancho and the supposedly idyllic, carefree life unfolding within its architecture is more subversive and critical than is generally acknowledged. While historians and literary critics have long accused early readers of misreading Jackson's critique of Indian policies in favor of her sentimental love plot and romantic depictions of a genteel Castilian Southern California, none accuse readers of misconstruing Jackson's fictional architectural itself when they understand the novel as, for example, "a pastoral fable celebrating an ordered, idealized version of the Spanish missions" (Moylan 236).[55] In contradistinction, I argue that the airy architecture that so attracted readers recreates in its inhabitants' experience the conditions of racialization and surveillance that created such splendid residences under the feudal Mission and rancho landholding systems. In the complexly-rendered Moreno rancho, Jackson both nostalgizes *and* problematizes the interactions that the Spanish rancho's architecture affords inhabitants of an already multiracial American periphery. The novel's iconic Mission open-air architecture makes visible the racial and social hierarchies that produced such grand feudal dwellings, and which structure Jackson's romantic, touristic tableaus.

I: The Dawes Act and Jackson's Architectural Remedies

Jackson's novel is structured around the eponymous heroine's episodic movement from dwelling to dwelling, and follows Ramona across cycles of troubled inhabitation and displacement in a hacienda, a hidden canyon, one- and two-room adobe houses in Indian pueblo towns, and an isolated mountain valley. In Reconstruction-era Southern California, Ramona's father, Angus Phail, is a Scottish shipowner who marries an Indian woman after he is spurned by

[55] See also Gutiérrez-Jones (57); Irwin (156).

Spanish-born Ramona Ortegna née Gonzaga.[56] Phail names his half Scottish, half Indian daughter after the Spanish woman he loved, and gives the baby to childless Señora Ramona Ortegna to raise as her own. When Señora Ortegna learns she is dying, she coerces her younger sister, Señora Moreno, into promising to rear her adopted daughter.[57] Little Ramona Ortegna is raised as a Californio by widowed Señora Moreno, who keeps the girl ignorant of her Scotch-Indian heritage, but secretly detests her for her mixed-race ancestry.[58] Teenaged Ramona, who has felt but not understood the Señora's coldness for years, falls in love with Alessandro Assis, the leader of a visiting band of Temecula Indians formerly of the San Luis Rey Mission. The unspoken, illicit courtship unfolds on the rancho's veranda, where Alessandro breaks class and racial hierarchies in his unorthodox role as medicine man to Felipe, the Moreno scion whose illness is soothed by Alessandro's violin-playing. Ramona learns of her Scottish and Indian

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[56] Many critics have misidentified Ramona's ethnic and cultural background, choosing to situate Ramona in whichever combination of Scottish, Indian, Mexican, and Spanish racial and cultural identification best suits their arguments. Daneen Wardrop calls Ramona "half Mexican and half Indian," though she later states that the girl's father was "Scottish" (Wardrop 28; 31). For Diane Herndl, Ramona is, like Gloria Anzaldúa's mestiza "alternately Indian and Mexican in both Mexican and Anglo cultures," even though Herndl slightly misreads Ramona's position as an "heiress in a wealthy Southern California hacienda" and her father as a "Scottish gold miner (Herndl 264–265). Michele Moylan writes that Ramona is "an orphan girl . . . Raised by wealthy Spanish relatives" who "choos[es] to abandon her Spanish heritage" to run off with Alessandro and later discovers she is half-Indian (Moylan 225). Debra Rosenthal identifies Ramona as half Scottish and half Indian, and understands the Morenos to be Mexican (Rosenthal 136). Scheik ignores Ramona's Scottish ethnic background entirely to finds that her "dual heritage suspends her between the Spanish and Indian cultures, both receding in the novel before the inhumane advance of white American civilization," and concludes that it is expected that "she should finally side with her Spanish heritage, the dominant force in the novel" to show Jackson's retreat from "reality of the Indian side of the novel's half-blood heroine" (Scheick 44–45).

[57] Jackson's choice to make Ramona's father Scottish was a calculated one. Ramona could have been half Irish Catholic, but her Scottish heritage might garner sympathy from Jackson's Protestant readers to balance the girl's fervent Catholicism. Additionally, the Scots were victims of Anglo-Saxon domination that resonates with the Spanish imperialism over the Indians in California. Ramona's ancestry might also allude to John Ross, the chief of the Cherokee from the 1820s to the 1860s, who was seven-eights Scottish.

[58] Within the casta system, which sought to hierarchize race, Señora Moreno and Father Salvierderra, both born in Spain, would have been *peninsulares* who could boast a "pure" Spanish/European blood. *Criollos* like Felipe Moreno II, born in the New World, were by a fiction of race and custom considered "white" even if one parent was not Spanish (typically if the father was highborn and the mother was a woman of color). Both groups were above Indians in the racial hierarchy (Menchaca 62–3). For Menchaca, the U.S. Government's nullification of most of Pio Pico's land grants, and policy of awarding these lands to American homesteaders but not to Mexicans who were promised the "enjoyment of all the rights of citizens" under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, is a sign that "under

ancestry when Señora Moreno threatens to disown her if she should tarnish the Moreno reputation by marrying a low caste Indian. Ramona casts aside her inheritance to elope with Alessandro, and the couple treks around Southern California searching for a place to settle. They construct idyllic domestic spaces in a canyon, the Indian villages of San Pasquale and Saboba, and a remote mountain eyrie, but their homes are repeatedly encroached upon by Anglo-American squatters during the land grab that followed the Mexican-American War and California's annexation. Their first child dies when an Indian Agent doctor refuses to travel to their remote village, and Alessandro is shot as a horse thief, leaving Ramona to raise their second child with Felipe in Mexico. Ramona's inability to keep hold of the nurturing domestic spaces she creates with Alessandro in such a bountiful, temperate region forms the sentimental embodiment of Jackson's protest of Indian displacement.

Jackson uses fictionalized depictions of the ejectment of the Temecula, San Pasquale, and Saboba Indians to illustrate how an imperial legacy of paternalism and US policies that favored Anglo homesteaders combined to deny Indians legal claim to their lands and to dispossess them of their meager homes. The first of the series of land thefts Jackson depicts in the novel is the Temecula ejectment, which involves Pablo Assis, Chief of the Luiseño Indian village in Temecula, losing his village's lands and leaving his son, Alessandro, and the rest of the community homeless. In the novel, Jackson explains that "all the title Pablo had to the village lands" was the "promise to Pablo" made by the "Mexican owner of the Temecula valley" that "he and his people should always live in the valley undisturbed" (52). When the rancher had been granted former San Luis Rey mission lands by the Mexican government, he also assumed responsibility for the Indian converts that had resided on them. Some official documentation

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United States law, as during the Spanish period, race once again determined whether a person enjoyed basic civil rights" (Menchaca 214).

protecting the Temecula pueblo existed, for the "lines marking off the Indians' lands were surveyed, and put on the map of the estate. No Mexican proprietor ever broke faith with an Indian family or village, thus placed on his lands" (52). However, the landowner moves to Mexico, falls grievously ill, and cannot defend his Mexican land grant against white settlers who made a legal claim for lands that included the Temecula Valley. As Alessandro tells it, "Americans—eight or ten of them . . . all got together and brought a suit, they call it, up in San Francisco; and it was decided in the court that they owned all our land. . . . It was the law" (177). The Temecula removal illustrates the problems stemming from the legacy of paternalism that transferred stewardship of Indian converts from the Missions to the Californio ranchers as owners of land supposedly held in trust for the Indians who had originally occupied it. Jackson treats the Temecula ejectment in greater detail in her 1883 *Century* article, "Sketch of the Present Condition of the Mission Indians in Southern California."[59] In the article, she argues that the "sketch of the history of the San Pasqual and Temecula bands of Indians is a fair showing of what, with little variation, has been the fate of the Mission Indians all through Southern California" ("Mission Indians" 128–129). In attempting to show "a few glimpses of the homes, of the industry, the patience, the long-suffering of the people who are in this immediate danger of being driven out from their last footholds of refuge," she takes pains to draw attention to the legal basis for their ejectment; a problem rooted not only in American laws, but in the prior Spanish and Mexican legal systems ("Mission Indians" 159).

Jackson's original title for *Ramona* was "In the Name of the Law," and in the novel she carefully traces present-day wrongs against Indians back to the legal tangles that grew out of the

[59] Jackson wrote four articles about California for *Century Magazine*. "Father Junipero and His Work" appeared in the May/June 1883 issue, "The Present Condition of the Mission Indians in Southern California" in August, "Outdoor Industries in Southern California" in October, and "Echoes in the City of the Angels" in December 1883. All four were reprinted in *Glimpses of California and the Missions* (1885).

Mission period. Jackson elaborates on how California's legal history is crucial to understand present day legal, political, and social conditions in another *Century* article on "Father Junipero and His Work."[60] For Jackson, "It is not until one studies these [old Spanish] laws in connection with the history of the confusions and revolutions of the secularization period, and of the American conquest of California, that it becomes possible to understand how the California Mission Indians could have been left so absolutely unprotected, as they were, in the matter of ownership of the lands they had cultivated for sixty years" ("Father Junipero" 105). Jackson spent considerable time researching California history in the Spanish and Mexican periods for her *Century* articles and in her capacity as an Interior Department agent. In "Father Junipero," she traces the land-title disputes being waged in the 1880s back to conditions established during Spanish colonization, though, like others of her time, she blames the abysmal living conditions of present-day Indians on secularization, and not on the abuses of the mission system itself.[61] According to Jackson:

> The original Spanish plan of colonization was threefold,—religious, military, and civil. . . From indefiniteness in the understanding of property rights, and rights of authority, as vested under these three heads, there very soon arose confusion, which led to

[60] Prior to departing for her first California trip in 1881, Jackson returned to New York to do some initial research at the Astor library. She spent June and July 1882 in San Francisco researching in the large private collection of Western Americana owned by Hubert Howe Bancroft, a businessman, historian, and collector who published a six-volume history of California in the 1880s (Starr 56).

[61] Mission Indian labor was used to create a surplus to provision the military Presidios, and some Mission Indians were given pueblos. Jackson's stance is in line with a generation of pro-Hispanic scholars trained by Herbert Bolton in the first half of the twentieth century, which offered accounts of positive Hispanic contributions in contradistinction to prevalent nineteenth-century depictions steeped in the Black Legend (Weber 7; 258–259). A later generation of scholars such as Carey McWilliams aimed to counter the Bolton school's pro-Spanish accounts by emphasizing the role played by culturally Mexican actors, and scholars following Sherburne Cook emphasized the impact of Spanish colonization on Indians by highlighting accounts of Spanish brutality and enslavement (Weber 259–263; Lightfoot 86). As both Weber and Lightfoot agree, late twentieth-century historians approach Spanish colonization from a variety of stances, such as Milliken's moderate approach that seeks to document practices of coercive labor and acculturation while still accounting for Native American agency in participation within and resistance to the mission system (Lightfoot 86). For an account of Indian acculturation and resistance to Spanish

> collisions,—collisions which have not yet ceased, and never will, so long as there remains a land-title in California to be quarrelled over. The law records of the State are brimful of briefs, counter-briefs, opinions, and counter-opinions regarding property issues, all turning on definitions which nobody has now clear right to make, of old pueblo and presidio titles and bounds. ("Father Junipero" 60)

Favorably disposed toward the Missions in *Ramona* and her article on Serra, Jackson is harshly critical of the results of the "so-called secularization of the missions [that] resulted in their plunder and complete ruin, and in the demoralization and dispersion of the Christianized Indians" that was planned by Spain and executed by Mexico ("Father Junipero" 75). The "final blow fell on the missions" with the 1834 secularization decree, which authorized the Mexican government to repossess most of the lands initially granted to the Franciscan missions by the Spanish crown in keeping for the Mission Indians ("Father Junipero" 73). She quotes extensively from the decree to conclude that it demonstrates "bold and unprincipled greed hiding itself under specious cloaks of right" ("Father Junipero" 75). In Jackson's account, a heroic Governor Micheltorena attempted to restore the twelve southern missions to the church and prevent the government from seizing land without consulting the Friars. Micheltorena's restriction of land for settlement was unpopular, and his proclamation "led to a revolution, or rather an ebullition, and Micheltorena was sent out of the country" ("Father Junipero" 80). Jackson blames Pio Pico, Micheltorena's successor as governor, for completing the "ruin of the mission establishments" by "sell[ing] missions right and left. He sold them at illegal private sales; he sold them for insignificant sums, and for sums not paid at all" ("Father Junipero" 84). Jackson quips that "whether [Pico] was, to use the words of a well-known legal brief in one of the celebrated

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colonization, see Jackson and Castillo; Lightfoot. For an analysis of the aftermath of the reservation policies that Jackson championed that touches on Jackson's nonfiction writing, see Hyer.

California land cases, 'wilfully ignorant or grossly corrupt,' there is no knowing, and it made no difference in the result" that the ex-neophyte Indians were dispossessed of lands that were to be held in trust for them ("Father Junipero" 84). These dubiously legal grants of former mission lands, which placed the security of Indians living on former mission lands into the care of Mexican landowners, would be the ones most easily preempted by Anglo-American settlers under American law.

In *Ramona*, Jackson lays out many of these major developments of Spanish and Mexican California in the history of the Moreno rancho. Señora Moreno's life, which in only sixty years spans "the best of old Spain, and the wildest of New Spain" as well as Mexican and American rule, links the rancho to Spanish colonizing influence in California that predates Mexican possession (1). Born in Seville and relocated to California when she was a child, Señora Moreno's family connects her to both Spanish military and Missionary power. Her father moves to California to take an appointment as "commandante of the Santa Barbara Presidio; and her best-beloved uncle, her father's eldest brother, was at that time the Superior of the Santa Barbara Mission" (19). She marries Felipe Moreno, "one of the most distinguished of the Mexican Generals," who was "much beloved by both army and Church" (21). The late General Moreno is a unifying figure who helps to mediate "many of the frequent clashings between the military and the ecclesiastical powers," and was favored even by the "Indians [who] also knew his name well, having heard it many times mentioned with public thanksgivings in the Mission churches" (21). The Moreno rancho benefitted from its owner's dual influence, further consolidated by his politically advantageous marriage that "linked [General Moreno] anew to the two dominant powers and interests of the country" via his wife's paternal Spanish relations (21). General Moreno's large land holdings articulate his high status, for "[w]hen the house was built, General

Moreno owned all the land within a radius of forty miles" stretching from the San Fernando Mountains to the sea (12).[62]

In the Moreno estate, Jackson introduces an unresolved tension between the Morenos' outrage as ardent Catholics over the diminishment of Mission power and abandonment of their Christianizing enterprise, and the family's material benefit from the privatization of mission lands intended to be held in trust for Indian converts. Jackson has the pious Señora Moreno ride in her youth to plead with Micheltorena in "Monterey to stir action against" the "despoiling and plundering of the Missions, under the Secularization Act." Jackson's narrator gives a rather tongue-in-cheek explanation of the Señora's view of her own influence, writing that it "was largely in consequence of her eloquent entreaties that Governor Micheltorena issued his bootless order, restoring to the Church all the Missions south of San Luis Obispo. But this order cost Micheltorena his political head, and General Moreno was severely wounded in one of the skirmishes of the insurrection which drove Micheltorena out of the country" (21). In spite of Señora Moreno's entreaties on behalf of the church, the Morenos gained considerably from secularization's redistribution of mission lands to well-connected Californios as political favors. The first lands confiscated from Señora Moreno by the US were received as a "gift from Governor Pio Pico, her husband's most intimate friend," whom Jackson denigrates in "Father Junipero" for his unscrupulous land dealings with family and friends (12; "Father Junipero" 84).[63] Thus, General Moreno's military service and powerful connections secured the bucolic

[62] It is commonly accepted that elements of the fictional Moreno rancho's architecture and location were modeled on that of the del Valle family's Rancho Camulos in Piru, CA. Jackson visited the adobe house in 1882 on the suggestion of her friends Marina and Antonio Coronel, longtime Los Angeles residents and friends of the Indians, though she did not find Mrs. Del Valle at home (Mathes 203). According to Wallace Smith in his history of Camulos, "there can be no doubt that the Moreno ranch described in such detail in the Jackson novel is situated in the valley of the *Santa Clara del Sur,"* and Rancho Camulos is approximately thirty-five miles from the San Buenaventura Mission in what is now Ventura, CA (W. Smith 180).

[63] In 1839, the Mexican government granted Antonio Del Valle, a former commander in the Spanish and Mexican military as well as the majordomo and administrator of Mission San Fernando during secularization, a spread of

estate as a reward for services rendered in establishing Mexican rule in California and for opening former Mission lands to Mexican settlement.[64]

The Morenos benefitted from secularization which gave them both the land and the labor force of Christianized ex-Mission Indians who had "belonged to the house" (5). Jackson establishes a continuation of the Mission acculturation enterprise on the rancho, for "In the General's time, while the estate was at its best, and hundreds of Indians living within its borders, there was many a Sunday when the scene to be witnessed there was like the scenes at the Missions" (17). As I will show in the following section, Señora Moreno believes in making Christians of the Indians on her land, but also in keeping them as second-class citizens.

In "Father Junipero," Jackson criticizes the hastiness and botched execution of the secularization project, but she bears grudging admiration for its stated civilizing goals:

> With a singular lack of realization of the time needed to make citizens out of savages, it had set ten years as the period at the expiration of which the Indian communities attached to the missions were to be formed into pueblos,—the missions to be secularized. . . . This was, no doubt, the wise and proper ultimate scheme,—the only one, in fact, which provided either for the entire civilization of the Indian or the successful colonization of the country. (H. H. Jackson, "Father Junipero" 60)

Although there is much to criticize in the presumptions of Western superiority that undergird Jackson's goal to "make citizens out of savages," her aims are at least an intended improvement on the history of Indian displacement and extermination that she outlines in *A Century of*

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over 48,000 acres in the Santa Clara valley that became known as the Rancho San Francisco. After Antonio's death, a portion of the land was renamed Rancho Camulos and passed to his son, Ygnacio in 1853 (National Register of Historic Places, *Camulos* 8.6).

[64] Notably, Felipe Moreno II does not share his mother's blinkered view of their acquisition of their massive lands. Ramona later reports that "They didn't mind the papers the Señora had for all that land of hers they took away . . . But Felipe said that was because Pio Pico was a bad man, and gave away lands he had no right to give away" (203).

Dishonor. Jackson's implied remedy for the wrongs done to Indians under secularization and American settlement policies is to integrate them into the body politic as homeowners with a secure legal claim to the land on which they live and work. Jackson's belief in the civilizing power of Christianity and in homeownership as an indicator of success is most clearly illustrated in her introduction to *A Century of Dishonor,* which posits that if "the Indian preferred his wigwam, and skins, and raw flesh, and filth to the cleanliness and conveniences of a civilized home; and it was only as Christian influences taught him his inner need, and how this could be supplied, that he was led to wish and work for the improvement of his outer condition and habits of life" (*Century* 2–3). In the report, she offers as evidence several case studies of Christianized Indians who successfully built houses and made at least a subsistence as farmers before they were cruelly displaced by government policy. A section on the disastrous removal of the Poncas from their lands concludes with a familiar cry to secure justice by securing Indians' title to land, for the "remainder of the Ponca tribe is still in Indian Territory, awaiting anxiously the result of the efforts to restore to them their old homes, and to establish the fact of their indisputable legal right to them" (*Century* 133).

Jackson's efforts paved the way for the 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act, often termed the Dawes Severalty Act. Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts shared Jackson's disgust with past treatment of native peoples as well as her civilizing mission, and intended the Dawes Act to "wipe out the disgrace of our past treatment, and lift [the Indian] up into citizenship and manhood, and co-operation with us to the glory of the country" (Dawes quoted in Limerick 198). Seen as progressive at the time, allotment aimed to reduce governmental support of Indians and to make Indians into self-sufficient citizens by breaking up reservations into tracts of land owned by individuals. As Janet McDonnell notes, "Tribal organization was recognized as a defining

feature of Native identity," and private ownership of land was a means to supplant indigenous communal landholding practices as well as to provide the legal and economic means for Indians to integrate into Anglo-American culture (McDonnell 1). The act appealed to reformers for its assimilationist rhetoric, but it appealed to homesteader interests with its provision that any land left over after the allotments were divided would be sold to white settlers. "Reformer idealism had thus intersected with settler practicality," writes Patricia Limerick, and "liberated Indians also meant liberated land" (Limerick 197). Senator Henry Teller of Colorado, a correspondent of Jackson's on Indian matters, opposed allotment on the grounds that its aim was "to get at the Indian lands and open them up to settlement. The provisions for the apparent benefit of the Indians are but the pretext to get at his lands and occupy them" (Teller quoted in Pommersheim 128). Teller accurately predicted the Dawes Act's devastating effects on Indian land possession. Limerick estimates that "Indians held 138 million acres in 1887," but the outcomes of the Dawes Act caused them to lose "nearly two-thirds of tribal land" over the next half century "without doing much to assimilate Indians into a homogeneous mass of American property holders" (Limerick 198–199).

Though Jackson, who died before the Dawes Act was passed, supported its aims, her remedy for the "Indian problem" differs importantly from allotment, and from the assimilationist arguments for which it was criticized. Jackson wanted to secure reservation lands for tribes, but not necessarily to have them individually allotted. The Dawes Act sought to assimilate Indians into an American pattern of independent yeoman farming through allotment, and imagined a national landscape composed of tracts of individually-owned land, in which each Indian household would eventually replicate Anglo domestic models in order to, in McDonnell's words, "replace tribal civilization with a white one" (McDonnell 1). By contrast, Jackson's fiction and

nonfiction writings favor a more multicultural approach. This multiculturalism appears in the metaphor of the multicolored "hit-er-miss" pattern of the rag rug with an "unexpectedly harmonious blending of the colors," woven by Aunt Ri, a Southerner who moves to California and overcomes her prejudices against Indians (349). For John Gonzalez, the rag rug "brings together white women's housework, pluralistic nation building, and domestic subject making" to model a "racially democratic project of nation building" that makes culture, rather than race, the determinant of citizenship (Gonzalez 437; 457). If the rag rug models weaving Indians into the national fabric, it also models a fabrication of homes that join multiple domestic practices. In Jackson's novel, a variety of homes might demonstrate the middle-class domesticity that would qualify non-whites for citizenship without exactly replicating Anglo domestic models. Ramona, with her Scottish and Indian ancestry, Californio tutelage, and adoption of Luiseño cultural practices, demonstrates that multiracial and multicultural peoples can create domestic spaces that fulfill by Anglo-American domestic ideals even if they are not identical to Anglo-American homes.

For Jackson, the everyday is the realm where wrongs are committed against Indian and where any proposed remedies must take place. Architecture is, of course, also a form of social engineering, and we must look to the architecture of the everyday to see how older societies consolidate institutional power and to imagine how new societies might build space would accommodate new, beneficial cultural practices. In *Ramona, A Century of Dishonor*, and her *Century* articles*,* Jackson depicts Indians making or aspiring to middle-class domestic spaces, but repeatedly being dispossessed of these markers of eligibility for citizenship. After she flees the hacienda, Ramona, herself of mixed heritage, creates dwellings that synthesize Spanish, Indian, and Anglo architectures and spatial practices. The pueblo-cottage-haciendas fuse vernacular

multicultural Californian architectures in to create domestic spaces that support marginalized populations.

Yet, while Ramona's hopeful architectural conglomerations imagine the construction of multicultural citizens rather than full assimilation, they dismiss the possibility that Indians might be able to continue on what had become US soil without some degree of assimilation. It is important to point out that multiculturalism as envisioned in the novel is in opposition to indigenous cultural preservation because it requires adopting, at least in part, practices and values of the dominant culture. Native Americans who wanted tribal sovereignty and autonomy from the US would adamantly oppose Jackson's solution of partial assimilation. Jackson's reformist remedy, by rejecting assimilation in favor of multiculturalism, makes room for the some indigenous cultural practices in America, but her hybrid buildings do not advocate the preservation of nostalgized Indian lifeways. Jackson depicts the failure of current models of racial hierarchy that privilege whites over Indians, but diplomatically does not locate this failure in an Anglo-American house. Instead, she uses the Moreno Rancho, run by Spanish-born Señora Moreno, to dramatize the consequences of an imperial culture that attempts to enforce conformity and cannot value racial and cultural difference in its members. It is against the negative example of Spanish imperial residues cloaked in a surface romanticism that Jackson depicts models for a new society in the diverse array of domestic situations that populate the novel's second half. To understand Jackson's subversive romanticism, it is necessary to closely attend to the spatial and social practices afforded and discouraged by the Moreno Rancho's iconic architecture.

II. Veranda Surveillance and Romantic Pantomime

A recent surge in critical attention to the novel stems in part from Hemispheric American studies scholars' interest in Cuban writer José Martí's Spanish translation of the novel and his

declaration that *Ramona* is "nuestra novela" ("our novel") for a self-consciously Latin American readership. Led by Susan Gillman's use of *Ramona* to work through issues in translation theory and Hemispheric American literary history, *Ramona* criticism of the last decade has tended to overlook tensions in the novel's richly-rendered Californian built environment when it uses the novel as a case study for discussions of the larger field of Hemispheric American studies.[65]

It is easy to dismiss the scenes at the Moreno rancho as local color meant to lure the reader into sympathy with the heroine and hero in preparation for the ordeal of their search for a home. Yet, for Jackson, the history of land rights and domestic space is the measure of social injustice against the California Indians, and setting is far more than simple window dressing to entice her readers. The dwelling itself, built "of adobe, low, with a wide veranda on the three sides of the inner court, and a still broader one across the entire front," serves as an index of the effects of the past upon synchronic social relations (14-15). As one extended, breathless sentence explains, "Señora Moreno's house was one of the best specimens to be found in California of the representative house of the half barbaric, half elegant, wholly generous and free-handed life led there by Mexican men and women of degree in the early part of this century, under the rule of the Spanish and Mexican viceroys, when the laws of the Indies were still the law of the land, and its old name, 'New Spain,' was an ever-present link and stimulus to the warmest memories and deepest patriotisms of its people" (11-12). Often used by scholars as a self-explanatory example of Jackson's romanticism, this sentence also points to the complex history undergirding social relations on the rancho. Jackson's interest in the house reaches back to its origins in Spanish colonial culture, and in how understanding those origins can help us to understand present-day social conditions.

[65] See, for example, Gillman, "Our America" and "Otra vez Caliban"; Coronado, "The Aesthetics of our America."

Jackson certainly draws on stock romantic imagery to characterize the Spanish rancho life as atavistic and exotic in an industrializing world. Yet, in her nonfiction writings, Jackson cites knowledge of underlying inequities as destructive of the picturesque. When she writes about the prevalence of what she calls "insanity" in shepherds in the otherwise boosterish "Outdoor Industries in Southern California," she notes that the "loneliness of the life is, of itself, a salient objection to the industry" ("Outdoor Industries" 244). Jackson condemns the luxury of ignorance for the owners who need not witness the actual conditions under which their profits are made, for "Of this [the sheepherders' loneliness and insanity] the great owners need know nothing; they can live where they like. But for the small sheepmen . . . it is a terrible life,—how terrible is shown by the frequency of insanity among herders." For Jackson, the knowledge that "Sometimes, after only a few months of the life, a herder goes suddenly mad" destroys the romantic image of shepherds: "After learning this fact, it is no longer possible to see the picturesque side of the effective groups one so often comes on suddenly in the wildernesses: sheep peacefully grazing, and the shepherd lying on the ground watching them, or the whole flock racing in a solid, fleecy, billowy scamper up or down a steep hill-side, with the dogs leaping and barking on all sides at once. One scans the shepherd's face alone, with pitying fear lest he may be losing his wits" ("Outdoor Industries" 244–245). Perspective is important in this tableau, for the distant eye cannot catch the truth of the shepherd's misery, and can instead only drink in a bucolic scene. One must approach close enough to "sca[n] the shepherd's face" to learn of the devastating effect of isolation and, by association, of the culpability of the remote sheep owner. Crucially, knowledge of structural inequality does not render Jackson unable to depict the idyllic picture, but it alters the meaning of that picture when closely analyzed.

Similarly, the first chapters of *Ramona* detail a set of ironic reading practices centered on the Moreno estate and its matriarch. The titular heroine does not appear until the third chapter; Chapter 1 instead concerns the Señora's control over the estate. The first sentence introduces the rancho and its matriarch in the same noun: "It was sheep-shearing time in Southern California, but sheep-shearing was late at the Señora Moreno's" (1). Lacking the subject noun, the estate is first referred to simply as the possessive form of the Señora's name, which elides setting with character. Although we are told that Felipe Moreno "was the Señora's eldest son, and since his father's death had been at the head of his mother's house" (1), he is more accurately the figurehead of a house that remains "his mother's." The Señora's control is wide-ranging and imperceptible, for "it was not Felipe, but the Señora, who really decided all questions from greatest to least, and managed everything on the place, from the sheep-pastures to the artichoke-patch; but nobody except the Señora herself knew this" (1). The novel's first chapter repeatedly emphasizes the importance of reading for irony, and of looking past first impressions to understand how people and places function in a novel that repeatedly reminds the reader that "surfaces are deceitful, and eyes see little" (159).

Jackson's first introduction of "romance" to the story concerns its connection to surface rather than substance, and its incitement of emotion: Señora Moreno's "life, the mere surface of it, if it had been written, would have made a romance, to grow hot and cold over: sixty years of the best of old Spain, and the wildest of New Spain, Bay of Biscay, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean—the waves of them all had tossed destinies for the Señora" (1). If the surface of Señora Moreno's life makes a romance in which, we might imagine, she stars as heroine inciting readers to "grow hot and cold" by the "toss" of fate, its substance makes a very different kind of tale concerned with tracing the origins and maintenance of power. The novel's second paragraph

emphasizes the distinction between surface and substance for the lady: “a tremendous force, wherever she appeared, was Señora Moreno; but no stranger would suspect it, to see her gliding about, in her scanty black gown, with her rosary hanging at her side” (1). Readers who only attend to the Señora’s visibly pious, feminine gently-bred air must ignore the imperious, domineering personality to which Jackson repeatedly attention. She instructs readers to look beneath the surface to understand the import of the Señora’s actions, and to do the same for the estate with which she stands in synecdochal relation. Jackson will call upon this habit of reading later when she asks her readers to make sense of the surveillant and conformist power relations that invisibly structure a series of seemingly romantic tableaux of leisure on the veranda.

Señora Moreno’s pursuit of power has explicitly imperial connotations. Father Salvierderra, the Franciscan priest who knew Señora Moreno when she was a girl in Spain, “understood [Felipe’s] mother’s character, and her almost unlimited power over all persons around her” (271). Part of the Señora’s power lays in its invisibility. She coordinates favorable outcomes as if they originated by natural order, and “Never to appear as a factor in the situation; to be able to wield other men, as instruments, with the same direct and implicit response to will that one gets from a hand or a foot” (10). There have been “men prominent in the world’s affairs at one time and another, “ who “have manipulated legislators, ambassadors, sovereigns; and have grasped, held, and played with the destinies of empires,” but “it is to be questioned whether even in these notable instances there has ever been such marvellous completeness of success as is sometimes seen in the case of a woman in whom the power is an instinct and not an attainment . . . Señora Moreno’s was the stroke of genius” (10). The imperializing language of the Señora’s pernicious, hidden control of the estate invites scrutiny into the connections between the rancho and empire, and a closer look at the social relations made possible in the hacienda.

Ramona's famous romantic vistas ought to be read with Jackson's cautions against being deceived by surface beauty in mind. One such encomium to the Western state's fecundity is situated on the fictional Moreno rancho veranda, and the vantage that offers a picturesque view also affords surveillance:

> Between the veranda and the river meadows, out on which it looked, all was garden, orange grove, and almond orchard; the orange grove always green . . . On either hand stretched away other orchards,—peach, apricot, pear, apple pomegranate; and beyond these, vineyards. Nothing was to be seen but verdure or bloom or fruit, at whatever time of year you sat on the Señora's south veranda. . . . A wide straight walk shaded by a trellis so knotted and twisted with grapevines that little was to be seen of the trellis wood-work, led straight down from the veranda steps, through the middle of the garden, to a little brook at the foot of it . . . [where] was done all the family washing. No long dawdling, and no running away from work on the part of the maids, thus close to the eye of the Señora at the upper end of the garden; and if they had known how picturesque they looked there, kneeling on the grass, lifting the dripping linen out of the water, rubbing it back and forth on the stones, sousing it, wringing it, splashing the clear water in each other's faces, they would have been content to stay at the washing day in and day out, for there was always somebody to look on from above. (16)

According to Stephen Silliman, rancheros typically constructed their homes on a high point so as to have "unimpeded vision across their property," not unlike the surveillant Southern planter's prospects that characterize what Terrence Epperson calls "panoptic plantations" (Silliman 21; Epperson 58). Jackson's imagery of the picturesque coincides with repeated references to the Señora's position of observational power from the veranda. Washing, often described as one of

the most strenuous forms of female domestic labor, appears from a distance as play. Coming after sixteen pages detailing Señora Moreno's manipulation of her rancho fiefdom, in which the reader is repeatedly instructed to look beyond romantic surfaces to understand the underlying power structures, readers should attend to the discipline afforded by the veranda's panoptic properties. A closer look at the detailed workings of the rancho as Jackson depicts it—particularly the leisure space of the veranda—reveals coercive social relations that structure the visible, audible, and even olfactory picturesqueness so often cited in passing by *Ramona* scholarship.[66]

Jackson uses incidents of plot and local color to render the house's layout, and in doing so limns the social relations that govern the use of domestic space. The layout of Rancho Camulos, widely acknowledged as a historical prototype for Jackson's fictional rancho, can further clarify the arrangement of rooms (see figures 6 and 7). When Father Salvierderra arrives at the Moreno rancho, the preparation for a feast illustrates that the "dining-room was on the opposite side of the courtyard from the kitchen, and there was a perpetual procession of small messengers going back and forth between the rooms" and straining to "get a glimpse through the dining-room door, open on the veranda, of strangers and guests" (45). The servants and their children who help to set up for a feast can observe the Moreno family entertaining their guests, even if they are not, of

[66] The "arched veranda along the front" where the "Señora kept her flowers . . . geraniums, carnations, and yellow-flowered musk" in "great red water-jars, hand-made by the Indians of San Luis Obispo Mission" introduces not only the concept of ex-Mission Indians in the novel, but also the influence of the Señora's Spanish upbringing. The Señora's "passion for musk she had inherited from her mother," Father Salvierderra recalls that her mother's room in Seville had a "stone balcony full of growing musk, which so filled the room with its odor that I was like to faint" (15). In California, her son and adopted daughter are secretly oppressed by the mildly sinister, omnipresent smell: "Felipe hated musk. Many times he had said to her how he hated the odor; but his mother was so fond of it, that it must always be that the veranda and the house would be full of it. Ramona hated it too. At times it made her faint, with a deadly faintness" (76). The incapacitating quality of the musk flowers endures in California, where its odor diffuses throughout the house, so that there is "ever and always musk. It was like an enchanter's spell, the knack the Señora had of forever keeping relays of musk to bloom all the year; and it was still more like an enchanter's spell, that Felipe would never confess that he hated it" (107). The musk is noted by characters several times in the first half of the book, a reminder that the air on the veranda that stages so much of family life is lightly poisoned by a scent that renders all but Señora Moreno faint.

course, invited onto the veranda to take part in their employer's entertainment. The local color detail of the "sunrise hymn sung in all devout Mexican families" establishes the placement of bedrooms on the veranda, a detail that becomes important in later machinations (47). The "room in which Father Salvierderra always slept when at the Señora Moreno's house was the southeast corner room," (47) and the voices that join his hymn are located in sequence, starting with "the Señora, from her room at the west end of the veranda, beyond the flowers; Felipe, from the adjoining room; Ramona, from hers, the next; and Margarita and other of the maids already astir in the wings of the house" (49). The hymn also introduces a "rich new voice" with a sound that "was from another world" that Ramona cannot identify. This disembodied, dislocated voice, of course, turns out to belong to Alessandro, singing from the house's peripheries.

Figure 6. Man on Horseback, Rancho Camulos South Veranda (c1888) from the Photograph Album given by Charles F. Lummis to Susanita Del Valle, photCL 504, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

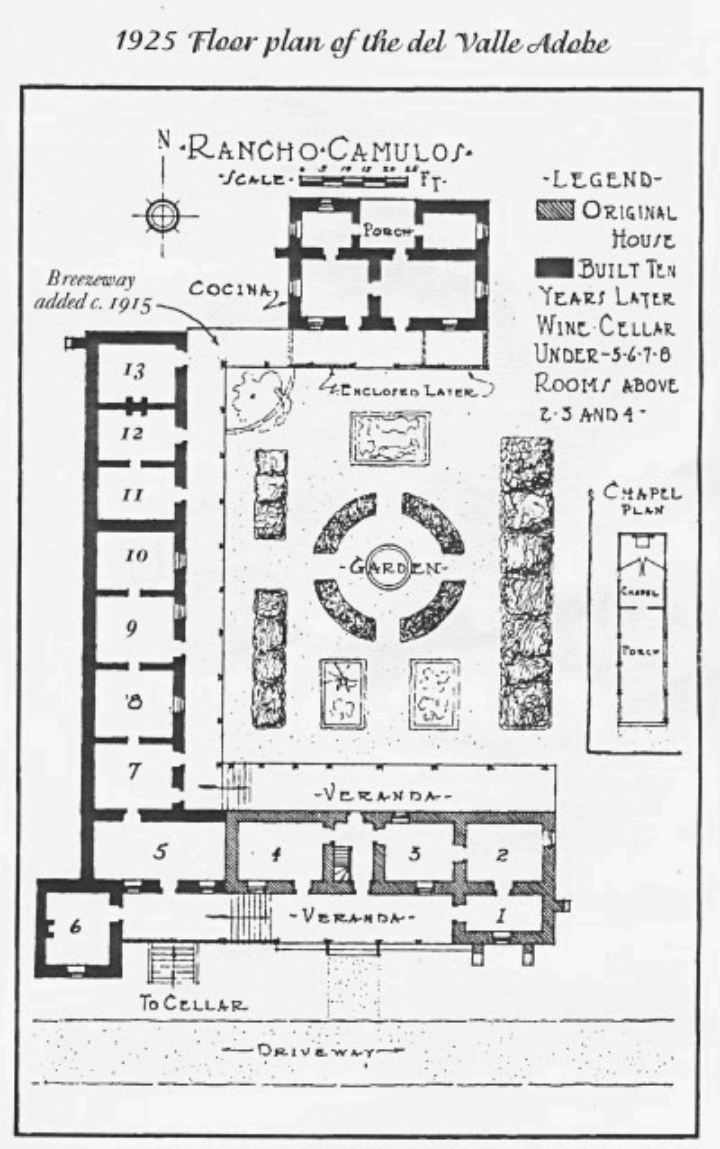

Figure 7. Floor plan of Rancho Camulos (c1925) showing the South veranda with adjoining bedrooms in the "original" section facing the driveway, and the kitchen with the servants' North veranda across the courtyard. From Rexford Newcomb's *The Old Mission Churches and Historic Houses of California*.

Spatial configurations are important in the drama that plays out on the veranda as Ramona and Alessandro's unspoken, illicit romance make visible and undermines the social and racial hierarchies the veranda architecture was designed to naturalize. A change to everyday household life occurs when Felipe falls ill while filling in for the head shepherd, and Alessandro's violin-playing proves an unorthodox medicine that soothes the feverish man.[67] Once Felipe's sickbed is placed on the veranda so that he might heal in the open air, the plot is largely driven by what each character can see and what information he or she can glean from observations in a structure engineered for surveillance. Initially, Alessandro's access to the veranda is granted as a professional courtesy given his role as a sort of medical man. Señora Moreno asks Alessandro to remain near Felipe during the night and Alessandro suggests that he should "lay on the veranda floor by Señor Felipe's side" with the

[67] Gutierrez-Jones notes that Alessandro's ability to play the violin is one of several aspects of "exceptional 'training'" that makes him and Ramona outliers rather than representative Indians in the novel (Gutiérrez-Jones 61).

hidden motive that by doing so, "he would also lie under the Señorita's window" that communicates with the veranda (123). Alessandro's introduction to the veranda in his capacity as a healer, combined with the subservient connotations of his culturally-inflected choice to sleep on the floor, does not initially contravene rancho hierarchies.

Importantly, Alessandro's promotion makes visible the limitation of opportunities for Indians on the rancho, and their restriction to a position as second-class citizens. Juan Can, the injured Mexican head shepherd, dismisses the idea that Alessandro might take his place permanently because he "was only an Indian,—and of course the Señora would never think of putting an Indian permanently in so responsible a position on the estate" (73). But Juan, for whom "an Indian was an Indian, and that was the end of it," does not realize that as "Chief Pablo's son, [Alessandro] had a position of his own not without dignity and authority," and that the acculturating legacy of the Missions has given Alessandro's family an inheritance of skill and wealth: "Alessandro's father had managed the Mission flocks and herds at San Luis Rey for twenty years; few were as skillful as he; he himself owned nearly as many sheep as the Señora Moreno" (73). Señora Moreno, who decides to hire "this young, strong, active, willing man to remain permanently in her employ" as new head shepherd, does not consider the "possibility of an Indian's being so born and placed that he would hesitate about becoming permanently a servant even to the Señora Moreno" (86). The narrator's word choice is significant, for qualifying even a head shepherd as a "servant" rather than an "employee" emphasizes the subservient quality of employment in the feudal household. Though Juan Can and Señora Moreno have different ideas of the suitability of Indians to particular employments, they express a similar views of a racialized hierarchy in which Indians remain below Mexicans and Californios in the position of "servants" no matter their wealth, status, or job title.

Keith Sculle, in the only article to explicitly attend to the novel's Spanish architecture, takes a sanguine view of Jackson's architectural rendering as a "social facilitator" to argue that "Hispanic residential architecture brings out its denizens' concern for others to the degree it serves Jackson's authorial design. Servants, laborers, and the household heads not only relax on the verandas at the Morenos' but also step into the stream of events to set a collective course" (Sculle 26). By focusing on "the veranda" writ large, Sculle does not distinguish between the family's South veranda and the servants' North veranda, and thus overlooks the class and racial tension stemming from Alessandro's access to the family's privileged space.[68]

During Felipe's convalescence and Ramona's budding romance, Jackson overtly leans on the pastoral image of California household life to illustrate changes in house politics via new uses of veranda space. With characteristically romantic language, she describes life as "exceedingly pleasant on the veranda" when "the delicious, languid, semi-tropic summer came hovering over the valley" (106). Although the family clustered around the stricken scion might make a charming tableau, the actual conditions on the veranda are far from idyllic. With Felipe's bed on the veranda, the narration becomes driven by surveillance as:

> a new sort of life began for them all. Felipe's bed on the veranda was the rallying point for everything and everybody. The servants came to look up at him, and wish him well, from the garden-walk below. . . . The Señora sat there, in the big carved chair, looking

[68] For Sculle, all verandas and veranda social practices are equivalent: "Kitchen work, except for cooking; babies sleeping, playing, and washed, women praying, napping, and weaving; ranch hands smoking, lounging, and dog training; young making love; Señora Moreno's floral arrangements in ornamental water jars; verandas invite many activities" (Sculle 21). In Sculle's account, Ramona "learns to depend on the veranda to such an extent that it becomes imperative in lean and bad times," leading her to ask Alessandro to construct one on each of their subsequent dwellings, including the timber house in the mountains, which Sculle misidentifies as a "tent" (Sculle 21–22). He notes in passing that "Verandas both breach class boundaries and reinforce them in the keenly class-conscious Moreno household," citing Margarita's use of the veranda to spy on Alessandro and the servants commiseration that Alessandro does not play his violin for them. Sculle concludes by ascribing the same depictions to the rancho and Ramona's San Pasquale house, "Rather like warehouses for goods in transit, these domestic spaces

> like a sibyl with her black silk banded head-dress severely straight across her brow, and her large dark eyes gazing out, past Felipe, into the far south sky. Ramona lived there too, with her embroidery or her book, sitting on cushions on the floor in a corner, or at the foot of Felipe's bed, always so placed, however,—if anybody had noticed, but nobody did,—so placed that she could look at Felipe without looking full at the Señora's chair, even if the Señora were not in it (104).

Ramona, who had recently shed tears over a slight by Señora Moreno, sits so that she need not look at her adoptive mother's customary spot, and, conveniently, cannot be seen. Señora Moreno, annoyed with Ramona's attempts to care for Felipe, positions herself so that she can observe her only child and her lands below. From this vantage, however, she misses the nonverbal signs of growing affection between the young head shepherd and her ward, and is blind to Alessandro's subversive reorganization of spatialized social relations on the veranda. Jackson notes that the other servants shout wishes for Felipe's recovery from the walkway in front, but do not enter the veranda. Rather than sleeping in a seemingly subservient position on the floor by Felipe, now "Alessandro [came] many times a day,—sometimes sent for, sometimes of his own accord. He was freely welcome. When he played or sang he sat on the upper step of the stairs leading down to the garden" (105). Alessandro thinks that he is being secretive in choosing "the spot which best commanded a view of [Ramona's] face" but the "secret was not all his own. Felipe knew it. Nothing was escaping Felipe in these days . . . as he lay there placidly looking at them all" (105). By not obscuring his view of anyone, Felipe sees more than anyone else and better understands the shifting allegiances and feuds, recognizes the love growing but publicly unacknowledged between Ramona and Alessandro, and begins plotting for their union before either of them start

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invite note of the domestic beatitudes in either the wealthy Morenos' house or in Ramona's temporary or permanent house in San Pasquale" (Sculle 26).

planning for themselves. The knowledge of Señora Moreno's certain objection to the match creates an ironic relation between Felipe's outward "placid" performance and the habit of keen observation he develops. Although Felipe "thought himself, from his vantage-post of observation on the veranda, and from his familiar relation with Ramona, well informed of most that happened" there was one more "close observer of these pleasant veranda days that Felipe knew nothing about. That was Margarita," one of the maids and a spurned competitor for Alessandro's affection (108-9). Margarita has unusual access to the family members' private spaces, and "As the girl came and went about her household tasks, she was always on the watch for Alessandro, on the watch for Ramona" as she plots revenge against the couple (109). What begins as a romantic tableau evolves quickly into a catalog of "watchers" collecting information on Ramona to further their own ends.

It is through Margarita's keen eyes that Jackson renders a change in the social and racial hierarchy achieved through proximity on the veranda. Margarita marks Alessandro's transition from behavior characteristic of an attentive servant "always at hand, ready for any service,—in the field, in the house," to spatial practice more befitting a guest and social equal. Margarita enviously remarks that "Alessandro himself now at his ease and free in the circle, as if he had been there always," and is kindled to rage that he is "like a member of the family . . . It is new times when a head shepherd spends his time with the ladies of the house, and sits in their presence like a guest who is invited!" (107). Over time, Margarita's complaints sow discord among the servants, who grow resentful of Alessandro's "strange intimacy with the family" (157). While Alessandro's music aided the ill Felipe, they surmise, it "was natural that Alessandro came and went as a physician might. But after Felipe had recovered, why should this freedom and intimacy continue? More than once there had been sullen mutterings of this kind on

the north veranda, when all the laborers and servants were gathered there of an evening, Alessandro alone being absent from the group, and the sounds of his voice or his violin coming from the south veranda, where the family sat" (157). When it is no longer excusable as service, Alessandro's presence on the veranda violates the architecturally-enforced social norms that police class and racial boundaries. Juan Can complains that "the lad's chary enough of his bow on this side the house," to which Margarita retorts "Ho! we're not good enough for him to play to! . . . 'Like master, like servant,' is a good proverb sometimes, but not always. But there's a deal going on, on the veranda yonder, besides fiddling!" (157). Domestic spatial policies, often naturalized as a charming local color detail, index the maintenance and disruption of different household social and racial boundaries.

When Señora Moreno is jolted out of her uncharacteristic blindness by the discovery of Ramona and Alessandro in an embrace, her actions to police the sexuality of a daughter of the house reveal the coercive power relations structuring the ostensibly "pleasant veranda days." Gothic elements intrude into the romance when it is revealed that the hacienda also contains "a secret closet in the wall, behind a life-size statue of Saint Catharine" in which the Señora has hidden the clothing and jewels from her deceased sister that were to be Ramona's on her wedding day had she wed with the Señora's favor (125). Despite having been told that Ramona's reading tastes were confined to a "few romances and tales and bits of verse . . . of the most innocent and old-fashioned kind (91), when the Señora opens the secret compartment, Ramona recalls having "read of persons who had been shut up alive in cells in the wall, and starved to death" (131). Though fear that the Señora might leave her to die an agonizing death might seem hyperbolic in its gesture to Black Legend tales of inquisition and torture, it signals a significant change in the possibilities for Jackson's supposedly bucolic hacienda. Ramona tries "to reason

with herself," based on her knowledge of the material properties of the adobe architecture, that "surely no ill could happen to her, in this room, within call of the whole house." She releases the conviction that she was "to be thrust into the wall closet and left to starve" when the Señora replaces the statue, but the specter of torture lingers in the next shift in domestic social relations (131-2).

Felipe's arguments in favor of Ramona's match with Alessandro advocate a class and racial mixing that are already demonstrated socially with Alessandro's easy adaptation to the veranda, but which are anathema to the Spanish-born Señora Moreno's views on racial hierarchy. Felipe proposes that the marriage would only formalize the family relation that has been developing on the veranda under the Señora's nose for weeks, and suggests that "I've been watching her all summer; I've seen her and Alessandro together continually. You know yourself, mother, he has been with us on the veranda, day after day, just as if he were one of the family" (144). Felipe, who is not aware of Ramona's mixed racial ancestry, worries that Alessandro, though the son of a chief, lacks the social standing to marry a daughter of the Moreno house. He argues that they might cement his status by giving him a lofty position on the rancho, for he "is a splendid fellow, and the best hand we have ever had on the place. All the men like him; would make a capital overseer; and if we put him in charge of the whole estate, there would not be any objection to his marrying Ramona" (141). Felipe's plan hinges on the possibility of social mobility for Alessandro, and imagines that a man who has been metonymized as "the best hand" on the hacienda might advance by his merits and marry into the ruling class. Señora Moreno trumps Felipe's class arguments with one of socially-coded race. Felipe reluctantly affirms his mother's statement that "it would not be right for us to let Ramona do anything which we would not let her do if she were really of our own blood," which includes "marrying an Indian" (142).

As Ramona Ortegna, she is placed in the double bind of not sharing ancestry or a surname with the Morenos, but still being ruled by the obligations of kinship. The hierarchies that a fictional whiteness is meant to uphold, however, also surface in the Señora's chivalric language to rule out Ramona's marriage to Alessandro as one that would make her "feel myself and our home dishonored" (149).

Instead, the Señora proposes an arrangement to simulate normalcy in the Moreno household that forces Ramona to pantomime everyday habits despite a change in status. The Señora promises that "my son, as head of this house, and I, as my sister's representative, consider you a member of our own family. So long as we have a home for ourselves, that home is yours, as it always has been. If you choose to leave it, and to disgrace yourself and us by marrying an Indian, we cannot help ourselves" (151). Ramona understands the overture's subtext that despite her fall in favor, there "should be no apparent change in [her] position in the house. She should come and go as freely as ever; no watch on her movements; she should eat, sleep, rise up and sit down with them, as before" in a charade of hacienda life. Thus, where an uninformed observer might only see two women having a cheerful conversation about local household practices to add local color when the Señora asks "in her ordinary tone . . . about the chili which was drying on the veranda," Jackson emphasizes the jockeying for position that takes place during the ostensibly benign discussion. Ramona "detected in the Senora's eye and tone the weapons which were to be employed against her" of making her "feel, every moment of every hour, that she was in disgrace; that she was with them, but not of them; that she had chosen an alien's position (155). Ramona is confident that she can endure the Senora's onslaught until Alessandro returns and they elope, and although no words on the subject are exchanged, "this train of thought in Ramona's mind was reflected in her face. The Senora saw it, and hardened

herself still more. It was to be war, then. No hope of surrender. Very well. The girl had made her choice" (156). The Señora has arranged the situation so that Ramona will uphold the hacienda's racial hierarchies either by pretending nothing is amiss or by following the Senora's underlying wish to for her to disgrace herself by running away from a seemingly ideal home. The simulated normalcy undercuts the romantic image of Spanish life, and the familiar domestic rhythms of chores and leisure on the veranda become battlegrounds between two adversaries.

When Jackson returns to stock romantic images of veranda life at the end of the book's first half, these romantic images ought to have a changed meaning for the educated reader. Although life had "resumed the ordinary expression and routine" in the Moreno household, Jackson once again emphasizes the inability to understand nuanced social relations by observing the merely visible, for "surfaces are deceitful, and eyes see little. . . . strength falters, fails, and comes near to giving way altogether, every day, without being noted by the closest lookers-on" (159). The everyday is the realm of the biggest human dramas, and Jackson instructs her reader to look beyond the romantic to understand the underlying problems in a scene that go unnoticed when cloaked by the familiar. Snapshots of "usual" veranda leisure emphasize the underlying discordant social relations, as "Señor Felipe sauntered about in his usual fashion, smoking his cigarettes, or lay on his bed in the veranda, dozing. The Señora went her usual rounds of inspection, fed her birds, spoke to every one in her usual tone . . . Ramona busied herself with her usual duties, dusted the chapel, put fresh flowers before all the Madonnas, and then sat down at her embroidery" (160). Jackson shifts narrative perspective during this performance to reveal the whirled "crowds of fears, sorrows, memories, anticipations in Ramona's heart" while "all that there was to be seen to the eye was simply a calm, quiet girl, sitting on the veranda, diligently working at her lace-frame" (160). Jackson punctures the romanticized view of a young, beautiful

girl working on her embroidery on the veranda by showing that the girl actually plotting how to escape the imprisoning house filled with adversaries who watch her every move. That readers so insistently ignored Jackson's subversive use of romantic imagery is a testament to their desire to read within genre lines.

To give a clearer sense of how subversive Jackson's veranda depictions are, it is useful to compare her with two other women writers of the time. Touted as "the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Indian," *Ramona* is most often compared with Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous antebellum anti-slavery work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Another work by Stowe, her 1873 Florida memoir and travel guide*, Palmetto Leaves*, includes romanticized Spanish architecture to encourage Northerners to visit or relocate to the tropical former Spanish colony for health and profit.[69] Stowe depicts many veranda scenes at her Mandarin, FL, home and the homes of friends, but the verandas in question are all occupied by Anglo-Americans like herself.[70] Unlike *Ramona,* Stowe's book confines Spanish influence in Florida to a single city in a single chapter, and emphasizes the isolation and archaic quality of Spanish architectural remnants to construct both a respectably deep past for the recently-acquired state and a narrative of U.S. acquisition as progress.[71] Stowe points out with a degree of pride that the coastal city of St. Augustine is the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in North America, such that "[t]his part of our country, at least, does not lie open to the imputation so often cast upon America, of having no historic

[69] Both works were originally serialized in the New England-based *Christian Union* magazine. Stowe's essays on Florida appeared sporadically from 1870-1877 in the *Christian Union* and were collected with some additions to make *Palmetto Leaves* in 1873. Jackson's *Ramona* was serialized for six months in weekly installments in the *Christian Union* in 1884 before its first edition appeared on bookshelves in November of that year.

[70] Stowe was in some ways too successful, and images of her socializing on the veranda of her winter home played a role in the increase of sightseers that eventually drove her to sell the Mandarin house.

[71] This is due, in part, to historical and material conditions. As David Weber explains, the Spanish built houses out of Florida's abundant timber, which were almost without exception destroyed by the British during occupation in the mid-eighteenth century or decayed by natural forces in the humid climate (Weber 7). Additionally, Anglo-Americans outnumbered Spaniards in the Floridas even while the territory still belonged to Spain because Spain

associations; though, like a great deal of the world's history, it is written in letters of blood and fire" (Stowe 211). Stowe makes a globalizing leap to claim regional US history as ancient "world" history by virtue of St. Augustine's age and European associations in contradistinction to native Americans, who were not thought to have history. Her description of the town's built environment renders it entirely Spanish and emphasizes its discontinuity with a vibrant Americanized Florida. St. Augustine, for Stowe, "is quaint and strange, in harmony with its romantic history. It has no pretensions to architectural richness or beauty; and yet is impressive from its unlikeness to any thing else in America. It is as if some little, old, dead-and-alive Spanish town, with its fort and gateway and Moorish bell-towers, had broken loose, floated over here, and got stranded on a sand-bank" (Stowe 213). In contrast to her detailed descriptions of Anglo-American dwellings, she populates sleepy St. Augustine with only a few stock images of bell-towers and Moorish decoration. Rather than the principal military settlement of the easternmost region of a transcontinental Spanish colony ruled for the better part of 300 years, St. Augustine appears a tiny, ghostly fragment of Spain incompatible with and unincorporated into the vibrant Florida sketched in other chapters. For Stowe, romantic but isolated ancient architecture represents a Spanish imperial history of which Floridians can be proud, even as its lack of development illustrates that Colonial Spain failed to accomplish in Florida what the U.S. might as a modern and modernizing power.

Social practice on the Southern Californian veranda in Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don* (1885) celebrates the social and racial hierarchies that *Ramona* undermines. *Squatter*'s scenes of leisure in the romanticized hacienda are an unambiguous appeal to grant the Californios social and political status in recognition of their *sangre azul.* Ruiz

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began in the late eighteenth century to allow Anglo-Americans to settle on free land when it had difficulty attracting culturally Spanish colonists (Weber 278–281).

de Burton depicts the aristocratic Alamar family's home with many of the same romantic flourishes as Jackson, writing, for instance, that "a silvered moon was rising serenely over the eastern hills, when the phæton . . . reached the foot of the low hill where the Alamar house stood. The French windows opening upon the front veranda, sent broad streams of light across the garden and far over the hill" (Ruiz de Burton 106). Lit by both sun and moon at twilight, the house is situated on a hill overlooking a garden and lands below, but without the language of surveillance that characterizes Jackson's depictions of the Moreno veranda. The Alamar veranda serves as a space of leisure, genteel female employment, and socializing for the family and their guests. In one scene, "The awnings at the east and south side of the front veranda were down, and in that deliciously cool place, the favorite resort of the Alamar ladies, they now sat with their guests—the Holmans—engaged in different kinds of fancy work" (Ruiz de Burton 112). The veranda naturalizes the leisure of the aristocratic Alamars, and there is no ironic subtext to be read in their actions on the veranda as there often is in *Ramona*. This is in part because *Squatter*, like *Ramona*, is a social protest novel, but that protest is centered on the mistreatment of the Californios rather than the Indians. Though Ruiz de Burton mentions once in passing that the "land-owners were useful in many ways . . . They also employed Indians, who thus began to be less wild," the assimilation of the Indians into the body politic is not an important goal on the rancho, and the "laz[iness]," gullibility, and deceitfulness of the few depicted Indians justifies their segregation into the lowest laboring class (Ruiz de Burton 89; 306; 259). Indeed, the Califorios are instead favorably aligned with earlier European rulers in putting down "savage" threats to civilization, for "in times of Indian outbreaks, the land-owners with their servants would turn out as in feudal times in Europe, to assist in the defense of the missions and the sparsely settled country threatened by the savages" (163). In *Squatter*, the genteel activities that

take place in the romanticized space of the veranda form a straightforward part of Ruiz de Burton's strategy to Europeanize the Californios and justify their inclusion in American social and political life.

In contradistinction, by the end of the rancho section of *Ramona*, Jackson has amplified her depiction of the rancho's coercive social relations to cast the Señora in the role of "tyrant," the rancho as a prison, and Felipe and Ramona as rebels using the affordances of the everyday to stage a resistance. Jackson's narrator interjects that "fortune is not always on the side of tyrants," (164) and Señora Moreno herself does not notice Felipe and Ramona passing notes using the access to windows and steps afforded by customary habits on the veranda, a "secret interchange" whose "significance could scarcely be overestimated" in which the foster siblings make "common cause with each other against her, and in fear of her" (165). To contextualize the import of these small domestic acts, Jackson likens the Señora's treatment of Ramona to tyranny that drives ordinary people to deception and intrigue, and her tactics to the contemporaneous Russian policy of exiling suspect citizens to Siberia:

> Tyrants, great and small, are apt to overlook such possibilities as this; to forget the momentousness which the most trivial incident may assume when forced into false proportions and relations. Tyranny can make liars and cheats out of the honestest souls . . . When kings and emperors do this, the world cries out with sympathy, and holds the plotters more innocent than the tyrant who provoked the plot. It is Russia that stands branded in men's thoughts, and not Siberia . . . The Senora had a Siberia of her own, and it was there that Ramona was living in these days. The Senora would have been surprised to know how little the girl felt the cold. To be sure, it was not as if she had ever felt warmth in the Senora's presence; yet between the former chill and this were many

degrees, and except for her new life, and new love, and hope in the thought of Alessandro, Ramona could not have borne it for a day. (165)

Jackson emphasizes that the irony between the seemingly trivial incident of note-passing and the "momentousness" of Ramona and Felipe organizing against the Moreno matriarch is brought about by the conditions of tyranny, which creates a distinction between the evident and the real. In Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866), Siberia acts as a geographic prison. In *Ramona,* Siberia is a state of coercive social conditions cloaked by a temperate climate. By forcing Ramona to simulate normality for the servants and Felipe while exiling her to "Siberia" by imprisoning her within the social conventions of hacienda life, Señora Moreno creates a situation in which Ramona must act falsely. Indeed, without the tyrannical coercion necessitated by Señora Moreno's attempts at maintaining racial hierarchy, the lazy days on the veranda actually might be the romantic leisured life that Jackson's readers wanted to see, and not merely a pantomime. For Ramona, however, the anticipation of escape with Alessandro renders the prison conditions bearable. When she does leave the rancho, she aims to make a home that will transform the conditions of surveillance that characterize the familiar architecture with which she has grown up.[72]

III. Conspicuous Domesticity: Ramona's Multicultural Shelters

Jackson structures the first half of her novel around a negative example tied to a single location to illustrate how the Moreno rancho's architecturally-enhanced surveillance promotes

[72] Jackson's writing about the governmental mistreatment of Indians in *A Century of Dishonor* has been compared to a Russian author writing about government abuse of criminals in Siberia by George F. Kennan, who toured Siberian institutions housing criminals in the late nineteenth century and wrote an important book about it. In his 1882 essay "Siberia—the Exiles' Abode," Kennan writes "Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson's *Century of Dishonor* is not a severer arraignment of the policy of the United States in its dealings with the Indians than Maximof's 'Siberia and Hard Labor Exile' is of the policy of the Russian Government in dealing with its criminals" (Kennan 59). Although I cannot locate any written mention by Jackson of Kennan's articles, she and Kennan shared an illustrator according to one 1891 article, which notes that "Mr. Sandham illustrated "H. H's" (Helen Hunt Jackson's) famous California papers in the *Century*. Recently he made illustrations for George Kennan's articles" (Harte 168).

deadening conformity to a social and racial hierarchy. The second half, by contrast, sketches alternatives to the Moreno rancho in several different types of habitations, which Jackson aims to use to convince her readers to take action against Indian displacement. That Ramona and Alessandro's search for a secure home largely drives the plot of the second half of the novel is evident in Jackson's letter to *Atlantic Monthly* editor Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in which she proclaims that:

> I hope it will be a telling book:—and will reach people who would not read my Century of Dishonor. . . . Do you remember, of course you do, Warners story of the Doe?—Do you think the story of two human beings, husband and wife, fleeing from place to place, to place, seeking a chance of life, and a home, and never finding it, could be told as simply and unsupportedly as that was, and be effective? —I think so. That is what I am going to try to do." (Jackson in Mathes 300)

Jackson designs *Ramona*'s second half to offer brief glimpses of domestic success interspersed by long periods of anxiety, displacement, and travel. Given her aim to show that Indians could be integrated into the body politic, it was vital that she appeal to the reader's sense of individual ownership of property and demonstrate Ramona and Alessandro's qualifications for citizenship via their economic self-sufficiency and their ability to create middle-class domestic spaces. At the same time, her reformist project to motivate those who ignored *A Century of Dishonor* to take action against Indian displacement required that these domestic spaces not be allowed to endure for long. These two narrative requirements lead to her particular depiction of multicultural domestic spaces as demonstrating conspicuous success that, rather than leading to citizenship and social benefits, incites Anglo squatters to steal the land on which the appealing houses sit.

Importantly, the houses that the pair build are not traditional Native American structures, but are multicultural hybrids drawing on Ramona's Californio upbringing and Alessandro's ex-neophyte Indian traditions with Jackson's Anglo-American approval. These houses do not simply nostalgize a culture's twilight years, but show an evolution that includes new architectural and cultural traditions. Although Jackson's end goal of the conversion of "savages" into "citizens" presumes Western superiority, her celebration of multicultural structures and spatial practices argues for the value of native methods, and for Indian inclusion in American social and political life without requiring their assimilation to strictly American models.

After leaving the hacienda, Ramona and Alessandro move through a series of multicultural hybrid domestic spaces. The two do not actually pass the night at Hartsel's, but Jackson's depiction of the motley establishment posits hybridity as an alternative regional hallmark to the architectural and caste purity of the Moreno rancho. Importantly, such hybridity has potential either for good or ill. The sprawling Hartsel compound is made of local materials, for "Hartsel's dwelling-house was a long, low adobe building, with still lower flanking additions, in which were bedrooms for travellers, the kitchen, and storerooms" (218). In its specifically local multi-functionality, "Hartsel's was one of those mongrel establishments to be seen nowhere except in Southern California," and it defies arithmetical evaluation as a building whose functions as "Half shop, half farm, half tavern" make more than a whole. Its many functions "gathered up to itself all the threads of the life of the whole region," and the racial divides that characterize life at the Moreno household seem at first to disappear in its democratic clientele of "Indians, ranchmen, travelers of all sorts" who "traded at Hartsel's, drank at Hartsel's, slept at Hartsel's. It was the

only place of its kind within a radius of twenty miles; and it was the least bad place of its kind within a much wider radius" (217).[73]

In its architecture and clientele, Hartsel's establishment might seem to be a model of democratic California hybridity, but the overlap of domestic and commercial functions proves a dangerous challenge to homemaking even for non-Indians who own their land. The main dwelling and comfortless wood-frame dormitory "with some half-dozen out-houses of one sort and another, stood in an enclosure surrounded by a low white picket fence, which gave to the place a certain home-like look, spite of the neglected condition of the ground" (218).[74] The fact that Hartsel "liked the Indians" and spoke "a good word . . . for them to travellers who believed no good of the race" places him firmly in a camp Jackson would have admired. Called upon to run not only a boarding-house, but also a bar, Hartsel "was by no means a bad fellow—when he was sober; but as that condition was not so frequent as it should have been, he sometimes came near being a very bad fellow indeed. At such times everybody was afraid of him,—wife, children, travellers, ranchmen, and all" (217). Keeping a boarding-house tavern means that he drinks with the land speculators who lodge with him, and then drunkenly threatens his wife and Alessandro. While in Chapter 1, I agued that Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* imagines the boarding-house as expanding the family by turning bare economic ties into affective ones, in *Ramona* the hybrid domestic/commercial space does not lead the Hartsels to

[73] Jackson carefully details the layout of Hartsel's establishment, which Kate Phillips suggests was modeled on the Temecula hotel and general store of Alsatian emigre Louis Wolf and his mixed-race wife, Ramona Wolf (Phillips 262). Hartsel, like Wolf, is not an Anglo-American, but an immigrant who had "drifted from Alsace to San Diego County" before U.S. Annexation and married a Mexican wife rumored to have Indian ancestry (217). Mathes includes a letter by Jackson that refers to a conversation with Ramona Wolf (Mathes 278–280).

[74] The California landscape, which produces such incredible bounty at nearby Rancho Moreno, is at Hartsel's "bare sand, or sparsely tufted with weeds and wild grass" which inhibits attempts at decorative landscaping. Lacking the resources of labor and, perhaps, abundant water that make the Moreno vista so picturesque, Mrs. Hartsel's front yard includes only "A few plants, parched and straggling . . . in pots and tin cans around the door of the dwelling-house. One hardly knew whether they made the place look less desolate or more so. But they were token of a woman's hand, and of a nature which craved something more than the unredeemed wilderness around her afforded" (218).

increase their family by taking in Alessandro and Ramona. Instead, the commercial threatens the domestic sphere by making Hartsel drunk and violent instead of sober and kind. Though Jackson preferred small, genteel boarding-houses during her stays in California, this bar/boarding house reinforces the ideology of separate spheres, showing Mrs. Hartsel's homemaking efforts engaged in a struggle against the forces of the climate, boarding-house, and bar.

Having established that not all Californian architecture is designed to maintain systems of social and racial control, Jackson explores different permutations of hybrid domestic spaces for her heroine. Ramona and Alessandro's first dwelling is a natural shelter that showcases the couples' homemaking ability as well as the pervasiveness of Anglo-American settlement. After braving a dangerous ride along steep cliffs to the hidden Pachanga canyon, Ramona and Alessandro descend into a bucolic "fairy spot" full of ferns (200). Alessandro remarks that "There is not in all this country so beautiful a place. This is our first home, my Majella" (201). Jackson lavishes unironic romantic detail on their makeshift open-air camp, and Ramona sleeps on "a couch no queen need have scorned" though it is constructed of twigs and ferns, while Alessandro lies on "our mother's lap" of earth (204). Though they build no structures, by "the end of their second day in the cañon, the place had become to Ramona so like a friendly home, that she dreaded to leave its shelter" (208). But the "fairy" scene, despite its abundance of natural beauty, lacks the necessary provisions for long-term survival. Alessandro rules out permanent settlement because there "would not be land enough, to live here," but is reluctant to leave the secret canyon because he cherishes the canyon's remote location. He wishes aloud that he might "stay here till I died, Majella, and never see the face of a white man again!" (201). Yet, in Jackson's novel, even a speck of unclaimed land that is unsustainable as a homestead and accessible only by a treacherous path is not remote enough to escape Anglo-American

incursions. On the third day, Alessandro demands they move on despite Ramona's growing attachment because he spots a cow from a "ranch only a few miles lower" grazing near their horse (210). The encroachment of the cattle prompts one in a series of increasingly despondent thoughts for Alessandro, for "[a]gain the sense of his homeless and destitute condition settled like an unbearable burden on his soul" (210).

Alessandro and Ramona make their first permanent house in San Pasquale, a neophyte town "about fifteen miles northwest of San Diego" (203). San Pasquale has accrued some advantages by being "a regularly established pueblo, founded by a number of the Indian neophytes of the San Luis Rey Mission at the time of the breaking up of that Mission" (203). The village is somewhat protected from Anglo usurpation by a Mexican land grant "established by a decree of the Governor of California" that gives the pueblo title to the "lands of the San Pasquale Valley . . . A paper recording this establishment and gift, signed by the Governor's own hand, was given to the Indian who was the first Alcalde of the pueblo" (203), and then to his son, Ysidro. Alessandro worries that even the paper will not keep the village safe from "the Americans [who] are beginning to come in at the head of the valley," but he hopes to live there "for a few years" because there "are nearly two hundred Indians in the valley; it is much better than Temecula, and Ysidro's people are much better off than ours were" (203). Although the San Pasquale land grant is less dubious than Pio Pico's gift of San Bonaventura mission lands to General Moreno, it is still vulnerable to the legal circumventions of Mexican land grants that Americans used to preempt claim to the Moreno lands.

Jackson uses many details of her visit to the historical San Pasquale for "A Sketch of the Present Conditions of the Mission Indians" to depict a precarious existence for the poor inhabitants of the fictional San Pasquale, but makes Ramona's house a splendid outlier. When

Alessandro builds a house, Ramona's homemaking abilities transform the small two-room adobe into a home that depicts successful domesticity as an appeal for citizenship via Jackson's favored model of multiculturalism. Ramona's "neat whitewashed adobe" would set the originally mud-colored house apart visually from the landscape and signal the couple's economic success (258). Her two-room, thatched-roof adobe dwelling includes the addition of "A broad veranda, as broad as the Senora's, [which] ran across the front of the little house. This was the only thing for which Ramona had asked. She could not quite fancy life without a veranda, and linnets in the thatch" (250). Ramona's request raises the possibility that the small house will replicate the survillant social relations of the rancho.

Though Ramona's and Alessandro's cottage replicates the potentially surveillant rancho veranda, she enacts new spatial practice within the familiar architectural features to make what would be a private domestic space into a center for community via religious worship. Alessandro designs their house around religious relics by building "a niche in the wall, between the head of the bed and the one window. The niche was deep enough to hold small pots in front of the [Madonna] statuette; and Ramona kept constantly growing there wild-cucumber plants, which wreathed and re-wreathed the niche till it looked like a bower" (250). There is no mention of pots of growing plants inside the Senora's house, only on the veranda, but Ramona creates a shrine in her bedroom by domesticating the wild cucumbers as a decoration. The function of the shrine is made clearer by the village's reaction, one not unusual in a tribal culture that values communal ties: "Below it hung her gold rosary and the ivory Christ; and many a woman of the village, when she came to see Ramona, asked permission to go into the bedroom and say her prayers there; so that it finally came to be a sort of shrine for the whole village" (250). If Ramona's many "watchers" strip the rancho's inhabitants of privacy, here the opening of a house to the women of

the village is celebrated. Rosemary King has argued that the bedroom shrine makes Ramona and Alessandro into "symbolic Edenic figures" who are "represented as practitioners of Christian traditions rather than Native spiritualism" designed "to appeal to [Jackson's] non-Indian readership" (King 13). Although there are certainly Catholic elements, the domestic space they create is not wholly reducible to a single or even a dominant culture. The couple's bedroom becomes a hybrid domestic and religious space that moves beyond Ramona's initial desire to have the Madonna in her bedroom to replicate favorable aspects of her childhood home, recalling that it "is beautiful to sleep with the Madonna close to your bed. She speaks often to you in dreams" (240). By using features that divided the Moreno household to facilitate community, Ramona's house demonstrates a radical rethinking of domestic space as both semi-private and semi-public. Importantly, the communal use of Ramona's bedroom figures on a smaller scale the kind of communal land ownership exercised in the San Pasquale pueblo, where Alessandro works community land he considers his own only by right of labor.

Ramona's compact, hybrid, semi-public dwelling manages to be more than the sum of its parts as a beneficial counterexample to Hartsel's violence-inducing boarding-house and bar. Ramona's two-room house "looked like a palace to the San Pasquale people, after Ramona had arranged their little possessions in it" (250). The house becomes a palace not because of its inspiring size (though the destitute condition of the rest of village "houses of bundles of the tule reeds" might make any adobe house seem grand), but because of Ramona's homemaking abilities (244). Crucially, the house appears impressive not only to the impoverished San Pasquale Indians, but also to Spanish Father Gaspara. Their bedroom, with its:

> clean whitewashed walls, the bed neatly made, with broad lace on sheets and pillows, hung with curtains and a canopy of bright red calico, the old carved chairs, the Madonna

> shrine in its bower of green leaves, the shelves on the walls, the white-curtained window,—all made up a picture such as Father Gaspara had never before seen in his pilgrimages among the Indian villages. (253)

Seen through Father Gaspara's well-traveled eyes, which stand in for those of her largely white readership, Ramona's house is at once an exemplar of Indian potential and an outlier given the village's widespread poverty. It is not only the whitewashed house itself, but also its furnishings, many taken from the dissolved missions, that constitute this "picture" of genteel domesticity. While the Dawes Act promotes individual ownership as the catalyst for self-sufficiency and work ethic, Jackson depicts the same benefits arising from a communal ownership system. That Ramona and Alessandro can build such an exemplary house on land they do not personally own argues that individual allotments are not the only way to protect Indian domesticity, but the government-guaranteed reservations that Jackson favored would allow multicultural domesticity on communal land.

Jackson dedicates only a few pages to depicting relative bounty and contentment for her heroine in her San Pasquale home before revealing that this security is doomed. Part of Jackson's critique is that the conspicuous evidence of domestic success that should prove Ramona's and Alessandro's suitability for citizenship instead imperils their sought-after domesticity because the vulnerability of the San Pasquale land grant is vulnerable to American legal attacks. Alessandro asks of Father Gaspara, "Why should I make plans? I will stay in my house so long as the Americans will let me. You saw our little house, Father! . . . my land is of the richest in the valley, and as soon as the Americans see it, they will want it" (260). Jackson dedicates the second half of the book to proving Alessandro's despondent conviction that "There is no place safe" for

Indian domesticity in the bountiful California landscape, for to be too conspicuously successful as an Indian is to invite the American acquisition of the land one has laboriously improved.

Alessandro's earlier wish to live in a remote place redoubles in force after Americans preempt the village lands. When the man who has purchased Alessandro's lot finally appears, Alessandro suggests that the man pay him for his house. The Anglo-American settler demonstrates a laudable impulse to do right by Alessandro, partly motivated by a desire to view his seizure of Alessandro's land in a more forgiving light: the "man's eyes gleamed. He would do the handsome thing. He would give this fellow something for his house and wheat-crops" (264). The little house has a powerful effect on the settler, and his relative magnanimity crumbles into avarice after "he saw the neat whitewashed adobe, with its broad veranda, the sheds and corrals all in good order, he instantly resolved to get possession of them by fair means or foul" (264). The picturesque cottage works like an enchantment to transform the nameless settler, so recently possessed of the desire to do the "handsome" thing, into a caricature of a conniving, land-hungry American. In a complete about-face, the man "insolently" and with a "brutal sneer" proposes that "I suppose I can have them without paying you for them, if I choose . . . You haven't got any rights here, whatever, according to law" (264)."[75] Only after Alessandro calmly threatens to burn the house and unharvested fields does the man agree to pay him two hundred dollars.

Once the American is secure in his possession of the house, he just as swiftly returns to an empathetic man wanting to do the "handsome" thing. When his well-meaning but insensitive suggestion that "there are a lot of farmers coming in here; they'll want hands" to work the land the Indians once owned garners a polite refusal from Alessandro, the man muses "I don't know

[75] Jackson alludes to Justice Taney's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1856) that the authors of the Constitution considered all blacks to be "beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations, and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

as I blame him a mite for feeling that way . . . I expect I should feel just so myself" (265).[76] The San Pasquale that Alessandro and Ramona entered (like the one Jackson depicts in her *Century* article) had been denuded of young men, who had gone to work on nearby Anglo-owned farms. Such a life of contingent labor does not allow for the kind of homemaking of the yeoman farmer on his own plot of land who can return each night to a domestic haven, a life Alessandro clearly prefers. Rather than being synecdochally reduced to a pair of itinerant "hands," Alessandro resolves to leave, but the nascent mistrust of his ability to hold land anywhere in California against Anglo-American interest grows into a despondent fatalism. Ramona "was now sometimes afraid of Alessandro. When these fierce glooms seized him, she dreaded, she knew not what. He seemed no more the Alessandro she had loved" (262). Like Hartsel, who turns from kind husband to terrifying drunk by the domestic-commercial hybridity of his boarding-house and tavern, the instability of their home and Alessandro's growing habit of "looking on the black side" transforms him from a man who can build a life with and for Ramona to a man whose depression and inertia threaten her ability to make and keep a home (261).

Although Alessandro would prefer to head to "the mountains, where the white men come not," Ramona's fear of isolation "all alone on a high mountain" and preference for company and community lead the two to travel toward the impoverished Indian village of Saboba at the foot of the San Jacinto mountains (266). Enroute, they are waylaid by a freak snowstorm that drives them into a sheepherder's cottage and into the acquaintance of the Hyers, a Tennessee family who have moved to California for the health of their tubercular son, Jos. The two families strike

[76] Jackson's 1883 official Report to the Bureau of Indian Affairs demonstrates her detailed understanding of the legal causes of San Pasquale's dispossession: "This San Pasquale village was a regularly organized Indian pueblo, formed by about one hundred neophytes of the San Luis Rey Mission, under and in accordance with the provisions of the secularization act in 1834. The record of its founding is preserved in the Mexican archives at San Francisco. These Indians had herds of cattle, horses, and sheep; they raised grains, and had orchards and vineyards. The whole valley in which this village lay was at one time set off by Executive order as a reservation, but by the efforts of

up a friendship and both move to Saboba, whose spring in the town center provides a valuable source of water in the desert, and whose hot springs are thought to have curative properties. Ramona is pleased, for counter to Alessandro's desire to remove to an area untouched by and invisible to avaricious Anglo-American civilization, she desires community, and believes that "companionship, she was sure, would do Alessandro good,—companionship, the outdoor life, and the excitement of hunting, of which he was fond" (287). The move to Saboba marks a growing tension between Alessandro's intensifying desire for isolation and Ramona's conviction about the necessity of community.

They do not build or own their house in Saboba, but instead rent a "little adobe house" from an even more destitute Indian woman. With its "one small room, walled with poorly made adobe bricks, thatched with tule, no floor, and only one window," the "wretched place" is a significant step down from their whitewashed, two room San Pasquale house with its broad veranda. However, within two months Ramona converts the rented hovel into another domestic haven. By adding a "small window in the door, and one more cut in the walls, [to] let in light and air," the couple demonstrates a natural understanding for the late-Victorian belief in the importance of air flow. White Tennessean Aunt Ri, whose appreciation of Ramona's home is meant to vouch for the homemaking capabilities of Indians on a larger scale, is floored by "the way thet Injun woman's got fixed up out er nothin'. It ain't no more'n a hovel, a mud hovel, Jos, not much bigger'n this yer tent, fur all three on 'em, an' the bed an' the stove an' everythin'; an' I vow, Jos, she's fixed it so't looks jest like a parlor!" (288). The parlor was a hallmark of the compartmentalized Victorian middle-class house whose function is at least partly to announce a household's economic standing by its ability to contain a room exclusively for entertaining and

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designing men the order was speedily revoked, and no sooner had this been done than the process of dispossessing the Indians began" (Jackson and Kinney 2).

domestic leisure that stood empty most of the time. Ramona performs domestic magic, not only hybridizing Anglo, Spanish, and Indian decorative principles, but making one room serve the functions of religious site, bedroom, kitchen, and even parlor.

The Saboba community alleviates Alessandro's despair as Ramona had hoped, and he "had been lifted out of himself by kindly companionship . . . the sense of home, the strongest passion Alessandro possessed, next to his love for Ramona, began again to awake in him. He began to talk about building a house" (289). Jackson again gives the reader only a few pages of domestic happiness in the reformed rental and hope for the renewal of Alessandro's powerful "sense of home" before she makes visible their precarious, landless situation. Ramona dissuades Alessandro from building a house in Saboba because she has learned about local whites' desire for Saboba's spring. Although Ramona can make the lowest mud hut into a home, any location that can sustain the community that Ramona desires and Alessandro needs is necessarily conspicuous, and is therefore vulnerable to Anglo avarice and theft because US laws and policies work in their favor.

The couple loses their daughter to illness because an Anglo doctor refuses to ride out to remote Saboba, but that remoteness proves no safeguard against displacement. It is not clear how or when the valley's owner, Señor Ravallo came into ownership, but Alessandro tells Ramona that the gentleman "found the village of Saboba there when he came to the country. It is one of the very oldest of all; he was good to all Indians, and he said they should never be disturbed" (279). Señor Ravello's sons keep their father's unwritten promise to not to disturb the village, but they sell nearby tracts of their land to "a company . . . formed for the settling up of the San Jacinto valley." The newly-arrived "white ranchmen in the valley were all fencing in their lands; no more free running of stock. The Saboba people were too poor to build miles of fencing; they

must soon give up keeping stock; and the next thing would be that they would be driven out, like the people of Temecula" (304). The fence laws place the burden of fencing on those who own livestock stock to fence them in, rather than on farmers to fence their crops to keep the animals out. Ruiz de Burton depicts the effects of fence laws on large-scale Californio ranchers in *The Squatter and the Don,* but Jackson draws attention to their devastating effects on small communities as well. To construct a fence around stock that used to run free on communal lands would bankrupt Saboba, and their inevitable abandonment of the village around the valuable spring will open the land for further Anglo settlement.

It is important to note that each of Jackson's repetitions of Indian land seizure involves a different cause. The Temecula Indians have seen a map of their lands, but the man who owns them moves to Mexico and cannot or will not intercede on their behalf. The Mexican papers that protected San Pasquale are declared invalid under the influence of wealthy land speculators. In Saboba, the adjacent lands are sold, and the new requirements for fencing land will deprive the impoverished Indians from keeping stock even though their village land has so far been protected. These varied causes for Indian displacement provide no easy remedy, and require redirecting US governmental interest in favor of securing Indian lands and creating policies favorable to their interests.

As Alessandro sees it, the only defense against the Anglo incursion is to occupy land that no one would want. He knows of a place "high up on the mountain, where no white man has ever been, or ever will be. I found it when I was following a bear. The beast led me up. It was his home; and I said then, it was a fit hiding-place for a man. There is water, and a little green valley. We could live there; but it would be no more than to live, it is very small, the valley" (279). At best the mountain valley will provide a lonely subsistence, but Alessandro "gloated over each

one of these features of safety in their hiding-place" with the hope that they will be "Safe at last" from "whites, who, because the little valley was so small and bare, would not desire it" (301). The price of safety in choosing land that no one wants is the loss of the community that proved so beneficial to Alessandro: the couple face "a poverty-stricken life, and the loneliest of deaths; but they would have each other" (304).[77]

Like the "fairy spot" in the remote Pachanga canyon, the San Jacinto mountain cleft appears a "wondrous valley" (309). Although they find evidence in "flat stones worn into hollows" of "bygone generations of Indians" who had occupied the valley, Alessandro and Ramona do not build a traditional Native American dwelling, but instead construct a combination a frontiersmen's log cabin and Indian tule-thatched dwelling with another Spanish veranda appended to the front. Jackson does not directly compare the mountain house to the brilliant whitewashed adobe house of San Pasquale, a potent visual symbol of prosperity. Instead, she highlights favorable aspects against the squalid rented house in Saboba: "No mournful gray adobe this time, but walls of hewn pine, with half the bark left on; alternate yellow and brown, as gay as if glad hearts had devised it. The roof, of thatch, tule, and yucca-stalks, double laid and thick, was carried out several feet in front of the house, making a sort of bower-like veranda, supported by young fir-tree stems, left rough" (310).[78] If Ramona and Alessandro's first house in

[77] Jackson's source material for Ramona and Alessandro's flight to the mountains came partly from her trip to San Pasquale, where "There are, in sight of the chapel, a dozen or so adobe houses, many of which were built by the Indians; in all of them except one are now living the robber whites, who have driven the Indians out . . . the Indians are hidden away in the cañons and rifts of the near hills,—wherever they can find a bit of ground to keep a horse or two and raise a little grain. They have sought the most inaccessible spots, reached often by miles of difficult trail. They have fled into secret lairs like hunted wild beasts" ("Mission Indians" 129).

[78] King inexplicably ignores the detailed descriptions of the house and the repeated emphasis on the tiny amount of land available in the mountain cleft to surmise that "there are no descriptions of the home, but instead depictions of the vegetation and geography of the mountain to convey its isolated locale. These naturalist descriptions suggest that the only place available for Ramona and Alessandro is in the wilderness . . . In contrast to the rendering of space throughout the novel vis a vis land that recedes about the Indians, this passage depicts space as boundless, infinite, and expansive on the high mountain plateau. The one place where such space exists for Indians in the world, according got Jackson's vision, is in Heaven" (King 14).

San Pasquale demonstrated their success by its whitewashed exterior, which set it apart visually from the surrounding landscape, the bark-covered planks of the mountain house blend into the surrounding scenery to articulate the couple's aims to survive by escaping Anglo notice. The thatched tule roof is consistent with their earlier houses in San Pasquale and Saboba, but the diminished porch, with its rough-barked supporting poles, is a new iteration on their adobe veranda.[79] Ramona's intent to recreate the parts of the Moreno rancho she preferred is clear, for "[o]nce more Ramona would sit under a thatch with birds'-nests in it," echoing the earlier assertion that she "could not quite fancy life without a veranda, and linnets in the thatch" (250). Jackson praises the unusual house as by "far the prettiest home they had ever had," and reveals the expectation of another child via a peaceful veranda scene without the surveillance and subterfuge that characterized rancho veranda spatial practice: "in the sunny veranda, when autumn came, sat Ramona, plaiting out of fragrant willow twigs a cradle" (310). Significantly, Jackson does not portray the house's interior. Logically, couple would have had to leave the accouterments of calico hangings, mission furniture, and religious relics below. Yet, the presence of the child marks the creation of another domestic haven that is, for Jackson, the precondition for futurity.

Although Alessandro hopes to find safety and freedom by occupying land that Anglos would not covet, the psychological pressures of American settlement follow him up the mountain to undermine the couple's domesticity for the final time. Though Ramona finds joy in the prospect of their new child, "[t]here was no real healing for Alessandro" (312). The coveted isolation meant to protect them from conspicuousness and land theft proves deadly, and

[79] The dwelling bears striking resemblance to ones in a "small valley" that is "little more than a pocket on a ledge" of San Ysidro Canyon in Exhibit F of Jackson's *Century of Dishonor*: "Their houses were good, built of hewn pine timber with thatched roofs made from some tough fibrous plant, probably the yucca. Each house had a thatched

Jackson's narrator comments that although community interaction such as "Speech, complaint, active antagonism, might have saved him," his "self-contained, reticent, repressed nature" leads him to "secretly broo[d] on the wrongs he had borne, the hopeless outlook for his people in the future, and most of all on the probable destitution and suffering in store for Ramona" (312). Alessandro's madness is often explained away as a bare plot device or by its similarity to the murder of Juan Diego, a Cahuilla Indian described in Jackson and Kinney's 1883 Report. In the report, Juan Diego's illness has no clear cause, and he is described simply as "had been for some years what the Indians call a 'locoed' Indian, being at times crazy; never dangerous, but yet certainly insane for longer or shorter periods" (Jackson and Kinney 19). By contrast, in *Ramona* Jackson carefully tracks the origins and progress of Alessandro's specific madness that begins when "the sense of his homeless and destitute condition settled like an unbearable burden on his soul" after Alessandro's home village of Temecula is in their first days of flight in the Pachanga Canyon (210). He develops a habit of "looking on the black side" once he is convinced that his San Pasquale house will eventually be seized (261). It is finally the lack of a solution for the seemingly inevitable Anglo pursuit and theft across geographic space that drives him mad, and "so slowly that Ramona could not tell on what hour or what day her terrible fears first changed to an even more terrible certainty, his brain gave way, and the thing, in dread of which he had cried out the morning they left San Pasquale, came upon him" (312). Alessandro's madness takes the form of delusions about American persecution and thefts, and "he fancied that the Americans were pursuing him, or that they were carrying off Ramona, and he was pursuing them" (312). Even Alessandro's coveted physical isolation cannot protect him from the systemic threat of Anglo covetousness from which Indians have no legal power to defend themselves. Alessandro's

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bower in front of it and stood in a fenced inclosure. These Indians raise beans, pumpkins, wheat, barley, and corn" (*Century* 490–491).

delusions demonstrate the psychological impacts of government-supported land theft, and invalidate the security that Ramona's idyllic homes should provide. US land policies turn a capable, self-sufficient farmer and valuable potential citizen into a madman who introduces danger into the domestic haven he and his wife have created. Ramona finds herself "as helpless in her freedom on this mountain eyrie as if she had been chained hand and foot" when she is unable to procure a doctor for Alessandro or to write to Felipe for help (313). There is no domestic architecture, no matter how "pretty" or ingeniously designed, that can become a home for Alessandro when pursued by intangible fears of Anglo avarice.

IV. Jackson's Domestic Paradox

In one of his delusional spells, Alessandro accidentally rides a local white man's horse home instead of his own. His unrealized fears of Anglo pursuit are made manifest when the man follows the horse's trail to his hidden mountain homestead and fatally shoots him in front of Ramona. Having demonstrated that Alessandro and Ramona cannot create a secure domestic space for their daughter in Southern California, Jackson packs Ramona, her baby daughter, and Felipe off to Mexico. Felipe sells the estate his father gained as a reward for his youthful military triumphs to "some rich American proprietors," and is able to further capitalize on his father's reputation to bolster his social status in Mexico City, where, unaccountably, "General Moreno's name was still held in warm remembrance" though he had lived in California since at least the 1840s (359; 362). Yet, unlike all other domestic settings in the novel—even temporary ones like Pachanga canyon—we never see Ramona's house in Mexico or learn what sort of spatial practices they develop in their new household. The oversight may due partly to Jackson's lack of familiarity with Mexico City and its local architecture. In a novel driven by such richly-rendered,

depictions of California architecture and daily life, however, the vagueness of Ramona's final household does not make for a satisfactory conclusion.

Part of the problem with Jackson's sentimental social-protest novel, which was intended to inspire Americans to advocate for reservation lands where Indians could make their own domestic spaces, was that she made California land and architecture as conspicuously desirable for her readers as Ramona and Alessandro's homes were for fictional Anglo settlers. Despite her depiction of the dangerous power structures that governed the seemingly idyllic lifestyle of the Moreno rancho, Jackson's novel exacerbated the problem of vanishing Indian lands by drawing tourists eager to see and settlers eager to own a piece of the romanticized landscape. When Jackson kills off her Indian hero and moves her heroine to Mexico, she vacates the charming adobes as effectively as the sheriff who clears the Temecula Indians from their homes in advance of the white settlers. Jackson's removal of Alessandro and Ramona from California is a plea to the audience to make the US habitable for them. Yet, instead of inciting her readers to advocate for reservations and continuation of evolving Native American life that she preferred, she incited support for the Dawes Severalty Act that opened thousands of acres of Indian land to white settlement.

Jackson's ending is similar to Reconstruction works sympathetic to African Americans, but which show that there is no place for them in the South. In Charles W. Chesnutt's first novel, *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900), the inability for the black middle class to secure a home in the Reconstruction South leads to a tragic ending. As I will establish in the next chapter, for Chesnutt the bid for the expansion of the social, economic, and political rights enjoyed by whites to include the black middle class involves the enforcement of a hierarchy of social and color prejudice not unlike that depicted in the Moreno Rancho.

Chapter 4

Free People of Color, the Carolina Cottage, and Slavery's Architectural Legacies in *The House Behind the Cedars*

Sometime between March 1899 and April 1900, Charles W. Chesnutt changed the title of the novel he had been working on for a decade from the character-focused "Rena" to the location-based *The House Behind the Cedars*.[80] Although this shift is by now common knowledge, the titular location has not yet been made a central object of study in Chesnutt scholarship. When criticism on this novel of the color line mentions the house itself, it is nearly always in reference to the gap in the cedar hedge through which white George Tryon discovers his ex-fiancée, light-skinned Rena Walden, dancing with biracial Jefferson Wain. For the novel's mixed-race characters, the house's location in Patesville's poorer district is the most material way of placing the inhabitants' ambiguous racial identity as black. Yet, too strict a focus on the dwelling's consistent racially classifying qualities obscures the evolution of the house's spatial relationships within the neighborhood and with nearby Haymount Hill over time that challenge, rather than cement, the predominant black/white racial paradigm. From the house's presentation as a gift to free black Molly Walden by her unnamed white lover sometime in the 1830s to its postbellum reinforcement of race and class prejudice within Patesville's stratified African American community, Chesnutt uses the history of the landscape around the house behind the cedars to complicate not only the color line, but also some racial assumptions we use even when discussing his work.[81]

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[80] Chesnutt wrote to Walter Hines Page of Doubleday, Page & Co, "Your house has turned down my novel 'Rena' in great shape" (22 March 1899, in *Author* 120). A letter from Page to Chesnutt on 24 January 1900 offered to publish the "Rena" manuscript with Doubleday & Page under title "the house behind the cedars" (24 January 1900, in *Author* 140).

[81] I base my estimate on the fact that Molly's son John is fifteen years old in 1855, and thus was born in 1840 (107).

The novel is structured around a series of departures from and returns to the titular house. Siblings John and Rena Walden grow up in the cedar-bordered house, the two light-complected children of freeborn Molly Walden and a local white slaveowner. As a young man, John decided to pass as white, and left his mother and young sister to seek his fortune as a lawyer in South Carolina. During his absence from Patesville, he changes his name to John Warwick, marries the daughter of a white planter, has a son, and inherits her plantation upon her death. The novel opens with John's return to his childhood home after years away. He makes the trip in part to convince Rena to pass as white, come live with him in his fine white mansion as a caretaker for his young son, and seek an advantageous marriage to a white man. While passing, Rena falls in love with George Tryon, the scion of a wealthy white family, but returns to the house behind the cedars to care for her ailing mother before the marriage can take place. George breaks off the engagement when a chance meeting in her hometown exposes her racial ancestry and an impulsive trip to her house reveals her dancing with biracial Jefferson Wain. Heartbroken, Rena leaves her mother's house again, this time to teach at a rural black school in Wain's town, which happens to be adjacent to Tryon's family estate. Fleeing the advances of both Wain and Tryon, Rena gets lost in the woods during a storm and grows ill. Frank Fowler—the faithful, darker-skinned, working-class neighbor who loves her—finds and rescues her, but her final return to the house behind the cedars ends with her death in her childhood bedroom just before Tryon arrives to declare his love.

The house's position and architecture are for Chesnutt part of the plot, which deals with how social relations create space and how space constructs social relations. While the architecture of the McAdoo plantation in Chesnutt's conjure tales has garnered much interest, the architecture of the Waldens' house behind the cedars has received minimal critical attention. In

his chapter on racial ambiguity in *Cedars,* Justin D. Edwards briefly describes the structure as static: its "features will never change; they will always remain monuments to past injustices" for "the secretive and unspeakable history of slavery is hidden away in this house, a house that remains elusive because 'no one can see [it] through the trees'" (Edwards 102–3). Edwards' passing description exemplifies a critical tendency. When criticism makes reference to the house at all, it pays only cursory attention to the structure itself as static, isolating, and racially reductive. In contradistinction, I would argue that the house articulates what Edwards calls the "unspeakable" history of slavery. Indeed, the house helps us to understand that Chesnutt also wants us to recognize that what we insist on calling a history of slavery also includes the history of free people of color. Spatial structures can tell stories about the past, and Chesnutt has carefully constructed his fictional house with extreme attention to details of space. My focus on domestic architecture, rather than on much-analyzed institutional landmarks like the market house, illuminates how social practices based in unequal freedom were resisted as well as carried into the present using everyday dwelling spaces.

But the house and its location do not tell only a story of history. They also tell a synchronic story about the social relations of present day Patesville. Hazel Carby has written that slavery's material conditions and social relations are "frequently reproduced in fiction as historically dynamic; they continue to influence society long after emancipation" (Carby 125–26). The same applies to the material settings that organize such social relations. It is the architecture, as well as the "economic and social history of slavery" that nineteenth-century authors like Chesnutt used as a "prehistory" to explain later phenomena. The position of the house behind the cedars in Patesville's shifting cultural geography reveals the fragile configuration of privilege and restriction accompanying free status for blacks, and the resulting

fraught dynamics not only between freedmen and slaves, but also between two classes of antebellum free people of color that persists—along with the architecture that supported them—into the postbellum South. In its history of free colored people in North Carolina, *Cedars* traces before and after the war what Saidiya Hartman calls the "double bind of emancipation," and the difficulty in representing its incredible shortcomings in terms of freedom and opportunity without gainsaying the "small triumphs of Jubilee" (Hartman 12).[82] Operating within a history of sexual coercion and curtailment of rights for free people of color, Molly Walden tries to turn an architectural symbol of concubinage and illegitimacy into a symbol of domestic respectability. Like the "female passionlessness" Ann duCille describes as a way to unite black and white women under the same mantle of chastity and virtue, domestic architecture and landscaping attempts to claim middle-class values of respectability and domesticity for Chesnutt's free women of color in spite of Molly's unmarried state. Yet, duCille emphasizes that in black women's fiction "purity must be scrutinized not simply as an inscription of middle-class mores but as a critique that held up to scorn the same hegemonic values it, on some level, inscribed" (duCille 32). So, too, for Chesnutt, whose middle class architectural display argues for the inclusion of blacks within the middle class from which they were systemically denied entrance, even as it lays bare the racial and social hierarchies its plantation-style design is meant to enforce. Chesnutt's novel dramatizes Molly's attempts at laying claim to reputability, which replicate the class and racial hierarchies that denied her the right to marry her longtime partner, that prevent

[82] Hartman's important account of racial subjugation during slavery and its aftermath omits the experiences of antebellum free people of color with the rationale that "Prior to [emancipation], legal precedents like *State v. Mann* and *Dred Scott v. Sanford* made the notions of black's rights and black citizenship untenable, if not impossible" (Hartman 117). However, I would argue that Chesnutt's long view of the history of free people of color depicts them dealing with many of the trials of what Hartman calls the "burdened individuality of the responsible and encumbered freedperson" (Hartman 117).

her daughter from marrying her white fiancé, and that keep her loyal, dark-skinned neighbor from attaining the class mobility that might allow him to marry his longtime love.

I. Geography, Architecture, and Synchronic Social Relations

The house's detailed architecture and location in a fictionalized version of Fayetteville, NC, help us to read the present day social relations of Patesville. The architectural and geographic detail in Chesnutt's Patesville is neither incidental nor beside the point, for the development Robert Sedlack describes of Rena's story from a love triangle to a social novel in Chesnutt's manuscripts cannot be divorced from the development of Chesnutt's thinking about the setting of that story (Sedlack 127). Although the first published mention of "Patesville" occurs in *The Conjure Woman* (1899), none of the conjure tales as they originally appeared in magazines were set in a specific North Carolina town. The name "Patesville" appears for the first time in the earliest manuscript of the novella "Rena Walden," written some time before 1889.[83] Chesnutt integrated his fictionalized Fayetteville into the reworked frame story for "The Goophered Grapevine" in 1898 to introduce and unify the collected conjure tales, but Patesville underwent years of development in drafts of "Rena Walden" in consultation with North Carolinian Walter Hines Page.

For Joseph McElrath, Chesnutt's correspondence with Page, an editor at *The Atlantic,* Houghton Mifflin, and later at Doubleday, Page & Co., shows that the editor nurtured a writer who "did not commit himself to the profession of authorship" (McElrath 152). Although McElrath reads the letters in an uncharitable light, Chesnutt's correspondence with the North

[83] In late 1889, Chesnutt writes to George W. Cable, "I take the liberty of enclosing you the Ms. of a story, entitled 'Rena Walden'" (9 September 1889, in *Author* 42). In the Fisk University catalogue of the Charles Waddell Chesnutt Collection, the five manuscript versions of "Rena Walden" are listed as "39p., 91p., 55p., 51p., 231p." The manuscripts are undated, but I have tracked Chesnutt's editorial changes to the five incomplete drafts to deduce that they were written in the following order: R-39, R-51, R-55, R-231, and R-91 (I follow Sedlack's nomenclature). I would like to thank the Fisk Library staff for their generous cooperation.

Carolina native also indicates that he revised "Rena Walden" several times with a local reader in mind. Chesnutt discovered in 1898 that Page was not a New Englander, but "a North Carolinian by birth and breeding" who had been "'bawn en raise' within 50 or 60 miles of the town where I spent my own boyhood and early manhood, and where my own forebears have lived and died and laid their bones" (20 May 1898, in *Author* 107). Chesnutt wrote to Page soon thereafter that he was working on "a story of North Carolina life, just after the war" (14 Aug 1898, in *Author* 112). Page read several versions of the novella, and in an early draft of one letter, Chesnutt expounds on Page's usefulness as a specifically North Carolinian audience: "If these stories are not interesting to a N.C. reader, *caeteris paribus*, they would not attract anyone, and if they interest you I am frank to confess the value of a favorable opinion at your hands would be enhanced in my eyes by the fact that you are a N.C." (20 May 1898, in *Author* 108).

In 1904, after the publication of the novel, Chesnutt enthuses that "I have not forgotten that the most popular of my novels up to date—at least the one which people speak oftenest to me about, *The House Behind the Cedars,* was rewritten by me in pursuance of a suggestion of yours similar to that which you make concerning this story" (29 June 1904, in *Author* 213–214). What that suggestion was is unclear, but Chesnutt's letters to Page often stress his attempts to "put more of the old town, and its people" into the story with the "the hope that you may find it, at least in part, what you thought I might make of it" (27 December 1898, in *Author* 118). Page indicates his interest in the local world of *Cedars* in a letter that, along with an offer to publish the novel, comments primarily on the story's development in terms of setting and secondarily in terms of its protagonist:

> I suppose you are wise in using old Judge Strange's name and old Mrs. McRae's name and all the familiar old family names and landmarks of Fayetteville, but some of our

> friends down there will be—well, I will say interested—. I congratulate you on the local color and the accuracy of your descriptions of the town and the country. You seem to have caught the very spirit of the whole community. Then, too, the story of Rena herself is most admirably and dramatically unfolded" (Page 24 January 1900).

Chesnutt took Page's implications to heart, and the surname "Straight" was superimposed in pencil over "Strange" on the longest of the undated "Rena" manuscripts (R-252 15). Page's focus on setting seems to have informed Chesnutt's decision to change the title as well, for Page offers to publish "Rena" with the suggestion that "We [Doubleday, Page & Co.] all agree that the best title is 'The House behind the Cedars'" (Page 24 January 1900). When, several months later, Houghton Mifflin offered to publish the novel, the firm wrote "We have decided to take 'Rena' (under the title 'The House Behind the Cedars')" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co March 24 1900). Chesnutt's self conscious attention to matters of location as he developed the novel's plot invites closer attention to the historical underpinnings of the novel's setting.

The characters and plot in *Cedars* are often read as melodramatic or romantic, but Chesnutt includes a tremendous amount of realist detail in the geographic, topographic, and architectural correspondence he creates between Patesville and Fayetteville. Chesnutt criticism has not yet plumbed Chesnutt's realism in *Cedars,* with the notable exception of William Andrews, who argues that Chesnutt transposes the Market House, Liberty Point, Arsenal, and several other Fayetteville elements into Patesville as a critique of the New South and revision of the Old. I agree with Andrews' point that "the attitudes as well as the architecture of the Old South still survive in this Reconstruction town," but in constructing a monolithic "Old South" out of large city monuments designed by white citizens, he overlooks domestic architecture and the specific ways in which Chesnutt's Patesville overlaps, alters, and elides aspects of

Fayetteville to articulate connections between neighborhoods divided by gradations of race and class (Andrews 284). Just as Leopold Bloom's walk through Dublin can be mapped, so too can John's walk to his mother's house through postbellum Patesville be mapped. For the fiftieth anniversary of Joyce's *Ulysses*, Clive Hart traced Bloom's walk in the "Wandering Rocks" chapter with a stopwatch, and verified that the time it takes characters to move within Joyce's Dublin is "realistically exact" (Hart 200). For Hart, the "outer world of Dublin . . . is rooted in the real, historical circumstances in which Joyce himself lived, a world of physical reality which the reader must also get to know (if only at second hand) in order fully to understand the meaning of much of the book" (Hart 185). So, too, for Chesnutt. The world of Patesville is deeply bound up in historical details of Fayetteville, which are crucial to understanding the social relations within Chesnutt's fictional world.[84] The incredible specificity with which Chesnutt presents John's trajectory through the town—noting when he backtracks, where he turns, when buildings are constructed of brick rather than wood, how long it takes to walk from one neighborhood to another—indicates the importance geographical and architectural relationships from the novel's first pages. Chesnutt's fictional town so closely mimics the layout of its historical prototype that, like Hart with his stopwatch in Dublin, I retraced John's steps in Fayetteville in 2014, and can verify a high degree of historical accuracy. Chesnutt's Patesville corresponds not only to present-day Fayetteville, but also, crucially, to antebellum Fayetteville. I have overlaid John's trajectory onto the 1822 McRae map of Fayetteville (see figure 8) to illustrate the spatial relationships of the city center, Haymount Hill to the east, and the house behind the cedars to the west.

[84] For a detailed account of geographical similarities and significant differences between Patesville and Fayetteville in the *Conjure Tales,* which includes a map of fictional settings and events, see Ingle. Ingle also offers an interesting interpretation of Chesnutt's decision to rename Fayetteville, arguing that the renaming erases its white namesake,

I will quote somewhat extensively from the opening chapter and make reference to the McRae map to emphasize the geographical specificity and abundance of direction Chesnutt gives to establish a set of longstanding relationships between Fayetteville's neighborhoods that inform

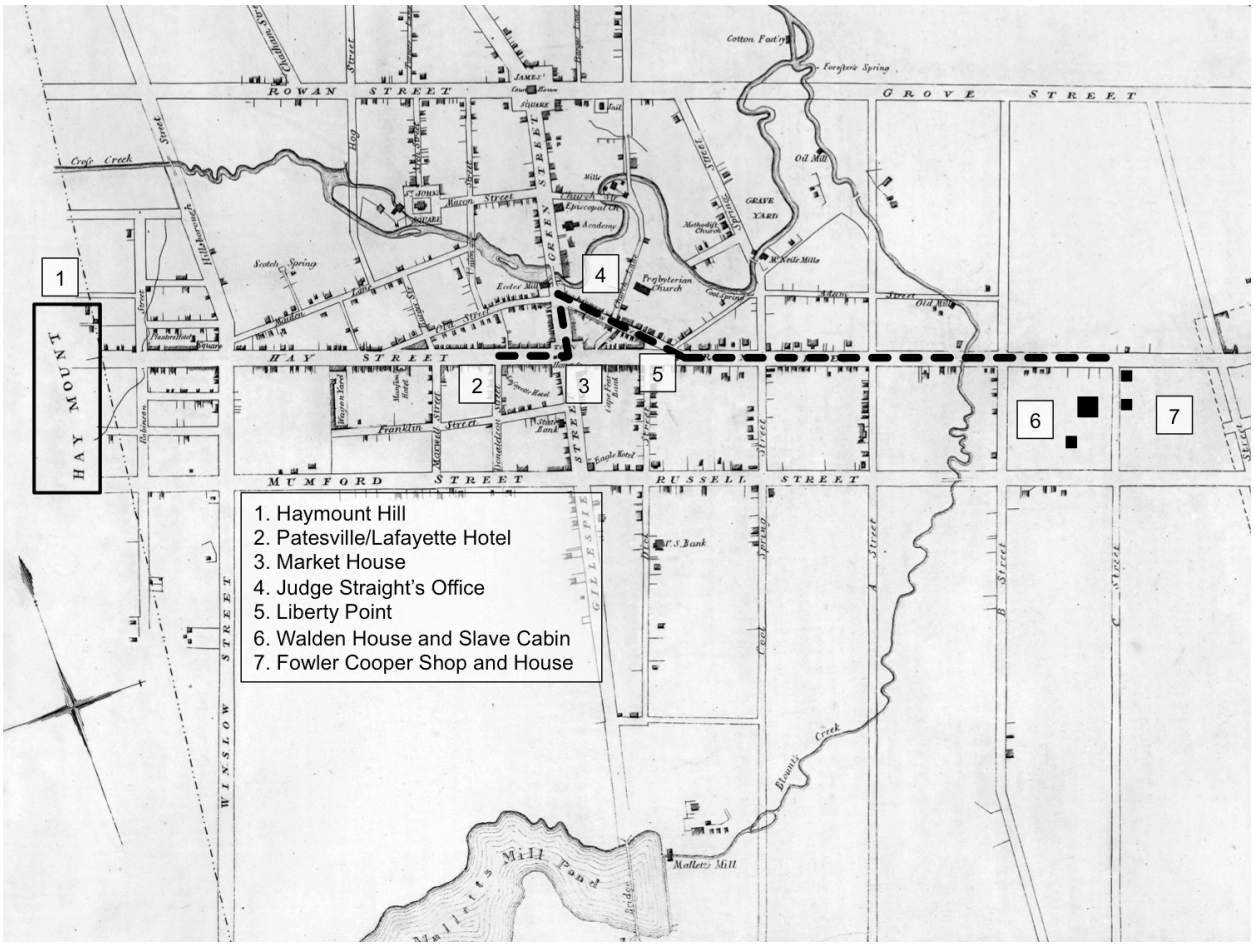

Figure 8. Author's rendering of John Warwick's trajectory superimposed on the McRae map of Fayetteville (c1822). Map from Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, www.loc.gov/item/2011585700

and reflect the social relations of their inhabitants. John walks out of "the Patesville Hotel" (the Lafayette Hotel on the map) "about nine o'clock one fine morning in spring, a few years after the Civil War, and started down Front Street toward the market-house" (2). A "two minutes' walk" brings him to the open air brick Market House. From the Market House he "turned to the left,

Revolutionary-era General Lafayette, from the town's history as an inversion of the historical tendency to erase

and kept on his course until he reached the next corner. After another turn to the right, a dozen paces brought him in front of a small weather-beaten frame building," the offices of Archibald Straight, later identified as standing "[near] the corner of Mackenzie Street, just one block north of the Patesville market-house," named Bow Street on the map (2-3; 109). He "retraces his steps" to talk to the town's black undertaker, and then resumes his original direction to walk "a few rods" past "the old black Presbyterian church" (pictured above on the 1822 map) and the Catholic Church (not pictured on the map because it was not constructed until the late 1820s). We learn that the "street down which Warwick had come intersected Front Street at a sharp angle in front of the old hotel, forming a sort of flatiron block at the junction, known as Liberty Point," a landmark so named in Fayetteville as well (4-5). At this point, "a young woman came down Front Street from the direction of the market-house," and Warwick follows the girl. Their walk down Front Street of "not more than ten minutes" takes them on "brick pavement" through a small industrial section with "a factory, a warehouse or two," and then on "mother earth, under a leafy arcade of spreading oaks and elms" through "a residential portion of the town, which, as they advanced, gradually declined from staid respectability to poverty" until they arrive at the house behind the cedars and John realizes Rena's identity and their kinship (5).[85]

When Chesnutt blurs the lines between fiction and reality, a deeper knowledge of the latter makes the former more meaningful. Although Chesnutt's fictional Patesville is often

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black slave labor from the visible landscape by naming landmarks after whites.

[85] No images of a historical prototype for the house behind the cedars exist, but William Andrews notes that Chesnutt's father left the "house and lot on C street, which was given me by my father," to his wife in his will (Andrews 2). Andrews cites John W. Parker's 1949 article for the location of the original house, but does not specify the exact location or the house's details. Parker, a former Fayetteville State University English professor, wrote that "the house behind the cedars (inspiration for his initial novel of the same name) stood on "the corner of Person and 'C' Streets, four blocks from the heart of the city." According to Parker, the "once-famous gable-roofed, frame cottage [was] set down in a profusion of flowers and shrubs with numerous forked cedars on either side of a winding walk that led to Person Street" (Parker 206). Sylvia Lyons Render writes about driving through Fayetteville in the 1960s with Sara Chesnutt, one of the author's half-sisters, who pointed out a block on Person Street where a former

identical to the real Fayetteville, he deliberately alters some aspects of Fayetteville to accommodate his fiction.[86] In Fayetteville, Hay Street exits the Market Square to the west, and the aristocratic district of Haymount Hill is logically named for where Hay mounts uphill (see figure 8). Person Street leads East from the Market Square to a poorer district named Campbellton, which Chesnutt included as a name for Molly's neighborhood in four of five manuscript drafts.[87] A historical Hay Street or Person Street address gives information about a person's socioeconomic status: the wealthier Fayetteville residents live in brick mansions on Hay and the poorer live in frame houses on Person even though the streets are continuous but for the market square where they meet. In the novel, Chesnutt changes both "Hay" and "Person" streets to "Front Street." The narration of John's walk reveals that Molly's house in a "sordid district in the lower part of the town" is a mere ten minute walk down Front Street from the market house that marks the city center (98). Several chapters later Dr. Green takes Tryon "to his own house . . . up Front Street about a mile, to the most aristocratic portion of the town, situated on the hill known as Haymount, or, more briefly, 'The Hill'" (98; 89). The shared street name links the "spacious brick house" of wealthy white supremacist Dr. Green, the "large," "gray, unpainted house" owned by Molly Walden, and the "small house between Front Street and the cooper shop" where the darker-skinned, poorer Fowler family lives (89, 98, 7, 10). By explicitly spatially linking different classes and races in his fictional invention of Patesville, Chesnutt suggests an interconnectedness that the white residents of the historical town of Fayetteville would deny. But he still reminds us that, though living on Front Street, the Walden home is somewhat hidden

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model for the house behind the cedars with an "avenue of cedars" stood before becoming a "victim to industrial expansion" (Render 43).

[86] One change worth noting is the renaming of "Bow" street as "Mackenzie" street, though I have been unable to locate a provenance for "Mackenzie." Chesnutt's 1905 novel, *The Colonel's Dream*, includes a minor character named Dr. Mackenzie, a Yankee Presbyterian minister who has moved to the South after the war, and who believes that the "Negroes are hopelessly degraded. They have degenerated rapidly since the war" (*Colonel* 168).

from the rest of the town by its impoverished neighborhood. Thus, is it not only Tryon who peers into the workings of the cedar-bordered house. A reader is also invited to understand how the relations established in the home connect to the social relations of the rest of the town.

II. Haymount Hill and the Urbanized Cottage in the Country

The presence of unmarried Molly Walden's house on Front Street within Patesville's limits tells a story of antebellum social relations by revising a common geographical trope of illicit desire. Seduction novels (a popular genre in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America; Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* sits on the Waldens' bookshelf) often feature a "cottage in the country": an explicitly remote location that hides an illicit sexual relationship and isolates the woman from the censure and/or aid of community. For instance, in Susanna Rowson's wildly popular revolutionary-era seduction novel, *Charlotte Temple* (1791), an English schoolgirl is convinced by her sympathetic seducer to abscond to America, where he installs and later abandons her in a fatally secluded "small house a few miles from New-York" (Rowson 67). Harriet Jacobs's fictionalized slave narrative, *Incidents the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)*,* evokes the danger of sexual coercion in an isolated dwelling when Linda Brent's master, Dr. Flint, threatens to "build a small house for [her], in a secluded place, four miles away from the town" (Jacobs 17). The knowledge that her "master had actually begun to build the lonely cottage" is what pushes Brent to make "a headlong plunge" into a relationship with her white neighbor, Mr. Sands (Jacobs 61).[88] In *Cedars,* Chesnutt inverts and urbanizes the conventional "cottage in the country" trope common to narratives concerned with seduction when Molly's white gentleman

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[87] Campbellton is mentioned in R-39 p8, R-51 p10, R-55 p10, and R-252 p54.

[88] Another such socially and geographically liminal space appears in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) when Hester Prynne removes herself to a "small thatched cottage" on "the outskirts of the town" following the birth of her illegitimate daughter, Pearl. Indeed, Hawthorne's description of Hester's cottage could stand easily in for Chesnutt's, which I will discuss later: "A clump of scrubby trees, such as alone grew on the peninsula, did not

gives her a cottage in the city on Front Street within easy access to kin and community.

Just as Chesnutt transforms a historical town into a world of his imagination, so, too, does he transform a commonplace literary convention into a world with revealing social significance. The relationship between Patesville's wealthier Haymount district and Molly's house in a sordid neighborhood down Front Street replicates to an extent the spatial arrangements of the plantation in an urban setting. Dell Upton, who schematizes plantation layouts in "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," has theorized that the planter's house generally "was raised above the other buildings and was often set off from the surrounding countryside by a series of barriers or boundaries," and that slave quarters form part of a "hierarchical landscape leading to [the planter] at the center" (Upton, "Landscapes" 64). William Gleason has drawn attention to the detail with which Chesnutt organizes antebellum and postbellum plantation layouts in the conjure tales and in Chesnutt's first published story, "Uncle Peter's House" (1885). Gleason notes similarities between the spatial arrangement of the slave cabin Uncle Peter occupies below the plantation big house, the log cabin Uncle Peter's family occupies adjacent to the unfinished house he works on after emancipation, and Uncle Julius' cabin a few rods off from the main house occupied by white Northerners John and Annie on the former McAdoo plantation. In *Cedars* Chesnutt describes the view of Molly's neighborhood from wealthy Haymount Hill in strikingly similar terms to the view from the planter's porch in "Uncle Peter's House." In "Uncle Peter's House," Chesnutt illustrates how the plantation house functions as a symbol of white control by orienting the surrounding lower lands in relation to itself:

> From the little group of cabins which made up the slave quarters of the large plantation . . . could be seen, at a short distance, the large white house . . . Standing on the

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so much conceal the cottage from view, as seem to denote that here was some object which would fain have been, or at least ought to be, concealed" (Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter* 81).

> highest part of the plantation, in a grove of patriarchal elms, it was the most conspicuous object of the landscape. From it the eye of the little autocrat who ruled this domain could overlook the acres of cotton stretching out to the edge of the distant forest, and the dark green masses of waving corn which covered the meadows; and toward it the ear of the tired slave was turned at evening, to listen for the sound of the horn which announced a few hours' respite from the hard toil. ("Peter" 168)

This passage illuminates several important features of the relation between slave cabin and plantation big house. The scale of the "little group of cabins," whose small quantity indicates also their diminutive size, is contextualized by the "large" white house located a "short distance" horizontally and vertically from the quarters. Seen from a distance, the field workers form part of the picturesque landscape of "dark green masses of waving corn," and "acres of cotton" stretching to the "edge of the distant forest;" human property blending in with the master's vegetable property. Indeed, the "tired slave" toiling in acres of cotton and rows of corn is omitted entirely from the "autocrat's" habitual view, though the house retains its "conspicuous" position and is visible from across the plantation. Importantly, the house is not only a central visual symbol, but also organizes the plantation soundscape by regulating distant bodies with the horn while remaining itself out of range of enslaved hearing.

In *Cedars* Chesnutt's description of the town as seen from Haymount Hill by white George Tryon and Dr. Green evokes the planter's prospect of the distant landscape in which men toil much like the one in "Uncle Peter's House":

> After reaching the top of this wooded eminence, the road skirted for some little distance the brow of the hill. Below them lay the picturesque old town, a mass of vivid green, dotted here and there with gray roofs that rose above the tree-tops. Two long ribbons of

> streets stretched away from the Hill to the faint red line that marked the high bluff beyond the river at the farther side of the town. The market-house tower and the slender spires of half a dozen churches were sharply outlined against the green background. The face of the clock was visible, but the hours could have been read only by eyes of phenomenal sharpness. (89)[89]

Like the fields in which slaves work in "Uncle Peter's House," the "sordid," "obscure part of the old town" district in which Molly resides is rendered picturesque by distance (98; 60). Her house is likely one of the "gray roofs" punctuating the "mass of vivid green" along the streets that stretch to the river a few blocks beyond her house. The domestic and economic functions of the plantation house are split in the urban landscape, and the buildings that house institutions—the clocktower and "the slender spires of half a dozen churches" that are "sharply outlined against the green"—retain the conspicuousness of the white plantation house (89). Though the market house clocktower, invoked repeatedly in the novel, cannot be read from Haymount, the curfew bell that John recalls during his walk through town unites Haymount and the "sordid" neighborhood where Molly lives within a soundscape. The market house bell, tolling curfew for black slaves and possibly for freedmen, uses authoritative sound to remove all blacks, slave or free, from public areas to private dwellings at nightfall, regulating black action in and around Patesville as the plantation house horn did for Peter's master's slaves.[90]

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[89] This passage appears nearly verbatim in the earliest version of "Rena" and in the subsequent manuscripts (R-39p 1a-1e; R-51p 32-33; R-252p 173-174). Chesnutt makes one substantial alteration to the passage's frame in the published version: in all manuscript versions, it is Wain who drives Rena up to Haymount Hill and shows her this view. He tells her his house is like the brick homes on Haymount "only mebbe mine is de leas' bit bigger" (R-39p insert *2). In the manuscripts, it is this statement and Rena's desire to live in a fine house that lead her to consent to Wain's wooing and to the disappointing marriage from which she flees.

[90] In his history of Fayetteville, John Oates does not clearly state if the curfew applied to free blacks as well as to slaves (Oates 88). Indeed, the Fayetteville market house bell still tolls at the nine o'clock curfew in the twenty-first century, a continuing reminder of white hierarchy that carries very different meanings to white and black auditors.

The situation of Molly's house an easy walk from the Hill and within earshot of the watchtower curfew bell evokes in an urban setting the slave cabin whose mingled distance from and proximity to the big house enabled the regulation of black routines as well as coercive extramarital relations. Such calculated proximity is noted obliquely in Kate Chopin's short story "Désirée's Baby" (1893), when plantation chatelaine Désirée offhandedly describes her baby boy's cry as so powerful that her husband, "heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin"; a spatial relation that suggests shared paternity, and not simply a drop of black blood, might account for her son's resemblance to La Blanche's children (Chopin 194). The spatial relation between Haymount and the house points to the psychosexual legacies of slavery, which are preserved but altered in the relationship between free but impoverished young Molly and her "rich and liberal" white gentleman protector (105).

Such conditions were not erased with emancipation. Architectural historian John Vlach argues that a planter "emphasized his social significance by situating the house either on high ground or close to the main thoroughfare. His house was thus 'up' while the other buildings were 'down,' or at the 'front' while the other structures were set to the 'rear'" (Vlach 229). Indeed, the racialized coding of upper and lower is so deeply ingrained that before the novel even mentions Haymount Hill, John surmises that the young lady he pursues down Front Street might be in "a neighborhood so uninviting" as the one near the house behind the cedars because she is "some young lady from the upper part of the town, bound on some errand of mercy, or going, perhaps, to visit an old servant or look for a new one" (7). "Upper" stands here as shorthand for upper class and, by implication, for white. If John imagines only charitable impulses for the girl who turns out to be his sister, he knows that he occasions suspicion as a white man in the poor black section of town: "Finding his glance fixed upon her, she quickened her pace with an air of

startled timidity" that does not relent until she reaches her own gate (5). Confronted with Rena's evident unease, John imagines "the young woman found his presence in the neighborhood as unaccountable as he had deemed hers" and quips that her timidity is unwarranted, for a "woman with such a figure . . . ought to be able to face the world with the confidence of Phryne confronting her judges" (7).[91] John raises and then discards the idea that Rena ought to be unnerved by his pursuit, though he introduces the topic of sex in the comparison with a yellow-skinned courtesan of ancient Greece whose exceptional physical beauty rendered her judges incapable of condemning her of a capital offense. John's comparison of Rena to Phryne—whose extraordinary physical attributes rendered her invulnerable to justice but not to selling those same attributes for her livelihood—points to the lingering specter of rape and sexual exploitation for a non-white woman in a poor neighborhood confronted by a wealthy, white-appearing man whether that woman is Molly before the Civil War or her daughter after it. Although John assumes that Rena is white until she marks her race and their kinship by entering the cedar-bordered house, his casual pursuit of a woman he finds attractive from the bottom of Haymount Hill down into the poorer quarter reprises his white father's appearance at young Molly Walden's community water pump.

Yet, it is a reprisal with the important difference that John's pursuit threatens to violate the incest taboo because he to pass as white, he has had to conceal his antecedents and stay away from his home so long that he does not recognize his sister. The house's first function in the story is its intervention in the nascent drama of incest by organizing the scattered siblings into a family hierarchy, but the encounter raises the danger for the estranged family members away from the identity-confirming locations of Patesville and their childhood home. In its depiction of

[91] For Matthew Wilson, Chesnutt tips his hand by associating Rena with famously nude courtesan Phryne, for "the repetition of the word *figure* in a novel of this period is telling. Such language calls attention to the physicality of the

brother unknowingly stalking sister, Chesnutt's novel renders spatially Hortense Spillers' configuration of slavery's legacies of kinship indeterminacy on the black family. In her article on father-daughter incest in African-American literature, "The Permanent Obliquity of an In(pha)llibly Straight," Spillers writes that "the laws and practices of enslavement did not recognize, as a rule, the vertical arrangements of their family. From this angle, fathers, daughters, mothers, sons, sisters, brothers spread across the social terrain in horizontal display, which exactly occurred in the dispersal of the historic African-American domestic unit" (Spillers 249).[92] John's attenuated kinship ties are not directly caused by conditions of enslavement, but by the conditions created by the absence of his white father's patrimony that drive John to pass for white by cutting ties to his past and avoiding recognition in his childhood hometown for a decade. On a basic level, John's near brush with incest after his long estrangement from the house behind the cedars viscerally emphasizes the importance of—and obstacles to—knowing the past in order to understand present conditions.

The house behind the cedars and the living conditions of its inhabitants did not simply spring into being in the novel. Chesnutt carefully outlines the spatial and social relationships between the house behind the cedars, Haymount Hill, and the Fowler residence, which reveal an often overlooked history of free colored people in North Carolina that directs and inflects present day social and spatial relationships. A major part of the story is contained in the architecture and location, and the unfolding of the plot can only be understood by paying attention to both synchronic and diachronic elements of postbellum architecture set up in antebellum conditions.

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mixed-race woman in a way that would have been taboo for a (white) lady" (Wilson 88).

[92] Spillers differs between black and white paternity, for "the African father is figuratively banished; fatherhood . . . is not a social fiction which he enters" or can enter under enslavement (Spillers 232–233). White fathers, "the 'master' and his class—those subjects of an alternative fatherhood—cannot be said to be 'fathers' of African-American children at all (without the benefit of quotation marks) since, by their own law, the newborn follows the

III. The Middle-Class Cedar-Bordered House and the Free Colored People of North Carolina

Molly's procurement of the house behind the cedars stands in for her seduction by a local planter. Molly's "fall" is glossed only in terms of property acquisition: a white gentleman notices her at the communal water pump near her home on Fayetteville's outskirts, returns "more than once, and soon, while scarcely more than a child in years, Molly was living in her own house, hers by deed of gift, for her protector was rich and liberal" (105). The sentences that follow deal also with the vital material gains made through the arrangement of concubinage: "Her mother nevermore knew want. Her poor relations could always find a meal in Molly's kitchen. She did not flaunt her prosperity in the world's face; she hid it discreetly behind the cedar screen" (105). It is not only shame, but also "prosperity" that the house behind the cedars attempts to conceal; prosperity born of a relationship unsanctified by marriage and unrecognized by law. Drawing upon the urban house's unusual proximity to family and neighbors, Molly takes a space originally intended to enable extramarital sexual activity and reappropriates it to alleviate her family's desperately poor condition. At least in these early stages, the house behind the cedars extends some of Molly's own financial security outward to an amorphous network of local kin.

Yet, as the clearest material marker of Molly's illicitly-gained prosperity, the house Molly owns and its decorative "cedar screen" announce her economic elevation at least as much as they might hide it. Many Chesnutt scholars emphasize the house's isolation and dilapidation when writing about the mingled permeability and protection of the cedar hedge that defines the domestic space in the novel's title and in local parlance. Darryl Hattenhauer invents unseen crops and livestock in his assessment that the postbellum Waldens' "need is acute. Molly's home is an

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'condition' of the mother" (Spillers 233). In Spillers's account, the white father-owner remains outside the black family, and so, too, does this happen in the free black Walden family.

‘unpainted house’ in a ‘row of mean houses’ in an area of ‘poverty.’ They feed [John] the food of the impoverished, persimmon beer and potato pone, which he has not had to endure in years. Their ‘garden’ in back is assuredly a necessity . . . Rena would be very important for tending crops and animals as well as for buying and selling” (Hattenhaur 38–9). Other critics focus less on material deficiencies than on the house’s seclusion and racially-reductive function. When Charles Duncan writes about “self-veiling” in *Cedars,* he finds that “the partially obscured house parallels the similarly concealed identities of the mixed-blood family living within” (Duncan 150). For Dean McWilliams the novel “speaks of the shadowy space between two communities where a sister and brother were raised. Viewed from within, the home is comforting, warmed by a mother’s love. Seen through the window of social prejudice, however, the dwelling is a place of shame claimed by neither the white nor black community” (D. McWilliams 146). For Stacy Margolis, “the house serves as both refuge and prison” for the Waldens (Margolis 110). Gleason briefly notes that the house is “an ostensibly private space whose visual vulnerability . . . allegorizes both the precariousness of black homeownership and the instability of racial categorization by skin color. Although screened and shaded as picturesquely as any Downingesque cottage . . . [the] house shields no one, inside or out, from the deadly legacies of racial segregation” (Gleason 102). Excessive focus on the house and garden as intended to, in Gleason’s words, “screen,” “shade,” and “shield” overlooks the social work of display performed by both built and landscape architecture.

Attention to architectural and landscape detail reveals that far from being a rundown indication of the Waldens’ economic and social debasement, the house behind the cedars articulates the Walden family’s middle-class aspirations. The house is often assumed to be dilapidated and shabby because of its unpainted condition, and the cover art on the two most

recent Penguin editions of *Cedars,* which depict a scruffily picturesque one story wooden cottage and a rustic log cabin surrounded by felled stumps, likely encourage the misreading. However, the "large house with dormer windows" is impressive enough to draw wealthy white George Tryon's gaze even before he learns that his ex-fiancée lives there (98). Chesnutt and characters like Tryon would have been familiar with the vernacular structure, for Molly's house is a "coastal frame cottage" or "tidewater-type house" classified as one of several basic house types in Virginia and the Carolinas in Fred Kniffen's landmark study of vernacular architecture (see figure 9) (Kniffen 569).[93] The Waldens' "gray, unpainted house, with a steep roof, broken by dormer windows" (7) is a one-and-a-half story hall-and-parlor frame cottage of a type popular in Tidewater states that, like the Walden house, commonly included an kitchen ell addition at the rear as well as front and back shaded porches called "piazzas" across the Carolinas (see image 3A and 3B in figure 10).[94] Vernacular architecture scholars make much of the economic symbolism of what Kniffen termed the "I-House," a class of symmetrical houses of one-room

[93] Doug Swaim argues that the Scotch-Irish, who settled much of central North Carolina between 1750 and 1800, spread the familiar English hall-and-parlor form across most of the state (Swaim 33). Frank Ainsley's more focused study of vernacular architecture in North Carolina's Brunswick County, which lies about 60 miles southeast of Fayetteville, reports that coastal frame cottages and hall-and-parlor houses were ubiquitous in the eastern regions closest to Fayetteville's Cumberland County (Ainsley 34).

[94] The hall-and-parlor has a basic two-room floor plan depicted in image 3A in figure 10: a large square "hall" entered directly from the outside and a smaller parlor on one side. As image 3B in figure 10 shows, a narrow stairway would lead to upstairs chambers, like Rena's bedroom, lit by dormer windows inset in the slanted roof. The narrator's offhand description of "the 'hall' or parlor of his mother's house" (107-108) indicates that the house has been renovated with an eye to increased efficiency and improved social entertaining at some point during Molly's ownership. In a hall-and-parlor house, the large square hall would have been originally used for cooking and everyday living, while the narrower adjoining "parlor" would have contained formal furniture for entertaining and likely the parent's best bed. Almost uniformly, an early renovation would add a kitchen ell at the back of the house (in *Cedars*, a "rear wing, at right angles to the front of the house"). Adding a kitchen ell would move cooking activities from the hall fireplace and enable the conversion of the multi-purpose hall into a "Parlor" whose main function was formal entertaining (Bushman 105–9). The former parlor then took on secondary domestic functions suggested by the "old loom, where in childhood [John] had more than once thrown the shuttle" it contains in the postbellum present (20).

depth.[95] Although it appears a slim one room deep from the side, when viewed from the front it forms an imposing square two rooms wide and two rooms high (Swaim 39). Compared with the shotgun house, in which four rooms are placed end to end to have the smallest possible street-facing profile, the four rooms of I-houses are arranged and oriented to create the largest looking structure possible from the vantage of the street. The house achieves its design aims: when aristocratic Tryon drives down Front Street, "there was nothing to attract his attention until the carriage came abreast of a row of cedar-trees, beyond which could be seen the upper part of a large house with dormer windows" (98).

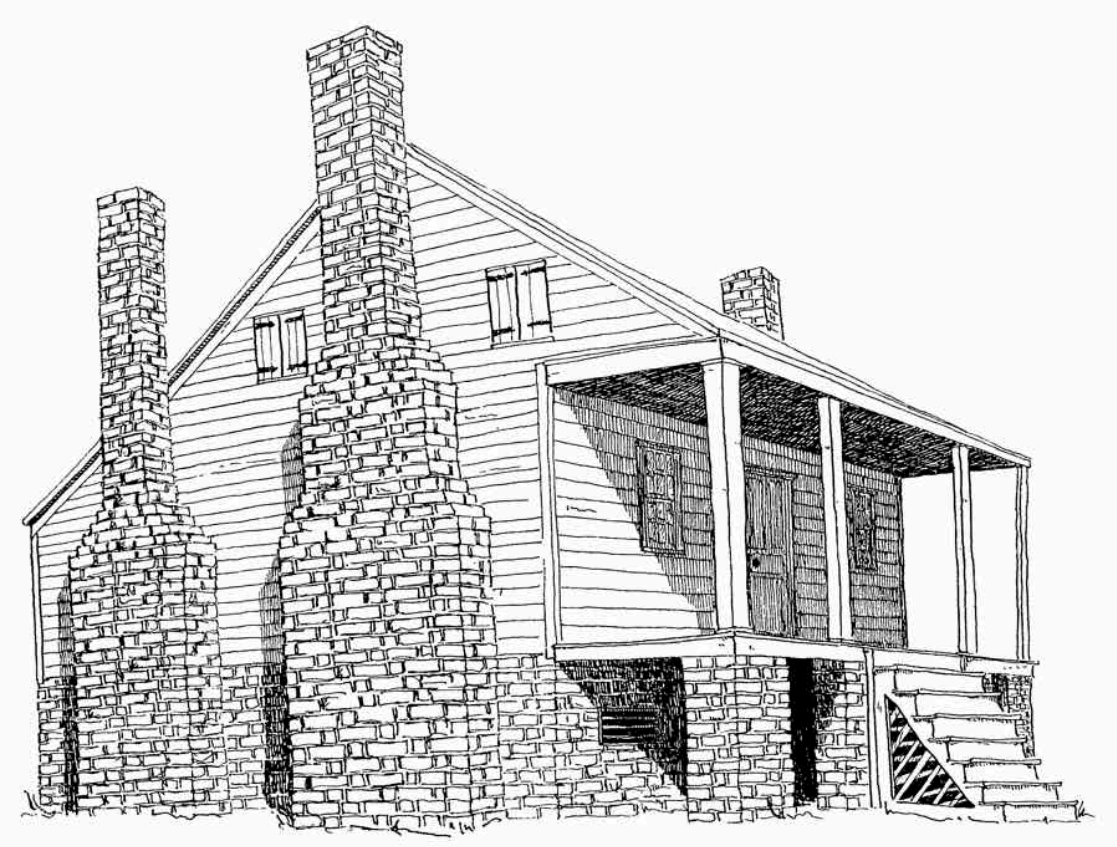

Figure 9. "Raised Tidewater-Type House" from Kniffen's "Folk Housing." A possible representation of a house like Molly's, which would likely have had a steeper roof and dormer windows on the second story

[95] The slim house's popularity in the sultry climate of the Carolinas stemmed partly its one-room depth, which allowed for ample cross ventilation through large doors and windows such as those through which Tryon watches Rena dance with Jefferson Wain. See Glassie 318; Ainsley 30.

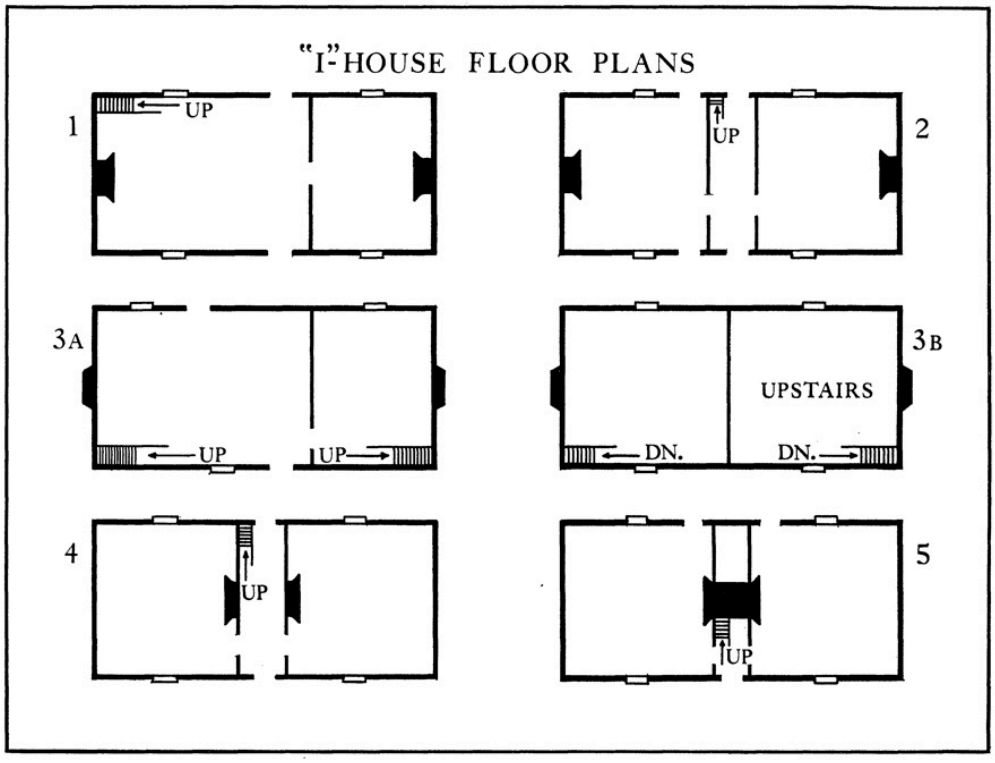

Figure 10. "A range of "I"-House floor plans" from Kniffen's "Folk Housing." Of particular interest are 3a and 3b, which correspond to the lower and upper floors of a structure like the house behind the cedars.

The mix of privacy and publicity in the house behind the cedars stems not only from the famous gap-riddled cedar hedge, but also from its imposing architecture and landscaping as well as the dwelling's placement back from Front Street on an unsubdivided "two-acre lot" (107). Doug Swaim notes that in North Carolina, "early houses tended to be built with their porches facing South in relation to sun and land, and over decades building preferences shifted so that houses began to face the road from deep within a lot, and then to creep closer to the road as house lots shrank" (Swaim 37). The house behind the cedars, which faces the road but is set back from it on a large lot, likely belongs to the middle period described by Swaim. Simply having room for a front yard would make the house notable alongside the "row of mean houses standing flush with the street" likely built more recently on subdivided lots that characterize the rest of her

neighborhood (5).[96] Indeed, the earliest of the "Rena" manuscripts lays out the effect of Molly's property in the neighborhood more explicitly, though less descriptively: "Mis' Molly lived in a big house on Front Street" in which the "flower-garden in front . . . a well-kept back yard, and a flourishing kitchen garden in the rear, gave to her premises an air of prosperity scarcely in keeping with the general character of the neighborhood" (R-39p 8). Rena's story changes across the drafts, but descriptions of the house behind the cedars, its relation to the neighboring houses, and her mother's acquisition of it remain remarkably consistent.

On the unusually spacious lot, the Walden garden articulates the family's respectability through a display of middle-class organization and cultivation. As Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd suggest, the "domestic space is never just private; it is a sign for public and cultural interaction, a space which 'outsiders' or strangers can enter, a site of encounter" (Bryden and Floyd 12). In the first chapter of the novel, John follows Rena to "a yard shut off from the street by a row of dwarf cedars," but manages to peer through "a narrow gap in the cedar hedge" to watch her progress toward the house (7). The house's moniker indicates that to be a house behind a cedar hedge is singular in the neighborhood. The hedge itself is fairly expansive, for the house stands on a two acre corner lot, "around [the front of] which the cedar hedge turned, continuing along the side of the garden until it reached the line of the front of the house" (8). The description of the Walden garden could have been plucked from the pages of Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences*:

> The garden walks were bordered by long rows of jonquils, pinks, and carnations, inclosing clumps of fragrant shrubs, lilies, and roses already in bloom. Toward the middle

[96] I date Molly's acquisition of an older house sometime before 1840 based on John's age. This timeline would be consistent with local building patterns, for Doug Swaim writes that "Before they fell from favor these asymmetrical Old World [hall-and-parlor] plans [were] given balancing face-lifts—through the treatment of fenestration, entrances,

> of the garden stood two fine magnolia-trees, with heavy, dark green, glistening leaves, while nearer the house two mighty elms shaded a wide piazza, at one end of which a honeysuckle vine, and at the other a Virginia creeper, running over a wooden lattice, furnished additional shade and seclusion. (7)

Dolores Hayden notes that Downing's *Treatise* gives advice on transforming an ordinary farm into a country estate, after which "there would be few right angles. A farmer's fields, with a straight access road, would give way to lawns divided by a curving drive and strategically situated trees and bushes" (Hayden 27). In *Cedars*, the landscaped garden is large enough to include three distinct zones marked by the "fine," "mighty" pairs of ornamental Magnolia and Elm trees. The plural sanded "garden walks" serpentine to enclose a central display of non-native flowers that can be found (with the exception of the jonquil) on the list of May- and June-blooming "Border flowers" in Downing's *Cottage Residences* (Downing 118–120). Following the description of the "shade and seclusion" provided by the vine-covered lattices on the piazza, Chesnutt writes, "On dark or wintry days, the aspect of this garden *must have been* extremely sombre and depressing, and *it might well have seemed* a fit place to hide some guilty or disgraceful secret" (7, my emphasis). The passage highlights the importance of perspective and the projections of the viewer onto the vibrantly flowering garden. The narrator returns to the springtime present to conclude the paragraph: "But on the bright morning when Warwick stood looking through the cedars, it seemed, with its green frame and canopy and its bright carpet of flowers, an ideal retreat from the fierce sunshine and the sultry heat of the approaching summer" (7). Such a quick reversal based on the context of viewing instructs readers from the very beginning to be wary about judging the cedar-bordered house from a position of limited

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and chimney stacks—which extended their popular acceptance until about 1830. . . they survived as less utilized dwelling options throughout the nineteenth century" (Swaim 36).

understanding.

Indeed, the front piazza and garden extend the social work of the parlor in the performance of middle-class rituals of respectability. Nearly all analysis of the parlor centers on the bookcase, which Richard Brodhead argues was given to the children instead of their white father's name (Brodhead 207). This attention is warranted given the important role the books play in John's upbringing, but the other furnishings bear attention as well. Chesnutt carefully describes an assemblage of material goods in the Walden parlor that articulates an investment in social and material affluence. Paul Mullins, writing about postbellum African-American consumer culture, argues that like "most Americans, African Americans were deeply attracted to the material self determination and attendant citizen privileges promised by consumer culture, and increasingly more African Americans saw consumer culture as a space to articulate social aspirations and class struggle" (Mullins 35). Mullins notes that prints like the Waldens' "steel engraving of General Jackson at the battle of New Orleans" in the War of 1812 and the "framed fashion-plate from 'Godey's Lady's Book'" were widespread in postbellum African-American households (11; Mullins 29). *Godey's Lady's Book,* with its hand-tinted fashion plates, was quite expensive at three dollars a year, and thus would have been a marker of class. However, the fashion-plate itself is not described, and might as easily mark the Waldens' faded affluence by depicting white women in outmoded dresses of decades past. The "collection of curiously shaped sea-shells" on the "octagonal centre-table" in a house miles from North Carolina's shores bespeaks participation in a larger economy of decorative consumer products, or, less likely, of the leisure to travel to collect souvenirs (11). This is, of course, the home of a woman whose benefactor died before the Civil War, and it is not perhaps unexpected that the expensive "great haircloth sofa" is "somewhat the worse for wear." The room did not, however, freeze with the

death of the wealthy gentleman, for the "screen standing before the fireplace" that is decorated "with Confederate bank-notes of various denominations and designs" must have been made after his death. John, with whom the reader has been invited to identify, demonstrates his superiority over the conditions of his childhood by quoting *Hamlet* to describe the irony of currency reduced to its barest material form (11). But while it may not attain the heights of sophistication reached by the plantation house John inherits from his wealthy white wife, Molly's house and parlor do articulate a claim to the privileges of middle class respectability in spite of her acquisition of the property as the mistress of a white man.

Molly's homeownership places her in a small group of prosperous antebellum free black women. According to Loren Schweninger, at mid-century over a third of prosperous free blacks were women in the Deep South, while 13% of prosperous free blacks were women in Upper South states like North Carolina. Schweninger attributes the higher rates of female free black prosperity in the Deep South to relationships like Molly's, "mulatto women who had lived with white men or inherited estates from white merchants or planters" (Schweninger, "Prosperous Blacks" 44–45). Frances Richardson Keller, Chesnutt's biographer, records a "poignant parallel" to Molly Walden's situation in Chesnutt's paternal ancestry. His grandmother, Ann M. Chesnutt, was a free black woman who lived in Fayetteville and had five children with local white slaveholder Waddell Cade, from whom Chesnutt gets his middle name (Keller 182).[97] Both women were what Schweninger would call "virtual wives" who, "while not legally married . . . shared their white mates' wealth or received some property at the time of their deaths" (Schweninger, "Property Owning" 24). Yet, one important difference between Ann Chesnutt's source history and Chesnutt's novel is that Molly owns her house "by deed of gift," and Ann

[97] For an overview of U.S. Census and property records held in the names of the Chesnutt children, see Keller 177–183.

likely did not.[98] Cade supported her financially, provided her with a house, and purchased property listed under the names of their five children on the 1850 U.S. Census, but the census records do not list any property owned by Ann herself. Late antebellum Black Codes imposed a curfew and limited liberty in other ways, but still allowed free blacks many rights denied to slaves, such as property ownership or the right to appear in court. Before 1868, when North Carolina passed a Married Woman's Property Act (in part to prevent farms held in a wife's name from being seized to pay a husband's Civil War debts), the common law disability of coverture—the legal concept that in marriage, a woman's legal existence is incorporated with that of her husband—denied free married women of any race the right to sue or be sued, to make contracts, to appear in court, or, crucially, to own property (Zipf 211). Unmarried free black women were both unprotected and unburdened by laws regulating marital relationship, and thus could make contracts and hold property. Although the lack of widow benefits or a will cheats Molly out of inheriting her partner's wealth upon his death, her ability to own her home through a gap in the restrictions placed on blacks and on women grants her a measure of power and security in her cottage in the city.[99]

As a free black woman and an urban homeowner, Molly Walden occupies a position quite different from that of the white heroine of a seduction novel or the black slave in a slave narrative. In his rendering of Molly's past, Chesnutt is careful to remind the reader of the differences between what was available socially to women of African descent and white women,

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[98] Another important difference between the two is that Ann Chesnutt was apparently literate. The box next to her name for "persons over 20 years of age who cannot read or write" is left blank on the 1850 census. Chesnutt's choice to make fictional Molly Walden illiterate drives the plot in several key places.

[99] A situation of the open secret of interracial desire akin to Ann's and Molly's arises obliquely in the postbellum narrative, for Molly writes to John about a neighborhood scandal, for "the white folks have all been mad since J. B. Thompson married his black housekeeper when she got religion and wouldn't live with him no more" (101). Interestingly, the 1860 US Census records show a family consisting of Waddell Cade, 85, a farmer, living with the much younger Anna Chesnutt, 45; Mary Chesnutt, 16; and Dallas Chesnutt, 12 in a mixed-race Fayetteville

but also what was available to free black women and to slaves. Molly is not duped into cohabitation by a false promise of marriage as Rowson's Charlotte Temple is, for the social taboo of intermarriage between races in North Carolina was codified by an 1830 anti-miscegenation law ("Free" 175). Nor, as a free black woman, is she legally obligated to become her gentleman's lover against her will, as the enslaved Harriet Jacobs nearly is. Though Chesnutt concedes that Molly "was free, she had not the slave's excuse," he emphasizes that the "moral point involved was so confused with other questions growing out of slavery and caste" as to merit special consideration (105-106). Chesnutt's description of Molly's "seduction" raises questions about what choice and complicity mean when something is as historically overdetermined as the relationship between powerful white males and a class of women who have been made exploitable. Yet, while the power dynamics between impoverished Molly Walden and a wealthy white slaveowner do no imply an easy refusal, the novel does grant Molly a degree of agency. Like Harriet Jacobs pleading that "the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others," Chesnutt argues for a special case for free black women: Molly is "entitled to charitable judgment" even though freedom of choice means that she "could not wholly escape blame" (Jacobs 62; *Cedars* 106). Narratives like *Charlotte Temple* about the seduction and fall of white characters turn on the tragedy of women who could have pursued respectability but were waylaid. Chesnutt reminds us that social conditions in the South alter the baseline for black women, even free black women, for unless they are fully passing, they will not be accorded the heights of social respectability. With a limited range of options, free black women could have respectable marriages to black men, could be mistresses to white men, or could live on the fringes like the conjure women of Chesnutt's conjure tales whose certain

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neighborhood; for the white, black and mulatto families scattered across the census pages, proximity on the page speaks to the proximity of their dwellings (1860 U.S. Census).

amount of power allowed them to remain somewhat outside of the network of ownership and sexual exchange. Indeed, Molly's choice of the "secluded life of an obscure woman of a class which had no recognized place in the social economy" could also describe her position as a free person of color in a society that only recognized black slaves and free white people (105).

Chesnutt creates in Molly's lineage a reminder that the history of African-Americans is not solely that of enslavement, and that free blacks had been better off in North Carolina in the past. North Carolina would not officially codify a "one drop" rule, which defined as black anyone with any or a very small portion of black ancestry, in law until 1923, though it regulated social relations before that date. As Chesnutt notes in *Cedars* "all people of mixed blood were called 'mulattoes' in North Carolina" (141).[100] In the multiracial Walden ancestry, Chesnutt recalls a time before oppressive hypodescent laws determined race in North Carolina. Molly, John, and Rena are limited by nineteenth century North Carolina law, which drew the color line "at four generations removed from the negro" according to Judge Straight (112).[101] We subsume under the term "black" distinctions of color that indicated ancestry and status to those who used them. As Johnson and Roark write, "a 'black' person had no white ancestors and was most likely a slave; a 'colored' person was the descendent of white and black ancestors and was more likely than a black person to be free; 'Negro' was a collective term that encompassed all persons with any Afro-American ancestry" (Johnson and Roark xvi). With attention to the anachronistic words used to describe racial distinctions important to Chesnutt and many of his characters—"colored," "mulatto," "Negro," and "black"—we can better understand the complex social world these terms describe. Chesnutt's narrator carefully refers to the Waldens as "colored" or "Mulatto" and never as "black," although some characters (for instance, Tryon) do. Indeed, the

[100] For an etymology and history of the term "mulatto," see Michaels 52–54.

racially polarized language used today to describe the mixed-race characters as "black" is something Chesnutt would likely have opposed. As SallyAnn Ferguson has argued, Chesnutt advocated for a race of "Future Americans" who would have mixed-race ancestry but be perceptibly white. His argument is as much about class as it is about race, and the gradations of color he assigns his characters are meant to communicate as much.

In his efforts to counter racial polarization, Chesnutt traces the Walden ancestry back to the "misty colonial period, when race lines were not so closely drawn" (104). These murkier "race lines" led to a "population of North Carolina [that] comprised many Indians, runaway negroes, and indentured white servants from the seaboard plantations, who mingled their blood with great freedom and small formality" (104). The novel does not state how the Waldens acquired their freedom, but Chesnutt's 1902 essay on "The Free Colored People of North Carolina" goes into greater detail about the several routes to antebellum freedom. Chesnutt surmises that the "mildness" of North Carolina's slavery on predominately small-scale farms meant that slaves worked "side by side with their masters in field and forest" and "fostered kindly feelings between master and slave, [which] often led to voluntary manumission" ("Free" 174). As opposed to Dixon's postbellum white supremacist Scotch-Irish in *The Clansman*, Chesnutt writes that the "Scotch-Irish Presbyterian strain in the white people of North Carolina brought with it a fierce love of liberty." Chesnutt's views are in line with Ira Berlin's foundational account of free blacks in the Antebellum period, *Slaves Without Masters*, in which Berlin notes that the Revolutionary Era's social and economic changes produced "large-scale, indiscriminate manumission" of slaves in the Upper South, of which North Carolina was a part (Berlin 305). Chesnutt cites US Census data from 1840 to 1860 on the growth and then stasis of

[101] For an extensive look at mixed race designations and race codes, see Sollors 112–141.

the free black population in North Carolina ("Free" 173–4). Because "the right of marriage between whites and free persons of color was not restricted by law until the year 1830, though social prejudice had always discouraged it," the number of free blacks was swelled by "occasional marriages, more or less legal, between free Negroes and slaves and poor white women, resulted in at least a small number of colored children, who followed the condition of their white mothers" ("Free" 175). Chesnutt further complicates the black/white binary when he notes that "[a]nother source of free colored people in certain counties was the remnant of the Cherokee and Tuscarora Indians, who, mingling with the Negroes and poor whites, left more or less of their blood among the colored people of the state" ("Free" 175). Indian ancestors also left their free status, for by "the law of partitus sequitur ventrem . . . the child of a free mother was always free, no matter what its color or the status of its father, and many free colored people were of female Indian ancestry." Chesnutt reminds his reader that the "status of these people, prior to the Civil War, was anomalous but tenable. Many of them, perhaps most of them, were as we have seen, persons of mixed blood, and received, with their dower of white blood, an intellectual and physical heritage of which social prejudice could not entirely rob them, and which helped them to prosperity in certain walks of life" ("Free" 174). Chesnutt's race consciousness does attribute White socio-economic and political privilege to some degree to biology, and as Ferguson has argued, denies darker-skinned characters the ability to assimilate into his ideal mixed-race but phenotypically White "Future American" (Ferguson, "Genuine Blacks" 109–110). While Ferguson is undoubtedly correct that Chesnutt would support any racial classification that would allow some people of color to achieve the political, social, and economic advancement denied them by American racial prejudice, she overlooks the issue of class in Chesnutt's theories. Chesnutt advocates that African Americans be categorized by class,

and not just race; his histories of free people in North Carolina demonstrate that it is not only generations of race mixing, but also generations of free status and the opportunity to accumulate wealth that have led to his light-skinned characters' advantages.

Yet the Waldens' light skin points not just to routes to freedom through mixed-race ancestry, but also to the limitations of that freedom as free people of color. Within the already contested category of free people of color, Chesnutt introduces a historical complication when he identifies Molly's parents as "old issue free negroes." Willard Gatewood, in his study of the "black elite," describes a class that self-identifies as being superior in terms of "culture, sophistication, and advancement" by virtue of being of the "old families," though Gatewood is careful to mention that such a term does not imply actual superiority or ancient family origins (Gatewood i). According to Chesnutt's narrator, the Waldens have been free in America since the "colonial period," long enough to have enjoyed the freedoms and relative prosperity of the post-revolutionary period, and to have seen such opportunities curtailed (104). Molly's parents, "free-born and legally married," had "certain advantages, even in the South before the war" by virtue of their free birth. Before emancipation, free people of African descent "were not citizens, yet they were not slaves," occupying an indeterminate middle class between two legally recognized groups (104). Chesnutt compares free people of color by implication to freedmen emancipated by the Civil War to show a history beyond slavery in which economic success was possible. Chesnutt's narrator notes that "Free colored people in North Carolina exercised the right of suffrage as late as 1835, and some of them, in spite of galling restrictions, attained to a considerable degree of prosperity" before mid-nineteenth-century fears of slave revolts remade free black status as more black than free (105). The Waldens' status, which stands for the status of free blacks more generally, drops with the rise of the slavery debate and its calculated racial

homogenization, for the "growing tyranny of the slave power crushed their hopes and crowded the free people back upon the black mass just beneath them." The origins of intraracial class consciousness arise from the specter of enslavement embodied in the "black mass just beneath them" that threatens free people of color. Chesnutt clearly explains the motivations to erect and maintain any distinction that might protect the Waldens from being subsumed into the racialized category that defines their own position of limited opportunity. These distinctions were curtailed in the years leading up to the Civil War, which move the Walden family from a position of relative security into one of precarity. Molly's father "had been at one time a man of some means" whose endorsement of a note for a white man "who, in a moment of financial hardship, clapped his colored neighbor on the back and called him brother" was "the beginning of a series of financial difficulties which speedily involved him in ruin." With the curtailing of opportunity for free colored people, Walden dies prematurely and leaves his wife and children in dire poverty in a house "just outside of the town, on one of the main traveled roads" (105). It is crucial to note that before the tightening racial codes lead to the financial decline of her family and free colored people more generally, Molly would not have been as vulnerable to the advances of a white stranger speaking "kind words" at the water pump near her house. Molly regains a measure of her family's former prosperity through an arrangement of concubinage, but she is careful to assert and protect the status she considers her due based on her free birth.

The position of Molly's house down Front Street from Haymount Hill is complicated by the presence of the house next door occupied by Peter Fowler, his wife, and his son Frank. Upton argues that slaves created a "black landscape" alongside the predominant white landscape on plantations by taking symbolic ownership of their cabins and using the grounds in ways that frustrated symbolic architectural aims: "Slave quarters were parts of two intersecting landscapes.

They fit into a white landscape centered on the main house in one way, and into a black landscape centered on the quarters in another" (Upton, "Landscapes" 63).[102] Following Brodhead, many scholarly accounts of Chesnutt's conjure tales trace the ways Julius in the postbellum frame narrative and slave characters in his antebellum stories create subversive black landscapes on the plantation and its outskirts that undermine white authority. But black and white landscapes are harder to identify in *Cedars*, where the neighborhood's grandest house is owned by a woman of color, where characters who both have African ancestry and live side by side inhabit very different social landscapes, and where a character who identifies as a person of color might be mistaken for white. Rather than demonstrating that free blacks made the periphery into their center, Molly uses her house to bring herself adjacent to white middle-class conventions, and to center herself against her darker, lower class black neighbors as periphery. Speaking of a black landscape, even a free black landscape, in the context of *Cedars*, threatens to obscure the gradations of class and color prejudice that persist in the architecture of Front Street.

IV. The Fowler Dwelling and Downward Mobility

Viewed synchronically, the adjacent houses owned by the Waldens and their free black neighbors, the Fowlers, might seem to indicate commensurate status. Yet, as Andreá Williams has suggested, Chesnutt's other works about the color line dramatize tensions along inter- and intraracial color lines to, in Chesnutt's words, "ask of white Americans is not only that they cease to practice social discrimination *against* colored people, but that they begin to practice social discrimination *among* colored people" (Chesnutt quoted in Williams 124). In one of the

[102] Vlach also argues that black spatial practice undermined plantation architectural designs, for the "size and visual prominence of his residence expressed, in positional terms, a desired social order. Slaves were assigned to their appropriate place below or behind their master. He was at the center of their world, whereas they were consigned to the margins of his. . . . Within the landscapes created by slaveowners, however, absolute social power was an ideal that was asserted more often than it was achieved. Much to their chagrin, planters came to realize that their systems

early "Rena" manuscripts, Chesnutt has the opposite sentiment—that race ought to trump class—come from the comically disreputable "Old Mrs. Dickerson, the poor white woman who lived next door to Mis' Molly" on the opposite side from the Fowlers (called the Fullers in this early version). Mrs. Dickerson stands against the social coolness that exists between the Waldens and the Fowler/Fullers, which she calls "this prejudice 'mongst niggers. It's puffickly redic'lous. What diff'ence do it make ef one is black an' t'other yaller? They're all niggers." To make race rather than class the arbiter of status of course bolsters Mrs. Dickerson's sense of her own status above all of her black neighbors, and she "would hobble away to the poormaster for her weekly dole of bacon and corn meal, which Mis' Molly's taxes helped to pay for, and thank God that she was white, and above such absurd notions. For her part, she was no respecter of persons; niggers were niggers—all tarred with the same stick" (R-51p p15).

But the history of the constellation of houses on Front Street complicates the simple dualism of black/white racial identification that Mrs. Dickerson—and with very different motivations, much Chesnutt scholarship—attempts to impose. When Molly's slaveowning gentleman made her the owner of the cedar-bordered house on a large "two acre lot," he also "built a cabin on the opposite corner, in which he had installed a trusted slave by the name of Peter Fowler and his wife Nancy" (116). The house behind the cedars replicates spatial characteristics of the "big house" in its relation to the cabin out back that housed a slave family sent to serve and surveil their white owner's black mistress, and doubles the relation between the slave cabin and the owner's house on Haymount Hill. The spatial constellation is duplicated in the social relations between the enslaved Fowlers and the property-owning woman whom they serve and monitor, as well as between the Fowlers and their white owner. Indeed, if Molly can

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of architectural manipulation could be easily frustrated if one simply refused, as many slaves did, to acknowledge or take notice of it" (Vlach 229).

own the house she's given as an unmarried free black woman, she could also have owned the Fowlers themselves "by deed of gift" from her "rich and liberal" gentleman protector (105).[103] Chesnutt was clearly aware of this possibility, for in an early version of the "Rena Walden" manuscripts, Molly's free black father had himself "even owned a few slaves, as had others of his class" (R-252 p42).[104] Though Chesnutt removes this blot from the Walden family history, the strained relations between the neighboring families in present day Patesville hint at Molly's ability as an "old issue free negro" to own property when the Fowlers were themselves chattel.

Ira Berlin suggests that white society granted enough privilege to free colored people to disincentivize cooperation with black slaves, but made that privilege tenuous enough that free persons separated themselves from their enslaved contemporaries to protect their own liberty: "standing a step above the slave, these freedmen could see how their status might degenerate and they knew whites needed only the flimsiest excuse to grab their liberty . . . freedom within the context of slavery thus pushed freedmen and bondmen apart" (Berlin 308–309). In Chesnutt, we see the persistence of such a cultivated separation even after an enslaved family achieves freedom. Gatewood indicates that class stratification developed among antebellum free blacks, dividing those whose "poverty, illiteracy, and color placed them closer to the slave masses than to those free people of color whose wealth, education, values, and complexion more closely resembled upper-class whites, with whom they were sometimes related by blood" (Gatewood 12). Peter Fowler, through prototypically American industry and thrift, hires his time to purchase

[103] As Michael Johnson and James Roark's *Black Masters* and Carter G. Woodson's 1924 *Free Negro Owners of Slaves* document, there was a sizeable population of free black slaveowners in the South. In *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860*, John Franklin notes that at "no time during the ante-bellum period were free Negroes in North Carolina without some slaves," but argues that existing records make it difficult to tell whether the motivations free blacks ownership of slaves might be for economic exploitation or out of benevolence to ease the lot of an enslaved friend or family member (Franklin 160).

[104] Additionally, in "Free Colored People," Chesnutt gives as an example of successful mechanics of color "a saddler by trade, had himself been the owner, before the war, of a large plantation and several slaves" ("Free" 176)

freedom for himself and his family. He also earns enough to purchase the "little house across the street, with the cooper shop behind it," and moves from the slave cabin in the back corner of Miss Molly's property to the house next door sometime prior to 1858.[105] By relocating the Fowlers next door to their former mistress, Chesnutt takes pains to show the difference in status between "old issue" freedmen and those who acquired their freedom more recently through personal connections to the white master class. Peter Fowler is, of course, the latter, a slave whose "trusted" status implies a personal connection with the master who agrees to let Peter hire out his time and who continues to patronize his shop afterward. Chesnutt notes that after they purchase their freedom, the Fowlers prefer not to work for "the woman who had been practically their mistress; it made them seem less free . . . and since the slaves had been freed, was not one negro as good as another?" (116-117). The maneuvering for position in the racialized class system is depicted as a postwar phenomenon, with the Fowlers arguing for equivalence based on the fact that both families were black and *all blacks were free*. Yet, we must recognize that even before universal manumission, Molly bolsters her sense of status via a downward social comparison with the darker, recently-freed Fowlers: "Mis' Molly felt herself infinitely superior to Peter and his wife—scarcely less superior than her poor white neighbors felt themselves to Mis' Molly" (116). Indeed, Molly's "feeling" of superiority is even more tenuous than that of her white neighbors like the excised Mrs. Dickerson, who lacks Molly's material prosperity but comforts herself with an unflappable sense of her racial supremacy.

If, in Molly's heritage, Chesnutt shows us a history of racial mixing and an antebellum period of relative privilege for free people of color, in the Fowlers' home and history he shows

[105] I base my date estimate on the Walden children's ages. We are told that John is fifteen in 1855, and thus was born in 1840 (107). When he leaves home to pass as white at eighteen, which would be about 1858, Rena is "a pretty child of seven" (116). If "Rena, then six or seven, had often gone across to play among the clean white shavings" of the cooper shop (117), the Fowlers must have purchased the cooper shop sometime before 1858.

us a time when employment as a skilled artisan or mechanic held the promise of socioeconomic elevation for darker-skinned slaves and ex-slaves. In a late manuscript for the novella "Rena Walden," Chesnutt describes the Fowler house and garden in more detail than he does in the final published version. The manuscript has the Fuller/Fowler family manumitted by the war rather than as a result of Peter hiring out his time, but their house, shop, and location remain identical. As in the finished novel, Peter's house sits on a lot adjacent to and across a bystreet from the house behind the cedars, with a cooper-shop toward the rear of the lot. In the manuscript, "Peter's dwelling-house, which faced Front Street" is "a small frame building, better built and more neatly kept up than most houses in Campbellton [the historical name for the Fayetteville neighborhood to the east of the market house], and surrounded by a white-washed picket fence, just outside of which, over against Miss Molly's flower garden, there stood a row of mulberry trees" (R-252p 54). To a lesser degree than Molly's, Peter's house, with its visually striking white picket fence, communicates the respectability of its owners via the care lavished on its construction and upkeep. The Fuller/Fowlers' domestic aims are further illuminated in their "garden, too, behind the mulberries—a straggling mixture of fruit and vegetables, quite in contrast with Mis' Molly's orderly parterre. Flowers of large size and bold coloring predominated; sunflowers, hollyhocks, peonies, rubbed elbows with collards, okra-plants, and growing corn, in democratic harmony" (R-252p 54-55). If Molly's "orderly parterre" emphasizes separation of cultivated blooms for decorative effect, the "democratic harmony" of flower and vegetable in Nancy's garden envisions a social order in which different distinct plants, both beautiful and useful, commingle without detriment. Nancy expresses her pride in her family's elevation to free status via her carefully nurtured kitchen garden plot, for "Peter's wife allowed no weed or blade of grass to profane the sacred precincts of her garden. Herself a piece of

property" when a slave, "she had cherished this little plat of land that she owned and controlled, for more than many a wealthy land-owner values his wide-spreading acres. Others might worry about schools, and the suffrage, and civil rights and social standing; to her the right to own instead of being owned was the essence and crown of freedom" (R-252p 55). Yet, Nancy's focus on her control of the domestic sphere as indicative of progress—real progress, to be sure, in "the right to own instead of being owned"—to the exclusion of social and economic rights on a larger scale also points to a limitation of perspective that will doom her husband's trade as a skilled artisan cooper.

With their antebellum success and postbellum stagnation, the Fowlers gesture toward a potential black middle class built on skilled labor that crumbles under regional prejudices and the pressures of capitalist accumulation. Unlike Peter's antebellum trade as a mechanic, which enabled the considerable achievement of purchasing himself, his family, and a house, the coopering trade he taught his son has been made obsolete by the market revolution's increase in industrial manufacturing. The construction of a local "barrel factory had so affected the cooper's trade that Peter and Frank had turned their attention more or less to the manufacture of small woodenware for domestic use" (190). According to Catherine Bisher, coopering was an "important and traditionally black craft" that was decimated by mass production. Bisher notes the impacts of industrialization in the neighboring city of New Bern, where "that once-vital trade declined abruptly in response to mass production, including the establishment of a local barrel factory," similar to the history Chesnutt sketches in Patesville (Bishir 199). In "Free Colored People" Chesnutt writes that "in large part through the operation of social forces beyond any control on their part" the current generation of blacks hand "lost their hereditary employments," skilled work which had inadequately been replaced by unskilled jobs in factories, mines, and

mills. Some "younger colored people who might have learned trades" had become teachers or preachers, while many others had drifted into "servile occupations" which were "a poor substitute for the independent position of the skilled Mechanic" ("Free" 180). Chesnutt believed that the position of relative prosperity enjoyed by some free colored people before the war was threatened by a downwardly mobile trend of African American workers after the war, and highlights the crippling effects in the curtailment of the Fowlers' trade.

Yet, it is not only postbellum technological determinism that doomed skilled black labor, but also late antebellum restrictions of rights for free blacks that reduced opportunities for black artisans to practice their trade with consequences that reached into the post-emancipation period. Paul Shackel and David Larsen argue that from the 1830s onward "whites feared competition and protested against the use of black artisans" and "relegated African Americans to secondary roles in industrial society, and they were pushed to the periphery of industrial capitalism" They suggest that despite the changing economic roles occupied by people of color throughout the nineteenth century, "ideological mechanisms ensured their subordinate status in an industrializing society and disenfranchised them from the increasingly dominant industrial culture" (Shackel and Larsen 26). In the early nineteenth century enslaved as well as free blacks practiced both skilled and unskilled labor, but as the Civil War drew near many formerly black-dominated artisanal trades were claimed by whites, and skilled black artisans were relegated to unskilled labor. Scaling down from coopering to "the manufacture of small woodenware for domestic use" (190) may enable the Fowlers to survive, but not to thrive and to move into the middle class.

V. Antebellum Spaces, Postbellum Uses: Reading Present-Day Patesville

One of the central problems in the novel is that there are no middle class black men for Rena to marry. In the novel's present day, Peter's son Frank cannot be a contender for Rena's hand not only because of a class and color difference, but because there is no way for him to offer her the novel's most desired symbol: he cannot provide, buy, or build her a house because he cannot attain the economic and social capital to advance (105). Given the economic realities of the novel, Frank cannot hope to marry Rena and make a home together as his father did for his mother before the war, overcoming the greater obstacle of enslavement but within an economic climate less hostile to skilled black labor. In Chesnutt's novel, Frank and Rena's difference in class combined with the impossibility of advancement into a black elite that fetishizes light skin makes Frank's love a form of worship across an unbridgeable divide. This divide is made evident by Molly's use of domestic architecture designed to demarcate social roles.

The loaded imagery of Molly's front and back piazzas distinguish intra as well as interracial gradations of class and color prejudice.[106] White or light-skinned visitors like Dr. Green, Jefferson Wain, and even John when he revisits the house in the guise of a messenger pass through the ornamental garden's winding sandy paths, cross the piazza, and finally the threshold before they find themselves in the parlor. When Wain calls, for instance, "the visit being one of ceremony, [Rena] had taken her cousin round to the Front Street entrance and through the flower garden" to the front piazza (133). Young Billy, the "negro boy" charged with delivering a letter to Molly, goes "round to the back door, and handed the envelope to Mis' Molly, who was seated on the rear piazza" (82).

[106] For a foundational reading of the North Carolina Piazza as descended from similar structures in the West Indies, see Johnston and Waterman's *Early Architecture of North Carolina* 41. For an alternative account that places North Carolina, and not the West Indies, as the originator of the integral piazza cottage form, see Little, *Carolina Cottage* 22–52.

When Mary B. asks to hold a party for Wain in Molly's large parlor because her own house is too small, Chesnutt classifies that the party guests, who enter through the front piazza, are "all mulattoes." Within postbellum Patesville's light-skinned class, Chesnutt marks distinctions rooted in antebellum conditions of racial ancestry and freedom from former bondage:

> Mis' Molly's guests were mostly of the bright class, most of them more than half white, and few of them less. In Mis' Molly's small circle, straight hair was the only palliative of a dark complexion. Many of the guests would not have been casually distinguishable from white people of the poorer class. Others bore unmistakable traces of Indian ancestry,—for Cherokee and Tuscarora blood was quite widely diffused among the free negroes of North Carolina, though well-nigh lost sight of by the curious custom of the white people to ignore anything but the negro blood in those who were touched by its potent current (141).

Along with lighter complexions, the majority of the group of invited guests are "old issue" free people of color like Molly, who had amassed small advantages over generations of freedom: "Very few of those present had been slaves. The free colored people of Patesville were numerous enough before the war to have their own 'society,' and human enough to despise those who did not possess advantages equal to their own; and at this time they still looked down upon those who had once been held in bondage" (141).

Frank, dark-skinned and born a slave, is particularly made to feel his second (or third) class status via the rear piazza.[107] Even though Frank's "family did not go with Mary B.'s set" by reason of color and former enslavement, Rena asks Molly to invite Frank to the party (145).

Molly's compromise between formally inviting Frank and not inviting him at all is to "sugges[t] that Frank might come over and sit on the back porch and look at the dancing and share in the supper" (145). Frank's father, who, of course, lived for years in a slave cabin behind the cedar-bordered house, catches the spatial allusion to the back door and chastises his son for "stickin' roun' dem yaller niggers 'cross de street, an' slobb'rin' an' slav'rin' over 'em, an' hangin' roun' deir back do' wuss 'n ef dey wuz w'ite folks" (145). Frank, in love with Rena, does accept the "maimed invitation" to the party, and sits "at the window opening upon the back piazza" to watch the festivities indoors without ever entering the parlor itself though front or back door. Although he can look into the illuminated room to watch Rena and the other party guests, Frank is concealed from view within by his placement "in the shadow of the piazza," where he cannot clearly be seen "in the darkness" when Rena comes to check on him (146). Unseen by the guests, Frank abandons his hidden vantage when Rena is called upon to dance with the odious Wain.

Gazing through the front window as Frank abandons the rear, Tryon is not spared the sight of Rena dancing with the "burly, grinning mulatto, whose face was offensively familiar" (149). Approaching from the front, rather than from the rear as Frank must, Tryon's movements involve the same language of concealment: just as "Rena, weakly persuaded, placed her hand on Wain's arm and entered the house, a buggy, coming up Front Street, paused a moment at the corner, and then turning slowly, drove quietly up the nameless by-street, concealed by the intervening cedars" (147). Tryon is obscured "in the shadow of the cedars until he reached a gap through which he could see into the open door and windows of the brightly lighted hall" and could "view, through the open front window, the interior of the parlor" (147-8). The party and its guests are on display for the inquisitive Tryon, as is Rena's ancestry. The house behind the

[107] William Moddelmog suggests that Frank is invited inside to read and write letters for Molly, but there is no direct evidence of this in the novel, and most people's interactions with Molly occur on the rear piazza (Moddelmog

cedars stages one of the consequences of the middle-class display that Molly has worked to maintain: both of Rena's would-be lovers watch her through the open windows of a parlor from which they, by different rules of the same racialized class structure, cannot enter.

Tryon's climactic discovery dramatizes what the house's location alone would have revealed, for it is unlikely that a middle-class white family would have chosen to remain in a poor, predominantly non-white neighborhood. The difficulty of placing Rena's ancestry when she is unmoored from racializing locations occurs several times in the novel outside of South Carolina. When young Billy nears Molly's house to deliver a letter warning her to keep Rena indoors, he steps out of the way of "a young white lady, whom he did not know" walking in the opposite direction, who is almost certainly Rena on her errand to town where her racial ancestry will first be discovered by Tryon (82). She must explain her ancestry at the teaching examinations (155) and at the schoolhouse to Mrs. Tryon's prying question of "are you really colored?" (161). One has the feeling that inquiries such as these are and will be a regular occurrence whenever she finds herself in a new location.

It is Frank, however, who makes the most dangerous interpretation of Rena as white when he discovers her after she flees from Wain and Tryon. During his journey to check in on Rena, the revelation that the moaning from the bushes is made by "a woman—a w'ite woman!" causes the unimpeachably chivalrous Frank to weigh the potential drawbacks of offering aid. "Frank stood for a moment irresolute, debating the serious question whether he should investigate further with a view to rendering assistance, or whether he should put as great a distance as possible between himself and this victim, as she might easily be, of some violent crime, lest he should himself be suspected of it—a not unlikely contingency, if he were found in the neighborhood and the woman should prove unable to describe her assailant" (109-191). It is

54). Either way, Chesnutt does not depict Frank inside the house until the end of the novel.

significant that most good-hearted character in the book might leave a woman to die in a swamp because of the violent vigilance that polices the South's racial hierarchy.

If Frank cannot hope to build a house and a life with Rena, the temporary and mobile shelter he builds for her limns the difficulties her near-white skin might have given them when her racial identity was not fixed by a familiar location. Frank ascertains Rena's identity when he hears her voice, and constructs a shelter out of components at hand. He sacrifices his family's livelihood in the form of the "cartload of tubs, buckets, and piggins" to clear space for the ailing girl, and "gathering dried leaves and pine-straw, spread them in the bottom of the cart. He stooped, lifted her frail form in his arms, and laid it on the leafy bed. Cutting a couple of hickory withes, he arched them over the cart, and gathering an armful of jessamine quickly wove it into an awning to protect her from the sun." The unconventional "canopied cart," like the parlor windows beyond the permeable cedar hedge, does not entirely screen Rena from sight, the fallible means by which racial judgments are made (192). Frank's "leafy bed" and flowered awning shelter Rena from the sun and the road, but the architecture he manages to construct does not in the end protect either of them from the danger of a seemingly white woman driving with (or being driven by) a dark-skinned man.

Rena's illegibility as black outside of Patesville, which allows her to pass in Clarence, South Carolina and requires many painful explanations in Sampson County, is a dangerous liability for Frank, who is questioned twice by white men about the unconscious, seemingly white woman in his cart. Though Frank satisfies one man's demand of "Look a-here, nigger, what are you doin' with this white woman?" with the explanation that "She's not w'ite, boss,—she's a bright mulatter," he has more difficulty convincing a hunting party of mounted men (191). The group is far more threatening, and the danger to Frank escalates when one declares "I don't

b'lieve she's black at all" (192). Only Frank's quick lie that Rena might be feverish and contagious (a move reminiscent of Huck protecting Jim from discovery on the raft, though with the race roles reversed) persuades the hunters to pursue their original quarry, using hounds that may have tracked runaway slaves in antebellum times and might still be used to track a man like Frank on suspicion of rape or abduction.[108]

Rena's death scene brings an abortive alteration to the loaded imagery of front and back piazzas, one which imagines and then forestalls an optimistic reading of inter- and intraracial reconciliation. As befits a formally invited visitor, "Dr. Green had just gone down the garden path to his buggy at the gate," while on "the back piazza . . . Frank, weary and haggard, sat on the steps with Homer Pettifoot and Billy Oxendine" (195). For the first time in the story, Frank is invited inside the house, and he "walked in softly, reverently, and stood by her bedside" (195). In a late manuscript, Rena gestures toward an unrealized alternative future that might overcome barriers of class and the intraracial color line when she proclaims, "I reckon I ought to have married you, Frank—dear Frank, for you loved me best of them all" (R-252p 251) In the published version her final words are still for Frank, but Chesnutt diminishes the initial clause to "my good friend—my best friend—you loved me best of them all" (195). Once Rena dies, "Mary B. threw open a window to make way for the passing spirit, and the red and golden glory of the setting sun, triumphantly ending his daily course, flooded the narrow room with light" (195). Daniel Worden reads the sunlit ending as indicative of a new era of color-blindness:

[108] Indeed, Rena's whiteness frustrates Tryon's attempts to find her as well, for one chapter earlier he describes Rena as "a young white woman with dark eyes and hair, apparently sick or demented" to passers by, including "a young negro with a cartload of tubs and buckets and piggins" who turns out to be Frank, and who "answered in the negative" but is not alerted to Rena's potential danger (186-187). Tryon later questions the first man who talked to Frank, who had "met a young negro with a mule, and a cart in which lay a young woman, white to all appearance, but claimed by the negro to be a colored girl who had been taken sick on the road, and whom he was conveying home to her mother at Patesville. From a further description of the cart Tryon recognized it as the one he had met the day before. The woman could be no other than Rena. He turned his mare and set out swiftly on the road to Patesville" (195)

"When Rena dies in the house, after Frank finds her in the woods, the house becomes a site of renewed hope. . . . This new light offers a markedly non-white and non-black possibility. The sunlight is beyond race, a vision of Chesnutt's 'The Future American'" (Worden 15). I find it difficult to read the ending optimistically, for not only does Rena die against a *setting* sun, but the novel's last line—"A young cullud 'oman, sah, . . . Mis' Molly Walden's daughter Rena"—contains the word "colored," which has been used both to bolster racialized class distinctions and to deny full privileges of opportunity to light-skinned Americans (196). There is no indication of a diminishment in the racial animosities between white and black characters, nor between Chesnutt's lighter-skinned former free colored people and their darker, more recently emancipated neighbors. Lacking even the manuscript's gesture toward the possibility of marriage between the children of "old issue" and "new issue" free neighbors, Frank's significant invitation inside does not mark a likely lasting change in the racial or social status quo on Front Street.

To give Rena a happy ending, and to have her securely settled in a home of her own—whether with Tryon, Frank, Wain, or even back with her mother—would be to resolve the problems of class and race that drive Chesnutt's social protest novel. Having Tryon permanently overcome his race prejudice, "make her white" by marrying her, and safely install her in his ancestral home is impossible because Rena is known in the neighborhood as the African-American schoolteacher; to have them move to a new locale, as Tryon also imagines, would require that she, like John, disown her kinship ties and pass as white (140). As I have established, Frank cannot buy, build, or otherwise acquire a home for Rena given the grim economic realities of the postbellum world that Chesnutt depicts.*Cedars* could have ended as Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* (1928) does and as the first several drafts almost do: with a miserable Rena duped into marriage with Wain and trapped in poverty in his mortgaged house. Such an ending would

clearly demonstrate the limitations for people of color (even those with the advantage of light skin) and might be designed to outrage Chesnutt's readers into action. But, as Chesnutt has her do in the drafts, Rena can fall back on the hope of escape to the safe haven of her mother's house, though in the drafts she grows ill on the journey, is rescued by Frank, and dies at home as she does in the published novel. To have Rena become a childless old maid in her mother's home would be to imagine a world without futurity for middle-class African Americans.

With no other options in the world he has created, Chesnutt has his heroine die. As Giuliana Fabi points out, Rena "does not die like the stereotypical tragic mulatta" as the result of a disjunction between the knowledge that she has black ancestry and a sense of white identity that forms the "today a mistress, tomorrow a slave" convention. Instead, Fabi argues that Rena "dies because the conditions of racial subordination" that would have made her vulnerable under slavery "are still powerfully at work in an unregenerate post-Reconstruction South" (Fabi 85). I agree with Fabi's conclusion that Rena dies to illustrate the continuity between antebellum and postbellum conditions for African Americans, but class, and not simply race, forms a part of those conditions. We can get a clearer sense of Chesnutt's use of Rena's death to illustrate the impossibility of upward social mobility for African Americans by comparing it to two related stories that end with what duCille calls the "coupling convention": Oscar Micheaux's 1932 film, *Veiled Aristocrats*, and Chesnutt's 1900 short story, "The Sway-Backed House."

It is telling that in the Oscar Micheaux remake of Chesnutt's novel, the Frank Fowler who wins Rena in the rewritten ending is a dark-skinned but successful carpenter who aims to develop his construction business to become "one of the leading builders and contractors of Fayetteville," rather than an impoverished cooper working in a dying trade. J. R. Green notes that Micheaux's film, by making both John and Frank middle class black strivers, isolates skin

color and the decision to pass as the point of difference between the two men (Green 145). The film instead presents two competing, achievable versions of class mobility. John's wealth and status are made possible by his decision to abandon his racial and kinship ties, to pass as white, and to accept class advancement based on racial hierarchy. In Micheaux's world, dark-skinned Frank Fowler is already comfortably ensconced in the middle class with plans to expand his business, and is a member of the town's black aristocracy. Frank's eloquent speech, fine clothes, and growing prosperity makes class mobility theoretically available to all black characters. When Frank rescues Rena in his car—a potent symbol of wealth—it is a rescue from the burden of passing as white that promises a happy and prosperous union to come. Chesnutt's novel, on the other hand, sketches the seemingly insurmountable obstacles to middle-class black domesticity for the postbellum generation.

Not all of Chesnutt's fiction paints such a bleak picture for skilled black labor and African-American domesticity. He offers a story of a blacksmith that offers an alternative view of the possibilities for a black middle class when skilled labor is not synonymous with failure and poverty in "The Sway-Backed House," published just after *Cedars*. Also set in Patesville after the war, the story features a dark-complexioned, prosperous, and well-spoken blacksmith, Tom Turner, who beats out a light-skinned, avaricious schoolteacher to win the hand of his beautiful light-skinned, free-born neighbor, Isabella Grundy. The teacher, Mr. Revels, reveals that he desired Isabella for her likely inheritance of the valuable land on which the titular sway-backed house sits, but abandons her when he learns that her adoptive grandfather divides the house in his will equally between Isabella and his sister's ten impoverished children. When Revels patronizingly offers to wed Isabella for her probable thrift, she reveals that she has married the steadfast Tom the day before, and sets off to her husband's house. Bisher

corroborates Chesnutt's depiction of blacksmithing, for "despite the influx of cast-metal products, the city's [New Bern's] black men maintained their strength in the blacksmith's trade" while "especially hard hit in New Bern was coopering, for decades an important and traditionally black craft" (Bishir 199). While Frank's economic prospects are on the wane, Tom's are fairly steady, and he can provide a house for Isabella. The short story also has the most socially and racially elitist character, Isabella's grandfather, freeborn Solomon Grundy, recognize an obligation to his dark-skinned, desperately poor relatives. By dividing his amassed wealth among them, he provides an opportunity for his industrious and well-spoken but shabbily dressed nephew to advance within the range of middle-class options depicted in the story. The possibilities for black skilled labor and social mobility mean that Isabella will not feel the sting of her split inheritance, and that the story achieves black middle class domesticity as well as increased socioeconomic opportunity for the most disadvantaged African American characters by sharing the fruits of free black accumulation across class boundaries.

Yet although *Veiled Aristocrats* and "The Sway-Backed House" end in marriage instead of death, they decline to depict the realities of African-American domesticity that they hopefully sketch in their closing scenes. Ann duCille argues that "black women writers of the 1890s invoked the coupling convention to explore the problems of living *in* freedom, in the shadow of slavery and the glaring light of institutionalized racism and discrimination" (duCille 31). In his next novel, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), Chesnutt will turn his attention to the household of Dr. and Mrs. Miller to explore the problems duCille outlines for black domesticity. In *Cedars*, however, the attempt to transform an architectural sign of illegitimacy and concubinage into an emblem of middle-class domesticity and respectability reveals itself to be predicated on the maintenance of the racialized class system that marks Rena as "colored" in life and in death. The

cedars that form Molly's distinctive evergreen fence are also commonly associated with cemeteries; without the possibility of fulfilling the "coupling convention" in the world of the novel, Rena's final resting place will be the "small clump of cedars in the rear of the two-acre lot."[109] It is a "private cemetery [from] those old days when the living were close to the dead" where the young son that Molly "lost" is already buried, but where Rena's father is not (107). The house is, in the end, situated between *two* groups of cedars, which articulate social aspiration and racial restriction. On Front Street, the cedars both screen and invite passersby to gaze upon the middle-class garden in the town's poorer neighborhood. On Back Street, the cedars mark the graves of family members who cannot be buried with their white father in a white cemetery. If Chesnutt, like the black women writers duCille examines, aims to undermine the "construction of 'black' as a unified category and the erasure of class as a cultural marker" (duCille 8), the cedar-bordered house demonstrates the difficulty of that undertaking given the realities of the world he depicts. Not all transformations are beneficial; Molly's middle-class architectural display argues that race should not bar blacks from inclusion in the middle class from which they were systemically denied entrance, even as it reiterates the racial and social hierarchies such Carolina cottages were designed to enforce.

[109] According to landscape historian Gregory Jeane, "The most common cemetery plant is the cedar (*Juniperus virginianus*), an evergreen that traditionally symbolized immortality; frequent association with burial grounds has earned it the name 'cemetery tree'" (Jeane 896).

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