SPATIAL SALVAGE: THE MATERIALITY OF REGION IN LITERATURE OF THE AMERICAN WEST

by

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ABSTRACT

At the end of the nineteenth century, many literary narratives of the American West repeated historical assumptions and genre tropes while material objects from the West indexed commodity flows and a national fetish for ethnography. Writers like John Wesley Powell, Elizabeth Bacon Custer, Owen Wister, and Mary Austin turned from plots and props to techniques of material assemblage to depict the diverse relations and dynamic tensions of the West. These writers engage in a practice of salvage, in which they separate materials from prior contexts of production or sentiment and combine them in new associations. Their salvage work appears as assemblages—scrapbooks, taxidermy animals, clothes, and weavings—and extends the methods and materials of these assemblages to the structures of their texts. Each work's composition foregrounds the incongruities of its elements, and each text becomes a borderland, or selvage, in which conflicts remain unresolved. The assemblages expose readers to "affective regionality," the feelings of "contingency, precarity, vulnerability," that occur between geographic places and rhetorical explanations. Each text, then, presents the writer's experience of "westness," of the fantastic and real, speculated and remembered, vast and intimate American West.

"Spinning a yarn" is a metaphor for telling a story, and stories can be "embroidered." But quilting doesn't seem to be of much use as a way to talk about narrative. … In fact, it's rather an insult to call a story patchwork.

Holly Welker

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: HOW THE WEST WAS MADE

In the spring of 1897, Willa Cather reviewed the reopening of Andrew Carnegie's Pittsburgh museum for the women's magazine, the *Home Monthly*.[1] In "The Carnegie Museum," Cather profiles the institution's leadership and describes its collections to satisfy the social interests of the magazine's middle-class readers.[2] She also praises the museum's unique connection with visitors of all classes, for whom the museum was a location of engagement: "the people have taken hold of the museum and claimed it for their own" ("Carnegie"). Cather credits head curator Herbert M. Smith for this popular appeal. Smith investigated "the conditions of the society about him" and resolved "to bring the museum in touch with the people, and so to arrange the exhibits that the observer may derive as much information as possible by mere use of his eyes, without reference to books."

Smith's plans for the scenes repeat a contemporary shift in museum display practices away from grouping objects by type to arranging objects in context. During this decade, Franz Boas and Otis T. Mason would become famous for their "life-group" dioramas in Chicago, New York, and

Washington, which placed material objects in mannequins' hands to instruct a narrative of individual use.[3] In Pittsburgh, Smith appears to have preferred small-scale models of larger scenes that displayed the processes of production as relations in space. For example, instead of "a costly collection of glassware," Smith planned a "minature glass factory [*sic*]" in the museum that "would show on a small scale the process of manufacture up to the finished product." The small-scale factory staged the relations no longer visible in the glass objects, the interactions that shaped raw material into final form.[4] The model removed a visitor from the factory's industrial processes and granted him a broader view of them.

The miniature glass factory likely appealed to Pittsburgh's museum-goers because it offered them a different perspective on the capitalist forces that shaped their lives. The miniature factory invited any visitor, wealthy or working-class, to consider the practices of making rather than the beauty of the object or the utility of the product. Smith's contemporary, curator Frederic A. Lucas, wrote in 1911 that such models attracted "more attention than full-size reproductions" because visitors could grasp the "whole scene … at once as in a picture" (188). Michel de Certeau explains the attraction of this perspectival shift as the visitor's "pleasure" in "seeing the whole," granted the "fiction" of knowledge otherwise available only to "a solar Eye, looking down like a god" (92). Susan Stewart grounds this pleasure in "being" rather than seeing; the miniature presents a "spatial transcendence" that

sacrifices "understanding," or narrative, to an awareness of "being in context" (60). The model locates an encounter with relations ongoing in space rather than sequences them in closed structures of meaning. The visitor transitions from the distance of visual interpretation to the intimacy of felt experience.

Willa Cather's attention to the miniature glass factory demonstrates the burgeoning writer's sense of Pittsburgh's social and economic priorities during the 1890s, but another scale model among Carnegie's collections suggests the shape her own interests would take in her later short stories and novels. Near the end of her review of the Carnegie Museum, Cather cites the prize-winning "descriptive letter" of Pittsburgh schoolboy Fordham N. Orr to note, "a model of the homes of the Cliff Dwellers and one of Montezuma's well stand upon tables at each side of the door" of the room "devoted to antiquities and archæology [*sic*]" ("Carnegie").[5] According to Carnegie Museum records, this exhibit of the "homes of the Cliff Dwellers" depicted "ruins" from Mancos Canyon, Colorado, or from Canyon de Chelly, Arizona (Holland 55). Plaster, sand, and oil paint assembled scenes from the American West as surveyed by John Wesley Powell's Bureau of American Ethnology during the 1870s and 1880s.[6]

The model ruins reduced vast geographical scales and mysterious archeological sites to a scene on a table.[7] They reproduced the surveyor's point of view, in which the cliff dwellings appeared small because of distance, even as they revised his perspective to include the ruins' interiors. A visitor

could reimagine the climax of discovery and the routines of habitation, and replace the domestic scene in a geographical context. An author could then translate these experiences into those of omniscient narrators and situated characters. Cliff dwellings appear in several of Cather's works, and Cather would revisit Mancos Canyon and Canyon de Chelly specifically in her 1920s novels *The Professor's House* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. In the late 1890s, Cather first encountered these western places as material objects fabricated to activate an awareness of space.

An Imaginary Region

My interest in this spatial imaginary develops from literary scholars' approaches to the American West through the field of cultural geography. The physical region of the West opposes abstract myths of the West to combine natural phenomena and cultural practices in place.[8] Such visibility of the region then allows scholars to trace political, economic, and cultural relationships between the region's localities and beyond the region into national or global networks.[9] Krista Comer summarizes that this "critical regionalism" addresses "matters of place, politics, and vulnerability" through a "thematics of movement, of fluidities of borders" ("Introduction" 5, "Problem" 205). At the end of the nineteenth century, regional dynamics appeared in land policy, capitalist accumulation, and cultural production. For instance, the territories of Wyoming and Utah became locally-governed states

even as the General Allotment Act of 1887 and General Revision Act of 1891 gathered under federal oversight individual plots of land. Voters in Cheyenne and Salt Lake City accepted state borders while the United States Congress dismantled the boundaries preserving indigenous communities and concealing corporate activities.[10] In both cases, a textual object, a ballot or a deed, moved between local and national jurisdictions to disclose these regional tensions. Each text manifested regional experience.

Like these texts, material objects orient regional discussions of economic forces. William Cronon finds in the 1880s "a single commercial system" between rural "hinterlands" and urban centers in the materials that transit through regional networks: "the westward flow of merchandise complimented the stream of natural resources moving in the opposite direction" (47, 310). Cronon explains that as large-scale production of goods eliminated seasonal variations in the availability of goods, economic forces reified materials into commodities. This abstraction diffused local affinities in a vast spectral landscape, or what Hsuan Hsu calls the "passionless economic space of globalization" ("Literature" 36).[11] One consumer reaction to this emotional diffusion was to invest the act of purchasing merchandise with affect, to re-place material consumption and possession within human desires and memories.[12] Alan Trachtenberg notes that John Wanamaker's department store capitalized on this desire by presenting goods with a trademark of "Wanamaker Fidelity," which authenticated an item's material

integrity and promised the customer "well-being for the soul" (221). Stephen Tatum explains that to possess an object was "literally to possess a repudiated or repressed or forgotten past through a material presence that would promote an affective experience legitimating or authenticating one's reality and real life in an increasingly weightless present" ("Spectrality" 25-26).

This cultural response exalted the places of origin and techniques to which commodities no longer connected. The turn toward the "antimodern" emphasized an "authentic" emotional engagement of fetishized traditional practices or places (Lears 61, 103). Audrey Goodman notes that this reorientation "provided an imagined escape from racial, class, and gender conflicts, and an apparent recovery of society's cohesive forces" (*Translating* xv). Bill Brown explains that anthropological methods and "local color" writing in the 1890s reintegrated material things into their regional contexts, in the spatial and social structures that organized what Cather called "proper, happy places" (83). In anthropology exhibits, Boas and Mason displaced theoretical "taxonomic and evolutionary" schemes to replace artifacts in regional milieus (Brown 88). In literature, objects similarly authenticated author's accounts of regional customs. Canned tomatoes in Owen Wister's *The Virginian* or Scratchy Wilson's maroon flannel shirt in Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" do not originate in Wyoming or Texas but participate in each locale's social rituals and thus

distinguish each region from homogeneous "national" culture.[13]

The "anthropology-effect" of such literary works, in which social settings imbue material objects with meaning, blurs cultural production between the material and the symbolic (Brown 88).[14] Material encounters combined with fictional stories to transform a geographic region into a romantic literary genre. The setting of the West begat the tropes of the western. Richard Slotkin notes that by 1895, popular culture replaced social or economic groups with the western "region" to entrench nationalist and racial hierarchies (*Gunfighter* 22). Cultural forms in the 1890s such as novels and stage performances repeated this ideology and, as Hsu explains, produced, reimagined, and actively restructured "regional identities in the minds and hearts" of their audiences ("Literature" 36). Literary narratives appeared to displace distinctive local activities in favor of constructed regional meanings that bolstered the national imaginary.[15]

In each of these areas—geographic, economic, and cultural—such explanations repeat timeworn binaries between the national and local, commodity and possession, past and present, material and symbolic. Individually, such relations are visible on the scale of the regional but do not evince the regional. However, gathered together, they disclose what Neil Campbell calls the "blurred, contested zone" of the American West that is "imagined dreamspace as well as real, material space" ("Critical" 62). Drawing from Edward Soja's concept of "thirdspace," which critically

restructures received, physical "firstspace" and imagined, interpreted "secondspace," Campbell explains the West through experiences of combination and crossing ("Critical" 61). Campbell's concept of "affective regionality" forestalls the meaning of these experiences between and beyond organizational structures like boundaries or ideologies as a "sensibility" of "hopeful, human relatedness" perceived through feelings of "contingency, precarity, and vulnerability" (*Affective* 4).[16] Affective regionality combines the diverse places, characteristics, and discourses of the West, or "westness," through the productive variety of individuals' felt experiences with them to locate a region that is both present and always in a process of change. Spatial objects or material assemblages in literature of the American West, affective regionality creates a spatial imaginary as it materializes a location at which to critique it.

A Model Frontier

Unlike the model glass factory, which encloses material relations in a mechanical utopia, Carnegie's miniature cliff city becomes such a spatial object as it "unfolds in space" (Stewart 66). Each of its features depicts a spatial boundary and discloses that boundary's precarity. The ruins' stone walls appear erected by Cliff Dwellers' hands and eroded by wind and rain. They no longer separate domestic scenes from wild circumstances but create a place that is both interior and exterior. The canyon's cliffs rise around the

buildings yet end at the model's edges. They present a material presence here that is also a spatial fact elsewhere. The model cliffs' miniature scale allows the visitor to envision the canyons beyond the model and to find in the model a place that is both real and imagined. The model itself stands at a threshold between the museum's edifice and its collection of ethnographic objects. It creates a possible context for these items even as its scenic coherence disconnects the artifacts from historical and cultural settings.[17] The model expands the museum's influence over the scene within its walls even as it diminishes the institution's control of a vastness the museum cannot contain.

The scale model presents borders and represents the crossing of those borders.[18] It materializes what Michel de Certeau describes as "the paradox of the frontier: created by contacts, the points of differentiation … are also their common points" (127). The miniature cliff city locates a frontier, a borderland, a threshold, a space between defined places in which a visitor becomes aware of the limits of such definitional authority. Edward Soja calls this awareness a "consciousness of spatiality," in which geography is no longer the received setting for human experience but a critical model for the dynamic relations between people and places (*Thirdspace* 2, *Postmodern* 14). A "critical geographic imagination" then transforms a border from the distinction between "either/or" into the borderland of "both/and also" (*Thirdspace* 5). As a scene of inside and outside, culture and nature, here and there, eastern institutions and the American West, the model cliff city resists

narrative conclusion to manifest a perpetual variation of human relations in physical space.

The model of the "homes of the Cliff Dwellers" invokes a "spatial imaginary" which accepts that, as Neil Campbell explains:

> The West … has never been simply a geographical region contained by traditions and customs; it is instead a complex construction, an architecture, designed and built by the intersection of discourses from many interested parties, refracted through time, space, and nations. (*Rhizomatic* 42)

The scale model makes visible such discourses of region and suspends them among feelings of "contingency, precarity, and vulnerability" (*Affective* 4). The model's edges provoke this affective register and evince the process Campbell calls "affective regionality," the "engaging, extending, overlapping, mutating [of space] beyond itself at its edges and boundaries where it touches 'something else'" (*Affective* 4). The model of the cliff ruins forestalls the meaning of ruins, canyon, and territory to invite affective responses to these elements, an experience of the various features and fictions that coexist in the places of the American West.[19]

This material model of a western place assembled for an eastern audience orients my interest in the convergence of material practice and spatial imagination I see in literature of the American West around the turn of the twentieth century. Informed by the American public's desire for material things and increase in national territory, writers of the West used material assemblages to enact the place's relations and tensions.[20] Like the example of the model cliff city, these assemblages are "groupings of diverse

elements" whose "uneven topographies" situate multiple relations and magnify their consequences (Bennett, *Vibrant* 24). Such groupings include both artifacts and commodities, yet create neither artifacts nor commodities. Assemblages neither support nostalgic structures of authenticity nor perpetuate deterministic systems of production and consumption.[21] As "topographies," these groupings also locate a heterotopia that juxtaposes "in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible" (Foucault 25). These "real," material places become borderlands, frontiers of "conjunction and disjunction," in which authors expand experiences into a West between and beyond boundaries (Certeau 127).

These assemblages appear within texts as both material practices and literary objects, and reappear in texts' rhetorical patterns and accompanying illustrations. But they resist the historical closure or narrative determinism of literary forms.[22] These assemblages are not so much metaphors, which subordinate materiality to meaning, but present the shifting relations between the material, spatial, intellectual, and affective.[23] They occur as material objects less obviously geographic than Carnegie's model cliff city, but objects equally evocative of western regionality. They include John Wesley Powell's scrapbooks, Elizabeth Bacon Custer's taxidermied animals, Owen Wister's outfits, and Mary Austin's baskets. Each object affords haptic perception of western relations as material features.

These assemblages make it possible for material culture to have informed expressions of the West as much as did fin de siècle narratives of cultural origins, national identities, and economic purposes.[24] Each site suspends such narratives to create a place in which all relations appear together as realities and possibilities. These objects materialize the dynamic between mythic erasures and persistent marks that deforms and reforms a West always real-and-imagined. In this regard, my interest in extending the "active, agitating presence" of Campbell's "affective regionality" amends this westness to include the "straight lines of myth" and the potential of the "local, small-scale, and fugitive to erupt into and disrupt regionalism's smooth-running, established 'languages'" (*Affective* 2, 4). These spatial assemblages inaugurate the twentieth century's experience of westness in the 1890s as material resistance to narrative closure.

Of Material Spaces

I use the term "salvage" to describe these assemblages, as salvage practice forestalls relations in a material assemblage while salvage processes substitute material objects for time or money.[25] Similar to what scholars of folk art call "salvage craft," the term salvage acknowledges material persistence outside of systems of production and permits artists to combine such materials in new relations.[26] The material variations repeat characteristics Bruno Latour ascribes to "quasi-objects," which are

"fabricated" between "different periods, ontologies or genres" (55, 73). Latour explains that quasi-objects exist in a "terrain" between such categories, and his geographic language gestures toward the spatial consequences of material objects (96).

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari take more literally the material fabrication of physical space. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain "striated space" and "smooth space" using the "technological" examples of woven, knitted, crocheted, and embroidered materials (474-77). A woven fabric's warp and weft organize a striated space, while the "entanglement" fibers in felt fabric present the mobility and possibility of smooth space (475). Each object's material composition depicts its abstract spatial characteristics. As with Latour's quasi-object and Soja's thirdspace, Deleuze and Guattari explain that "the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture": "smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space" (474). Deleuze and Guattari use a familiar salvage practice, "patchwork," as an example of this mixture (476). In patchwork, "piece-by-piece construction" permits "infinite, successive additions of fabric" (476). As in striated space, patchwork sews scraps into fixed positions, and as in smooth space, the characteristics of these positions can vary infinitely. The resulting patch-work "is not only named after trajectories, but 'represents' trajectories," and materializes the variations of mixed space (477). It becomes

a “passage” between smooth and striated spaces, in which the term passage connotes movement as well as the place of that movement (475). Salvage produces a material borderland in which spatial relations are visible, various, and dynamic.

Salvage transforms edges into a middle ground. Selvage describes that new place and combines the word’s meanings of the edge of a fabric and the bank of a river. It is a cultural product and a natural characteristic. It is a material feature and spatial fact. Within this discussion of regionality, selvage becomes a synonym for borderland, frontier, and threshold that includes the material interactions in the space between boundaries. Salvage assembles materials into a site of affective encounter with spatial relations, the selvage of regionality.

When Deleuze and Guattari use patchwork as a verb, as the specific “technique” of spatial salvage, they appear to restrict this practice to female technicians (477). They cite an excerpt from William Faulkner’s novel *Sartoris* to depict this “special work”:

> She had been working on it for fifteen years, carrying about with her a shapeless bag of dingy, threadbare brocade containing odds and ends of colored fabric of all possible shapes. She could never bring herself to trim them to any pattern; so she shifted and fitted and mused and fitted and shifted them like pieces of a patient puzzle-picture. (476)

An unnamed “she” performs the patchwork. She gathers the fabric, and shifts and fits it into a “puzzle-picture.” She creates from her experience a selvage that is both material assemblage, a “puzzle,” and representation, a “picture.”

Deleuze and Guattari connect Faulkner's nameless "she" to a parenthetical example of "the importance of the quilting bee in America, and its role from the standpoint of women's collectivity" (476-77). Though relegated to pronouns and confined to parentheses, the quilters reveal Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical margins to be selvage regions. Indeed, women's access to the materials Deleuze and Guattari marginalize — "leftover fabric, pieces salvaged from used clothes, remnants taken from the 'scrap bag'"— makes patchwork a means for women's opposition to structures of social control (477). Material feminists would suggest that such fabrication of place opposes the social manufacture of gendered identity, and material spaces, like material bodies, are "co-constituted by various forms of power and knowledge" (Alaimo, "Trans-corporeal" 243).

Though salvage practice can amend previous studies of women's material history, specifically as regard quilts as "maps," I intend spatial salvage to include diverse relations that affect women and men.[27] Indeed, the following chapters will show male and female authors eschewing gendered conventions along with political and economic hierarchies. Their salvage techniques transform material remnants into haptic regions of affective experimentation, in the words and images of textual assemblages. Detached from previous cultural purposes, these materials excite new relations with space. John Rajchman suggests that this "experimental" spatiality creates the possibility for a variety of affective responses (131). These material

assemblages of affective regionality enact what Campbell calls a "redistribution of the sensible" that propagates new human relations through pain and pleasure alike (*Affective* 4). A selvage combines the real-and-imagined, preferred and persistent experiences of westness.

Into the West

The following chapters explore spatial salvage in works published between 1885 and 1903, in John Wesley Powell's *Canyons of the Colorado*, Elizabeth Bacon Custer's "*Boots and Saddles": or, Life in Dakota with General Custer* and *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Texas and Kansas*, Owen Wister's *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains*, and Mary Austin's *The Land of Little Rain*. These texts narrate experiences in the American West by easterners who became known as westerners through their writing. Powell's descent of the Colorado River and Custer's presence alongside her husband in Dakota Territory obscured both writers' midwestern roots. Doctors told Wister to "go West" to Wyoming and Austin's husband took her to California, but both writers found social and artistic freedom in the West. Each author published stories and essays in popular magazines, including *Scribner's Monthly*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *The Land of Sunshine*, through which each author earned a reputation for expertise on western realities and developed relationships with other western writers.[28] All produced, and profited from, popular interest in the West.

I begin in Chapter 1 with John Wesley Powell and introduce salvage practice using his 1895 text, *Canyons of the Colorado*. The work combines Powell's account of his explorations of the Colorado River in the 1870s with illustrations from other U. S. Government reports that Powell's agencies published during the 1880s. Powell does not include these sources to explain or represent the American West, as his peers and audiences expected and as scholars continue to suggest. Instead, Powell juxtaposes these elements across his text's pages to materially assemble the tensions that persist beyond government institutions' control. The frame of each image constructs a boundary in the text that does not organize the meaning of the narrative. Each illustration juxtaposes the authority of Powell's narrative by creating what Powell calls a "refuge," a place in the text in which Powell and his reader can pause and imagine experiences outside of the text (*Canyons* 4). The competing frames of the text's more than 250 illustrations allow Powell to silently critique the boundaries he helped draw around the West and expand a refuge, or selvage, for affective possibilities to persist in the West.

In Chapter 2, I discuss Elizabeth Bacon Custer's use of taxidermied animals in narrative production and spatial processes in her 1885 text *"Boots and Saddles": or, Life in Dakota with General Custer*, and in the illustrations to her 1887 *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas*. As in Powell's *Canyons*, Custer returns to events during the 1870s when she accompanied her husband George on his military campaigns. Custer centers

her narratives on the places in which they lived and lingers over scenes in which she arranges material objects to domesticate the western places. These scenes become assemblages in which Custer combines the material remnants of her travels, specifically the bodies of animals George taxidermied for her, into the shifting relations she experienced during those travels, between exterior and interior spaces, temporary and settled communities, and masculine and feminine manners. The taxidermied animals are neither trophies nor specimens, and instead materialize a narrative of western conquest within a domestic spatial imaginary. These objects create a selvage in which Custer can preserve her supporting role as George's widow and assert new authority as a western writer.

I enter the twentieth century in Chapter 3 with Owen Wister and his 1902 text, *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains*. Wister's attention to men's clothing inverts Custer's interest in taxidermy. Where Custer placed preserved bodies to fix spatial boundaries, Wister changes men's attire to redraw geographic and social relations. Though scholars dismiss Wister's characters' "gyarments" as costumes and symbols, Wister presents the sartorial and its variations as the material site of affective regionality (*Virginian* 5). Handkerchiefs, flannel shirts, cartridge belts, and chaparreros create a selvage in which Wister can experiment with the freedom of social mobility and feel the threat of such "equality" to the existing social order (95). Such democratic possibility threatens the sartorial standards by which

Wister knows himself, and Wister finally encloses the Virginian in a suit that confines his individuality in the static conventions of eastern society.

In Chapter 4, I follow Mary Austin as she retreats from eastern fashion to *The Land of Little Rain*, where she creates a selvage for women's artistic survival. The 1903 short-story collection centers around the Paiute basket maker Seyavi, whose knotted fingers, coiled willow fibers, and quail plume designs teach Austin the material techniques of spatial production. The weaver reclaims memories and materials which national, economic, agricultural, and social structures rendered marginal, and she weaves them into a place for herself. Where Powell salvaged texts to materialize westness, Austin translates Seyavi's woven assemblages into the new networks of western narratives that Austin suggests only women can negotiate through affective exploration and material expression.

I conclude with a brief discussion of spatial salvage in the early twentieth century to consider its critical application to writers' renewed interest in indigenous communities living in the American West. Mary Austin's 1918 collection of stories for children, *The Trail Book*, combines Powell's government institutions with Custer's taxidermied animals to create a selvage from reanimated museum dioramas. Willa Cather's 1925 novel *The Professor's House* escapes Wister's sartorial confines to seek Austin's artifacts in Southwestern communities, only to return to the geographic stability and affective sterility of domestic institutions. Zitkala-Ša's "serial

fictionalized memoir" *American Indian Childhood*, which appeared in the *Atlantic* magazine in 1900 and as a single volume in 1921, returns indigenous practices to indigenous artists (Bernardin 23-24). Zitkala-Ša's blend of material techniques and rhetorical patterns presents weaving as a persistent practice of spatial creation and individual experience.

The works I address in this study present these writers as they test new methods through which to express the tensions they experienced in the West. Each text combines the rhetorical tropes of biography, history, fantasy, and reportage with the material techniques of scrap craft, taxidermy, dress, and weaving to present shifting regional relations. The texts' material assemblages create the haptic places in which the authors can explore these connections and the affective responses they prompt. The texts forestall in material relations the forces of regional production and become portable, persistent encounters with the processes of affective regionality.

Notes

[1] Carnegie dedicated the museum building in 1895, but expanded collections "re-opened to the public" for Founder's Day, Nov. 3, 1896 (Holland 11). Cather became a reporter and editor at the *Home Monthly* in June 1896 (Benson 228).

[2] See Bradley 38.

[3] See Brown 88-89 and Jenkins 261-68.

[4] Boscagli begins *Stuff Theory* with a similar collection of glassware, which become "Things, unproductive materiality consumable primarily as spectacle," and "accessed only visually, at a distance" (8). Though Cather frames Smith's concerns about the glassware in terms of cost, Smith's preference of the factory over the collection suggests he intended museum visitors to understand relations rather than consume spectacles.

[5] Fordham N. Orr was also the son of Thomas E. Orr, who bought the *Home Monthly* and became Cather's boss in 1897.

[6] Carnegie Museum records list these models among six small scale casts Carnegie purchased from Ward's Natural Science Establishment in 1896 (Holland 55). Carnegie's catalog names these acquisitions as "Restoration of Pueblo Bonito, Pueblo Acoma, ruins in the Valley of Rio de Chelly and Mancos Canyon, Montezuma's Well, and ruin of ancient tower." Ward's records from the period are scarce and substantiate the company's prolific production of fossil replicas, but do not include these anomalous archaeological models. Smithsonian Institution records from the late 1880s do include these models among their holdings, and the similarity of the models' names between the Smithsonian's and Carnegie's records connect Carnegie's casts to Bureau of American Ethnology studies in the American Southwest during the 1870s and 1880s (Mason "Report" 91-92, Beauchamp). The Smithsonian catalog specifically lists a model of "ruins in Mancos Canyon" as "issued by Ward & Howell" in exchange for Ward's purchase of the original model from the Bureau of Ethnology. Orr's use of the term "Cliff Dwellers" also suggests that Carnegie's model was likely a cast of William H. Holmes's model of ruins in Mancos Canyon, as contemporary audiences associated Mancos Canyon, or Mesa Verde, with the much-publicized "Cliff Dwellers' Exhibit" at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Smith).

[7] Unlike Georg Simmel's ruins, which present the place in which "man" becomes "an accomplice of nature" as decay "transforms the work of art into the material for [nature's] own expression," Holmes's scale model of the cliff city reproduces human architecture outside of its natural context and the effects of natural processes on it (Simmel, "The Ruin" 380, 382). Holmes's

model ruins signify an elsewhere "frozen and thereby both particularized and generalized in time" (Stewart 48). As Holmes's models predate Simmel's interest more than a decade, the museum models create a sort of "precession of simulacra" of the "ruin."

[8] See Cresswell 4.

[9] See Hsu, "Literature" 38.

[10] See Greenwald 7, 15.

[11] See Lears 33.

[12] See Stewart 133.

[13] See Wister 30 and Crane 93.

[14] "It is especially interesting that in archaeology and in *cultural anthropology* the reference to **culture** and a **culture** is primarily to *material* production, while in history and *cultural studies* the reference is primarily to *signifying* or *symbolic* systems. This often confuses but even more often conceals the central question the relations between 'material' and 'symbolic' production, which in some recent argument … have always to be related rather than contrasted" (Williams 53).

[15] Campbell employs Jacques Rancière's "distribution of the sensible" to describe that repeated stories construct a "powerful regime of representation" (*Regionality* 2-3).

[16] See also Campbell *Rhizomatic* 43.

[17] See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 389.

[18] My approach to the material model differs from Susan Stewart's interest in the miniature as a physical consequence of narrative description. Stewart's "description" of minute details creates a closed "tableau," "frozen" in time, in which each object's "signifying properties" multiplies (47-48). The scale museum model neither requires nor translates language and neither compresses nor freezes time. It constructs temporal relations and spatial boundaries as material features.

[19] Such as the mythic processes of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis (Slotkin *Gunfighter* 4*)*, and the place-based investigations of New Western History, beginning with Patricia Limerick's *Legacy of Conquest*.

[20] See Goodman, "Assembling California Photobooks."

[21] See Benjamin 220, Stewart 66, and Certeau xii.

[22] See Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 6.

[23] See Goodman, *Translation* xxi, and Latour 96.

[24] See Michaels 2 and Trachtenberg xxii.

[25] See "Salvage" and Lape 126.

[26] See Certeau xii-xiii. My use of material differs from Boscagli's definition of "stuff" in that salvage detaches material from its "origin" in commodification and denies material an end as "refuse" (Boscagli 2). My approach also differs from Watson's use of the "bibelot" to discuss accumulation and classification, as such objects arrive and appear complete rather than subject to creative amendment (27-30)

[27] See Fryer 247.

[28] Powell published in *Scribner's*, Wister published in *Harper's*, and Charles Lummis published Custer and Austin in *The Land of Sunshine*.

CHAPTER 2

"REVISED AND ENLARGED:" TEXTUAL ASSEMBLAGE IN JOHN WESLEY POWELL'S *CANYONS OF THE COLORADO*

John Wesley Powell's 1895 *Canyons of the Colorado* purports to follow Powell's expedition down the Colorado River in 1869 and includes the near-verbatim account of several river journeys from his 1875 publication *Exploration of the Colorado River of the West and its Tributaries*. *Canyons* imports with that source the popular acclaim Powell enjoyed following the publication of *Tributaries* in 1875 as a three-part adventure story in *Scribner's Monthly* and as an official report by the Government Printing Office. Editions of *Canyons* published since 1961 under the composite title of *The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons* emphasize the text's continuity with the 1875 publications.[1] But the text's remaining bulk, more than one-third of the 1895 volume, comprises "enlarged" descriptions of areas beyond the river's course and more than 250 illustrations Powell "gathered from the magazines and from various scientific reports" (Powell, *Canyons* 4-5). These additions distinguish *Canyons* from Powell's earlier text and

disrupt its narrative flow.[2] *Canyons* expands Powell's experiences beyond his iconic descent of the Colorado River into the canyon country beyond it.

Powell's most important additions contradict the narrative pace and nostalgic romance of his earlier adventures to fragment his experience of the West. Consider Powell's description of the "Tewan Plateau" in the "Mesas and Buttes" chapter he added to the 1895 text.[3] Where Powell's 1869 expedition propelled him westward as much on the Colorado River's current as on national enthusiasm for western expansion, here Powell approaches the Tewan Plateau from the west (39).[4] He has left the Colorado River's course to circle through Arizona and New Mexico and travel east to the Rio Grande drainage.

He begins with the rivers, situating Tewan "on the border" of the valley of the Little Colorado and "beyond the drainage of the Little Colorado and San Juan and within the drainage of the Rio Grande" (54). Though the Little Colorado's course outlines a border, the seasonal variation in western drainages transforms these landmarks into unstable suggestions. The plateau's western edge is "the Nacimiento Mountain, a long north-and-south range of granite," and the plateau stretches eastward, "far toward Santa Fé [*sic*] and is terminated by the canyon of the Rio Grande del Norte" (54-55). The specificity of cardinal directions erodes in the natural flow between heights and depths. "Sheets of lava" and "red sandstone" compose the plateau during centuries of "floods" and "explosions," and striate the space into "many

alternating layers" of sediment (55). Tewan is "booned with abundant rains," a separate oasis amid the surrounding desert, yet "divided into blocks by deep, precipitous canyons" (55). The space exists both within and beyond its grid of geological phenomena, a place without precise boundaries.

Powell then notes that the plateau is home to the "tribes of Tewan Indians, who built pueblos" of the volcanic rocks, erected shrines to the volcanic cones, and "excavated chambers in the cliffs" to escape Navajo invasion and the "Spanish adventurers [who] entered this country from Mexico" (55-58). Powell studies this material evidence and explains that the tribes cut building blocks for their pueblos, "twenty inches in length, eight inches in width, and six inches in thickness," and made "prayer symbols … of the plumage of birds of the air" (56). He does not explain routines of life or rituals of worship but speculates from a historical narrative of violence that the cliff dwellings were refuges for an industrious and devout people. He approximates the cliff city's size, "hundreds of feet high and thousands of feet or even miles in length," and notes that the people "constructed stairways in the soft rock" to reach the city (56).[5] He concludes that "the archaeologist" can connect the "cavate dwellings" to earlier violence against the Tewan people, but Powell says nothing about the living Tewan pueblo he and his U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of American Ethnology staffs visited to study this scene (58).[6]

This short episode constitutes two paragraphs, one each to summarize

the geological and anthropological research Powell directed over twenty years.[7] Each paragraph situates physical features into relations of cultural significance. Powell composes the water and rock ecosystem into the materials from which humans construct their lives. But as the written text frames the scene, several accompanying illustrations expand it. A drawing of "an ancient coiled vase of Tusayan" appears above the paragraph that introduces the Tewan Plateau to mark a cultural rather than geographical transition space between places in the Plateau Province (54).[8] The vase inverts a tension of the era's ethnographic displays. An artifact in a museum is inherently mobile, detached and displaced from contexts of creation or use and displayed within ethnographers' classificatory schemes.[9] Here, the illustration's fixity opposes the narrative's movement and privileges the inarticulate, affective authority of the images over Powell's limited explanations.

Nested within Powell's study of Tewan buildings is a drawing of "a typical cliff dwelling."[10] This drawing centers stone walls and windows between the cliff faces, the canyon's bottom, and the plateau's crest, and reimagines the scientific and ethnographic narrative into an encounter with the living present. The facing page moves this scene inside "A Room in a Pueblo," where the viewer sits with three people among the materials of their daily lives. Powell's description of Tewan concludes alongside the portrait of "a Navajo ready for a journey," whose upright stance and distant gaze

contrast the Tewan community's comfort in place and signal Powell's return to his narrative survey.[11]

This brief section highlights the unusual characteristics that distinguish *Canyons* from Powell's previous works and professional reputation. The written text portrays the vast plateau and abbreviates Powell's multiple visits to it, but the narrative cannot define the place nor capture the people who live there. The Tewan Plateau overstretches boundaries as its living people outpace ethnographers' efforts to depict them as "vanishing" or vanished.[12] The illustrations that appear within and alongside the passage exacerbate this disparity. Powell does not mention the images at all, but he admits that he "gathered" them from other publications for use in *Canyons* (4). The images do not translate, interpret, or represent Powell's words as late nineteenth-century writers and readers expected illustrations produced for a text to do.[13] Instead, the illustrations interrupt Powell's narrative to present the West differently, as a site between experiences that language cannot contain. Each image prompts the reader's awareness of the West's diverse landscapes and livelihoods, and the "many illustrations" together reveal the inability or impossibility of Powell's written text to account for the various affective registers of western experience.

Literary scholars, western historians, and government officials credit Powell with sketching the boundaries of the American West.[14] The textual incongruity of *Canyons of the Colorado* evinces an American West suspended

between the geopolitical boundaries Powell helped define and the experiences beyond them he could not explain. The text's "many illustrations" offset Powell's verbal elisions and expand his narrative of exploration into an experience of "westness," of the juxtaposition between ideas about and encounters in the American West (Campbell, *Affective* 2).[15] The text presents the West as a composition between and beyond boundaries, as an assemblage of historical reports, contemporary knowledge, pedagogical demonstrations, sketches, photographs, and illustrations. Such an assemblage, as Jane Bennett notes, gathers into "uneven topographies" "materials of all sorts," and generates "as much force as entity, as much energy as matter, as much intensity as extension" (*Vibrant* 24, 20). Following Bennett, Audrey Goodman uses material assemblage to present the region's shifting social and spatial relations ("Assembling"). The assembled materials of *Canyons* transform Powell's reprinted narrative into a new exploration of western places and imply that, by the end of his career, Powell doubted his and others' efforts to explain and define the West.

The material assemblage of *Canyons* contradicts what Rick Van Noy and José Liste Noya read as Powell's literary pursuit of a "spirit of place" or the written "presentation as a quest for knowledge" (Van Noy 184, Noya 4). The illustrations undermine Powell's narrative authority with what Roderick Coover describes as the "fundamental question of representation" (15). Coover, like Martha Sandweiss, finds a shift in *Canyons* from interpretive

illustrations to accurate photographs that substitutes romantic production of the West for rational appraisal of it (24).[16] *Canyons* gathers words, photographs, and illustrations to assemble simultaneous western experiences rather than organize or contemporize them.

These textual pieces also vivify the assemblage beyond Powell's explanation of it. Unlike the artifacts in Smithsonian collections which Powell's anthropologists labeled with meanings, the images in *Canyons* receive little or no explanation.[17] They do not complete Powell's narrative but open gaps within it that allow Powell and his reader to consider their affective possibilities rather than intellectual purposes. *Canyons* presents the West as these textual fragments, in the "always 'more-than-representational:' experienced, lived, performed, felt" experience of "affective regionality" (Campbell, *Affective* 5). *Canyons* creates an encounter with the "region-as-process" that acknowledges a precarious, inarticulate spatial imaginary, "actively engaging, extending, overlapping, mutating beyond itself at its edges and boundaries" (4, 8). *Canyons of the Colorado* fields affective regionality between the text's narrative organization and evocative illustrations. The text assembles the real-and-imagined fluidity of western space at its margins, in the fields of possibility between text and image, maker and viewer. The text preserves and perpetuates an experience of westness.

Gathering Scraps

Powell's gathering of these graphic materials becomes a practice of spatial assembly from marginalized material objects, or salvage. Unlike the process of martial recapitulation, through which Powell collected ethnological objects to increase national cultural capital and erase indigenous cultures, the practice of salvage detaches objects from their previous contexts to create new affective registers. Salvage combines materials into an assemblage of relations and possibilities. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari use an example of salvage craft, the patchwork quilt, to demonstrate this material composition and spatial abstraction.[18] Patchwork "is not only named for trajectories, but 'represents' trajectories" as it combines the "infinite, successive additions of fabric" and the routines of labor to organize scrap material into a physical space and project an imaginative space of mobility and extension (Deleuze 476-77). The quilt orients a haptic encounter with spatial relations as the quilt's maker creates relations and explores them.

In the context of this study, *Canyons of the Colorado* provides an example of salvage not yet separated from the textual apparatus. Where later chapters will employ material objects as the places for affective opposition to such institutional control, Powell approaches texts themselves as objects, as the materials he will gather into the relations of westness. Powell's preface to *Canyons* traces its haphazard genealogy. He acknowledges popular reception of the 1875 account and the part his reputation played in prompting the

subsequent 1895 text. He explains the composition of *Canyons*:

> I have concluded to publish a fuller account in popular form. In doing this I have revised and enlarged the original journal of exploration, and have added several new chapters descriptive of the region and of the people who inhabit it. Realizing the difficulty of painting in word colors a land so strange, so wonderful, so vast in its features, in the weakness of my descriptive powers I have sought refuge in graphic illustration, and for this purpose have gathered from the magazines and from various scientific reports an abundance of material. All of this illustrative material originated in my work, but it has already been used elsewhere. (4-5)

Here Powell explains that *Canyons* includes new material, he selected the illustrations, and he published the volume himself as a personal rather than professional project. But he smooths over the specifics. "Fuller" admits Powell's revisions and additions, and "revised and enlarged" describes more than copy edits to the *Tributaries* narrative. The phrase accounts for a new regional overview in the first chapter, the addition of his men's biographies to the journey's outset in "From Green River City to Flaming Gorge," and the two later chapters that Powell rewrites from his return visits to southwestern tribal communities, "Over the River" and "To Zuñi." These last portions resemble the content of an 1876 *Scribner's Monthly* article, "The Ancient Province of Tusayan," and include greater detail and appear in a daily journal format like *Tributaries*, which extends the time scheme of *Canyons*. [19]

"Several new chapters" include four sections that synthesize Powell's geological and ethnological research. Together, these additions constitute 150 of the text's 400 pages and consider more precisely and poetically the terrain Powell's earlier river journey propelled him past. Indeed, many of his most

memorable passages appear in these new parts, including this description of southern California:

> Over this coastal zone there falls a balm distilled from the great ocean, as gentle showers and refreshing dews bathe the land. When rains come the emerald hills laugh with delight as bourgeoning bloom is spread in the sunlight. When the rains have ceased all the verdure turns to gold. (19)

Here Powell reveals that the text contains his experiences over time, as his earlier river expedition barely lasted a season. In the summer of 1869, rain was a circumstance that exhausted the men and made the river run red; by 1895, rain is a character in Powell's prosopopeic pastoral, laughing at it heals, bathes, and tickles a land that in every season is a form of wealth, emerald and gold (263, 238, 19).

The sources of the illustrations in *Canyons* are harder to trace than the origins of its narrative because Powell obscures his claim to what he twice calls graphic "material." Powell explains that the images "originated in my work," and "in" signals their creation under Powell's supervision rather than their appearance within articles and reports bearing Powell's name, or "as" his work. Their having "already been used elsewhere" ostensibly separates Powell's gathering of them in *Canyons* from his influence over their previous printings.[20] The images do not represent his work but re-place an expansive West under his name, beyond the Colorado River to Yellowstone Park and the Mojave Desert.

From Powell's description, I located most of the 259 illustrations in annual reports for the Bureau of Ethnology and U.S. Geological Survey

published during the 1880s, in Powell's *Scribner's Monthly* articles in 1875, and in *Tributaries*. The few remaining images connect *Canyons* to publications outside of Powell's purview, such as the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey for 1874 and A. C. Wheeler's 1876 *Scribner's* article, "On the Iron Road." The images' variety obliterates any pattern in their inclusion or placement. Thomas Moran's illustrations, John K. Hillers's engraved photographs, and William H. Holmes's geographic panoramas repeat from Powell's *Scribner's* and *Tributaries* publications.[21] Other images, including 67 photographs and drawings from Victor Mindeleff's "Study of Pueblo Architecture: Tusayan and Cibola," connect Powell to his staff's work in the American Southwest during the mid-1880s.[22] The many images clutter the text with little connection to the narrative and only a vague caption from which to infer relevance.

For example, several illustrations of the Rocky Mountains appear facing descriptions of southwestern deserts. Two such images, "Mountain of the Holy Cross" by Moran and "Snow-clad Mountains on the River" by Holmes, first appeared in Ferdinand V. Hayden's 1874 report (*Canyons* 38, 26, Hayden 54, 65). That Powell includes them is surprising since Powell's own work does not appear in Hayden's report at all and Powell would not assume leadership of the organization until 1879. Other pages accumulate ethnographical research by Frank H. Cushing, Washington Matthews, and James Stevenson, and ten pages of their images from five annual reports

separate Powell's visit to Zuñi from his summary description of the Grand Canyon (*Canyons* 380). Powell disconnects these illustrative materials from their earlier contexts by giving them new captions. Holmes names the specific "Snow Mass group" near Aspen, Colorado, but Powell obscures their origin as "Snow-Clad Mountains."[23] Stevenson's four separate illustrated catalog entries of Zuñi water vases and canteens have become one plate of generic "Zuñi Pottery" (374).[24]

The effects of this assemblage are three-fold. First, the images appear to assemble the author's ideas rather than satisfy any audience curiosity. The illustrations do not complement the narrative, and their captions do not explain their contents.[25] The images instead indicate Powell's familiarity with an overwhelming variety of source material. As Powell claims that he "gathered" the materials and published the text through the small Chautauqua firm "Flood & Vincent," the images likely appear in the text where Powell wanted them (Flood 722).[26] The assembled illustrations present the idiosyncrasy of a scrapbook, akin to the "multidimensional" laboratory books that Katherine Ott notes male professionals in the late nineteenth century created to study and teach their work ("Between" 29).

Scrap-work as a form of salvage practice precedes its association with women's privacy, sentimentality, and leisure to afford any individual a place in which to collect clippings from the period's abundant published material.[27] Samuel Clemens patented "Mark Twain's Self-Pasting Scrapbook" in 1873,

and Brander Matthews, writing as Arthur Penn in 1886, suggests that a scrapbook "of real use" will "be able to lay every scrap on any topic under [a man's] eyes all at once" (Garvey 61, Matthews 82). Powell's *Canyons* appears to participate in this tradition by collecting words and pictures from previously published materials into a single volume.[28]

Matthews credits James Garfield's effectiveness as President with "his adroit handling of facts and figures treasured up for him" in his "extensive scrap-books" (80). Garfield connects Powell to scrap practice most directly, as Powell credits then Congressman Garfield with insisting the 1875 "history of the exploration should be published by the government" (*Canyons* 4). Roderick Coover notes that Garfield's support "corresponds with the integration of different kinds of imagery, of both graphic and artistic natures, during this period" (39 n. 2). Powell's scrapbook gathers diverse materials into monographic focus, despite the disorder of its individual pieces. As Susan Stewart explains, to reorganize materials without recourse to their origin makes "temporality a spatial and material phenomenon" (153). Where Powell's biography entwines discrete moments into a continuous experience, the scraps gather mobility and variety into book. Powell's history in the West becomes a textual space of the West.

Canyons transforms Powell's eccentric arrangement into an official record. The text's many illustrations cooperate with Powell's professional reputation to create what Hsuan Hsu calls the "authenticity effect," a

rhetorical construction of historical legitimacy through "the very abundance of both textual captions and visual supplements" ("Authentic" 310). Unlike Walter Benjamin's concept of authenticity that inheres in an object's material connection to the past, Hsu's authenticity-effect occurs between objects and their construction of an imagined or ideological "history" (Benjamin 221, Hsu, "Authentic" 309). Detached from temporality, text and thing reciprocate an idea of authenticity. The narrative authorizes the material object, and the objects accrue narrative legitimacy.

In *Canyons*, an example of this process occurs between Powell's preface and the text's documentary images. Photographs of pueblo architecture and illustrations of museum catalog entries appear separated from their original publications and therefore lack a substantive connection to the historical record. Within the assembled context of *Canyons*, Powell explains that the images come from "various scientific reports," and they represent the authority of those reports, not reproduce their content. This dialectic of reinforcement entwines the words and images of *Canyons* with the influence of U.S. government institutions. Powell's duties as director of both the U. S. G. S. and Bureau of American Ethnology included editing annual reports, placing him among the illustrations from which he chose the materials for *Canyons*. Those images index the authority of the Department of the Interior or the Smithsonian Institution as much as they enact Powell's authorial intent. The authenticity-effect of *Canyons* relies on the institutional authority

under which Powell worked and blurs Powell's personal interests with his institutions' power. This effect clarifies Wallace Stegner's and other scholars' deference to Powell's brief explanation of the images' sources.[29] The images manifest the breadth of Powell's experience. *Canyons* authenticates Powell's professional reputation and that reputation has determined the critical reception of *Canyons*.

Yet in their material "abundance," the illustrations expose a gap in *Canyons* between Powell's intent to encompass a region and his inability to represent western regionality. The images represent Powell's experience and expose the limits of that experience. Or as Hsu explains, even as the profusion of visual materials reinforces the authenticity-effect of those materials, their "heterogeneity and the superficiality of their content" disclose their mediation of reality ("Authentic" 310). The textual integrity asserted by all of the images breaks down when the viewer considers each image. Each image provokes affective rather than intellectual responses, and each image fields new possibilities in the margins between words and images, text and context. In the practice of salvage, this transitory zone is the "selvage." Salvage arranges materials into a space of variety and expands the selvage, or border, into a place of encounter, or what Latour calls "the margin of manœuvre" (39).

Exposing Institutions

In *Canyons*, this selvage appears in "A Room in a Pueblo," the only full-page illustration within the Tewan Plateau passage (Figure 1). At first glance, the plate resembles a life-group diorama, with its reclined figure facing away from the viewer, "in a posture that the [viewer] might easily adopt, stepping into the scene" (Brown 95). To arrange these displays, museum curators removed material artifacts from formal object groups and positioned them in mannequins' hands. Such occupational displays enacted a new anthropological approach in the 1890s that sought to connect geographical place and cultural practice in a context of use. Franz Boas would become famous for life-group exhibits for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and later for the Chicago Field Museum, American Museum of Natural History, and Smithsonian Institution (Ames 51, Brown 94). In Chicago, Powell had worked with Smithsonian employees Otis T. Mason and Frank H. Cushing to orient the U.S. National Museum's displays around his map of the "Linguistic Stocks of American Indians" (Goode 127, Jenkins 259). Powell's map gathered linguistic variety into a single landscape.[30] Mason encircled it with sixteen alcoves, each with "a group of lay figures of men and women or children, dressed in proper costume and engaged in typical occupations" and "as many examples of the handiwork of that people as possible" (Goode 129). Boas's exhibits fragmented narratives of historical progress to situate individual material interactions in unique

Figure 1. “A Room in a Pueblo,” engraving by H. H. Nichols. J. W. Powell, *Canyons of the Colorado*, Meadville, Pa.: Flood & Vincent, 1895, p. 57. Reproduction courtesy of Princeton University Library.

places, while Powell's geographic imaginary permitted diverse historical, political, social, and material relations in common spaces.

No imperial map orients Powell's approach to "A Room in a Pueblo." Instead, Powell follows indigenous footsteps up cliff faces. He combines his own "general" knowledge of the plateau, "that remains as a map engraved on [his] mind," with a "particular" tribal knowing of "every rock and every ledge, every gulch and canyon, and just where to wind among these to find a pass" (*Canyons* 300). Powell walks between the "general" map "engraved" on his mind and the myriad singularity of "every" rock and canyon he passes.

His description resembles the practice of "(re)mapping," in which Mishuana Goeman finds that "the simultaneous metaphoric and material capacities of map making … generate new possibilities" for experiences beyond imposed geographic boundaries (3). For Goeman, these "new possibilities" exist between designated places like reservations and lived-in spaces, such as a migratory worker's pickup truck for a "bed" or a community "convenience store" in a family's home (4, 8). (Re)mapping enables Goeman to oppose the settler colonial systems of spatial control with which Powell's government surveys and studies were complicit. (Re)mapping also expands or "carves out" a selvage between the narrative relations of metaphorical maps and the spatial relations of material ones (5). *Canyons* troubles Powell's mapping of western boundaries to admit his awareness of an "affective regionality" beyond them. He imagines the "engraved" map and feels the

rocks under his feet. He has stepped into the scene to find his topographic imaginary fragmented into "the particulars of a route" (*Canyons* 300). Powell's narrative map eschews what Judith Fryer calls a masculine approach to space—measuring, mastering, mythologizing—in favor of a feminine approach to gather experience in the materials for a quilt, a scrapbook, a story (245, 247).

"A Room in a Pueblo" then illustrates affective intimacy where it interrupts Powell's imperial narrative. Unlike Powell's superficial descriptions, the image places the viewer inside a room lit brightly through window, door, and ceiling openings. The illustration translates the written text's abstract dimensions into a haptic scene, where the viewer perceives his position in the room from the materials he is close enough to touch. A pot appears on a shelf in the left corner and another, on the floor in the right foreground. Yet unlike Boas's and Mason's dioramas, the individual objects here are of less note than the room's abundance of materials. Above the door hangs a ristra of drying chiles. Next to the door sit two sacks and several containers. In the right corner is a hearth above which hangs the drying laundry and next to which is stacked extra firewood. In the right foreground, drying corn hangs above a mealing trough and more containers. And in the left foreground the three figures appear casually grouped in shadow, two faces unreadable and one face unknown.

The image introduces a depth to Powell's narrative that calls into

question the purpose of *Canyons*. If the image is to supplement Powell's narrative, the label elides the necessary connection. The image originally appeared as "Room in a Pueblo of Taos," in Lewis H. Morgan's 1881 *Houses and House-Life of American Aborigines*. It appeared first in Volume IV of the Bureau of The Interior's *Contributions in North American Ethnology*, a series that appeared under Powell's name first as the director of the U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region and later as director of the U.S. Geological Survey. The original caption connects the image to a specific pueblo in Powell's Tewan region, and Morgan explains that the image reproduces Powell's own experiences there, as H. H. Nichols's engraving "is from a sketch by Mr. [F. G.] Galbraith, who accompanied Major Powell's party in New Mexico [in the 1870s]" (Powell, *Linguistic* 122, Morgan 149). However, as it appears in *Canyons*, the image merely imports "A Room in a Pueblo," equally detached from the historical accuracy of its content and from the institutional authority of its context.[31] It predates the use of life-group dioramas in museum displays, but rewards a reader familiar with such compositions. The illustration mobilizes spatial and social relations beyond Powell's narrative.

If the image is to supplant the narrative, it instead investigates the narrative's spatial consequences. "A Room in a Pueblo" repeats the conventions of life-group displays to manifest a narrative of domestic labor. Yet the illustration includes people in a moment of rest, their tools left

unattended on the hearth or stored away for use at another time while they sit together and talk. The composition doesn't conform to the "poetics of attachment" Bill Brown posits for the museum displays' physical contact between human figure and object (92). "A Room in a Pueblo" instead spatializes narrative. The image brings the viewer close enough to hear the figures and admits greater intimacy than all Powell's descriptions, and yet the image's silence betrays a narrative boundary in the place. A viewer can inhabit the posture of the reclined figure, yet not the story being told. The image forestalls explanatory closure and social inclusion to depict an alternate, affective plurality.

The image's most provocative detail is the doorway, opening onto the community plaza beyond the room with the outline of another home in the distance. It reminds us that the "room in a pueblo" is both inside a pueblo and part of the pueblo, and collapses the distinction between constructed geographic and community relations. The steps leading to the threshold continue an upward movement along the ladder across the way, which, like the ladder in the room, reminds the viewer that these people live more out of doors than inside them. More than the window and the ceiling openings, the doorway reveals the plateau's "intimate immensity," an experience which Fryer locates at the conjunction of protective enclosures and vast horizons (310). Though the image imposes familiar domestic arrangement on an unfamiliar scene, the doorway allows for an escape from such frames of

knowing into a world beyond them. The image becomes a space of refuge, a place of both protection and preservation in which Powell invites the viewer to consider affective possibilities beyond his immediate experiences.

The image expands two thresholds, between the room's interior and the plateau's vastness, and between the text's materiality and the West's variety. Each space becomes a selvage, a place of transition between borders. The illustration extends beyond the text's frames to invite affective variety. Powell captures this spatial imaginary in his term "refuge": "Realizing the difficulty of painting in word colors a land so strange, so wonderful, so vast in its features, in the weakness of my descriptive powers I have sought refuge in graphic illustration" (*Canyons* 4). Powell does not propose the illustrations complement his narrative but he creates a new understanding of the West with them. Beyond language, the images preserve the affective possibilities of such places. "Refuge" includes the location of retreat and includes the movement to it, as its Latin origin denotes flight or escape ("Refuge"). Thus "refuge" captures spatiality and mobility, a place and a practice. Powell's illustrations evoke a West vaster than his experience and create the refuge in which to explore western variety. His narrative describes the West while his illustrative materials assemble westness.

In the image, the room's material clutter contrasts the pueblo's vast horizon. In the narrative, Powell's explanations conflict with his acknowledgement of their limits, or as he excuses it, "the weakness of my

descriptive powers" (*Canyons* 4). Throughout the text, illustrations and words cooperate and compete to make Powell's reader aware of the thresholds, borders, margins, gaps, and points of transition: experience both is there *and* here and representational space is "both/and also" (Soja, *Thirdspace* 5). Powell creates this textual selvage through material assemblage, gathering "an abundance of material" in a pastiche of museum display techniques to create a "refuge in graphic illustration" and transform "a popular account" into a protracted experience (*Canyons* 5, 4). By blending new narratives with previously published reports, Powell disorders time. By assembling geological diagrams, indigenous scenes, photographic studies, and artifactual catalogs, he subverts institutional authority to imagine the place beyond institutional definition.

Foregrounding Margins

The selvage in *Canyons* expands during Powell's descent of the Green River, below Flaming Gorge, Wyoming. Powell imports the episode's narrative from his *Tributaries* account without amendment. The scene famously opens Powell's voyage down the Colorado River with his team's "anxiety" toward this first "mysterious canyon" and their exciting trip through it (*Canyons* 133). Powell runs Flaming Gorge "on a swift current," and enters a "narrow passage" below it between "ledges and cliffs, —500, 1,000, 1,500 feet high" (134). Powell then positions himself in his boat in the

river rapids:

> I stand up on the deck of my boat to seek a way among the wave-beaten rocks. All untried as we are with such waters, the moments are filled with intense anxiety. Soon our boats reach swift current; a stroke or two, now on this side, now on that, and we thread the narrow passage with exhilarating velocity, mounting the high waves, whose foaming crests dash over us, and plunging into the troughs, until we reach the quiet water below. Then comes a feeling of great relief. (134)

Here, emotions overwhelm the surveyor's objectivity. The river's current outpaces Powell's visual study of cartographic distances and geological measurements to excite his body. He stands upright, "mounting" high and "plunging into" the river's waves, as his crew paddles "a stroke or two" and delivers the men through the "foaming crests" to the "quiet waters below." Slow "anxiety" becomes "exhilarating velocity," which resolve into an even current of "great relief." Such intensity overwhelms Powell's insistence that his river survey "was not made for adventure" (3). High cliffs and waves dwarf the men and their understanding. Natural forces overwhelm human actions. Narrow canyons propel the river's current with a speed that magnifies the rock walls. Speed permits only affective responses, anxiety, excitement, and relief. Yet Powell surveys the canyon even as the current sends him through it, and he stands to "seek a way," to see his space differently. The scene demonstrates nothing so much as Powell's awareness of his position on his point of view. He stands against natural forces within the narrative, upright on the boat's deck through the rapids, and he stands outside these forces to later organize the narrative for heightened effect.

The account surrounds another commentary on perspective, an illustration of the "Camp at Flaming Gorge" that Thomas Moran adapted for *Scribner's* from E. O. Beaman's photograph of Powell's 1872 expedition (Figure 2).[32] The illustration foregrounds shrubs and trees to frame a rugged peak across the river. The water reflects the trees on the opposite bank and divides the scene's upper, distant two-thirds from the intimacy of a camp on the near shore, making the mountain seem even larger. Several figures appear near the shelter on the left, reading or engaging in conversation. None of them takes in the view. Rebecca Solnit notes that "stability in a landscape image often comes from the more or less horizontal line of the horizon or the inhabitable level of the foreground," and here the camp makes the foreground literally inhabitable (86). The tree nearest the viewer's position on the left interposes between the camp and the viewer to create the "intimate immensity" of the vantage point. The viewer alone sees a selvage in which the confined comfort of the camp and the expansive grandeur of the mountain coexist within the trees' frame. The stereographic camera in the center foreground does more than highlight "the process of [the image's] production," as Coover suggests (34). It interrupts the experience of viewing with an awareness of the spatiality of point of view. Together the camera, camp, and peak triangulate a space of instability between perspectives, a selvage between multiple viewpoints. Where the narrative transitions between objective and subjective perspectives, the illustration's nested domestic,

Entering Flaming Gorge, we quickly run through it on a swift current and emerge into a little park. Half a mile below, the river wheels sharply to the left and enters another canyon cut into the mountain. We enter the narrow passage. On either side the walls rapidly increase in altitude. On the left are overhanging ledges and cliffs,—500, 1,000, 1,500 feet high.

CAMP AT FLAMING GORGE.

On the right the rocks are broken and ragged, and the water fills the channel from cliff to cliff. Now the river turns abruptly around a point to the right, and the waters plunge swiftly down among great rocks; and here we have our first experience with canyon rapids. I stand up on the deck of my boat to seek a way among the wave-beaten rocks. All untried as we are with such waters, the moments are filled with intense anxiety. Soon our boats reach the swift current; a stroke or two, now on this side, now on that, and we thread the narrow passage with exhilarating velocity, mounting the high waves, whose foaming crests dash over us, and plunging into the troughs, until we reach the quiet water below. Then comes a feeling of great relief. Our first rapid is run. Another mile, and we come into the valley again.

Figure 1. "Camp at Flaming Gorge," engraving by Thomas Moran. J. W. Powell, *Canyons of the Colorado*, Meadville, Pa.: Flood & Vincent, 1895, p. 134. Reproduction courtesy of Princeton University Library.

natural, and technological frames disclose the borders of viewing.

The photograph on the facing page appears to offer an escape from the tensions within the camp image, just as the river's calmer waters permit Powell a "feeling of great relief" after the canyon's turmoil. The photograph shows the pueblo of "Mashongnavi, with Shupaulovi in the distance," as photographed by Victor Mindeleff in 1885 (Figure 3).[33] Where canyons surround Powell's narrative and trees frame Moran's illustration, Mindeleff's exposed plateau appears boundless. Mashongnavi is centered in the image's upper-third, just below the featureless horizon line and open sky. Rock formations ground a diagonal in the lower left corner that moves through Mashongnavi to the distant Shupaulovi in the upper right corner and creates visual movement through the plateau and beyond. A standing figure down the path on the right and a seated figure amid the rocks near the pueblo walls to the left evince the scene's immense scale. The plateau's aridity opposes the narrative of the river's current and removes the distortion of the river's reflection in Moran's illustration. The plateau's dry air affords clear sight beyond the immediate or the composed. Set to the right of the Flaming Gorge passage, the photograph imports Powell's later experiences in the canyon country beyond the river's current.

The photograph appears rotated, forcing the reader to turn the text clockwise to see the scene. This position truncates the photograph's expansive sky in the text's gutter and aligns the separate spaces of Wyoming and

MASHONGNAVI, WITH SHUPAULOVI IN THE DISTANCE.

Figure 3. "Mashongnavi, with Shupaulovi in the Distance," photograph by Victor Mindeleff. J. W. Powell, *Canyons of the Colorado*, Meadville, Pa.: Flood & Vincent, 1895, p. 135. Reproduction courtesy of Princeton University Library.

Arizona in the text's material assemblage. Narrative, illustration, and photograph cooperate to disclose Powell's awareness of boundaries, both at the edges of the page and at the limits of witness. As in Powell's description of the rapids, Mindeleff's photograph juxtaposes pace and perspective. Where the river's natural force constrains narrative content, the technological speed of the camera's shutter opposes the endurance of desert rocks. Both Moran and Mindeleff anchor their scenes with geometric forms, and together the square tent and rectangular pueblo create a continuity of cultural constructions. Moran's tent looks nothing like the mountain beyond the river, but Mindeleff's distant ruins of Shupaulovi repeat the sharp outlines of the plateau's rock formations in an example of Latour's continuous relation of nature-culture (7).[34] Each frame no longer contains each image but emphasizes the tension of framing. Instead of composing content, the images juxtapose context.

None of these scenes offers a place of refuge but together they compel mobility toward refuge, an escape beyond borders. Powell's present-tense, first-person narrative stands the reader in his shoes on the deck of the boat, yet neither boat nor narrator can resist the river's current. Moran's viewer stands under the trees only temporarily, as camp and camera indicate impending travel. The mobile tent indexes a stationary elsewhere and tomorrow's picture records today's experience. Mindeleff's photographer is utterly exposed, high on bare rocks in the desert summer sun while those

who live here seek the shadows for shelter. Though the pueblo's inhabitants have worn a path between this place and their doors, the photographer remains outside and finally retreats from the pueblo entirely to publish his report. Together, these textual elements displace the singular viewpoint of Powell's narrative authority. They evoke affective possibilities his language cannot capture, such as vulnerability and triumph on the deck of the *Emma Dean*, anticipation and doubt in camp on Green River, and exposure and escape at the pueblo in Arizona. The text's competing borders force an awareness of textual limits and provoke the imagination of experience beyond them. The narrative, illustration, and photograph locate individual scenes, but together foreground a selvage between them in which margins become central spaces of multiple and changing affective registers.

Arranging Materials

Thus far, Powell's textual salvage materializes borders to disclose a dynamic spatial imaginary, or affective regionality, between them. Powell's tracing of so many borders presents the impossibility of any border to contain westness. The text cannot fix Powell's experience or the West in history or geography. Between the canyons of his descriptions, the frames of his illustrations, and even the edges of the text's pages, Powell creates a selvage of perpetual affective variety. This margin expands among the illustrated items that appear in Powell's account of his visits to the indigenous

communities of Oraibi, Walpi, and Zuñi.[35] Unlike the text's other expansive views and intimate scenes, these fourteen pages present only material objects grouped together according to their form. The items receive no justification in narrative or caption, and they appear beyond any context of origin or use. Depicting such abstract serial display, the images seem to replicate a formal mode of museum exhibition. As the "interesting results [that] accrued" from ethnographical research Powell oversaw after 1870, the images instead salvage regional excess (*Canyons* 364).

Film theory employs "excess" to connote something that intrudes on the viewing experience and opposes a film's "unifying forces," such as extravagant costumes that distract a viewer's attention from plot, character, or style (Thompson 513). In *Canyons*, Powell's serial illustrations similarly interrupt a narrative of indigenous cultural traditions with what could be objective evidence of those traditions. The images' myriad objects do not connect to the written text. They instead accumulate material in excess to the text that opens for the reader a space in the text in which to doubt the unity or authority of that text. Detached from indigenous cultures and anthropological explanations, these illustrated artifacts accumulate an "excess of signification," in which Eric Santner combines past, latent, and imposed meanings in the persistently material (78). The serial object groups locate excessive material and excessive meaning, or what Suanne Ngai would call a "heap" or "adhesion" of materials rather than a "coherence" or

"orderliness" of their relations (288-89). These illustrated heaps or assemblages disorder Powell's more familiar institutional forms. And as evidence of regional excess, the accumulated materials suggest a West not diminished by the objects' removals or contained by those who removed them. The prolific images instead indicate a persistence of regional production, in the creation of materials as well as in the ongoing experience of westness.

The serial illustrations depict Powell's return to his interest in a dynamic West after a career surveying terrain and overseeing artifact collection. Powell's early writings evince his cultural curiosity, and in "The Ancient Province of Tusayan," published in *Scribner's Monthly* in December 1875, Powell praises "an agricultural people [in Oraibi] … having skill in manufacture and ornamentation of pottery, raising cotton, and weaving and dyeing their own clothing, skilled in a system of picture-writings, having a vast store of mythology, and an elaborate, ceremonious religion" ("Cañons" 212). In the early 1880s, Smithsonian Institution Secretary Spencer F. Baird forestalled Powell's cultural investigations with a warning that "members of Congress were less interested in Indian languages, customs, and governments than in specimens for the National Museum—specimens that could be seen by visitors to the capital city" (Jenkins 251). Congress also controlled the operating budgets of Powell's departments, and the abundant records of material objects that appear in the Bureau of American Ethnology's annual reports indicate that Powell acquiesced to the demand for

"specimens" (Jenkins 251).

Powell's revised notes on his Oraibi visit in *Canyons* appear to describe a similar shift from cultural context to material accrual:

> For two days we employ our time in making a collection of the arts of the people of [Oraibi]. First, we display to them our stock of goods, composed of knives, needles, awls, scissors, paints, dyestuffs, leather, and various fabrics in gay colors. Then we go around to the people and select the articles of pottery, stone implements, instruments and utensils made of bone, horn, shell, articles of clothing and ornament, baskets, trays, and many other things. (342)

The scene does not depict a cultural endeavor so much as a commodities exchange. Knives, scissors, and mass-produced "fabrics in gay colors" equate to so many stone implements, articles of homespun clothing, and pieces of pottery. The trades make no account of provenance or purpose as all gained objects accrue into the "results" of ethnologists' work (364). Detached from Oraibi and displaced to Washington, D.C., the collected objects further compound into the cultural capital of the capital city. Powell's serial illustrations invoke this mode of consumption by accumulating an abundance of objects.

Yet the images depict his critique of the abstraction of cultural practice that such consumption requires. Where his earlier article praised indigenous technique, *Canyons* reduces practice to product and removes images from any context other than the objective. As in museum displays of the same period, Powell separated material objects from narratives of cultural use to arrange them in serial groups of similar objects. Michael Ames explains that as

anthropological investigation matured during the nineteenth century, so the displays of ethnographical evidence shifted from the natural history exhibits of "primitive" specimens through the contextual arrangements of cultural scenarios to the formal comparison of material objects (50-52). Each convention places objects in relation to a different narrative.

Specimens propagate what Stephen Tatum calls a kind of "synecdochal magic where part objects (e.g. Navajo rugs) were construed as expressing the 'whole' of a culture" ("Spectrality" 25). Objects in use enact a metonymy whereby the object stands in what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains as "a contiguous relation to an absent whole" (388). And objects "typologically arranged … according to basic form (the kind of object) rather than to specific function within a historically, geographically, and tribally specific milieu," as Brown describes serial display, enable aesthetic classification (89). Each arrangement annexes the material object to the narrative it serves. The synecdochal specimen is a representative piece of a cultural whole. The metonymic tool indexes an ongoing practice elsewhere in which it no longer participates. The formal example constructs an entirely new context of abstract, material properties. In every arrangement, narrative continuity overrides each object's material characteristics.

The serial images juxtapose such narrative authority to court the reader's curiosity among Powell's salvage materials. As usual, Powell's written text does not address the serial illustrations at all and the reader

encounters the images with little interpretation. For example, the section of *Canyons* that includes Powell's "revised" chapters "Over the River" and "To Zuñi" begins with an illustration entitled "Ancient Pottery from Tusayan" (Figure 4). Unlike the earlier illustration of "An Ancient Coiled Vase from Tusayan," which appeared by itself within Powell's description of the Tewan Plateau, this illustration gathers four drawings of individual pots on a separate page. The objects are similar to each other in shape and decoration. Each item is rounded with an opening at the top, and each bears black and white geometric designs.

Just as the objects' forms repeat, so each item's graphic elements repeat, and the grouping effects the iterative repeatability Jessica Dubow notes is necessary of an example (826). Each image repeats a material object and cooperates with the illustrated group to exemplify the captioned "pottery." The images and label perpetuate the authenticity-effect of *Canyons* and import a logic of formal museum display that asserts aesthetic value through material abundance. Just as *Canyons* reciprocates Powell's institutional pedigree through its many graphic materials, so a museum curator's expertise on material objects collaborates with an extensive accumulation of items to compare. The illustrated group of "Ancient Pottery" combines material objects, illustrated representations, and captioned exposition to display anthropological expertise. The image represents the legitimacy of Powell's narrative, of his collecting objects from indigenous

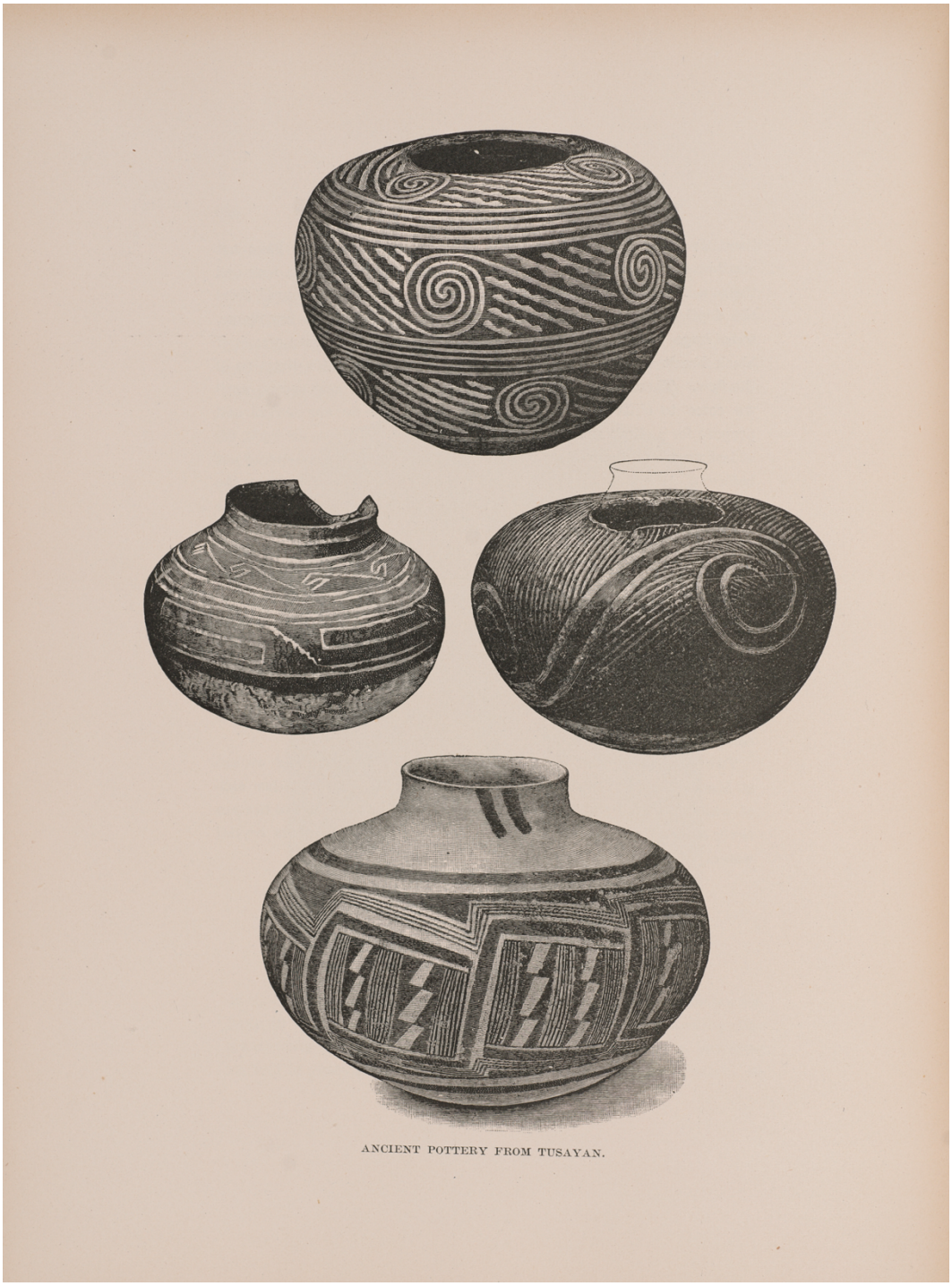

Figure 2. "Ancient Pottery of Tusayan," drawings by W. H. Holmes. J. W. Powell, *Canyons of the Colorado*, Meadville, Pa.: Flood & Vincent, 1895, p. 326. Reproduction courtesy of Princeton University Library.

groups, of his government staffs' ethnological reports, and of his textual assemblage.

As Stewart notes, "to group objects in a series because they are 'the same' is to simultaneously signify their difference" (155). Within the group, each item's shape varies at its top. The bottom image depicts a neck while the top image shows none. The two central images have broken edges, a cracked lip on the left object and the outline of a missing neck of the right object. Following the pattern of Powell's earlier illustrations to depict spatial phenomena, these material differences represent the variation of western places, with a flat horizon, with a crumbling ruin, with a vertical cliff face, and with a real-and-imagined multiplicity of features.

The images' designs similarly vary, from rectangular shapes to spirals, limited to horizontal strata or covering an entire round form. They reverse the transformation of material shapes into spatial features as the designs transpose received structures onto imaginative creations. Horizontal lines across three objects enclose spirals, rectangles, and squares like a map's grid, while the sweep of a single open spiral on the center right item invites a departure from these organized spaces. The designs juxtapose the objects' forms to reveal the networks in which the items still participate, not in production or consumption but in haptic perception and affective provocation.

Each illustrated object further depicts an enclosure from a point of view that discloses the selvage between inside and outside, containment and

expansion. Each item asserts itself as a margin and expands into multiple possibilities. Yet this viewpoint is a consequence of the illustration's assemblage of images, not of a perspective of each image's production. Indeed, each item reproduces a separate illustration from William H. Holmes's 1883 study of "Pottery of the Ancient Pueblos," and Powell's illustration seems to paste the images together on a single page.[36] As such, the images do not so much index Powell's collecting of material objects from indigenous communities as his collecting of materialized images from his staffs' reports.

Powell cannot displace material images that originated without spatial connection, but he can replace such items to create a new space. The items appear within the field of the page, not arranged in a display. Only the bottom image includes the shadow of a physical position, a detail that asserts the object's material boundary in space and reproduces its effect on its place. As an illustrated addition, the shadow becomes a selvage of material possibility that the object creates but does not control. The bottom object's shadow becomes as suggestive of an elsewhere as the lack of shadows from the objects above. Just as Powell contrasts narrative, imagined, and photographic points of view to triangulate a critical perspective of the text's point of view, the serial illustration provokes a sort of punctum beyond the text, to borrow Roland Barthes's term for the "element that rises from the scene" to involve its viewer (26). The illustration's variety fragments its accumulated authority of the government agency, the museum, and the text.

The gaps between the objects permit a dynamic regional network beyond the objects.

Powell's salvage of the graphic materials revises the geographic consequences of such materials. They present a new relationship between explanatory text and displayed objects that gestures beyond the text's borders. Michael Baxandall posits that, where "the elements of naming, information, and exposition" no longer supersede the object's material presence, this space between object and label fields contact between the object's viewer, exhibitor, and maker (36-7). In Powell's serial illustration, the simple caption contrasts the images' myriad features, as material objects with different features and textual elements with different origins. The disparity between words and things on the page provokes the viewer's curiosity about Powell's connections off the page, which prompts a consideration of the places beyond the text, on the plateaus of the American Southwest and in the pueblos of Tusayan.

The textual display stages a critical imaginary that gathers sites of experience into a perpetual affective exploration. The arrangement on the page belies disarray beyond the page, in which social discourses and spatial definitions cannot restrict the activity of regionality. This process resembles what Campbell describes as a "redistribution of the sensible," whereby the activity of regional networks disrupts the "regime of representation" that tries to fix a "region" in discourse and subordinate it as the source of urban

centers' material resources (4, 2). Powell's rearranging of material objects, the abundant images of his salvage craft, opposes a similar fixity of institutional control. The serial illustrations activate connections between and beyond textual elements to disclose a persistent experience of westness.

Salvaging Regionality

The pueblo's doorway, the plateau's horizon, and the page's edge each manifest the selvage of Powell's regional experience. Together they materialize the practice of salvage and the possibility for such assemblage to include the multiple affective experiences of a dynamic experience of region, or regionality. Indeed, such a practice becomes Powell's preferred method of expression, as the narrative of *Canyons* finally fails to organize his diverse experiences.

Consider his intrusion in the "Over the River" chapter. Powell interrupts his description of the view of the Grand Canyon from the summit of the Kaibab Plateau in September, 1871, to explain that, "twenty-one years later I read over the notes of that day's experience and the picture of the Grand Canyon from this point is once more before me" (*Canyons* 328). He explains that the view is "the grandest that can be obtained in the region from Fremont's Peak to the Gulf of California," and that he later returned with Thomas Moran, who "from this world of wonder … selected a section which was most interesting to him and painted it" as his famous work, "The

Chasm of the Colorado."[37] The paragraph substitutes Powell's description of the initial viewpoint for a "picture" of the scene recollected twenty-one years later, a picture that contrasts Moran's painting of a "section" of "this world of wonder" that Powell concludes is "too vast, too complex, to grand for verbal description" (331).

The paragraph breaks across two serial illustrations of "Tusayan Fetiches and Implements [*sic*]" and "Tusayan Basketry."[38] The images of carved animals, wooden tools, and baskets of various shapes and designs appear to enact the variety Powell mentions, but now as a material fact rather than a geological phenomenon. Ngai explains such heaping occurs when language becomes futile, and here Powell assembles material to evince a spatiality his narrative cannot capture (289). The illustrated objects' lack of spatial context also contrasts the specificity of Moran's "section," which Powell limits within the Grand Canyon's expanse and fixes "in a hall in the Senate wing of the Capitol of the United States" (*Canyons* 328). The ethnographic objects appear detached from any such institutional apparatus and evince the spaces missing from Powell's narrative. The West is indeed too much for Powell to explain, and his materials assemble a diverse West within the text as the materials gesture toward a spatial vastness beyond the text.

Powell concludes *Canyons* in a similarly "composite" Grand Canyon, where "multifarious and exceedingly diverse" features overwhelm "language and illustration combined" (390, 394). Powell expands his salvage to include

the "music of waters," and both music and water flow through the text to expand the spatial imaginary beyond it (394). Powell also courts the sublime, as if such shorthand for inarticulate awe could excuse his incomplete knowledge and inadequate description of the canyon's characteristics. Rick Van Noy explains that Powell's sublime is less the shock of overwhelming vastness than his only word for "a terrain with both human and geological marks all over it, [that] required time and patience to cultivate an understanding, from several vantage points and perspectives" (184).

Thus, when Powell retreats into the rhetoric of the sublime, he does not mean to avoid or simplify a complex West but include such multiple and persistent relations in an ongoing experience of westness. Even Powell's final lines propose this experience: "You cannot see the Grand Canyon in one view, as if it were a changeless spectacle from which a curtain might be lifted, but to see it you have to toil from month to month through its labyrinths" (397). Through the repeated "toil" of professional work or salvage practice, Powell's composition projects a selvage beyond institutional boundaries to present "a vast district of country" (397). Powell's West eschews regional definition through what we might call the perpetual activity of regionality, "engaging, extending, overlapping, mutating beyond itself at is edges and boundaries" in a space affective plurality (Campbell, *Affective* 4).

Canyons of the Colorado provides an encounter with a dynamic American West, in which experiential variety disrupts narrative imposition

and spatial definition. From his experience in the service of such institutional structures, Powell salvages an alternative space in which to approach the complex relations of western experience his professional efforts sought to contain. His famous account of his descent of the Colorado River carries with it an abundance of additional materials, among them updated descriptions of regional characteristics and many illustrations from U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of American Ethnology reports. The resultant textual assemblage neither reproduces the arrangement of material objects in a museum display nor represents Powell's professional authority over western places. Instead, the text salvages a new space for affective responses to Powell's experiences in the margins, in a refuge beyond borders into the always active process of affective regionality.

Notes

[1] The Library of Congress considers the 1875 and 1895 texts "different but related" (James).

[2] I abbreviate the text's longer titles as *Canyons*, to preserve the 1895 text's integrity, and *Tributaries*, to separate the 1875 text from it. The words also reflect the relationship I see between the textual materials, as *Tributaries* feeds both words and images to the larger *Canyons*.

[3] Tewan is an outdated term that corresponds to the Tewa language of the indigenous pueblos of northern New Mexico, which include San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, San Juan, Tesuque, Nambe, and Pojoaque ("Tano/Tewa Indian Language").

[4] Wallace Stegner explains that Powell's intended "methodical and factual investigation" of the river's course sought to combat blind enthusiasm for western settlement, or what he calls "the Gilpin mentality" of belief in western resources rather than knowledge of their existence, and Richard White describes Powell's reports as later advocating western settlement "according to the realities of the West instead of people's hopes about what the West would be" (Stegner 48, White 153). Yet Powell's initial Colorado River expedition largely repeated the frenzy of mid-nineteenth-century western expansion as he proceeded without Congressional appropriation onto a river he believed, rather than knew, would deliver him to Arizona (Stegner 44-45). Indeed, Powell's early actions can connect what William Cronon calls the rhetoric of empire, summarized by Bishop Berkeley's general exposition, "Westward the course of empire takes its way," to the individual charge of Horace Greeley's "Go west young man!" (41-42).

[5] Though Powell does not specify, these cliff ruins are likely part of the Bandelier National Monument near the Tewa pueblos north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The monument is named for Adolph F.A. Bandelier, who secured archaeological access to the sites in the 1880s due in large part to Powell's support of his work to the Archaeological Institute of America (Lange 37). William H. Holmes notes Bandelier's work in the canyon in his study of "Pottery of the Ancient Pueblos," published in the *Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (298).

[6] Powell led the U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region until assuming direction of the U.S. Geological Survey from Clarence King in 1881. He resigned from the U. S. G. S. in 1894. During the same period, Powell founded the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of Ethnology in 1879 and directed that agency until 1900 (Jenkins 250).

[7] Anthropology includes both ethnography and ethnology. In 1878, The

Encyclopedia Britannica clarified that "ethnography embraces the descriptive details, and ethnology the rational exposition, of the human aggregates and organizations" ("Ethnography"). Twentieth-century use further specifies ethnography as the study of a single group and ethnology, a comparison across groups.

[8] The pot from William H. Holmes 1883 study of "Pottery of the Ancient Pueblos," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (297).

[9] See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 387, Greenblatt 44, Stewart 161-62, and Brown 88-89.

[10] The cliff dwelling from Frank H. Cushing's 1883 "Study of Pueblo pottery as illustrative of Zuñi culture growth," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (479).

[11] The Navajo from Washington Matthew's 1884 examination of "The Mountain Chant: A Navajo Ceremony," *Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (424).

[12] See Deloria 80 and Trachtenberg 193.

[13] Sonstegard notes that literary realism in the 1880s and 1890s established expectations for what Tatum describes as the "belief that illustrations should be *continuous* with and *complimentary* to" an author's words (Sonstegard 3-4, Tatum "Pictures" 8). But this approach requires the author's words to precede the illustrator's adaptation of them, which Powell's use of previously-published illustrations inverts.

[14] Before Frederick Jackson Turner described the West as a necessary and disappearing complement to eastern America and the United States, Powell's work situated the West "beyond the hundredth meridian" of longitude, to borrow Wallace Stegner's phrase. Powell's work also articulated a "thirdspace" between map lines and geographical features that enabled and troubled U. S. Government policies in the 1890s. See United States, Congress, Senate 10-11 and Horwitz 368.

[15] Campbell includes among the "straight lines" that render the West visible the myth of regenerative violence, the rhetoric of imperial expansion and Manifest Destiny, and the legacy of conquest (*Regionality* 2); See Richard Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation*, William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis*, and Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest*.

[16] Sandweiss explores more broadly the late nineteenth-century technology required to reproduce photographs and the rhetorical effect of publishers' printing either photographs or illustrations based on photographs (275-324).

Images still framed readers' ideas of the West, but photographs masked as accurate or factual the photographer's vision (see also Solnit). Surprisingly, Sandweiss mentions Powell only briefly, to place his use of illustrations in *Exploration of the Colorado River of the West* in the context of contractual disagreements with his photographers (295-96). She fails to note that Powell oversaw Charles Dutton's choices of illustrations as his boss at the U.S. Geological Survey, and also governed the Bureau of American Ethnology's use of drawings and engravings in their Annual Reports published during the 1880s (297-98, 319).

[17] See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 388-89.

[18] See Introduction.

[19] *Tributaries* presents its own problems, as Powell combines his own and others' notes from four trips down the Colorado River in 1869, 1870, 1871, and 1872 into a daily log of a single first descent. Wallace Stegner dismisses critical interest in the composition as "not very important" to the "validity" of the overall report, but Roderick Coover thinks that Powell may have recombined "elements of the overall experience for the sake of his story" (*Canyons* x, Coover 26). Following Coover, I am interested in the consequences of such re-vision to the spatial imaginary Powell's narrative serves and the spatial imaginary it presents.

[20] Flaws appear in illustrations in *Canyons* that do not appear in the images' earlier U.S. Government printings, and the marks are likely from scratches to engraving plates during storage and transportation. These marks indicate that Flood & Vincent reprinted the images from original U.S. Government engraving plates, which implies that Powell used his professional access to the materials for his personal publication (Thompson).

[21] Coover contrasts Hillers's, Moran's, and Holmes's images to investigate a shift in artistic and scientific approaches that "impact how the land is thought of and used in the years to come" (15). Coover suggests that Holmes's illustrations of Clarence Dutton's surveys complete Powell's transition from Hillers's human photographic subjects and Moran's romantic imagery to "the practices of local actuality … drawn in lines and grids and written out in deeds and laws" that organize western spaces (38). However, Powell includes more illustrations and photographs in *Canyons* from his Bureau of American Ethnology studies than he does sketches and images from U. S. G. S. reports, and assembles content that I think contradicts Coover's retreat to organized firstspace.

[22] *Eighth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* 13-228.

[23] "Snow Mass group" appears in Holmes's "Report on the Geology of the

Northwestern portion of the Elk range," in F. V. Hayden's 1874 *Annual Report of the Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories* (59-70).

[24] Stevenson's Zuñi objects augment his "Illustrated Catalogue of the collections obtained from the Indians of New Mexico and Arizona, in 1879 and 1880" for Powell's *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Figs. 361, 374, 385, 387, 394).

[25] See Sonstegard 21 and Tatum "Pictures (Facing) Words" 8.

[26] As Powell's U. S. G. S. colleague and friend Grove K. Gilbert destroyed Powell's personal papers according to his wife's wishes after his death in 1902, and Flood & Vincent's records appear not to have survived history, I can only speculate as to the extent of Powell's editorial influence (Thomas xiv). However, the Chautauqua press likely executed Powell's preferences rather than imposed their own.

[27] See Ott "Introduction" 10 and Garvey 254 n. 9.

[28] Photo-copy technology was rudimentary at best in 1895, and Flood & Vincent likely used the original engraving plates to print the illustrations. Powell's textual salvage, then, begins with printed illustrations and moves back to the material means of that printing to create from them a new composition. *Canyons* is a scrapbook in that it assembles these materials rather than literally arranges paper scraps into the book.

[29] Wallace Stegner's introduction to the 1987 Penguin edition of *Canyons* erases this distinction: "The scientific part of the Powell expedition has been corrected, and some of it superseded. But nothing has superseded the literary effort. It remains as fresh and gripping as when it ran in the pages of *Scribner's*" (James, *Canyons* xii). For Stegner, the text's history does not affect its consequence to history, and scholars continue to follow Stegner's lead and emphasize the latter over the former. Van Noy uses Powell's 1895 "revision of *Exploration*" to discuss what Powell calls his encounter with the sublime on first reaching the Grand Canyon in 1870 (195-197); and, despite Noya's interest in writing as a form of exploration, Noya notes that *Canyons* was first published as *Tributaries* in 1875 and cites the 1895 text in support of his discussion of Powell's 1875 endeavors (4, 33 n. 4).

[30] The map summarized Powell's review of nearly a century of "literature" on Indian languages to depict "linguistic families" when they "first became known to the European" (*Linguistic* 13, 30). The map also acknowledges nearly twenty years of Powell's professional interests and, as a record of this work, the map shows Powell's own contact with indigenous groups and his work among the living communities. It connects Powell's biography both to a national history of conquest and a native history of persistence.

[31] Susan Stewart notes that a quotation or cited material "lends both integrity and limit," as its connection to an original context conveys authority while its new frame renders its content "manipulatable, examinable" (19). Powell's image inverts these terms: he elides the image's original context and undermines the credibility of its explanations, and he mobilizes borders around a fixed but real-and-imagined space.

[32] See Coover for an extended discussion of such photographic illustrations (34).

[33] The photograph is one of 112 full-page plates in Mindeleff's "Study of Pueblo Architecture, Tusayan and Cibola," in the *Eighth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (Plate XXVII, p 64). Powell explains in his report on his staff's field work in the *Seventh Annual Report* that while Mindeleff was in Tusayan, Powell spent the summer of 1885 with James Stevenson near Flagstaff, Arizona, visiting "many structures … which have greatly interested travelers and anthropologists," which may have included a stop to see Mindeleff at work (xviii).

[34] Unlike Georg Simmel, who locates in such a ruin the site where "the work of man appears to us entirely as a product of nature," Latour fields a useful margin between natural phenomena and cultural constructions that forestalls a retreat into anthropological primitivism ("The Ruin" 381, Latour 39).

[35] Oraibi and Walpi are villages on the Third Mesa and First Mesa, respectively, in what is now the Hopi Reservation in northern Arizona. To the southeast, over the border into New Mexico, is Zuñi Pueblo.

[36] Holmes's illustrations appear in the *Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (331, 335, 337, 343).

[37] Powell includes Moran's painting in *Canyons*, but fifty pages earlier and facing his account of becoming stranded four hundred feet above the river on a granite pinnacle from which his team must rescue him (276).

[38] Each of the fifteen images appear in James Stevenson's "Illustrated Catalogue" in the *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*. The five "fetiches" are Figures 509, 510, 511, 512, and 513, "Wolpi Pipe, Effigies, and Ornament" (facing 378). The four tools are Figures 547, 548, 549, and 553, "Wolpi Wooden Implements" (between 392 and 393). The baskets are Figures 537, 538, 541, 542, 544, and 545, "Wolpi Baskets" (between 390 and 391). The *Annual Reports* figure numbers do not correspond to the U.S. National Museum catalog numbers, with which each item appears in its original illustrated context.

CHAPTER 3

SUSPENDED SALVAGE: TAXIDERMY AS REGIONAL PRACTICE IN ELIZABETH BACON CUSTER'S *BOOTS AND SADDLES* AND *TENTING ON THE PLAINS*

Elizabeth Bacon Custer grew up feeling the limits of her social sphere. As a middle-class white Christian woman in the middle of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth was taught that the home was her place. The home organized a domestic, gendered identity that bolstered a wife's "female moral authority" over her family and projected it into the community (Pascoe xvii).[1] Elizabeth tested such plans. As a child, she preferred to play outside and, when her mother punished her for it by locking her in a closet, Elizabeth simply napped in a clothes basket (Leckie 7). After her mother died, her father boarded her at Reverend Erasmus Boyd's Young Ladies Seminary and Elizabeth played on her teachers' sympathies to receive the special privilege of her own bedroom *and* a parlor (10). After graduation, when she visited her married friends, she saw their new households as "confining" (28). Elizabeth seems to have preferred liberty to containment, and her choice to marry the dashing person and dubious character of George Armstrong Custer provided

her more than a famous surname. As Mrs. Custer, she could move throughout the United States and its territories, and her writings would shape national ideas about these places.

Custer's three books catalog her travels and her housekeeping.[2] She proposes that the volumes narrate her husband's life from the end of the Civil War to his end at Greasy Grass, or Little Big Horn, but she reports the routines of her own life in various military camps. At each posting in Kansas, Texas, and Dakota Territory, and along the trails in between, Custer describes the rooms in which she slept and the materials with which she furnished them. A pattern emerges as Custer assembles diverse materials into comfortable places between the natural world and a more conventional social architecture. Each place suggests a "thirdspace" of both received institutional structures, like marriage and military living quarters, and creative experiments at the edges of these constructions.[3]

For example, in *Following the Guidon* (1889), Custer depicts her garrison quarters at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, as an experiment in "ingenuity" (252). The building itself was "severely plain, with plastered walls, [and] wood-work that was once painted, perhaps, but bears little trace of the brush now" (227). Custer upholsters the bare room with "covers of cretonne or common calico," "boxed, the frill fully pleated on," pillows "stuffed with hay," "bright Mexican or gay striped blankets" strewn about, and "four gray Government blankets, bought at a sale of condemned goods, … darned,

sewed together, and spread in the centre of the room [*sic*]" (252-53). The rough structure becomes a furnished lounge. She explains the decoration as necessary to her husband's health rather than her personal comfort, which subordinates her homemaking to masculine professional acumen. Her practice of decorating involves less conventionally framed accumulation and assemblage.

She claims worn blankets and rough boards from government trash heaps and constructs them into floors and furniture.[4] She rolls window curtains and furniture covers into stuffing for wagon cushions (252). For Custer, this word "stuff" includes both inanimate material and active practice, as fabric retains the physical characteristics of stuff and a potential function in the act of stuffing: "we became very expert in choosing stuffs that would [also] cover furniture and curtain windows" (252). Stuff softens the edges between interior and exterior experiences. Fabric hung inside a room tames rough walls and open windows, while that fabric rolled inside a cushion absorbs the shock of rugged trails. Conversely, a "bright Mexican" blanket and hay inside pillows enliven the staid interior with elements from elsewhere and out-of-doors.

Indeed, Custer uses wild stuff to obscure the boundaries of her place entirely. At Leavenworth, she explains, "sometimes in the underbrush, where the sole trees we had—the cotton-woods—grew, we found clematis, and the joy of draping our pictures or mantles with this graceful vine, covered with its

soft tufts of fluffy gray, was something to be remembered" (254). Like a curtain, the vine changes the edges of the domestic setting. Custer drapes the vine over picture frames and mantle shelves in the room. [5] The clematis' "soft tufts of fluffy gray" blur these boundaries and position Custer simultaneously in an exterior margin, in the brush under the cottonwoods near a creek bed gathering the vines. The vines intertwine the excitement of Custer's exterior adventures to the joy of her interior designs, and gather her practices of creativity and memory, exploration and settlement in a single place.

As if to emphasize this mixing, Custer contrasts the clematis with a vase of flowers, "in such common use nowadays that few tables are without them," and pressed ferns she once pasted on a window, which "transported" her to a "fairy-land" of "cool nooks on a pretty brook overhung with thick foliage," so unlike the "arid sunbaked plains" of Kansas (254). The flowers repeat a cultural convention while the ferns permit a fantastic invention. Only the vine brings together Custer's domestic and wild experiences. The "something to be remembered" blends the joy of display with a thrill of discovery, a comfort of place with a freedom of movement. She can feel all of these because the room she creates from the materials she salvages is inside and outside, feminine and masculine, familiar and exotic. Yet the "graceful" clematis vine subdues Custer's actions as its drape softens the room's sharp edges, to perhaps tame both her and her husband's reputations for readers in the early 1890s.[6]

Conversely, Custer's earlier books relate less conventional practices as she makes homes in the out-of-doors. A "traveling-wagon" outfitted with fold-down seats becomes "a complete little house of itself" (*Tenting* 119). "Blankets and shawls" stretched over rafters in a "little, half-finished cabin without an enclosure" make "rooms" (*Boots* 18-19). A pillow of moss is more "comfortable" and "patriotic" than an Army overcoat, though the moss "often held in its meshes the horned toad, a harmless little mottled creature that had two tiny horns" and became Custer's bedfellow (*Tenting* 121-22). It comes as no surprise that Custer's own house cannot contain her as she literally straddles the threshold: "housekeeping in garrison quarters was a sort of camping out after all, with one foot in a house and another in position to put into a stirrup and spin 'over the hills and far away'" (*Tenting* 328). The dominant theme of all Custer's works is this connection of the spaces of feminine domestic comfort and masculine wilderness adventure. Custer derives authority over these spaces from her access to them and movement between them. She practices that authority through narrative organization and material arrangement.

Custer assembles her place from the material remnants of her western experiences, notably the preserved flora and fauna she encountered in the West. Specifically, she uses taxidermied animals George made for her to assert her authority and voice. Taxidermied objects occupy a borderland between narrative creation and material production, between a reenactment

of western mobility and a mimesis of western life.[7] Taxidermy takes literally the preservative gesture of house-keeping but enables Custer to forestall the temporalities of mortality and history to assemble a place of "still-life." Such a construction makes visible the concept of "affective regionality," Neil Campbell's term for the "lived, performed, and felt" relations of regional encounters (*Affective* 5). The taxidermied object becomes a site at which appears the real-and-imaginary experience of these relations, or "westness" (*Affective* 2). In her 1885 *"Boots and Saddles," or Life in Dakota with General Custer* and 1887 *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas*, Custer uses taxidermied objects to spatialize within an intimate domestic scene the narrative of western conquest her husband's death served on a national scale.[8] The taxidermied animals materialize the tensions of geographic boundaries and social divisions in the West and make visible the perpetual production of westness.

Preserving a Place

In *Boots and Saddles*, Custer claims to chronicle the Custers' life during United States military campaigns of the 1870s. Custer moved to Dakota in 1873, after the U.S. Congress transferred jurisdiction of the territories from the Department of State to the Department of the Interior and General Philip Sheridan dispatched the Seventh Calvary to protect the Northern Pacific railroad's work on a transcontinental line.[9] *Boots and*

Saddles begins when the Custers "went to Dakota [Territory] in the spring of 1873" (*Boots* 11). There Custer watched as commercial interests became federal priorities, and soldiers denied indigenous groups' sovereignty to defend settlers' security.

Historians explain Custer's text as a biased defense of George's life after Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho forces overwhelmed the Seventh Calvary and killed George in eastern Montana Territory on June 25, 1876.[10] After George's death, the press fit his reckless bravado to the pattern of a mythic hero's tragic downfall and portrayed reports of his errors as attacks on his character by jealous peers.[11] Custer's grief ennobled such interpretations of George's death, and *Boots and Saddles* profited from public sympathy for the hero's widow. Custer credits the "echo" of George's voice for the text's inspiration, through which a spectral George authorizes the truth of Custer's memories rather than the accuracy of others' reports. At the turn of the twentieth century, such positioning enabled Custer to vehemently defend her husband's reputation and defeat efforts to tarnish it even as she demurred from becoming a "platform woman … who always has grievances and seeks perpetually to reconstruct something" (Leckie 264).[12] As with her husband's legacy, Custer's actions continue to overshadow her words. Her memoirs, stories, letters, and lectures evince in their abundance her inability to gild her golden-haired husband in anything more lasting than language.

Custer did not compose *Boots and Saddles* until the early 1880s,

several years after George's death and after her own move to Manhattan for work and community. She found both through the Society of Decorative Arts, an organization that taught impoverished but "well-bred" women painting, embroidery, and other crafts for profit (Leckie 218). Custer worked as the Society's secretary and there met important professional contacts from whom Custer would receive the encouragement to write *Boots and Saddles*.[13] Delivered to Harper and Brothers in 1882 and published 1885, the text was well received not just for its sketch of her husband's "private character" but also for the "natural way in which the lady presents a story of military life in the far distant Indian country" (Leckie 231, 236, "New Publications"). Historians returned to Custer's works in the 1990s for her insights into this masculine, military community on the "extreme frontier" (*Boots* 5).[14] Custer explains that *Boots and Saddles* gives "a glimpse to civilians of garrison and camp life" about which they have "imperfect knowledge" and "innumerable questions" (5). Custer's descriptions of wagon beds, furniture covers, and frontier "fancy dress" civilize military circumstances as much as present to her readers the creative conditions of western homemaking (117).

Custer frequently subordinates these accounts within stylized anecdotes about her companions and acquaintances. The wagon is one of Custer's homes but is also heaped with belongings, which include the cook's bedding and property, "invariably tied up in a flaming quilt representing souvenirs of her friends' dresses," as the cook herself "grasped her red

bandana, containing a few last things, while the satchel she scorned to use hung empty on her arm" (13). Custer's furniture needs covers because it sustains damage during such moves, for which George's "old colored servant, Eliza" reprimands her master: "Chairs don't grow on trees in these yere parts, gen'l" (10, 12). Attire allows Custer to embellish her own camp reputation through her servant Mary's boasts, "as is customary with the colored people, who so love to display," as well as scrutinize others' actions, as with "Old Nash," the "Mexican" laundress who had "so coarse and stubborn a beard that her chin had a blue look after shaving" yet wore "gauzy, low-necked gowns" to the soldiers' parties (117, 199-200).[15] Custer's biographer Shirley Leckie suggests these scenes repeat Custer's childhood hobby of "writing brief vignettes based on close attention to details," but Custer's use of derogatory racial caricatures suggests her familiarity with the tropes of popular fiction rather than her development of an amateurish style of reportage (10).[16] The scenes reflect Custer as a reader, of short fiction in the magazines she and George read, of the garrison community she watches, and of the audience she courts.[17] *Boots and Saddles*, then, is more a literary creation than a historical record, and it presents a writer constructing a text and a professional career from the events and popular interest that preceded them.

As a fictive memoir rather than a factual biography, *Boots and Saddles* expresses Custer's ideas about the national and social significance of the

American West during the 1880s. Written a decade after her departure from Dakota Territory, the text allows Custer to revise her experiences as woman, wife, and westerner. Reproduced from Custer's recollections from Dakota Territory and experiences in New York, the text renders the narrative of western conquest her husband's death served as objects arranged to serve Custer's narrative of domestic stability.[18] *Boots and Saddles* describes a West that is public and private, historical and fantastic, wild and domestic.

These tensions appear most clearly in the chapter, "General Custer's Library." The chapter layers memory and materiality in a built space. It begins with the rebuilding of George's officer's quarters on Fort Lincoln, the exterior lines of which Custer traces before moving inside to describe the rooms' dimensions and placements. She pans the interior of the library itself, "a room entirely for [George's] own use" with which she conveys intimate familiarity (*Boots* 175). Custer gathers the "souvenirs of the hunt" in the library: "a buffalo's head [plunging] out of the wall" over the mantel, "the head of the first grisly [George] had shot [*sic*]" looking "fiercely down on the pretty, meek-faced jack-rabbits on the mantel," "several antelope heads," "the head of a beautiful black-tailed deer," "a sand-hill crane," "a mountain eagle, a yellow fox, and a tiny fox … called a swift," "the immense skin of a grisly bear [*sic*]" before the fireplace, "the skins of beavers and American lions" thrown over the camp chairs, and perched "by itself on a pair of deer antlers, … a great white owl" (175-76). The taxidermied objects bound the room,

noted first above the mantel, then on successive walls and in "different corners," before returning to the "floor before the fireplace" (176).

In addition to the taxidermied objects, Custer furnishes the room with a "wide lounge at one side," "camp-chairs," and "a stand for arms in one corner" (176). She finally adds texture to corners and shelves, with guns, photographs of "the men my husband loved" and "of his wife in bridal dress," and two "Rogers statuettes" (177). Custer's sequential circuits through the room, from architecture through taxidermy and furniture to photographs and statues, suggest Custer's awareness that repeating patterns transform historical particularity into mythic convention.[19] Each route detaches the place from time as the narrative removes each object from its historical connections to position it in the library. The assemblage suggests Susan Stewart's category of the collection, which makes "temporality a spatial and material phenomenon, its existence … dependent upon the [collector's] principles of organization and categorization" (153). This arrangement resembles Custer's material layering of the clematis vine over the mantel in Fort Leavenworth, but here keeps visible all of the room's materials to assert the room's competing logics of accumulation, preservation, and placement.[20]

Custer returns to the fireside, suspending time in a moment of perpetual dusk in which she and George "often lounged" "without a lamp" while "the firelight reflected the large glittering eyes of the animals' heads" mounted on the walls around them (*Boots* 179-80). Custer's attention to the

light seems to expose the intimate tableau to the wilderness beyond it. "Without a lamp" to orient domestic control, "the large glittering eyes" surround and threaten Custer's household. Indeed, Custer describes that "the firelight reflected the large glittering eyes" rather than that the eyes reflected the firelight. In the dim light of dusk, the eyes replace the room's walls and transform the hearth fire into a primordial presence. The eyes take on uniquely material characteristics as "glittering" surfaces rather than sources of a piercing gaze. They are not the means of an unmediated "communion" between viewer and animal that provokes "a sense of the uncanny" (Haraway 25, Gregory 82). They do not upset the "jolly family," as Custer suggests they would hurry "to his doom by fright" "a man on the brink of *mania a potu* [*sic*], thrust suddenly into such a place in the dim flickering light" (180). Instead, the "eyes of the animals' heads" become more stuff of Custer's construction. They assert a place between objects and activity, inside and outside.

As if such an evening's rest is affectively impossible or rhetorically insufficient, Custer ends the chapter in the even smaller space of "an old engraving [that] represents a room in which but one chair is significantly placed" (180). The image "represents" a room that contains a chair but results from the reprinting of an engraving plate. The engraver carved into the plate's surface, and the printer inked these spaces into defining marks. The engraved image suggests spatial stability but its presence imports creative practice, as does Custer's passive construction of the chair's position. Just as

someone placed the chair "significantly," so she places the engraving of the austere, intimate chair in the library's material assemblage. Within this paradoxically public space of a military officer's personal quarters, geometrically planned to substantiate U.S. government jurisdiction and support the garrison's social gathering, Custer constructs her claim over the library by curating its material reproduction.

Technology of Capture

Custer's foremost spatial practice resembles taxidermy. As Karen Jones explains, taxidermy connotes an arrangement of skin (228). This arrangement implies an underlying structure or intended shape as well as the persistence of the material body. The form is built new, from wood, wire, and stuffing, but the skin is preserved from previous life (*Ladies Manual* 205-11). Each of Custer's taxidermied animals underwent a process by which the dead animal became a still-life object, an assemblage of material and fantasy. This process repeats in "General Custer's Library" as cast-off fabrics and furniture flesh out Spartan architecture, and photographs and statues construct personal memories on impersonal supports. Beyond the library, the text constructs a lifelike George from his material remnants. Custer composes George as a "figure that would have fixed attention anywhere," dressed in "buckskin breeches fringed on the sides," and with "hair short, wavy, and golden in tint" and "mustache … long and tawny" (*Boots* 107-8).

Even the text's title suggests Custer's haptic intentions. *Boots and Saddles* is a cavalry bugle call, but boots and saddles are also the leather materials of her husband's life that, like George's "costume" for the "frontier," Custer can assemble into a new place for herself (*Boots* 107).[21]

In these moments in *Boots and Saddles*, Custer tests her experience against a mode of preserving it, of assembling natural and social elements into new relationships. For taxidermied objects to create this spatial assemblage, taxidermy must evoke practices beyond the familiar contexts of display and creation. In the late nineteenth century, taxidermy techniques collaborated with photographic technologies to represent realism, to capture the "natural" in a "cultural" object "seemingly exempt from the course of temporality and the burdens of history" (Tatum "Solace" 134). For Donna Haraway, museums displayed taxidermied specimens in family groups to naturalize the gender, class, and racial hierarchies of an "American" social order (24). Like photography, taxidermy preserved "one historical moment's way of seeing, while calling this vision whole" (38). Helen Gregory and Anthony Purdy similarly find in the popularity of taxidermy exhibits "a culture preoccupied with freezing time and space" to oppose the disappearance of nature rather than bolster patriarchal systems (66). For my purposes, Haraway and Gregory and Purdy too quickly constrain taxidermy to museum settings and too starkly contrast the museum's institutional spectacle with a false "natural" reality.[22]

Outside of the museum, taxidermy appears most frequently in the homes of male hunters. The taxidermied bodies of hunted animals are trophies of the hunter's conquest over the natural world. Rebecca Poliquin extends eighteenth-century elite European attitudes toward land ownership into nineteenth-century North American hunting practices to suggest that "the ability to hunt connoted land ownership" (158). Poliquin summarizes that in the United States, "hunting was the unrestricted pleasure of all citizens … [and] a declaration of democratic values," and the taxidermied objects represented "belonging to and ownership of a new nation" (161-2).[23] These trophies become relics of the wealthy, white, male hunter's superior position in the social order such symbolic violence perpetuates. For Stephen Tatum, these trophies are the "obsessive staging of sacrifices and violent deaths [to create] the conditions for comrades to recognize each other" ("Solace" 141).

Custer's contemporary Theodore Roosevelt describes an example of this community on his "home-ranch," where the "true American" sits warmly in a rocking chair, under "plenty of bearskins and buffalo robes, trophies of our own skill," surrounded by "deer-horns ranged along the walls" and "the elk-antlers which jut out from over the fireplace" (13-14).[24] In Custer's text, George's taxidermied animals initially suggest a similar relationship of violence to peace and manifest George's destruction of one world to help construct a new nation from the fragments. The antelope head, for example,

links George's actions during his first Yellowstone expedition in 1873 to the broader consequences of those actions.[25] George writes to Custer about his "hunting-parties" along the Yellowstone River and the success with which he preserves the head and neck of the antelope he kills (*Boots* 273-74). The taxidermied animal represents George's martial dominance over the wild animal and subordinates the animal's past freedom to the governed domesticity of the Custers' home.

The phrase "hunting-parties" also covers the details of George's official duties when "the 7th Cavalry were sent out to guard the engineers of the Northern Pacific [railroad] while they surveyed the route to the Yellowstone" (*Boots* 90). George's official report of the expedition barely conceals his enthusiasm about his pursuit of the "Sioux" along the river and the "losses in killed and wounded" he caused "beyond all proportion to that which they were enabled to inflict upon us" (*Boots* 281, 289). The antelope head, then, signifies George's "hunt" for the indigenous people across whose land the railroad company sought to connect the continent's coasts and provide communities with commodities. For George, the "Sioux" can only serve the idea of national unity through their death and the organization of their land as the nation's territory, just as the antelope can complete George's domestic imaginary only after he kills it and prepares it according to his desires.

However, Custer's objects are not hunting trophies in this sense. George mounted them as gifts for Custer rather than as evidence of his

hunting ability, and Custer, not George, places them in the library that Custer and George share.[26] Custer's use of the taxidermied animals instead invokes a history of women's material practice. Women's home arts long included taxidermy techniques to prepare dead animals into decorative items for personal wear and home display. Women's attire admits its wearer into the world, and taxidermied accessories suggest the way in which its wearer understands that world or intends to interact with it. Julia Long describes how women in the nineteenth century added taxidermied animals to their attire as proxy pets, for friendship and adornment (109). Stacy Alaimo notes that author Mary Austin opposed the use of prepared feathers in hat decoration as such materials often came from endangered birds ("Undomesticated" 76). Beth Tobin brings such women's "social practices surrounding death and the dead" into the home, where women prepared taxidermy mounts to ornament their tables, shelves, and walls, or to sell as specimens to scientists and museums (1, 323).

Several manuals published during the nineteenth century instructed women in such preparations. For instance, Sarah Bowditch Lee's 1820 *Taxidermy* records such techniques for an English audience, and includes tips on how to capture animals and sell taxidermied objects. Tobin highlights the *Ladies Manual of Art for Profit and Pastime*, sold by subscription in the United States between 1887 and 1890. She explains,

> [The manual's] possible plagiarizing of natural history books, which were intended for men who would most likely be killing

> their own specimens as hunters and naturalists, is interesting because it inadvertently, or possibly purposely, invites women into the masculine world of specimen hunters and professional taxidermy. (322)

Tobin takes this reading of women's access to professional taxidermy practice one step further to suggest that women "in the 1880s were being trained as taxidermists," which gestures too far toward a professional system of institutional display (323). Instead, the manual locates taxidermy among women's interests in the decade during which Custer would reconsider her material effects as she remembered her husband's life. The manual claims to equip "refined, educated, but needy women" with the skill to "ornament" and "embellish" many homes. Before the success of *Boots and Saddles*, Custer was one such woman, and the text exhibits her homes and her embellishments.

Mounting for Home

Taxidermied objects appear throughout Custer's texts. Her "favorite" pet stag-hound Cardigan comes to represent George's countless dogs, with whom Custer competes for bed space and her husband's affections (*Boots* 41-42, 57-58, 176). After death, Cardigan becomes a mounted specimen in "one of the public buildings in Minneapolis," more likely as a natural history display than the commemorative "tribute" to his friendship that Custer suggests (58). General Sheridan's "splendid black horse" appears taxidermied in *Tenting on the Plains*, as a public memorial in the "Military Museum at Governor's Island" where "boys of this day, to whom war is only history, may remember

what a splendid part a horse took in those days" (386). The same could be said of Comanche, Seventh Cavalry Captain Myles Keogh's mount during the Battle of Little Big Horn, whom Custer may have seen at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, displayed among less domesticated fauna specimens from the Kansas plains.[27]

Custer also reprints in *Boots and Saddles* George's letters to her from his 1873 Yellowstone expedition, during which Smithsonian Institution scientists taught George taxidermy and he prepared the library's menagerie as well as an entire elk, the King of the Forest (293).[28] This letter provides the stark contrast of a hunter's narrative from a scientist's technique, as George focuses on the elk's appearance rather than the circumstances of the hunt. George preserves him "entire—antlers, head, neck, body, legs, and hoofs—in fine condition, so that he can be mounted and look *exactly as in life*" (293). The resulting taxidermied object is so large that it requires a room of its own, and with Custer's approval, George donates it to the Audubon Club of Detroit (293). This move disentangles the possession of the mount from the performance of the hunt.[29] Indeed, Custer's literary construction of her husband opposes the trophy head status military authorities and the popular press granted George to give him a room of his own, and preserve him entire, "exactly as in life": "A picture of one day of our life in those disconsolate times … fixed indelibly in my memory" (*Boots* 267). Even Custer's biography of George at the beginning of *Tenting on the Plains*

concludes not with his death but with the "marked individuality" of his "appearance": his "buckskin" garb, "his flowing locks," his body so "lithe," and "the sparkle of his ever youthful eyes" (22-23).[30] The presence of taxidermied objects in *Boots and Saddles* signals Custer's awareness of the period's taxidermy traditions and techniques, and her willingness to displace them to create her own West with the objects.

Taxidermy as a women's practice then can reanimate the taxidermied objects that previously gathered dust in corners as "somebody else's souvenirs" (Poliquin 164). Taxidermied animals cannot become symbols of conquest and normativity because their materiality persists in excess of such narratives.[31] Their placement expands a borderland between life and death, inside and outside, nature and culture, fragment and totality. The taxidermied object gathers materials and ideas into a threshold that provokes a new awareness of spatial relations, a selvage created by salvage. In this context of material phenomena participating in social practices, salvage as a process of material creation rather than of martial collection creates a dialectic in which women can reclaim and reconstitute materials to produce and proliferate social practices.[32]

Taxidermy connects Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's "mixed space" assembled from leftovers, remnants, and scraps, to Susan Stewart's "salvage craft" of the personal memento (Deleuze 477, Stewart 139). The method of patchwork construction is central to both descriptions as it divorces materials

from their original contexts of production, use, or meaning, and preserves their physicality.[33] A taxidermied animal enacts this salvage as operations of the object's assembly remain visible in an object that also exists in a borderland, or selvage, between biological death and narrative life, "a severed head of an animal mounted on a wooden plaque and displayed in a domestic space, perhaps above the fireplace or in the study" (Poliquin 147).

Custer's library scene animates the "severed head" to, as Stewart explains, reproduce in a new context that which has authority only in relation to its irretrievable, original context (19). Rather than carry forward a moment of origin, these materials gesture toward preservation and the act of a choice to preserve. The taxidermied animal then forestalls temporality to prompt an awareness of spatiality, expanding a moment into a place of haptic perception. Custer's collection of materials asserts an alternative guiding vision, one that constructs from what is available a gathering of memories, narratives, and meanings. The salvage of these materials extends Custer's appropriation of George's arrangement to her own creative agency.

In the library, "a room entirely for [George's] own use," Custer lounges (*Boots* 175, 179). Such collocation attaches to Custer's physical form George's activities. She paints, after George "sketched the outline of my pictures;" she sews, after George "arranged my sewing-chair and work-basket next to his desk"; and she listens, to George's work, writing, and reading (143, 145, 140, 150, 145). Bodily present in keeping with George's plan, Custer repurposes

her husband's creative practices to her own literary production. She amends the library's traditional "space sanctioned for professional work within the domestic sphere" into a thirdspace of domesticity as professional work (Rosner 92). "General Custer's Library" only exists in Custer's text, and Custer herself persists in national discourse from the assembled authority of this constructed place.

The library's taxidermied objects serve Custer's, not George's, purposes. Mounted as indeterminate gifts, the objects anchor Custer's imagined home in an otherwise rootless experience. Custer's personal life was often unmoored but her professional work assembled a static materiality from which to mobilize gendered and geographic boundaries, to create a West in which she could possess taxidermied things and from which she could provoke political change.[34] Custer's collection juxtaposes the more familiar encounters with taxidermied animals appearing between 1885 and 1895, including Theodore Roosevelt's imagined ranch décor in his 1885 *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*, P.T. Barnum's, Carl Akeley's, and the popular press's resurrection of the elephant Jumbo in 1885, and the display of Comanche among wild animals at the 1893 Columbian Exposition's Kansas pavilion.[35] In *Boots and Saddles*, Custer deploys taxidermy to authorize a fantastic history from which she projects personal freedom.

Assembling Experience

Custer's taxidermied animals only ever exist as reproductions, salvaged from the gifts George creates for Custer, then from the souvenirs Custer narrates, and finally from the illustrations of scenes in *Boots and Saddles* that her publisher includes *Tenting on the Plains* (*Boots* 292). The objects gesture toward historical reality but deny in their linguistic and lithographic materiality such preexisting authority. Their importance, then, derives from this persistence. As actual and artificial, textural and textual, the taxidermied animals locate the multiplicity of regional ideas and relationships, or regionality. The taxidermied animals' material persistence enables Custer's construction, through which she assembles the remnants of her western experiences into biographical fantasy.

The objects appear in the text of *Boots and Saddles* and reappear as the illustrations in Custer's second book, *Tenting on the Plains*. They extend the reach of Custer's creative control. Three illustrations by Albert Berghaus render Custer's earlier narrative in minute detail, from the placement of Custer's photograph above the desk and the stand of rifles in a corner to the empty chair "significantly placed" before the fireplace (180). Of this series, the most evocative images include a portrait of George at his desk and an illustration that centers an empty chair in George's library, as in Custer's "old engraving of a room in which but one chair" appears (180).

In the first, George is calmly reading, which directs his gaze down the

diagonal of his legs to the doting hound on the floor (Figure 5). The dog's body frames the scene while his gaze incorporates both George and the photo of Custer in her wedding dress. The animal's frozen posture unifies the illustrated relationship between body and reproduction, between now and then. A similar juxtaposition occurs between the military paraphernalia on the desk and the hunting items suspended above. The miniature, bust, and flags below reproduce the photograph, mount, and antlers above to suggest a cooperation of symbolic systems of admiration and violence.

Even as the antlers and flags' parallel shapes bring the gaze back down to Custer's photograph and George's book, the gesture reminds the viewer of the illustration's materiality, of its presence as yet another reproduction in the room. The illustration becomes another material object in Custer's construction. Only the owl's gaze offers an escape from the illustration's geometry, but as a taxidermied animal, rendered whole with finally false eyes, the effect is to invert the authenticity the animal's body indexes and the authority the whole image proposes. George's body no longer underwrites Custer's witness because the owl reminds us that the whole scene has been constructed of surfaces, first written over an empty frame and then drawn over those mere words.

This illustration of George reading at his desk reproduces an earlier photograph taken by Orlando S. Goff in the library at Fort Lincoln in November 1873 (Kortlander). Only Berghaus has made several changes. He

GENERAL CUSTER AT HIS DESK IN HIS LIBRARY.

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Figure 5. "General Custer at his desk in his Library," illustration from Albert Berghaus. *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas,* C. L. Webster & Co., 1887, p. 409. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

removes a portrait of George and a territorial map from the wall above George's back and includes the dog. The new composition displaces a narrative of conquest and fame, in which George's head is the trophy, with the naturalized command over domesticated bodies. The map projected United States' political control over Dakota Territory and elides its occupants, while the dog embodies relations of colocation, cooperation, and control. Berghaus's amendments complement the taxidermied owl's "authenticity effect."[36] Just as the owl and dog represent history, their body-objects manifest an excessive material persistence within and beyond that history. In the original photograph, George seated under his portrait aligns original and type to signify authority. In Berghaus's illustration, George is composed of photographic evidence and illustrated interpretation. As in Custer's text, Berghaus's image places a taxidermied George in the library.

Berghaus's illustration of the library's fireplace moves Custer's imagined library into a perpetual present tense, and replaces the library's "camp-chairs" with the "one chair" of Custer's "old engraving" (*Boots* 180). Here the animal skin draped over the back of the empty chair replaces George to unify the scene (Figure 6). The skin is the closest taxidermied item to the viewer and appears in the image's foreground, as an imagined invitation to the chair's potential occupant. The skin denies the desire for a person to sit in the chair as it occludes the viewer's access to it. The skin collaborates with the other animals' gazes off the page by directing

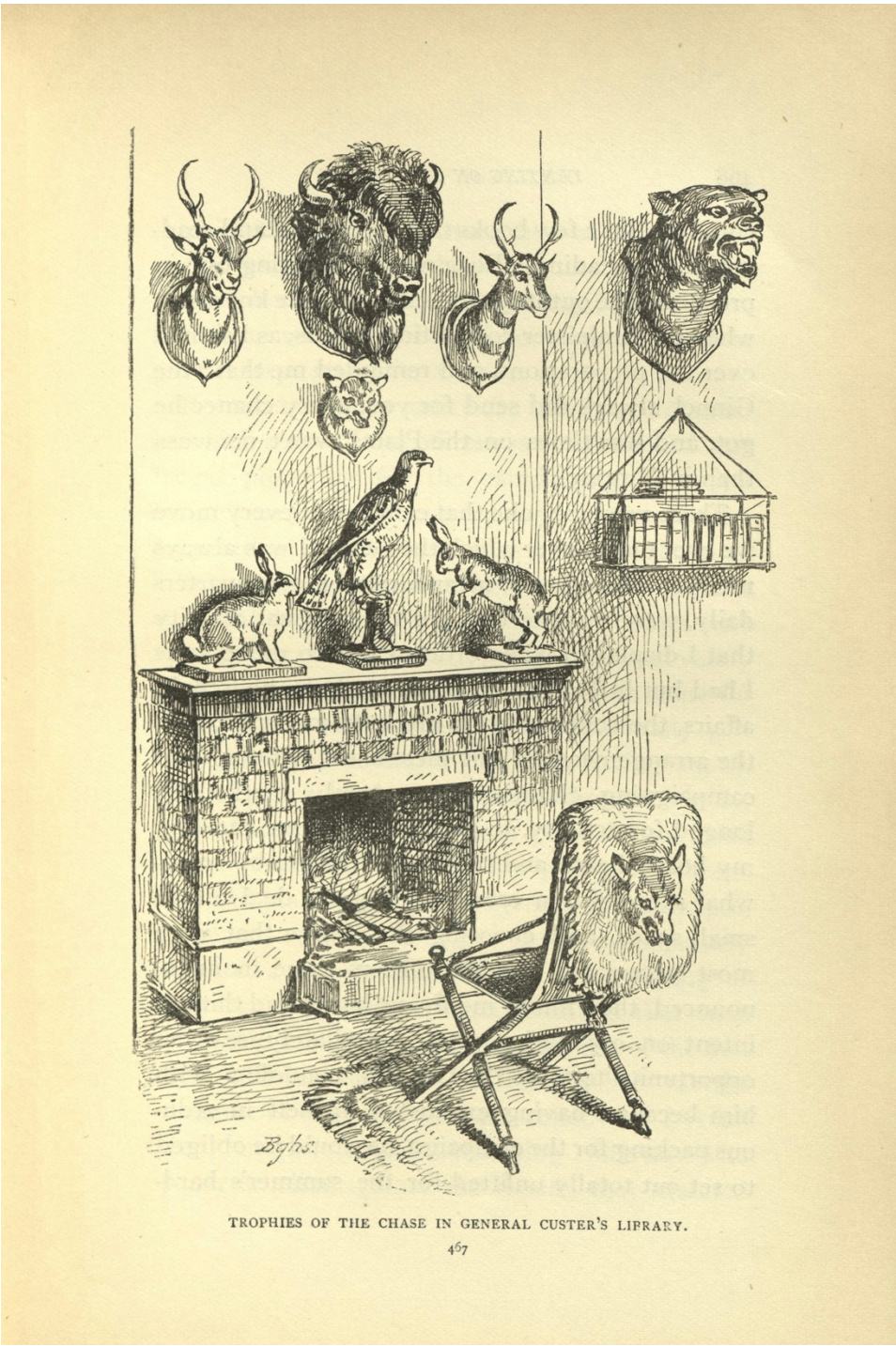


Figure 6. "Trophies of the Chase in General Custer's Library," illustration from Albert Berghaus. *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas*, C. L. Webster & Co., 1887, p. 467. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

imaginative trajectories outside the illustration's frame. As with the owl above George's desk, this skin represents the material remnants Custer salvaged in the library. Juxtaposed to the mounted heads and preserved bodies on the wall, the skin's aberrant simultaneity—a singular taxidermied head in the middle of an unnatural geometric field—repeats the relations in Custer's selvage.

Berghaus's illustrations speak more to the curiosity surrounding George's behavior than to the popularity of Custer's narratives, her witness to women's life in the territories, and to the publicity made possible by Samuel Clemens's publishing house. Where Harpers and Brothers' *Boots and Saddles* included only a portrait of George and a map of Dakota Territory, C. L. Webster and Co. commissioned twenty illustrations for *Tenting on the Plains*, including twelve scenes featuring George in what appears to be William Cody's hat and Mark Twain's moustache. Berghaus's images authenticate George's character rather than Custer's authority.[37] The volume's other illustrations instead salvage from Custer's earlier text the materials to extend her construction of space. Drawn by Frederic Remington early in his career, these illustrations reconstruct Custer's authority and combine in her body the assemblage she locates with the taxidermied objects.

Remington's Custer is a present witness, an iconic figure in her own right, and a participant in the construction of national narrative and western places. She first appears standing next to George to receive a newcomer to

Fort Riley, Kansas (Figure 7). Remington depicts George and Custer in full length, and together they command one half of the scene. While their guest to the right and Custer's companion in the background are confined by a cluster of chairs and the doorframe, Custer stands freely next to a chair from which she has risen and brightly lit by the paned window. Custer's right arm is bent towards her face to conceal her opinion of their guest as she continues to watch the meeting (*Tenting* 377-378). Her companion in the doorway seems to mirror Custer's posture as she reaches to adjust her hair, with which Remington asserts Custer's authority over the fort's female community. Custer's gesture and placement also signal her privileged access to the manners and meanings of the supposedly male space. She is aware of the difference between the newcomer's polished appearance and his uncertain character. The viewer shares her privileged understanding by looking over her shoulder at the scene. Here Custer's facelessness grants her inextricable authority over the room's relations.

Remington's third illustration of Custer repeats this geometry of power as a letter-carrier arrives with news of George (Figure 8). The soldier's salute authorizes Custer's role. Though seated, she influences what she surveys, the soldier, the fort, the flag, and plains beyond. Indeed, that she's seated gives her a power even over military customs. Military men rise to meet one another, as in the previous scene, but here she commands respect by remaining seated. The image of this moment in which a textual object

Figure 7. "The Officer's Dress—A New-Comer for a Call," illustration from Frederic Remington. *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas*, C. L. Webster & Co., 1887, p. 375. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah.

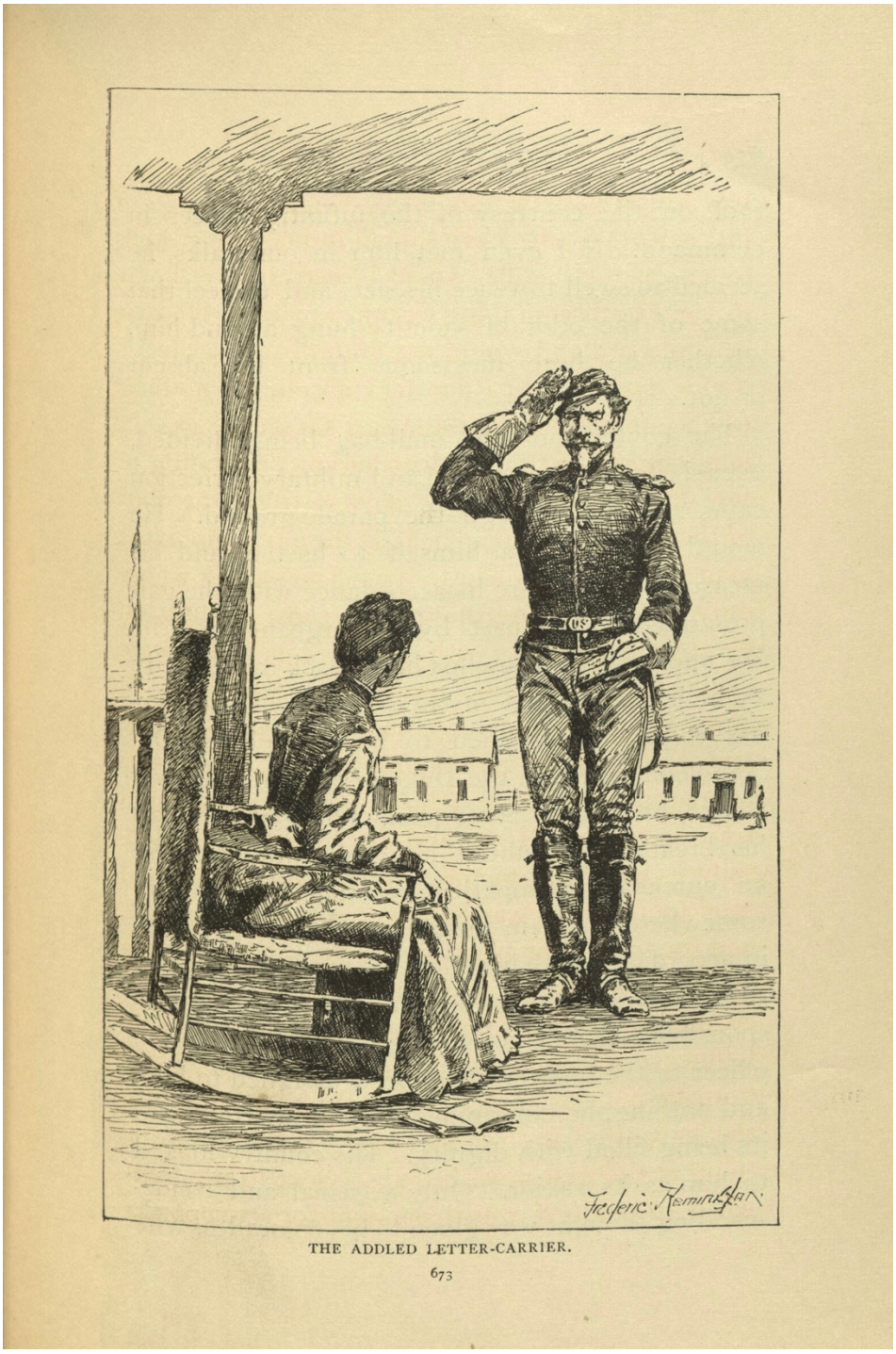


Figure 8."The Addled Letter-Carrier," illustration from Frederic Remington. *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas*, C. L. Webster & Co., 1887, p. 673. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

connects Custer to George authenticates Custer's reproduction of George's texts and authorizes Custer as an equal participant to George, the Army, and the U. S. Government in national control of western people and places. Custer's stiff form also appears akin to George's taxidermied animals. Remington turns Custer's back to create an illusion of complete knowing from her partial witness. Her body is a posed form with dressed hair that marks the selvage between domestic and national, intimate and public.

Suspending Space

Remington's central illustration of Custer, in which she and George ride horses together on the Kansas plains, composes active human and horse bodies in the style for which Remington would become famous. This image is the closest Custer or Remington comes to the hunt that preceded George's taxidermied objects (Figure 9). Two horses gallop and each appears to have only a single hoof on the ground. George's horse faces the viewer while Custer's horse suggests an inaccessible futurity outside the frame to the right. George sits on his horse, both feet in the stirrups and right hand on the reins. His uniform is as still as his body is vertically stationary. Custer's posture, however, is a paradox of motion. Her right leg is free of her sidesaddle and her left leg is loose from her stirrup. Her right hand catches the reins but her left hand grasps at the air. Her torso tilts to the left while her unpinned hair flies to the right. George holds her waist and touches her

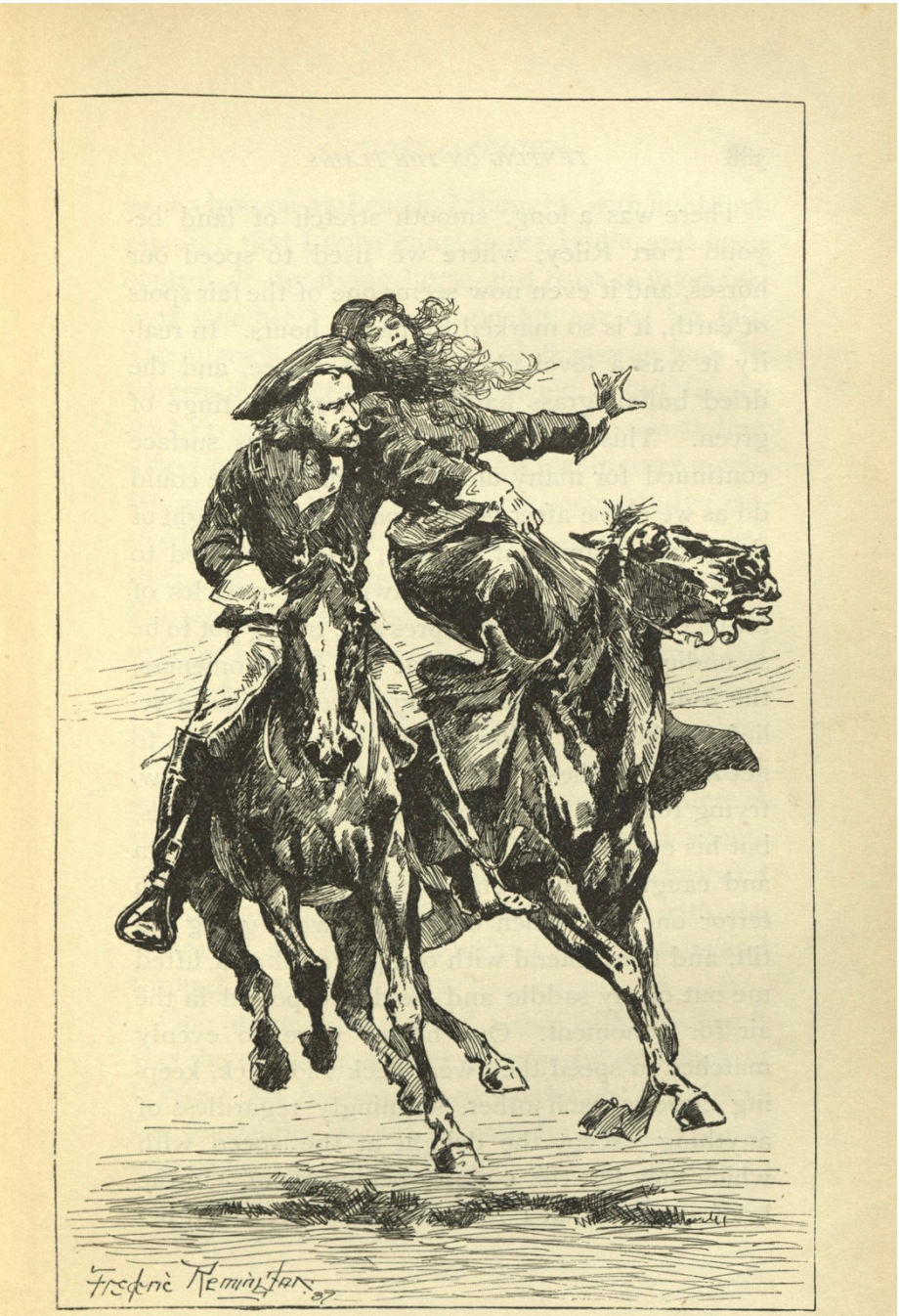


Figure 9. "A Suspended Equestrienne," illustration from Frederic Remington. *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas*, C. L. Webster & Co., 1887, p. 387. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

shoulder to merely anchor the expanding forces, not to rescue her from them. She is, as Remington's title declares, "suspended" (*Tenting* 387).

Describing the scene, Custer says she "had gone to pieces," literally detached from her "awkward water-fall" hairpiece, which George "scoffingly called 'dead women's hair' [*sic*]" (384, 385). The detail exposes the taxidermied assemblage that is Custer's own form, diverse bodily remnants gathered into a single, civilized appearance. The hairpiece is an example of what Custer calls the "barbarities of civilization," and her use of reclaimed hair echoes the indigenous display of scalps, which Custer describes in *Boots and Saddles* as a piece of a warrior's "toggery" during his "recital of his achievements" (*Tenting* 385, *Boots* 134-5). The hairpiece juxtaposes Custer's otherwise derogatory reflections on the "grotesque, crouching figures" she encounters among native communities, as Custer's physical connection to the hair salvages the mode and material of self-expression—the narrative prop of human hair—to redraw the boundaries of civilization. Now part of her costume and part of her person, the "dead woman's hair" makes Custer a product of taxidermy's actuality and artifice.

In the image, Custer is simultaneously fixed and mobile, corseted and unconstrained, purposeful and chaotic, fearful and ecstatic. Yet, like the owl in George's library, the gaze of George's horse challenges the viewer's access to this space in which conventions fragment and Custer constructs a new reality. If Custer's poise mimics the formal pose of a taxidermied animal, her

flight suggests the vitality such taxidermied forms capture and make visible. Only at this suspended boundary of wildness and cultivation, private intimacy and public display, can the simultaneity of such modes appear.

In service to such a woman's practice of westness, Remington's three images of Elizabeth Bacon Custer should amend, however slightly, Christine Bold's assertion that "Remington's visual art of the West excludes women" (105). Remington's images of Custer propagate women's claim to material remnants from which they can construct domestic places. For all the wild freedom of "A Suspended Equestrienne," Remington's other illustrations of Custer etch her into a defined West that her central position assembles around her. Proliferated in four editions during the decade that witnessed the Dawes's Act's and Columbian Exposition's colonization of land, matter, and remnants, the illustrations to Custer's *Tenting on the Plains* reproduce taxidermied forms as the layered sites at which to see competing spatial constructions.

Custer's verbal and visual reproductions of a contested American West situate the late nineteenth century's perpetual production of westness in the taxidermied thing. Salvaged from their functions as trophies of masculinity and symbols of white domination, the taxidermied figures allow Custer to create a selvage in which to manifest the narrative forces competing for social legitimacy. In an apparent performance of nostalgia for the places she shared with her husband, Custer instead assembles her material effects into a new

place from which to authenticate her own sense of westness. With these objects, she constructs a material yet imaginary West in which she is a coequal presence and from which she can speak with authority.

The taxidermied thing enables Custer to provoke desire for the past but not satisfy that desire, and instead interrupt past narratives with persistent affective variations. Custer's taxidermied animals aggregate these experiences and suspend them among the objects' multiple meanings to locate a perpetual encounter with regionality. As substantial and spatial, the taxidermied thing cannot be limited to western kitsch—in which Clement Greenberg would later locate the expression of experience that excuses the conditions of that experience and which Poliquin and Bold would negate frontier violence in the form of the domestic hunting trophy.[38] Instead, taxidermy assembles a selvage for the processes and critiques of regional production.

Notes

[1] See Rosner 2, 11.

[2] I refer to Elizabeth Bacon Custer by her surname according to scholastic convention rather than by "Mrs. Custer" or "Libbie." Though the surname preserves her connection to her husband, it does not subordinate her literary production to his biography or habits as the personal title and nickname do. As the author of the texts under consideration here, she will be Custer and her husband, George.

[3] See Introduction.

[4] Custer uses "stuff" differently than Maurizia Boscagli, for whom "stuff" includes material objects that are no longer commodities and not yet refuse (2, 4). Custer's stuff retains the activity of the word's meaning in verb form.

[5] Custer's layering of natural materials on cultural forms and spaces in the Fort Leavenworth room distances Custer from the conventions she eschews in her earlier texts even as the room allows her to perform feminine domesticity. The curtains and clematis cover Custer's raw experience, and her accountability for it, and cover her adventures in domestic convention. Custer's assemblages in *Boots and Saddles* remain exposed and suggest what Sianne Ngai calls "heaping" to accumulate meaning rather than arrange materials to organize relations of meaning (Tatum *Remington* 113, 102; Ngai 288).

[6] See Leckie 256-281. Slotkin addresses the Custers' reputations two decades earlier as created by Frederick Whittaker's 1876 biography of George (*Fatal* 502-5). Whittaker's work "hastily" wrote the Custers' lives as a romantic genre fiction, in contrast to which Custer's hybrid of memoir and fantasy appears reasonable and factual (*Fatal* 502-5).

[7] I follow Rebecca Poliquin and use "taxidermy" to denote preservation techniques, literally the arrangement of skin, and "taxidermied" to describe the effect of these practices on what Susan Stewart calls "samples of the body," such as hair, nails, and skin, to create "souvenirs of death" (Poliquin 8, Stewart 147, 140). The phrase "taxidermied animal" or "taxidermied object" foregrounds the unnatural process that creates an apparently "natural" product and separates the object from the desires of its creator. I prefer "taxidermied" to "taxidermic" or "taxidermal," both of which describe the process of taxidermy rather than its product. Helen Gregory and Anthony Purdy propose an intriguing new "ontological category of the nonabsent animal" in their term "dermography," but my interest here is in the animal as assembled object rather than as spectral animal (Gregory 65).

[8] See Slotkin, *Fatal* 435-438, and Deloria, *Indians* 20.

[9] Congress passed the act of transfer 1 Mar. 1873 and Sheridan dispatched the Seventh Calvary later that month; see United States, Congress, House, White 171, and Leckie 154.

[10] For a more thorough account of George's actions and analysis of the battle, see Denzin 31-61.

[11] See Slotkin *Fatal* 430-45,

[12] See Mathias "Memorial," and Russell, et al.

[13] Custer would eventually keep company with Robert Louis Stevenson, Samuel Clemens, Rudyard Kipling, and Charles Lummis. Clemens's short-lived publishing house, Charles Webster and Company, also published Custer's second book, *Tenting on the Plains*, and Lummis published Custer's essays and short stories in *The Land of Sunshine*.

[14] See Tonkovich 56.

[15] Peter Boag addresses Old Nash at length and finds in Custer's "somewhat sympathetic—though not exactly empathetic" portrayal a failure to see beyond the individual's appearance (335). Custer describes Old Nash as "coarse," "swarthy," "tall, angular, awkward," of "architectural build with massive features," but Boag notes that Old Nash is also a man who attracts and marries three husbands and whose sex Custer only learns after fellow laundresses prepare Old Nash's body for burial (*Boots* 199-200, Boag 334-35). But Custer's anecdote emphasizes Old Nash's competence as a laundress and the harm done to Old Nash by husbands who took her money, rather than credit Old Nash's relationships with reciprocal affection between the married partners (Boag 335).

[16] In *Tenting on the Plains*, Custer retreats further into stereotypical style and her commentary on Indian, "white-trash," Mexican, and "negro" people with whom her travels bring her into contact rely heavily on derogatory physical description even as Custer benefits from the generosity and ingenuity of each group (*Tenting* 39, 76, 107, 120, 170, 190, 224, 228, 356, 429, 506).

[17] Larry McMurtry summarizes these positions in his review of Custer's books: "Despite a kind of dude ranch tone, her books are engaging. Libbie always casts herself as the dude, whether she's in Kansas, the Dakotas, or Texas" (164).

[18] "My husband tried for years to incite me to write, and besought me to make

an attempt as I sat by him while he worked. I greatly regret that I did not, for if I had I would not now be entirely without notes or dates, and obliged to trust wholly to memory for events of our life eleven years ago" (*Boots* 152).

[19] See Slotkin *Gunfighter* 5-6, Debow 827.

[20] See Tatum *Remington* 102.

[21] See Chapter 3 for a longer discussion of masculine attire as spatial salvage.

[22] Or as Haraway contrasts animal and human life and behavior with taxidermy displays as the "dead literal" "meaning-machines" of ideology (58, 52).

[23] To say hunting in North America is a "pleasure" for "all citizens" negates the historical fact of hunting for sustenance and the political reality of racial and economic prohibitions on citizenship and access to land in the United States. As important to any such reading of hunting to nineteenth-century expressions of American nationalism is an awareness of the restrictions placed on indigenous populations to prevent migratory hunting and the political exclusion from citizenship of all except white men. Poliquin blurs "democratic values" into shorthand for Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, and links "rugged American individualism" to the "private homes, banks, saloons, and country stores" in which hang taxidermied animals to freeze forever Turner's defining moment of the necessary encounter and conquest of wilderness to "American" civilization (Poliquin 161, Turner).

[24] Though Custer was born fifteen years before Roosevelt, she also outlived him by almost fifteen years.

[25] See Slotkin, *Fatal* 412-13.

[26] See *Boots* 293 and Rosner 92.

[27] See Lawrence 112-27 and Lemons 66. Comanche endures as the site of material history and narrative construction. The University of Kansas Natural History Museum has displayed the object since 1893 but, following a petition from indigenous students in 1970, as a symbol of the "theme of survival itself" rather than as the "sole survivor" of the Battle of Little Big Horn (Lawrence 193, 189, 214). My encounter with Comanche when I was five years old continues to inspire this project ("Comanche").

[28] See Dippie 164 and Jones 41. Sadly, Jones misstates that George's "King of the Forest" is a taxidermy mount of an entire grizzly bear when the "King of the Forest" was a large elk George mounted whole. George's "grisly bear" appears fragmented in Custer's library as a head mounted on a wall and a

rug spread before the fire (*Boots* 175-76). George's elk, however, ends up at the Audubon Club of Detroit because that organization has a room for it (*Boots* 293).

[29] See Bold 188.

[30] Custer also laments having lost in a fire "a wig that I had worn at a fancy dress ball, made from the golden rings of curly hair cut from my husband's head after the [Civil] war" (*Boots* 117). This wig becomes more like a taxidermy object when connected to the "light hair" Custer sees among collections of scalps or in pools of blood in Kansas; only George's hair still lives, on Custer's head (*Guidon* 112, 225). See also Stewart 147.

[31] See Gregory 62, Brown 16, and Bennett 20.

[32] See Alaimo "Introduction" 8.

[33] Stewart would not equate "memory quilts" with taxidermy, or the "souvenirs of death, the relic, the hunting trophy, the scalp … [which] mark the horrible transformation of meaning into materiality more than they mark, as other souvenirs do, the transformation of materiality into meaning," because "such souvenirs of death … disrupt and disclaim that continuity" the quilt constructs (140). But Stewart's analysis of the souvenir requires the dismissal of such absolute origins, in birth or death, or at the point of purchase. To be a souvenir, an object rematerializes a spectral experience and suspends its affective power in what Walter Benjamin would describe as the allegorical, or the "profane illumination" of the material and transcendental. If origin or end do not amend other souvenirs, "souvenirs of death" conflate with Stewart's "samples of the body," as both can signal the body's material excess and spectral proliferation (147). See also Santner 50 and Boscagli 41-2.

[34] Custer never "settled down" in any one place but traveled frequently throughout her life. She also used her connection to George to embolden her own voice in support of military widows and orphans and in opposition to government voices who sought to defame her husband after his death (Slotkin *Fatal* 382-83, 502, Leckie 235-46)

[35] See Bold 21, Haraway 31, and Lawrence 127.

[36] "At the same time the overabundance of reproductions and commentaries produces an authenticity-effect, their heterogeneity and the superficiality of their content actively undermine the direct, unmediated presence expected of an authentic artifact" (Hsu "Authentic" 310).

[37] Such reverence for national figures is consistent with Berghaus's earlier

work as the illustrator who famously reproduced Matthew Brady's studio and Abraham Lincoln's deathbed.

[38] See Greenberg 17, Poliquin 158, and Bold 188.

CHAPTER 4

SARTORIAL SALVAGE, OR IF OWEN WISTER COULD WEAR THE WEST EVERYWHERE

Owen Wister was disillusioned when he moved to Boston and began work as a bank "office boy" for Lee, Higginson and Company in 1883 (Payne 62). For the previous year, he had been in Europe among elite society. He had caroused with Harvard classmates in London, played piano for Liszt in Bayreuth, and enjoyed the Paris salons. Now Wister wasn't even a broker as his father had planned, not to mention the composer his parents prohibited. He spent his days recording deposits and calculating interest. He declined assembly subscriptions and dinner invitations. He economized. The simplest evidence of these constraints and the anguish they caused Wister takes the form of a "cutaway coat" that his father offered him for Christmas and Wister declined (Payne 63).

The cutaway, or morning, coat differed from the older frock coat and more formal tail coat in its rounded hemline and curved tail. The style was considered appropriate for daytime social gatherings.[1] Wister claimed to have no use for it or similar social amenities, being but an office boy. Raised in

various boarding schools and a regular in elite drawing rooms, Wister no doubt learned how to dress appropriately for the company, which is to say in the right combination of articles of clothing to allow admittance to a specific social sphere. With a new cutaway coat, Wister could gain access to Boston's elite society, but without the invitation or desire to visit such places, he needed no such coat.

This coat, and the multiple social relations and physical movement it implies, reveals Wister's awareness of the sartorial as "transit." In astronomy, a transit is the appearance of one object moving across another, such as a planet that from Earth appears to cross the face of the Sun. The term includes the foremost object's movement, the background object it occludes, and a viewer's vantage point of the relationship. Jodi Byrd applies the term to language to orient her investigation of imperial power structures (31). Just as people observe the transit of a celestial body from multiple viewpoints, Byrd aligns approaches to the same subject from different fields of inquiry. She reads the transit of "Indianness" as a vehicle for settler colonial violence, as colonizers shift the meaning of "Indianness" in art and policy to venerate symbolic "Indians" and subjugate or erase indigenous people.[2] My transit of attire combines scholars' understanding of clothing as a means of self-expression, social performance, and economic exchange, which overlap on women's bodies and in women's social roles, to reveal a mobile, masculine gap in such approaches.

Wister's coat discloses the familial, professional, social, economic, and geographic forces vying to organize a man's experience. The coat further delineates the physical space in which its wearer negotiates such relations. Georg Simmel explains that clothing provides a place for community through the "imitation" of social relations and the "demarcation" of a self from them ("Fashion" 299). Attire becomes a threshold, or selvage, of simultaneous sameness and difference.[3] Anne Hollander notes that human beings are "completed by clothing, not left bare in their own insufficient skins," which entwines the self with the materials that cover it (2). The coat then is more than an ephemeral fashion accessory or a performative social necessity. Clothing becomes a borderland in which to move between social relations and physical spaces.

Wister's second trip west, part of the "camp cure" prescribed by physician and family friend S. Mitchell Weir to combat Wister's depression and neurasthenia,[4] concludes with a similar image of a coat. In his journal entry from September 6, 1887, Wister explains:

> During the past two months I have been mistaken for—
>
> 1. an Englishman
> 2. a drummer
> 3. a bartender
> 4. a stage driver.
>
> The Englishman leads because I'm taken for one by themselves and my own countrymen at first invariably unless I anticipate the error by employing the Western idiom. It is my clothes—for I traveled in a loose comfortable flannel shirt that came from London, and a soft cloth hat. My trousers and coat were also English, and this did it. But in another day or so I shall be back where nobody takes me for anyone but myself. (*Out West* 61)

As in Boston, here Wister notes his social position before he describes his dress. The rhetorical sequence suggests a limiting, functional logic. An office boy does not wear a cutaway coat; an American does not wear an English coat. Wister implies that a man choses his apparel to confirm his social identity, and his apparel affirms that identity to society. Wister's experiences separate a suit of clothes from the self they attire. The cutaway coat could admit an office boy to an elite drawing room because the cutaway coat covers the actual boy. The English coat similarly allows Wister access to various social settings because the coat reshapes Wister's singular self into a generic shape—not "myself" but "a loose comfortable flannel shirt … and a soft cloth hat" mistaken for "anyone." An Englishman's coat invokes a singular elsewhere from which one can travel anywhere, and a drummer's coat indexes a diverse elsewhere from which one gathers things here. The man who wears such a coat is both the gentleman for whom money is no object and the tradesman for whom money is the object. While the Englishman's and the drummer's coats visibly transport men across spatial and social boundaries, the bartender and stage driver disappear in the same relations. The bartender stays here; the stage driver travels everywhere. The clothes no longer define boundaries but become the means to transgress them.

The flannel shirt's "loose" shape and "comfortable" fit expands this sartorial site of Wister's experience into an affective register. Where other passengers see Wister's attire and mistake, or interpret, it to identify a point

of origin or national character, "loose" and "comfortable" describe how the same clothes feel to Wister. The clothes may be "English" in origin or style and Wister's "idiom" "Western," but the "loose comfortable flannel shirt" provides Wister a physical space in which to move between these definitions. As Neil Campbell explains, this transition into the affective shifts "away from *representing* place as something already there, like a static, bounded text, and towards *experiencing* its variability and uncertainty as something *in process*" (*Affective* 17). The coat represents neither England nor the West but provides Wister and his fellow travelers a material location of simultaneous spatial possibilities. The coat permits its wearer's mobility across class boundaries and geographical borders.

One final coat aligns Wister's experience with sartorial standards and clothing's affective possibilities into a reorganization of western places. At the end of Wister's famous text *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains*, after the titular character hangs the cattle thieves Steve and Ed, shoots the lead rustler Trampas, and marries the schoolmarm Miss Molly Stark Wood, but before his investments mature him from cowboy to cattleman, the Virginian travels to Vermont to meet Molly's family. Fresh from their honeymoon in the Wyoming mountains and "well established in their familiarity," Molly suggests that the Virginian should arrive to Bennington on horseback wearing his "six-shooter," because the way he looks is irresistible (*Virginian* 319). The Virginian counters that his cow-puncher look would arouse fear

among strangers in New England but the suit he "got for Bennington's special benefit" will inspire trust and inclusivity (320). The Virginian recognizes that the occasion warrants a change in manners to "seem fit to come inside the house" (320). Wister accomplishes this transition through the Virginian's clothes rather than through his speech or actions.

The Virginian dons his "one particular suit" that combines his fondness for and "ideas" about clothes with Bennington's expectations: "To see get out of the train merely a tall man with a usual straw hat, and Scotch homespun suit of a rather better cut than most in Bennington—this was dull" (320). Wister's narrator explains throughout the text that the Virginian is sensitive to the different dress customs of town and country: "It is only the somewhat green and unseasoned cow-puncher who struts before the public in spurs and deadly weapons" (296). Here the Virginian's suit meets docile eastern standards. "Merely," "usual," and "dull" render the silent, tall man nearly invisible, to be permitted on Bennington's train platform and in its drawing rooms without notice.

The narrator's language suggests that this ordinary feat takes extraordinary effort. The suit of "a rather better cut" subtly admits careful assembly of the material and the social into a new physical space. The cut of a suit bespeaks technical and stylistic precision, as a tailor matches the fabric's grain across the suit's various pieces to achieve the apparent seamlessness of the fabric's uniform drape.[5] The suit's composition resembles

the garment's purpose in social relations. Each of a suit's separate pieces rearranges the body's physical boundaries into a socially ideal and spatially mobile shape. The homespun suit permits the Virginian's social access by disassembling geographic boundaries. Self and other, East and West, inside and outside, work and leisure, wilderness and civilization combine in Bennington's haptic perception of the homespun. The Virginian's attire resists formal definitions to evince the cooperation and coproduction of "westness."

Men's clothing upholsters *The Virginian*. The text opens with Uncle Hughey's eloquent Sunday clothes, the Virginian's dusty overalls, and the Tenderfoot narrator's "estranging" attire, and includes in each chapter handkerchiefs' knots and flannel shirts' textures (12). The plot's climax, when the Virginian chooses his promise to shoot Trampas over his promise to marry Molly, begins with Scipio LeMoyne's warning, "Don't change your clothes" (296). The Virginian's "wedding garments, … other civilized apparel," and homespun suit clothe the text's conclusion in apparent formality (296, 320). These articles and Wister's persistent attention to them garner little critical attention. Scholars dismiss the text's western "gyarments" as generic icons or performative costumes through which Wister wears his mythologizing aims on his sleeve (5).[6] Scholars instead explain how Wister constructs an idealized society of marriageable bachelors, mutable signs, and mobile bodies.[7]

I suggest that Wister manifests these dimensions in the materials with which he attires his western figures. Wister salvages cowboys' hats, handkerchiefs, cartridge belts, and chaparreros to locate but not limit western geographic, social, and economic relations.[8] This clothing assembles a borderland, or selvage, in which Wister interrogates the composition of self in the American West and beyond. His sartorial details create an affective place between romantic costumes and practical gear in which Wister feels the possibilities of social mobility and explores the consequences of westness on his national ideal.

A Composite Self

The Virginian occupies a privileged place in literature of the American West as a capitulation of national fiction and an origin of popular fantasy.[9] Most frequently approached as a novel, the text aspires to combine Wister's earlier essays and short stories into an historical romance (*Virginian* xxxix). As Christine Bold summarizes, "three plot strands hold the episodic structure together," the Tenderfoot's friendship with the Virginian, the Virginian's courting of Miss Molly Stark Wood, and the Virginian's promotion through the ranching hierarchy, which requires certain acts of extralegal violence to demonstrate loyalty to class, race, and gender (9). Only the text's marriage plot achieves any such genre convention, but when Molly permits the Virginian to her bed fresh from his showdown with Trampas, the text also

admits the Virginian's violence to the social order and appends Wister's historical revisions to national memory.[10] That such real and imagined narratives cooperate in the text begs a return to its composite construction and calls into question its treatment as only a novel. While chapters import Wister's earlier published short stories, the text also gathers Wister's personal experiences from "Wyoming between 1874 and 1890" into its "narrative" (*Virginian* xxxix).[11] The assembled accounts allow Wister to revise and reimagine his own conduct in the West, which further blurs the categories of history and romance through memoir.

Wister's combination of the factual and fantastic goes beyond Wister's "narrator-author's intrusions," through which William Handley sees Wister articulating a "fictionalized polemic" (72). Wister even outpaces his own impressions of the western scene, which he reproduces almost exactly from his earlier journal entries.[12] Wister's composition does not separate but blends the text's figures, and assembles in the Virginian's character Wister's own responses to western scenarios. Wister's amendments to the "Balaam and Pedro" episode most clearly display this transposition.

Wister's journal from June 18, 1891, records one D. R. Tisdale beating his horse after it failed to overtake two runaway horses. Tisdale's displeasure culminates in his gouging out one of his horse's eyes (*Out West* 109). Wister writes that he was "dazed with disgust and horror," "utterly stunned and sickened" by Tisdale's "brutality," and that his "position became more

complicated":

> My own conduct in making no effort to prevent or stop this treatment of the horse has grown more and more discreditable to me. But, the situation was a hard one. Here was I, the guest, and the very welcome guest of a stranger. … And I should have done no good, and reduced the relation between us two solitary people to something pretty bad, with nothing to do but sit together, eat together, and sleep together. (110)

Wister articulates how social customs trump his revulsion and limit his possible reactions. No matter his disgust, Wister had to honor social customs due to his traveling companion and host. Subsequent entries continue in this vein. The following day Wister writes, "Whenever [Tisdale] addresses me, I answer with perfect civility and coldness. Hand him things at table and then it stops" (110). And the next day: "I seize every chance to be civil, as you would to a stranger just introduced to you in a club by a friend" (111). Wister repeatedly resorts to civility despite the inability of such social graces to remedy Wister's "nauseated … soul" (111).

When reworked into the short story "Balaam and Pedro" to be published in *Harper's* in January 1894, and revised again into a chapter for *The Virginian* in 1902, Wister's notable change is not so much the actual Tisdale for the Biblically-inspired Balaam,[13] but the substitution of the Virginian for himself. Like Wister, the Virginian first interacts with Balaam according to a social code, which now combines the deference of a guest with the independence of the gentleman. On the trail to Sunk Creek, the Virginian similarly adopts Wister's civility, "preferring silence to the discomfort of talking with a man whose vindictive humor was so thoroughly uppermost"

("Balaam" 195). Unlike the inarticulate sickness with which Wister met Tisdale's brutality, the Virginian counters Balaam's "monstrosity" with "vengeance" (200). In the short story, "Balaam was rolled to the ground … by the towering Virginian, in whose brawn and sinew the might of justice was at work" (303). The Virginian stamps Balaam's pistol and hand into the dust, and lifts and slings him across Pedro's saddle. The narrator concludes with expositional distance: "Vengeance had come and gone."

By 1902, the scene gains in human action what it loses in animal cruelty:[14] "The Virginian hurled [Balaam] to the ground, lifted and hurled him again, lifted him and beat his face and struck his jaw … [with] sledgehammer blows of justice" (*Virginian* 199). The Virginian further wrenches and crushes Balaam's arm, which Wister amplifies: "[Balaam] seemed to hear his own bones, and set up a hideous screaming" (199). The Virginian finally lifts and flings Balaam "so that he lay across Pedro's saddle a blurred, dingy, wet pulp" (200). The Virginian's anger is mechanical and reduces Balaam to mere flesh, the "sledgehammer" pummeling the man to "pulp." Wister again concludes the scene with the phrase, "vengeance had come and gone," and now the Virginian's vengeance underwrites an objectified moral force. The fictive cannot erase the factual, no matter how insistently and increasingly the Virginian's violence suggests Wister's desire to do so. Instead the scene combines the text's affective registers: somatic, historical, experiential, and moral. The episode locates Wister's salvage of

textual materials to reform the networks of power that shape western places. Where social conventions restrain Wister's conduct, the Virginian's actions defeat and redraw the boundaries. The cowboy becomes a composite character, and his actions combine the real-and-imagined experience of westness.

The scene introduces the additional plot of social standards, or club manners.[15] In his journal, Wister describes his conduct towards Tisdale "as … to a stranger just introduced to you in a club by a friend" (*Out West* 111). Tisdale's Wyoming ranch no more resembles Wister's eastern clubs than Wister's Wyoming does Camelot,[16] but the line reveals the strength of Wister's social training. His default approach to social engagements is the highly-wrought standard of elite club rules, with their detailed requirements for decorum and attendant gender, class, and race restrictions.[17] One must first and at least appear appropriate. Social censure had contributed to Wister's need to go west, and events in the west exposed the depth to which Wister had internalized such critique. That Tisdale is a landowner and Wister's host continues to determine Wister's behavior even after Tisdale's physical brutality awakens Wister's emotions. Wister is neither socially permitted to contradict Tisdale nor physically strong enough to counteract him, and the Virginian enacts Wister's escape from his own self-discipline. Wister also replaces himself to signal his willingness to explore the variations or exceptions to such manners that shift the contexts to which they apply.

Wister's essays and stories explore the effects of these alterations and culminate in the selvage of *The Virginian*: the borderland of men's clothes that fields diverse affective responses to social connections. For between the Virginian's actions of romance and violence and Wister's tutorials on "quality and equality" is first the practice of dressing to be "equal to the occasion" (*Virginian* 95, 127, 130). Wister separates men in overalls from men in trousers and conflates them in flannel shirts. Wister notes how the Tenderfoot's English clothes establish social boundaries and when the Virginian's handkerchiefs erase them. And Wister reveals the proper standard of appearance to be a practice of assemblage, as the Virginian salvages from experiences the material means to amend social scenes. When the Virginian changes his clothes, he also changes his relations to place.

Getting Dressed

These variations in the Virginian's attire signal that Wister understands clothes to operate in relationships other than the performative and symbolic. As a costume or the "stylized repetition" of a social identity, clothing situates an individual in history and subordinates him to established social hierarchies (Butler 519).[18] As an "eclectic" arrangement of signifiers that construct a "narrative of interiority," attire liberates an individual from these networks of power and detaches the individual from the material world (Stewart 158). In both cases, clothing is a means to an end rather than a

middle ground. Instead, articles of clothing form an assemblage, which is Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's term for material and social simultaneity (477). Assemblage also combines their model of space with the practice of its construction, or the "patchwork" of salvage (477). Jane Bennett explains that assemblages "are not governed by any central head," so do not repeat historical or social patterns (24). Assemblages also create possibilities "despite … energies that confound them from within," and thus outpace individual narrative impulses (Bennett 23). An assemblage preserves the material "efficacy of objects in excess of human meanings, designs, or purposes they express or serve" (Bennett 20).

Assemblages are best understood as dynamically spatial. Bennett notes, "They have uneven topographies, because some of the points at which the various affects and bodies cross paths are more heavily trafficked than others" (24). Wister's attention to the Virginian's clothing locates these "heavily trafficked" crossings and orients a borderland, or selvage, between western places. Consider the opening sequence of *The Virginian*, in which Wister undresses and redresses his leading man.[19] The Tenderfoot first notices in the corral a cowboy for his "smooth and easy" movements, "as if his muscles flowed beneath his skin" (3). On the train platform moments later, "a slim young giant, more beautiful than pictures" appears wearing "his broad, soft hat … pushed back; a loose-knotted, dull-scarlet handkerchief [sagging] from his throat," a "cartridge-belt … slanted across his hips," and dusty boots

and overalls (4-5). The same man enters the eating-house having "done wonders with the wash-trough," brushing his clothes and now "the neatest among us" (13). At each step, the Virginian appears enveloped by his clothes and each envelope amends his relations with social spaces. His living muscle under tight skin permits him almost invisibly as another of the corral's animals. His "lounging" posture of "loose" and "casual" clothing connects him to the flows of the station's purpose and platform's company (4). His neat toilet of rough dress allows him inside the eating-house equally among "commercial travelers" and "other cow-boys" (13). No single garment discloses this transit, but the mutable gatherings of multiple articles manifests spatial possibilities. The Virginian shifts his attire and his place.

The clothing facilitates the Tenderfoot's awareness of the Virginian's actions as the cowboy's garments permit the range of such movements. Where he is silent, his clothes articulate; unlike Uncle Hughey's clothes that "are speakin' mighty loud o' nuptials," the Virginian's clothes move and enable mobility (4). Hollander explains in her study of men's attire that the "coherent and articulated" body is the "ghostly visual image and underlying formal suggestion" of modern male clothing, "a formal authenticity derived from human corporeal facts" (82, 31). Interest in the "heroic male nude of Classical antiquity" simplified nineteenth-century men's attire from a surface of "glinting textures" to a structure of "noble proportions" (62, 67). The resulting "complete envelope for the body" assembles pieces into an apparent

whole:

> The separate elements of the costume overlap, rather than attaching to each other, so that great physical mobility is possible without creating awkward gaps in the composition. The whole costume may thus settle itself naturally when the body stops moving, so that its own poise is effortlessly resumed after a swift dash or sudden struggle. (4)

Hollander's attention to the shifting terrain assembled by the fluidity of parts echoes Michel de Certeau in describing space as "composed of intersections of mobile elements" (117). The articles of clothing appear to create borders and erase them simultaneously because the garments move. The Virginian replaces dusty overalls with new trousers to transit indoors, and trades his pieced attire for the homespun suit to bring all places within his purview. The Virginian's articles of clothing construct a physical space, and his exchange of them amends the social meaning of that space.

Wister uses garments to obscure this construction as the natural expression of the Virginian's "qualities" as much as the articles of clothing manifest it through careful combination (*Virginian* 24). Wister's narrator imagines the Virginian's fluid muscles only because the cowboy's body doesn't strain against his clothing. The Tenderfoot calls beautiful the lounging man because the Virginian's gathered accoutrements accentuate his body's parts in perfect proportion to a whole. The Virginian's efforts of dress become the effortless poise Hollander describes. Wister subsumes the Virginian's attention to dressing as the effect of his inherent, immutable "qualities" so as to soften the threat of sartorial variation to the existing social order. If the

Virginian can move between places through his dress, as Wister did on the train to Chicago in his English coat, then clothing can create mobility for the "equality" rather than confirm a geography of the "quality" (95). This possibility excites Wister even as it causes him anxiety. In 1887, he reacted to western anonymity with the desire for the eastern boundaries that constrained him, "where nobody takes me for anyone but myself" (*Out West* 61). In 1902, Wister will settle the movement of his Virginian's "loose" and "casual" clothing into "a rather better cut" of "homespun" that Molly says is naturally "exactly the thing" for him (4, 320).

Wister's earlier writings establish the precedent for his using men's attire to mediate social encounters. Although his 1895 essay "Evolution of the Cow-Puncher" articulates "Wister's version of essential, racial, and gendered identity rooted in Saxon Europe and amplified in the soil of America," as Campbell summarizes ("Wister's" 215), it also illustrates a common barrier to social connection through attire. The essay opens with a scene on a train: "Two men sat opposite me once [on a train to London], despising each other so heartily that I am unlikely to forget them. … The cause of their mutual disesteem was appearance; neither liked the other's outward man, and told him so silently for three hours" ("Evolution" 602). Wister frames the scene in terms of disaffection. The men dislike and despise each other because of "appearance" only, "the other's outward man," and not what that man's appearance may signify. Wister goes on to describe rather than interpret the

scene and the latter of the two men draws a greater portion of Wister's attention. Unlike the "peer," whom Wister reduces to his "good" rugs, umbrella, and traveling bag and who "garnished those miles of railroad with incomparably greater comfort than we did," Wister gives the "male who could take care of himself, and had done so" a fuller form: "He wore a shiny silk hat, smooth new lean black trousers, with high boots stiff and swelling to stove-pipe symmetry beneath, and a tie devoid of interest" (602-3). That the men are both "bad" and share the first-class cabin and the "Anglo-Saxon's note of eternal contempt for whatever lies outside the beat of his personal experience" does not bridge the border asserted by each man's stuff (603). The "Piccadilly" peer disappears amid his possessions while the "trans-Missouri" American appears as the piecework of his attire (603).

As in Wister's journal entry that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Wister's attends this man's dress to reveal the practices beneath and beyond the appearance. And as with Wister's use of the Western idiom to undermine the spectacle of his own English coat, the train passenger's act of "at stated intervals … [spitting] out of his window" disassembles the man's outfit of silk hat and stiff boots (603). Wister betrays no sympathy for the "trans-Missouri" man's attempt to dress for the occasion because the man's clothes assert a boundary between the man and his means. The trousers are too smooth, the boots too stiff, the change too abrupt. No article discloses wear or manner. The man is not Hollander's naturally mobile, enveloped

body, coterminous with the feelings of that body, but a surface detached from the practices that assembled it. Unlike Wister's own "loose comfortable flannel shirt" and tailored coat that transit classes and continents, or the Virginian's neat wear of casual clothing that permits him among diverse company, the passenger's clothes separate him from both the "trans-Missouri" and from the train car's company (*Out West* 61, "Evolution" 603).

Where "Evolution of the Cow-Puncher" proceeds through Wister's snobbery and sentimentality—the essay connects the cowboy to "Anglo-Saxon" intrepidity through the peer, not the passenger on whom Wister wants to find "the pistol"—his 1897 novel *Lin McLean* repeats the train scene to call out the spatial consequence of the sartorial. Before Lin meets his "Biscuit-Shooter" bride and before Wister introduces the Virginian, the plot opens with "How Lin McLean Went East." The chapter follows the young cow-puncher's search for "variety" through Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, and Nebraska before the train delivers him to his childhood home in Massachusetts and returns him to home range in Wyoming. The chapter centers on Lin's preparations for his journey.

When he finds his trunk and "suit of clothes for town wear" had been sold in Omaha, Lin proceeds east without changing his clothes (27). The narrator traces the effects of his attire:

> If you journey in a Pullman from Mesa to Omaha without a waistcoat, and with a silk handkerchief knotted over the collar of your flannel shirt instead of a tie, wearing, besides, tall, high-heeled boots, a soft, gray hat with a splendid brim, a few people

> will notice you, but not the majority. New Mexico and Colorado are used to these things. As Iowa, with its immense rolling grain, encompasses you, people will stare a little more, for you're getting near the East, where cow-punchers are not understood. But in those days the line of cleavage came sharp-drawn at Chicago. West of there was still tolerably west, but east of there was east indeed, and the Atlantic Ocean was the next important stopping-place. In Lin's new train, good gloves, patent-leathers, and silence prevailed throughout the sleeping-car, which was for Boston without change. Had not home memories begun impetuously to flood his mind, he would have felt himself conspicuous. (28)

Wister's description of Lin's clothing almost exactly contrasts the train passenger's appearance in "Evolution of the Cow-Puncher." Where Wister noted the stranger's hat, trousers, boots, and tie, the narrator here highlights Lin's shirt, handkerchief, boots, and hat. The train passenger's attire attracts and dismisses notice with the "tie devoid of interest," but Lin's flannel sleeves, silk scarf, and "splendid brim" excite attention. Unlike the man's suit that constrains the social and spatial in the London train, Lin's clothes disassemble such boundaries.

What Lin wears remains the same in Mesa, Omaha, Chicago, and Boston, regardless of Lin's position in or the narrator's position on west and east. Wister's diction echoes this mobility. The place names replace social distinctions. New Mexico and Colorado stand in for their residents' being "used to these things." Lin's own experience blurs between the subjective and affective, as his actions and memories prevent him from feeling "conspicuous." Lin prepares a "suit of clothes for town wear," and his brother snubs him for his "style of hat," but carefully knots his handkerchief to reveal

Lin's and Wister's attention to the practice of attire rather than its appearance (27, 32, 2). Lin's outfit is haptic, carefully salvaged to manifest his experiences in marginal social spaces.

The point of contact between Wister's western travels, these early texts, and his *Virginian* is the way in which garments gather the sartorial as the spatial. The train passenger's stiff boots fix him in urbanity while Lin McLean's shirt-sleeves permit western mobility. Wister's soft hat admits him between communities while the Virginian's handkerchief acknowledges his aspirations beyond them. The items are neither "picturesque," as Wister's beloved Theodore Roosevelt called them in *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*, nor purely practical, worn against environmental and social contingencies (9).[20] Instead they are the matter from which Wister assembles places for possibilities, for the movement of men's bodies and the manipulation of social customs. While each person admits an awareness of standards of dress that restrict social terrain, Wister's subtle substitutions in each combination of garments affectively remaps the spaces they transit. Thus, between Lin's jaunty handkerchief and the "trans-Missouri" man's boring tie are the Virginian's range of "blue spotted" and "weather-beaten crimson" silk scarves (*Virginian* 56, 263).[21] The cowboy knots and ties them to experiment with social restriction and spatial expansion. The Virginian changes his clothes to salvage his place.

A Portrait of the Cowboy

Wister's attention to clothing's material variety competes with each item's potential as a signifier. Indeed, clothing assemblages in *The Virginian* extend Wister's project to disrupt the interpretation of linguistic and visual signs. Susan Rosowski notes that Wister's attention to turns of phrase and silences focus "our attention on the 'thing' itself, on physical ways of knowing," through gesture, looking, and pointing (270). For example, when fellow cowboy Steve calls the Virginian a "son-of-a-bitch," the narrator explains that the words' meanings are not relevant to the gesture of "Steve's friendly lips" (*Virginian* 11). The language enacts a practiced intimacy rather than enunciates a derogatory relationship. A similar dispute over language occurs when Molly shows her great aunt a portrait of the Virginian. In the chapter entitled "What is a Rustler?", Wister calls attention to the power of a word to disappear amid its contradictory meanings. Whatever "rustler" may connote in "cattle country," in Bennington it retains no material connections to the man to which it refers (168-69). As Rosowski explains, "eastern language doesn't cover a western reality" (270). Language cannot encompass intimacy with the man.

Stephen Tatum articulates a further fluidity in Wister's visual signifiers, which "too seem to be both accurate and deceptive, clearly adequate and yet entirely deficient in representing the 'true' reality of any situation, object, or character" and display "a residue of what might be called

excessive or nontranslatable or untranslatable meaning" ("Pictures" 12-13). As Molly and her great aunt debate the meaning of "rustler," they dispute the significance of the portrait's elements. The women attempt to read from the Virginian's clothes his activities, and interpret from those activities his manners. Molly's great aunt fixates on the Virginian's "belt and pistol" and stammers to put into words the social consequences of "a man like that" who kills people and yet makes love to Molly (*Virginian* 167). Molly redirects attention to imagined possibilities and suggests a "white collar" instead of the presumably depicted handkerchief, even as she confirms the photograph's accuracy: "yes, he's exactly like that" (167). For Tatum, meanings proliferate and compete in this "gap" or nonalignment between visual and verbal signifiers—between the pistol's specific utility and the masculine pronoun's totality—and multiply the text's ideological layers. No visual signifier conveys truth because all signifiers conceal plural actualities.

The narrator's description of the Virginian's portrait suggests Wister interrupts relations of signification to salvage persistent materiality from a visual imaginary. Like Campbell's "redistribution of the sensible," Wister's attention to haptic effect of assembled attire upsets the "major language," verbal or visual, of the western myth (*Affective* 4, 3). Consider the narrator's intrusion between Molly's aunt's request to see the Virginian's portrait and Molly's showing it to her. The dialogue stops as Molly goes upstairs and the narrator ceases to follow the characters' actions. Instead the expositional

paragraph catalogues Molly's "photographs from Wyoming": "views of scenery and of cattle round-ups, and other scenes characteristic of ranch life," several pictures "of young men," and "that picture of the Virginian" (*Virginian* 167). The photographs contrast with representative generality "that" specific Virginian's picture and undermine a familiar visual survey with intimate connection. This final object receives the most attention: "It was full length, displaying him in all his cow-boy trappings, —the leathern chaps, the belt and pistol, and in his hand a coil of rope." The details of the photograph discompose its subject as "full length" totality fragments into separate material objects. The chaps distort the legs and the pistol obscures the hips. Even the hand fails as synecdoche because it does not relate to a whole body, just to the tools it handles.[22] The photograph is not the man nor can it represent his dimensionality. The portrait only clearly displays the "cow-boy trappings" to which Molly's aunt refers when she laments, "My dear, you've fallen in love with his clothes" (167). Molly's great-aunt wants to read the Virginian as a complete type, but the portrait's parts resist such easy consolidation.

The articles of clothing reveal in the narrator's attention to the Virginian's portrait a reorientation from a symbolic imaginary to an affective register. Wister asserts each item's materiality to detach it from historical significance and salvage its alternative possibilities. As Jessica Dubow describes the breakdown of historical explanation into discrete examples, the

"particular" eschews narrative generality to become a unique "space in which to consider the coercions of that willed interrogation" (827). Wister's attention to each article of attire cues the reader into Wister's desire for the clothes to mean something, and under the pressure of which the garments fail to perform. Where Molly's great aunt reads the Virginian's outfit through a myth of western violence, and specifically that myth's consequence to Molly's physical safety and social security, Molly sees each item as the Virginian's material means to negotiate his environmental conditions and social relations.[23] That the attire appears within a photograph further evinces Wister's awareness of such frames' control over meaning. Just as Molly mentions that the Virginian wears a "white collar" sometimes, so the photograph evokes a life ongoing elsewhere, beyond the portrait's borders.

The Virginian's chaps manifest a convergence of the material and spatial within the portrait. The "leathern chaps" are the first of the "cow-boy trappings" the narrator lists, which position asserts their importance to the cowboy's look and life. In C. M. Russell's illustration of the portrait—Arthur I. Keller did not depict the item for the original 1902 text—the Virginian's chaps literally ground the image (Figure 10). In contrast to the shades and shapes of the hat, handkerchief, shirt, vest, rope, and belt, the chaps appear in singular simplicity. They are vertically straight while the belt, bent arms, and hat brim intersect the body horizontally. They direct attention upwards from the cowboy's virile center—his crotch and cartridge belt—to trap the

carefully, let me beg you, the case of a young man and a young woman who walk out of a door on Tuesday, pronounced man and wife by a third party inside the door. It matters not that on Monday they were, in their own hearts, sacredly vowed to each other. If they had omitted stepping inside that door, if they had dispensed with that third party, and gone away on Monday sacredly vowed to each other in their own hearts, you would have scarcely found their conduct moral. Consider these things carefully, — the sign-post and the third party, — and the difference they make. And now, for a finish, we will return to the sign-post.

Suppose that I went over my neighbor's field on Tuesday, after the sign-post was put up, because I saw a murder about to be committed in the field, and therefore ran in and stopped it. Was I doing evil that good might come? Do you not think that to

Figure 30. Drawing of the Virginian, from Charles M. Russell. Owen Wister, *The Virginian*, MacMillan, 1911, p. 434. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

gaze between the rope and hat in a complementary circuit between the cowboy's eyes and hands, only to then become the trajectory of escape to the firm ground on which he stands. Their shading suggests little of the anatomy underneath, as the shirt sleeve shows the bent elbow above, but the chaps remain contiguous with the man. The chaps exaggerate the shape of the legs in the body's silhouette but also expand the body as a second skin. They do more than define or signify cowboy. They assert a selvage into which the man extends his actions and in which he meets a social environment.

Wister's interest in "chapparajos" in his essays and journal entries leads me to read the garment as a materialized borderland of the social and spatial ("Evolution" 612). In "Evolution of the Cow-Puncher," Wister details the "gear" necessary for the cowboy's work (611). Wister describes the chaps as the cowboy's "armor" against "the thorny miles of the Rio Grande," else the chaparral "would tear his flesh to ribbons if the blades and points could get hold of him" (610). That chaps are necessary makes clothing an addition to the self rather than an occlusion of it, and that the cowboy's chaps fortify the body, not merely disguise it. Wister goes on to note how the cowboy embellishes the chaps with fringe and embosses them with roses, by which the garment annexes more of the cowboy's terrain to his body (610). The fringe admits and redirects rain, and the rose combines and separates living things; both further blur the body's boundaries into the geographic spaces he transgresses. The chaps gather the cowboy's felt experiences to the material

of his attire.

Wister distinguishes the use of chaps as protection from the wear of chaps as a performance, and the cowboy's being perceived as "something of a figure" (612). He notes that, "in his brief hour of opulence," the cow-puncher made a "self-conscious and deliberate … show," but in "these shrunk days," he "dresses poorly and wears his chaps very wide and ungainly" (612, 615). Wister emphasizes the point of transition from the material to the visual, from the practiced to the perceived, through his emphasis on "opulence," "show," and the "ungainly." To wear the garment is different than to envision how one appears in the garment. Such is the difference between an embodied practice of work and a superficial performance of it.[24] The individual material disappears into an imaginary that imposes symbolic significance and enables social performance.

Wister was acutely aware of the way chaps could cross the line between cowboy work and western show. He claims to have resisted the gift of chaps from Dean Duke in 1895, having "always been shy of wearing or owning these garments, as not being enough of a frontiersman to be entitled to them" (*Out West* 247). Wister fears what others will interpret from his chap-wrapped appearance more than he acknowledges the article's necessity to his western travels. Behind Wister's image consciousness and his cow-punchers' displays persists the way in which chaps facilitate their wearer's interaction with physical space. The chaps territorialize place as they enable

movement through it. Wister denies the chaps because he cannot move through the West freely—outside of a train car, he needs an escort—and his cow-punchers' "wide and ungainly" chaps betray their wearers waning need to ride freely through brush. The chaps combine the practice and presentation of material presence into much more than a mere figure.

Each time Molly and the Virginian meet, the narrator notes the cowboy's "fringed leathern chaparreros" which thus locate a site between boundaries. The chaps expand the self and body into contact with society and field changing relations between them. Molly can love the cowboy's look and acknowledge the significance of his clothes, but she further understands the Virginian's attire to assemble a new place in which he moves through the world. The chaps become the margin in which the Virginian negotiates his politics, Molly interrogates her manners, and the narrator disputes the static shape of the cowboy type. For Wister deploys the chaps not to define an appearance but to orient a selvage of affective experience.

Cutting the National Cloth

The Virginian's alterations to his attire put into practice Wister's position on a "social fabric" made by "self-governing men," to borrow Judge Henry's phrases (282). Indeed, the Judge's "fabric" is the only use of the word in the text as Wister, his narrator, and his characters use the words "cloth" or "clothes." The words differ in their relation to process—a fabric, or

fabrication, is cut or made from a cloth or stuff that materializes such potential. Or, cloth is in process while fabric is the result of process. Cloth manifests an intermediate terrain, between what Deleuze and Guattari call its "bottom" or beginning and its potentially "infinite" length, with a width "determined by the frame of the warp," which Laurel Thatcher Ulrich points out was first "determined by the reach of the weaver's arms" (Deleuze 475, Ulrich 93). Cloth connects the individual body to new arrangements through the simultaneously abstract and actual relations of "thirdspace."[25] Organized between selvages, the material's edges that correspond to a body's span, the cloth becomes the means to reform the body's borders. The cloth shapes a new space in which the individual can experience and construct the social rather than receive it. The Virginian's clothes interrupt the sense of a unifying "social fabric." By changing the Virginian's garments, Wister brings together competing affective responses to a singular national ideal.

The force of this sartorial shift becomes clear in contrast to the Tenderfoot's fixation on a single garment, the condemned Ed's "gray flannel shirt" (*Virginian* 246). The narrator meets the man east of Horse Thief Pass on the eve of his execution, to be hanged alongside Steve by the Virginian and his companions for stealing horses with Trampas and Shorty. Three chapters detail the lynching's preparations and aftermath, and conclude on "Superstition Trail" with the discovery of Shorty's body. The sequence interrupts the text's marriage plot. The scene intrudes between the

Virginian's engagement and wedding and appears to Molly's moral position. The gray flannel shirt blurs all of these boundaries by covering the Tenderfoot and Ed, living and dead, in the same cloth.

The narrator explains when he arrives, "I stood awkward and ill at ease, noticing idly that the silent one wore a gray flannel shirt like mine" (246). That the two men could wear the same shirt is a simple fact of the nineteenth-century ready-made men's clothing industry. As Michael Zakim asserts, "the frontier … might have served as an escape from the oppressions of waged existence in factory towns and Eastern cities, but it was certainly no escape from the market itself" (55). The shirt could index economic flows through Medicine Bow's mercantile from Molly's failed mill town, and bring together the quilts, pink fabric, and trousers available for sale with their origins in the East (*Virginian* 59, 17, 96, 67). Wister detaches these items from their manufacture and trade.[26] The garments operate only in connection to wear as the material means of spatial assemblage. The shirt does not equate the men's purchasing power so much as collocate their experiences.

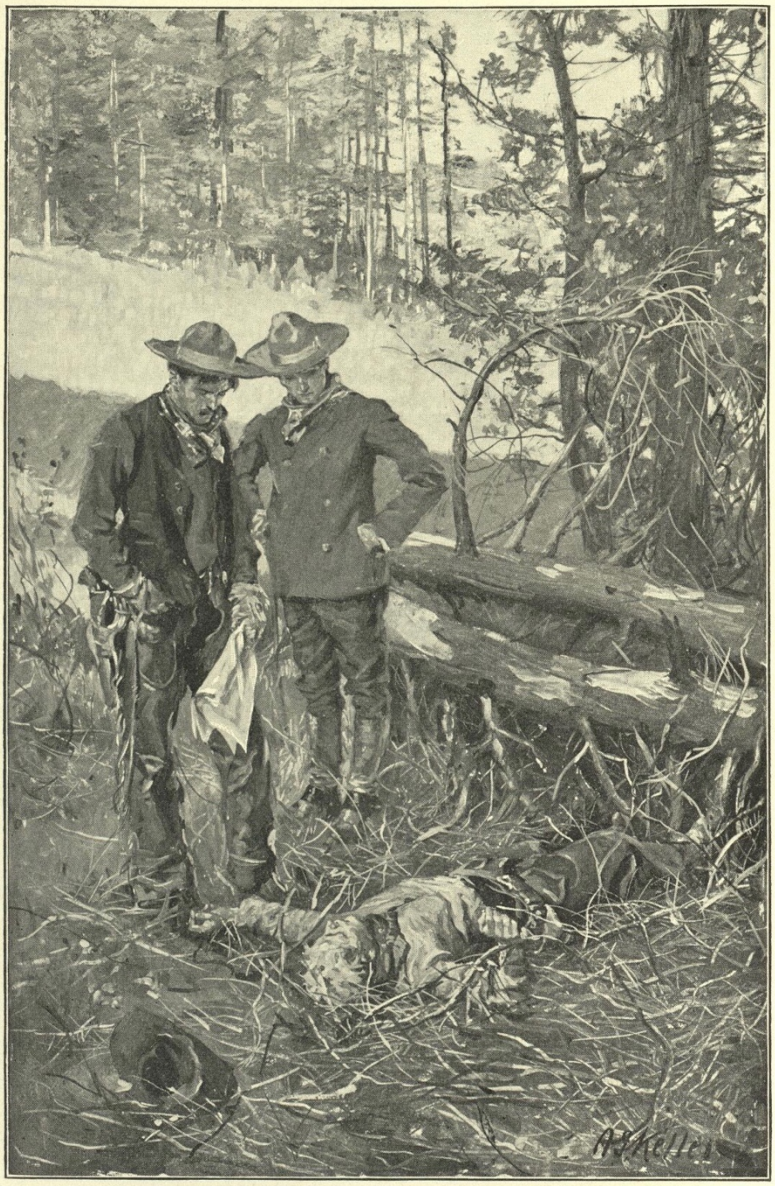
As the hanging proceeds without the Tenderfoot's involvement, he narrates his own thoughts: "Dead men I have seen not a few times, even some lying pale and terrible after violent ends, and the edge of this wears off; but I hope I shall never again have to be in the company of men waiting to be killed. By this time tomorrow the gray flannel shirt would be buttoned round a corpse" (246). While this musing establishes the narrator's exchange of

civility for violence and performs his claim of being no "longer a 'tenderfoot,'" the word "edge" suggests a spatial resonance beyond emotional shock (243). The shirt dissolves the margin between the narrator's corporeality and the condemned man's corpse as it materializes the place of their conjunction. The shirt makes them one and the same, and forestalls specific individuality. When the narrator asks himself, "which should I resemble," he lists Steve's actions before leaving open ended the identity and consequence of "that poor wretch in the gray flannel shirt" (254). The same cloth covers both men, both wretches unnerved by the hanging.

Even as the cloth connects a community, a literal "flannel-shirted democracy" that equates the living eastern traveler with the dead western thief, it also discloses the social consequence of such ready-made identity ("Evolution" 603). Zakim explains that manufacturing attire according to "a cartographic ordering" of the male body through "proportional measurement" and the "universal system" of the tape measure ignored individual experience (88, 94, 8). Garments produced using such "technologies" required no direct interaction between tailor and customer (92). The resulting ready-made clothing fit and fixed only a disembodied stereotype, and constrained autonomy within a system of anonymity (94, 188). The narrator's choice of the gray flannel shirt does not separate him from the wear of the shirt. Instead, the shirt blends his individual action into common practice and abstracts his singularity into a mathematical mean.

This is the "uncanny dread" the narrator experiences on "Superstition Trail" (*Virginian* 268). As Sigmund Freud would explain in 1919, the uncanny "is something that is secretly familiar … which has undergone repression and then returned from it," and which "arouses dread and horror" and an incongruous sense of comfort (946, 930). The ready-made shirt is as comfortable to the Tenderfoot as his own skin and yet, when worn by Ed, that same shirt provokes the Tenderfoot's awareness of his body's boundaries. He imagines a somatic experience that is familiar and foreign, at home in his own skin but uncomfortable in another's body. The flannel cloth creates a selvage in which boundaries and hierarchies cannot organize the narrator's experiences but field the variety of their affective registers. No verbal insistence on the "ETERNAL INEQUALITY of man" can deny the narrator's affective vulnerability in a place in which he could be Ed, Steve, Trampas, Shorty, or the Virginian (*Virginian* 95). Such assembled equality threatens the sartorial standards by which the narrator orients himself.

Arthur I. Keller's illustration of the final scene of "Superstition Trail" for the 1902 edition of *The Virginian* depicts these equivalencies (Figure 11). The image freezes the Virginian and the Tenderfoot at their discovery of Shorty's body, after their tense ride through the Tetons behind fresh footprints that the Tenderfoot imagines belong to the dead and the Virginian deduces belong to Trampas and Shorty. Keller stands the Virginian and the Tenderfoot side-by-side, vertically centered in the frame but horizontally



"'I wish I could thank him,' he said, 'I wish I could.'"

Figure 11. "'I wish I could thank him,' he said. 'I wish I could.'" Illustration from Arthur I. Keller. Owen Wister, *The Virginian*, MacMillan, 1902, p. 421. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

to the left of Shorty's prone body. The figures' gazes connect the trio, the Virginian and Tenderfoot looking down into Shorty's upturned face. The image's natural elements conspire to hold the viewer's gaze among the figures as the sunlit background and jumbled foreground offer no specific items on which to focus. Shorty's empty hat in the bottom left corner opposes the deadfall that bisects the image's height. Together they confirm the body on the ground to be so much dead wood and constrain the image's focus to the two men left standing.

The men juxtapose Shorty's cow-puncher piecework with their outfits. Shorty appears in chaps and shirt-sleeves with only the faint shadows of a kerchief and cartridge belt. (He also seems to have six fingers on his right hand.) The Virginian and the Tenderfoot look like models in a catalogue, posed together in similar attire with only slight variations. The Tenderfoot wears his coat buttoned and tall boots or gaiters over his trousers while the Virginian's coat is unbuttoned to reveal his vest's fit in contrast to his chaps' folds. Their hats, heads, and handkerchiefs are almost identical and tilt toward each other. Though the Tenderfoot stands slightly behind the Virginian and appears shorter in height, his coat, handkerchief, and hat assert his equality to the Virginian's proportions. The scene equates all men in a common society that encompasses life and death. Keller takes the illustration's caption from the Virginian's reaction to the newspaper he holds, bearing "the message from the dead [Steve], brought by the dead [Shorty]"

(272). The figures' placement directs the Virginian's thanks to both men. Thus, Shorty is also Steve, and because of his flannel shirt, Shorty is also Ed and the Tenderfoot. And in their matching coats, the Tenderfoot is also the Virginian. This parity extends Wister's desire for a western doppelganger, as revealed by his revisions to "Balaam and Pedro," but finds its limit at individual obliteration. Faced with anonymity among the "flannel-shirted democracy," the Tenderfoot and Wister feel only "dread."

Wister's rejection of such sartorial symmetries and social systems occurs through the Virginian's distinctive "Scotch homespun suit" (320). The concluding scene of *The Virginian* begins with the garments, as Molly and the Virginian arrive in Bennington to meet her family. The Virginian explains that the suit is the result of his "ideas" about clothing, derived from his "noticing" and "watching the Judge's Eastern visitors." No "ready-made guy," he sends "his measure East" and fights with "the tailor" to design his own attire. The suit permits him into Bennington society— "no wild-west show, after all"—and yet preserves his unique practice of clothing. The step from handkerchief knots to suit design outpaces even the Virginian's education. The suit's cloth and cut assemble Wister's ideas about men's attire.

The "Scotch homespun," which Molly declares to be "exactly the thing for [the Virginian]," is not the declaration of racial connection that Neil Campbell sees in "Scotch" so much as a combination of political values in "homespun" ("Wister's" 228). The term invokes two eras in United States

history—the early-national period during which household production enabled political independence, and the nineteenth century when men's appearance facilitated civic participation. Homespun is first a type of cloth, made at home from fibers grown at home. It retains the rough texture and natural hues of its raw materials. It manifests the smallest circuit of domestic production, from the fields and flocks tended by the family to the fibers prepared and woven by women to the fabric and garments worn by men.[27] Thus homespun comes to mean both the cloth and the economy. Zakim explains, "Breaking flax and shearing sheep, and then transforming the raw fibers into cloths through a chain of tasks mobilizing the entire family, rehearsed the republican credo of propertied independence" (1-2). This is the idyll Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's Farmer James laments losing among the Indians— "my wife, deprived of wool and flax, will have no room for industry; what is she then to do?"—and the ideal of industry and independence captured by Benjamin Franklin's pseudonym, Homespun (Crèvecoeur 220, Zakim 13). Given Wister's own interest in the early national period and the Virginian's nominal connection to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, homespun seems to dress the cowboy in yeoman's clothing and constrain him to the conventional terms of household production.[28]

By the 1890s, "Scotch homespun" was a category of mass-produced cloth that only resembled the coarse textures and muted colors of hand-weaving.[29] It no longer required or materialized domestic relations. Instead,

homespun subordinated men to sartorial standards and social customs. Homespun combined latent civic values and modern superficiality in the choice of material to personalize the uniform suit, in which a man could appear in public. A homespun suit aligned disparate origins, tastes, manners, and meanings in its "essential texture" within the suit's formal manifestation of "diplomacy, compromise, civility, and physical self-control" (Hollander 65, 83). The fabric combines individual narrative with past national ideas and global economic flows. The Virginian's choice of such material, then, entangles in his attire his myriad experiences. Homespun cloth suits the Virginian because its surface permits the affective intimacy his suit's style otherwise denies. The homespun practices in miniature the spatial consequence of the knot in his handkerchief. The cloth transforms a visual boundary into a region of haptic encounter.

However much homespun reterritorializes the suit with western variety, the suit's "rather better cut" betrays the limits of Wister's salvage project. For the suit's cut interpellates the Virginian in a mass-mediated sartorial system that undermines Wister's desire for individual exceptions. The two meanings of "cut" connect the suit to this social consequence. Cut rends cloth into pieces and describes the final shape of those assembled parts. Cut is both practice and product, skill and style. To cut a suit required technical precision and artistic judgment to match the grain of a cloth across pieces so the final garment would appear seamless and drape with the body's

movement. Zakim notes that even as the clothing industry streamlined and outsourced production processes, cutting remained the province of in-house specialists (86). The Virginian's comment that he "sent [his] measure East" reveals his reliance on such expertise, whether from an individual tailor or a clothing firm (*Virginian* 320). Only cutters could translate his ideas into material. He could never have cut his suit himself. Thus, Wister's knowledge of clothing's manufacture mediates his emphasis on the Virginian's practice of dress.

That the Virginian could take his own measure and claim credit for the garment's final cut, or style, also ignores that such measurements only work in cooperation with standardized pattern shapes. As with Ed's gray flannel shirt above, the suit's basic structure varies little across proportionally-derived sizes. The Virginian's measurements can only create his suit in combination with an established cartographic organization of his body, and his suit can only fit if his measurements enable necessary design elements. Such precision blurs the categories of custom-made and ready-made.[30] Zakim explains that by the mid-nineteenth century, "diagrams for self-measurement began to appear in advertising circulars, so that even those unable to visit the city could nevertheless partake in the sartorial distinction of having one's own custom tailor in New York and Philadelphia" (86). The Virginian's "ideas" about attire, then, likely derived as much from watching Judge Henry's friends as from the published images of dress and the advice of his

tailor, who may or may not have simply amended an already-produced homespun suit to match the Virginian's measure.

The "rather better cut" suit manifests the Virginian's selvage. It subordinates the man to a mass-mediated symbolic imaginary that segments the individual into sartorial provinces governed by abstract forces and capitalist mechanisms. It limits the Virginian's democratic choices of attire within established patterns for such choices. Though the suit's rough, "homespun" fabric creates a haptic terrain in which to perceive westness, the suit's shape constrains the Virginian's possibilities within Wister's eastern social hierarchy. If the suit's cut were not so fine, it would preserve within the Virginian's agency his variation of a materialized west, simultaneously connected and dividuated, static and mobile. Instead, the "rather better cut" suit places too great a value on social interpretation of image and style, or on the "social fabric" cut uniformly from such diverse cloth.[31]

Always Change Your Clothes

A final pair of images shows Wister's contradictory aspirations for spatial variation and social convention. Both Keller and Russell illustrated scenes from "With Malice Aforethought," the chapter in which the Virginian travels to town to marry Molly and shoots Trampas. Keller depicts Molly as she pleads with her cowboy in the intimacy of a hotel room (Figure 12). Russell renders the moment just after the murder, in a marginal sketch of

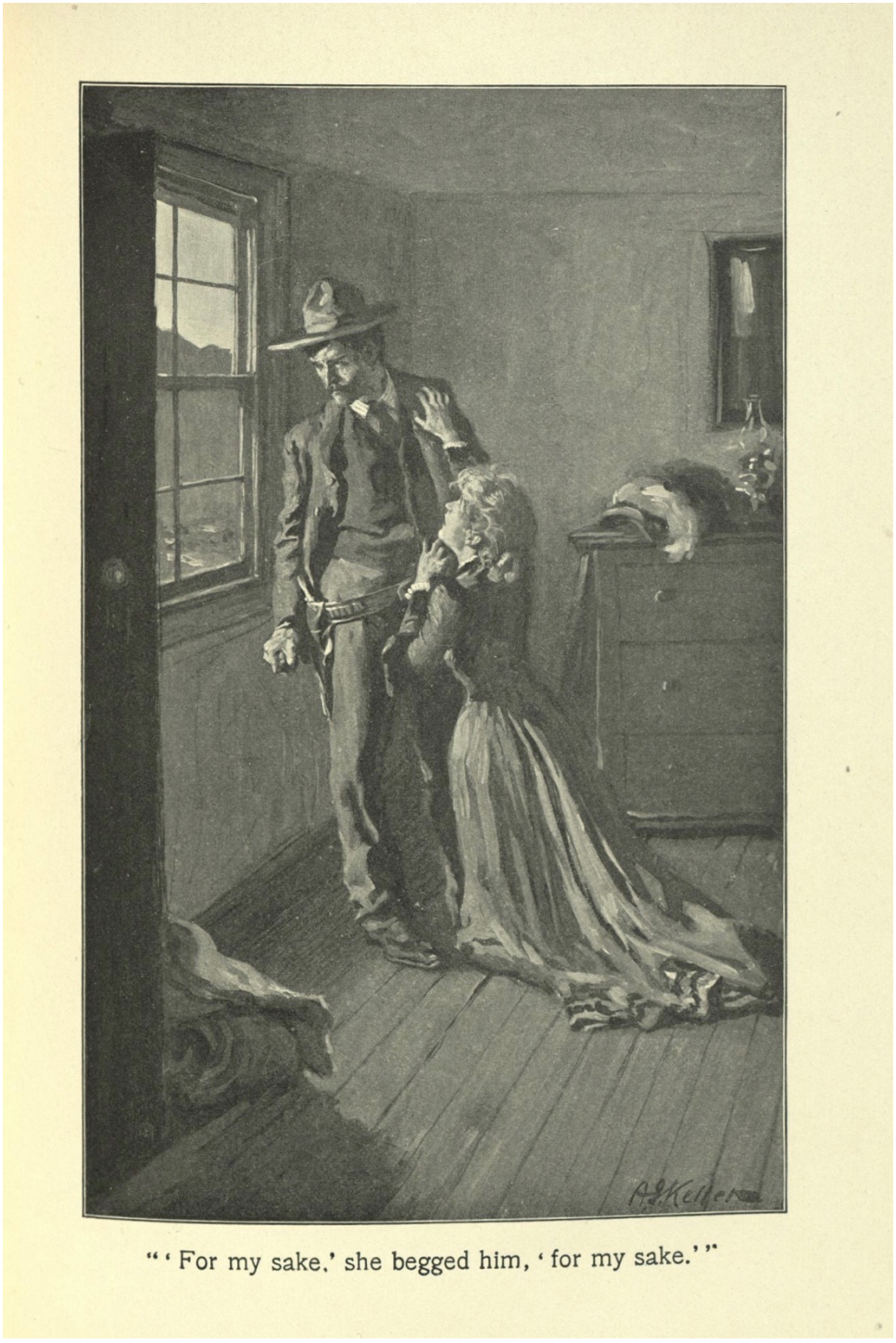


Figure 12. "'For my sake,' she begged him, 'for my sake.'" Illustration from Arthur I. Keller. Owen Wister, *The Virginian*, MacMillan, 1902, p. 476. Reproduction courtesy of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

the Virginian as he looks down on Trampas's body (Figure 3.4). The Virginian appears almost exactly the same in both drawings. He wears his familiar soft hat and cartridge belt but is otherwise a new man, clad in suitcoat, vest, white collar, tie, trousers, and shined boots. Both images extend the social affiliations of the Virginian's attire even as they inscribe his choices of clothing within the systems outside of which he supposedly operates. He is equally composed indoors among domestic furnishings and out-of-doors above Trampas's cowboy trappings. Keller's visual balance repeats the structure of his "Superstition Trail" image and centers the Virginian's sharp suit and Molly's ruffled dress between a pile of blankets near the door in the bottom left foreground and Molly's hat on the clothes dresser against the rear wall. The cut of the Virginian's suit echoes the geometric proportions of the room's architecture and organizes his space and his actions. Russell's sketch reprises the shape of his portrait of the Virginian. He narrows the leg's silhouette from chaps to trousers and replaces the lasso with a pistol. Unlike the disarray of Trampas's body, the Virginian's posture and stance show that he wears all of his clothes with similar confidence and believes they annex space to his body.

Both illustrations make visible the practical irony of Scipio LeMoyne's charge, "don't change your clothes" (320). Because whatever the Tenderfoot's interest in western idiom or armament, he also notes that the Virginian always changes his clothes. Each article of attire extends the Virginian's

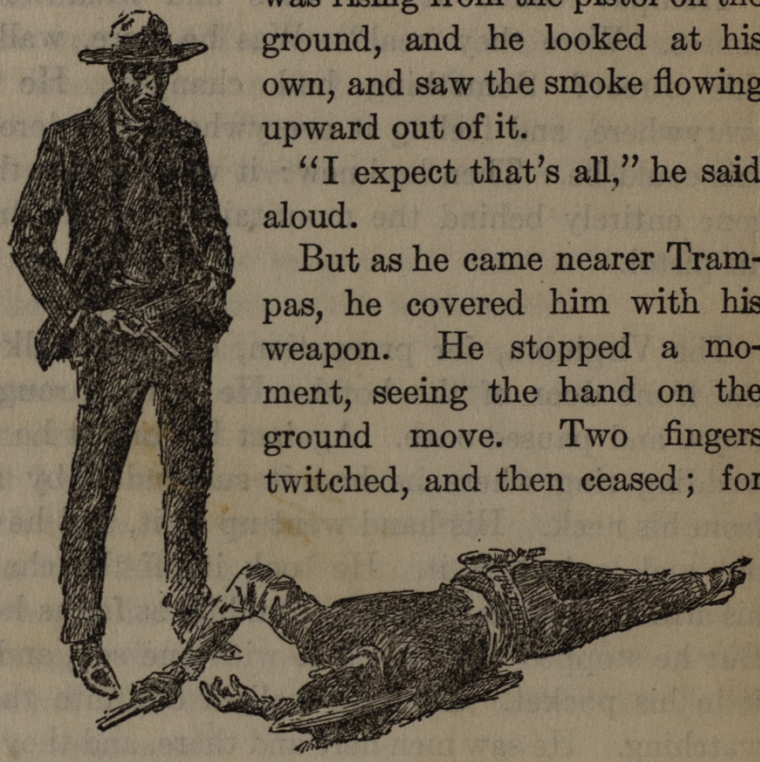
endure, because it was there that he had been going to-morrow.

"It is quite awhile after sunset," he heard himself say.

A wind seemed to blow his sleeve off his arm, and he replied to it, and saw Trampas pitch forward. He saw Trampas raise his arm from the ground and fall again, and lie there this time, still. A little smoke was rising from the pistol on the ground, and he looked at his own, and saw the smoke flowing upward out of it.

"I expect that's all," he said aloud.

But as he came nearer Trampas, he covered him with his weapon. He stopped a moment, seeing the hand on the ground move. Two fingers twitched, and then ceased; for



it was all. The Virginian stood looking down at Trampas.

"Both of mine hit," he said, once more aloud. "His must have gone mighty close to my arm. I told her it would not be me."

Figure 13. Drawing of the Virginian and Trampas, from Charles M. Russell. Owen Wister, *The Virginian*, MacMillan, 1911, p. 484. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

social mobility and spatial possibilities. Wister limits this sartorial practice as he limits individual choice to masculine convention, the familiar dress code of his eastern clubs. The Virginian's homespun suit does not dress up the man as a universal ideal, or "hero," of the West in the national imaginary. Wister erases the Virginian's individuality in deference to the eastern boundaries of national control.

Unlike fashion, which transcends situation through spectacle,[32] the Virginian's suit presents Wister's retreat to the albeit stuffy stability of the eastern establishment. He cannot separate a suit from the social structures it repeats, and he unwittingly inscribes his Virginian not in a system of his own creation but a system beyond his control. Where the Virginian's chaps and handkerchiefs blurred boundaries, the suit requires them. The suit appears to dissolve boundaries but instead reveals them. It materializes Wister's, not his cowboy's, final retreat to familiar territory and its conventional limits.

The Virginian traces a narrative of social access and spatial production and assembles through the Virginian's shifts in attire a new terrain of western possibility. As a site of westness, or the varying and variable affective experience of the American West, the cowboy's clothes materialize a marginal place. They serve neither to disguise subjectivity nor to signify history. Instead, its substantial persistence permits the Virginian's intermediate mobility, across formal boundaries of physical space and between conventional hierarchies of society. The Virginian's chaps and

handkerchief assert his individuality in contiguity with his diverse environments while his homespun suit enacts a haptic combination of eastern civility and western variety.

Wister explores a sartorial selvage to reorganize western places and the real history and imagined mythology of westness. His efforts to move attire beyond social organization highlights the extent to which clothing remains connected to its social necessity. Clothing persists within the dynamic relations of social custom, from basic modesty and protection to elaborate embellishment and performance. Such salvage can go only so far as to gesture toward spatial possibilities before Wister must return to the broad terms of social organization. The Virginian's clothes may permit his gestures of western expansion and social reorganization, but his suit finally constrains him within the sartorial standards of class and gender conformity. The suit erases distinctions between eastern and western spaces and coarse and refined men. Personal freedom from social conventions may inspire Wister, but his literary exploration of the place of this possibility falls prey to his fear of such wide-ranging individuality. Instead Wister contains the individual to make a man. That's what a suit does, after all.

Notes

[1] Harold de Fontenoy Vincent explains that the cutaway coat was "rarely out of place before dark" but that Chicago tailors "Messrs. Franche and Wallin" felt by 1895 that "the three-button cutaway will be as popular for genteel business wear as ever but for day dress it is probably losing caste, as it is not so genteel in appearance as the double-breasted frock" (6, 13). The frock coat's horizontal hem continues to assert this change of style into the twenty-first century, and late nineteenth-century accounts echo the loss of caste of the cutaway coat by listing it among servants' liveries, from which later stage manuals appear to include the cutaway as distinctive period attire for servants ("How Men May Dress Well," Jackson 70). But photographs of Wister assert the garment's earlier upper class social implications. Indeed, in the famous portrait of Wister leaning against a desk, he wears the daytime outfit of gray pinstripe pants, a darker waistcoat, white collar, bow tie, and a three-button cutaway coat ("Owen Wister about 35 years old").

[2] Similar to Patrick Wolfe's "representative authenticity," Byrd's transit of "Indianness" enables the "imperial desires" of the United States by suppressing or exterminating actual indigenous people to instead represent "Indianness" as submissive and permissive (Wolfe 111, Byrd xii-xiii). Byrd separates her theoretical language from her application of it. "Indiannness" is "a transit," which permits the use of transit beyond the settler-colonial context (xiii).

[3] See also Elahi 46-47.

[4] See Scharnhorst *Wister* 13, Payne 75-77, and Tuttle 91-92.

[5] Hollander explains, "The making of men's clothes was in fact a serious matter, involving the calibration and adjustment of the carefully designed paper pattern-pieces needed for the suit, and a refined skill, both in the cutting that translated them into fabric, and in the construction of the inner layers that created the hang of the garments" (48). Michael Zakim summarizes, "Male fashion in the nineteenth century was based on a singular, fastidious criterion: fit. 'It is the cut,' the *Mirror of Fashion* reminded its readers in 1855, 'that decides the style'" (82).

[6] While costume can refer to a more general ensemble of clothing, it typically connotes a specific combination of garments to present or preserve the distinctive style of a time or place, as Hollander includes in the "typical costume" of Folk dress and Theodore Roosevelt describes in his "distinctively national dress" of "homespun or buckskin" (Hollander 12, qtd. in Elahi 166). Representative or performative uses derive from such reduction of complex customs and contexts to single articles of clothing that transgress time and

space. So, when Jane Tompkins finds beneath the Virginian's and Molly's "cowboy and schoolmarm *costumes* … recognizable *types* who perfectly enact the most conventional social expectations," she applies to the characters a simplified reading from their clothes (139, emphasis added). Such disparity does not dissolve Wister's treatment of history for Tompkins, but disguises it. The supposedly timelessly attractive silhouette of a cowboy overwrites a specific historical negation of female cultural influence (144). Melody Graulich finds in the Virginian's clothes a similar break between individual actuality and social convention, but to his own rather than Molly's detriment. His exchange of his cowboy trappings for the Scotch homespun suit enacts his kowtowing to social definitions, to the performed power of the "male role" ("What If" 202-3). Because he must wear clothes, he is forever denied the freedom symbolized by his island nakedness. In both critiques, the Virginian's clothes obscure rather than cooperate with Wister's construction.

[7] See Handley 71, Tatum "Pictures" 12-13, Rosowski 269, and Campbell "Wister's" 229-30.

[8] See Introduction.

[9] See Graulich "Introduction" xii-xiii.

[10] Bold best summarizes how Wister translates Wyoming cattle barons' lynching rustlers during the 1892 Johnson Country War into the Virginian's heroic duty (4-13).

[11] Tompkins suggests such biographical origins using the "Em'ly" chapter for its articulating Wister's "hostile and twisted" feelings toward his wife's "civic activism" (140). William Handley explores in greater detail the composite character of the Virginian drawn from across Wister's western companions, and specifically how "too close for Wister's comfort, the Tenderfoot's ardor for the Virginian resembled Wister's devotion to [George] West" (82).

[12] In *The Virginian*, Wister cites exactly his initial impression of Medicine Bow as a "town,' "until language stretches itself to take in a new word that fits" (*Out West* 35, *Virginian* 10). And he embellishes his description of the range beyond; "a green cut where there are horsemen and wagons and hundreds of cattle, … like Genesis" becomes "a world of crystal light, a land without end, a space across which Noah and Adam might come straight from Genesis" (*Out West* 35, *Virginian* 10).

[13] See Scharnhorst, *Wister* 55.

[14] Theodore Roosevelt famously faulted Wister's including the eye-gouging in the *Harper's* version of "Balaam and Pedro," and Wister cites Roosevelt's influence in omitting it from the 1902 revision: "Some of these pages you have

seen, some you have praised, one stands new-written because you blamed it" (*Virginian* xxix). For a longer discussion of the "quarrel," see Walker, Fanny Wister 96, and Scharnhorst, *Wister* 140-43.

[15] Christine Bold calls this framework "club culture," and explores its influence throughout her *The Frontier Club* (2).

[16] See "Evolution" 610.

[17] See Bold 2.

[18] See Debow 822-827.

[19] That Wister opens *The Virginian* with his protagonist's muscle and skin before clothing it in dull scarlet and dusty gray notably sidesteps conventions of the genre he's often, and problematically, credited with creating. Stephen Crane's sheriff Jack Potter arrives to Yellow Sky in 1895 in new black clothes (86). Edward L. Wheeler's Deadwood Dick first appears in 1899, "in a tight-fitting habit of buckskin, which was colored a jetty black," "a broad hat … slouched down over his eyes," and "a thick, black vail [*sic*] over the upper portion of his face" (4-5). Zane Grey's Lassiter rides out of the sage in 1912, "silhouetted against the western sky," in black leather and a black sombrero (8-9). And Jack Schaffer's Shane first impresses in 1949 with his black tooled belt, black silk handkerchief, and soft black hat (2). Even Cormac McCarthy's John Grady Cole enters *All the Pretty Horses* in a black suit, albeit for his abuela's funeral (3). Each man's silhouette seems to determine the plot's shape before his actions. Wister's more careful additions and substitutions to his Virginian's attire forestall possibilities of plot to create a space of textured encounter.

[20] Wister's cowboy's fashions appear to owe much to Roosevelt's 1887 description: "The cowboy's dress is both picturesque and serviceable, and, like many of the terms of this pursuit, is partly of Hispano-Mexican origin. It consists of a broad felt hat, a flannel shirt, with a bright silk handkerchief loosely knotted round the neck, trousers tucked into high-heeled boots, and a pair of leather 'shaps' or heavy riding overalls. Great spurs and a large-calibre revolver complete the costume." For more about Wister's relationship with Roosevelt, see Bold 28, and Handley 77.

[21] The obvious parallel here is with "tying the knot," or the text's marriage plot, that Molly foreshadows by removing the Virginian's handkerchief and "knotting it with her own" to make a bandage for his wounds (213). Molly's tying fabric to fabric is symbolic, while the Virginian's tying scarves to his body is a salvage of self. Indeed, his recuperation is complete when he dresses himself in clothes from Sunk Creek and, "with a silk handkerchief knotted round his throat … told her it was good to feel respectable again" (226).

[22] Certeau explains synecdoche "names a part instead of the whole which includes it" (101).

[23] The Virginian's pistol represents to Molly's great aunt the "Darwinian competition of strength and virility," in which Richard Slotkin reduces Molly to her maternal duties, and the cowboy's opposition to female authority, through which Jane Tompkins sees Wister replacing Molly with the Virginian's passive "earthy mother" (*Gunfighter* 170, 183; Tompkins 144, 155). Molly's great aunt fears Molly's erasure in service to a dominant social narrative.

[24] I privilege chaps above the cowboy hat because hats' shapes change enough to resist universality. A wide-brimmed hat signals the iconic silhouette of the cowboy, and the Stetson has shaded westerners since the Civil War, but Wister omits any such branding. The Virginian's hat is simply "broad, soft," rather than tall and stiff as in the fashion of eastern metropolises of the day (*Virginian* 4). Even a Stetson's shape varies across flat, creased, or domed crowns that would come to organize periods and character types in twentieth-century film westerns. Daniel Worden finds in T. S. Eliot's use of the word "Stetson" an erasure of the hat's materiality to hold out "promise for an unearthed truth, a renewed brotherhood" (11). Willa Cather uses the Stetson to similarly represent a homosocial community and geographic imaginary in *The Professor's House*. Godfrey St. Peter first meets Tom Outland "in a heavy winter suit and a Stetson hat" (110). Steven Moffat, conversely, reduces "Stetson" to a popular culture transit between early westerns, the militarized American West of the 1960s, and the twenty-first-century's "prestige westerns" when the 11th Doctor of the BBC series "Doctor Who" proclaims, "I wear a Stetson now. Stetson's are cool" (Moffat, Nelson). Chaps, however prominent and pedestrian, are only ever chaps.

[25] See Latour 45 and Soja, *Thirdspace* 11.

[26] Unlike the "maroon-colored flannel shirt" worn by Stephen Crane's outlaw Scratchy Wilson in "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" that, like Pace Picante Sauce, is made in New York City, Wister detaches his textiles from their manufacture (Crane 93). Even the new quilts on which the Tenderfoot spends his first night in Medicine Bow are not the products of quilters but the Tenderfoot's temporary terrain (17).

[27] Ulrich explains that domestic production of textiles in the United States differed from England's artisanal industry in both location and labor. She notes that most European guild weavers were men while most early American weavers were women (104).

[28] See Scharnhorst, "Virginian" 227, 240.

[29] "Scottish homespun twills in stripes, irregular or undefined checks, and mixtures, are shown in the colors which peasant women in the north of Scotland and Ireland dye their own homespun goods, with dyes from native forest barks. Natural gray, natural brown, and homespun blue are favorite shades in these peasant woolens, which, although known as Scottish homespuns, are really made in France, and are far better and stronger cloths than their prototypes," *Demorset's Family Magazine*, March 1891, p. 312.

[30] Rob Schorman notes, "Contemporary observers claimed that 90 percent of men wore ready-made clothing, … even as the rhetoric surrounding men's clothing continued to stress a custom-made ideal" (5).

[31] Hollander summarizes, "The suit remains the uniform of official power, not manifest force or physical labor. …[It] express a confident adult masculinity, unflavored by either violence or passivity" (83).

[32] Most critics explore fashion as a female province, which Boscagli describes as "the cultural terrain where [women] are interpellated into femininity and consumption," and as "the site of female spectacle and of fantasy as a mode of dissent against how subjects and objects are supposed to relate" (81-82).

CHAPTER 5

"ABOVE ALL COMPASSING OF WORDS": WEAVING WESTNESS IN MARY AUSTIN'S "THE BASKET MAKER" AND *THE LAND OF LITTLE RAIN*

The central scene of Mary Austin's 1903 story collection *The Land of Little Rain* is Austin's relationship with the Paiute woman Seyavi's basket. Austin describes the object during her visit to Seyavi's "campoodie" in the volume's single chapter about a woman, "The Basket Maker" (Austin, *Land* 93). Situated within the collection's narrative of Austin's "wanderings" and accounts of other humans and nonhumans in the desert, the story depicts a destination that is also the origin for Austin's reimagining her relation to the place (17). Austin arrives at the campoodie on the Mesa Trail to find it empty at midday, except for "the blind and incompetent left there to keep camp" (88). Among these older Paiutes sits Seyavi, having "paid the toll of the smoky huts and become blind" (98). However, Austin presents Seyavi as anything but incompetent and relates the tale of Seyavi's life, through marriage and war, motherhood and want, and basket-making and wit.

Seyavi's lack of sight signals Austin's transition from visual aesthetics

to affective practice. Austin tells Seyavi's story through her woven cooking vessels: "Seyavi made flaring, flat-bottomed bowls, cooking pots really, when cooking was done by dropping hot stones into water-tight food baskets, and for decoration a design in colored bark of the procession of plumed crests of the valley quail" (95). Austin explains that these woven bowls "are all of the same piece" despite their various shapes because Seyavi has made them "in this pattern," "in the golden spring of her wedding year," then "after pillage, [when] it was possible to reinstate the housewifely crafts," and now to sell for money, "in a generation that [prefers] iron pots for utility." Seyavi's basket weaving creates the site of her experiences from the repetitions of seasonal changes and the flow of history.

Austin accentuates this convergence of circular and linear forces by framing the basket description between two modern circumstances—the ever-changing "fashion" of women's hair and the static aesthetic site of the art object. Unlike a woman "in our kind of society," who ceases to alter her hair only after passing "the crisis of her experience," Seyavi's repeating pattern is the mode of her experience. The basket's appearance is as integral to its material form as is Seyavi's practice of basket weaving to her persistence through her life's crises. This intertwining of form and substance further opposes Austin's use of Seyavi's basket to authenticate a narrative separate from Austin's own. The object is not an ethnographic specimen or artistic representation but the site at which Austin explores the limits and

consequences of such meaning-making structures.[1] The woven bowl becomes a site of "understanding all this without saying anything," and creates a place in which to consider this affective alternative (96). In Seyavi's basket, Austin can experience and experiment with her real-and-imagined encounters of the American West.

The woven bowl gathers several threads of Austin's story collection, including the habits that produce the rhythms of life, the limits of social conventions and environmental conditions, and the patterns that appear from juxtaposing familiar cultural practices. The basket also enacts a gesture beyond Austin's narrative intricacy, as the practice and product of basket-weaving materialize a space in which Austin can explore affective variety. As Neil Campbell explains, the affective shifts "away from *representing* place as something already there … and towards *experiencing* its variability and uncertainty as something *in process*" (17). Seyavi's basket exemplifies this transition for Austin. Austin reconnects the material thing to its practice of construction to consider the multiple relations performed in the producing. Among Seyavi's willow fibers Austin includes expressions of domestic chores, seasonal patterns, and artistic inspirations. The basket's warp and weft combine in a similar tensegrity of experience.[2] Like the basket-weaving that manipulates natural materials into cultural forms, Austin's woven space brings together real-and-imagined events into a new site of "westness."

Salvaging Critical Space

Current criticism subordinates Austin's material and spatial elements to approach Seyavi as Austin's doppelgänger. Melody Graulich explains that within "feminist frameworks," critics understand Seyavi to embody Austin's exploration of woman artists and their challenges to "cultural definitions of womanhood" throughout her works (xv). Anna Carew-Miller suggests that "the characteristics of these [women artists] might reflect Austin's life during the time she created them" (115). Seyavi, "The Basket Maker" in *The Land of Little Rain*, and another Weaving Woman in Austin's 1904 short-story collection *The Basket Woman*, are both "creative, brave, and resourceful," "unhampered by the needs and desires of their women's bodies," "more self-sufficient and less in need of a man" (116, 115).[3]

Austin's early life was a similar negotiation between her responsibilities and desires, between her duties as daughter, sister, wife, and mother and her aspirations for intellectual development and artistic honesty (Schlenz viii-ix). Austin's earliest short stories provided financial support to her family and allowed her to imagine a world beyond their society (Halverson 83). She articulated a freedom of the California desert that sold well enough to support her own independence, after she divorced her husband and institutionalized her mentally-disabled daughter (87). To parallel Austin's choices with Seyavi's circumstances ignores the violence of Seyavi's experience and the facts of Austin's life. Austin explains at the

beginning of "The Basket Maker" that Seyavi "lost her husband in the dying struggle of his race" and "set her wit to fend for herself and her young son" (*Land* 93). Seyavi's spouse died fighting the "cattle men and adventurers for gold" who settled in the Owens Valley, while Austin's spouse merely failed as a settler and water developer for those cattle men (93, Schlenz viii). Catheryn Halverson also notes that Austin did not leave her husband until 1905, two years after *The Land of Little Rain* was published and profitable (83). These differences undermine the assumed independence of Austin's women artists and the priority of art in their activities. Art was less a choice for either Austin or Seyavi than a means for each woman's survival; like Austin's stories, "Seyavi made baskets for love and sold them for money" (*Land* 95). The important connection between the women, then, is not so much through biography as through practice.

Austin's attention to the work of art invites critical framing from her 1923 treatise *The American Rhythm* instead of from her 1932 autobiography *Earth Horizon*. Where *Earth Horizon* curates a performance of self between Austin's split "I-Mary," "Mary-by-herself," and third-person narrator personas, *The American Rhythm* details her experiments with expression.[4] In *Earth Horizon*, Austin's identity slips between "multiple selves who never coalesce into a unitary subject," and among whom she imagines Seyavi (Karell 171). In *The American Rhythm*, Austin is at work alongside "the basket makers" and "in the midst of these processes … caught up in the

collective mind" (*American* 40-1). To use Austin's autobiography as an authoritative record, however fraught, diminishes her other texts and characters to mere evidence of that history, as with the blurring of individuality between Seyavi, the Basket Woman, the Weaving Woman, among others, and Austin herself (Hoyer 136).[5] To look instead to her alternative theory of aesthetic practice reveals *The Land of Little Rain* as an exploration of the real-and-imagined through the physical gestures of basket-weaving, which produce real-and-imagined places.

Austin's interests in practice compliment my own approach to salvage, which I derive from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's example of patchwork space in *A Thousand Plateaus*. They use woven fabrics, quilts, and baskets to exhibit spatial techniques (475). In weaving, warp and weft intersect to form a striated space from which an understanding of smooth space emanates. Or, the intersecting materials of a basket organize the site of the basket and at the same time fix the spatial relations of outside, inside, bottom, and top. The basket is finite but the practice that produces it is infinite, "perpetually in construction or collapsing … prolonging itself, breaking off and starting up again" (20). Seyavi's weaving in "The Basket Maker" demonstrates this process. Seyavi weaves many baskets during her lifetime, all of which Austin explores through "one of Seyavi's golden russet cooking bowls with the pattern of the plumed quail" (*Land* 96). The basket, then, is not so much an object as an assemblage, an affective site at which

Austin gathers the practices and relations that operate beyond the material thing. The basket materializes Austin's use of natural materials and cultural forms, physical experiences and imagined possibilities. The basket brings together the connections of Bruno Latour's "quasi-object" and the productions of Edward Soja's "thirdspace" to reveal the cooperation of material and spatial practices.[6]

As the practice of salvage arranges materials into various relations, it expands the selvage or borderland, or what Latour calls "the margin of manœuvre" (39). Seyavi's woven bowl enacts this reorientation of the edge as the center. Seyavi cuts willows from the river bank for her baskets and, through her weaving, transforms the river's selvage into the basket's form. Austin traces this shift through Seyavi's story. Seyavi appears confined within the boundary of her wickiup's shadow until Austin explains that the land, "not the wattled hut," is the Paiute's home (97). Seyavi gathers food from the margins, digging "tule roots and fresh-water clams" from the "slough bottoms," and expands them into a habitable place (93). Austin then approaches her own travels from this reformed point of view. She finds "peaks, cañons, and clear meadow spaces which are above all compassing of words," and "in the damp borders of the irrigating ditches clumps of *yerba santa*, horehound, catnip and spikenard, wholesome herbs and curative" (3, 145). Natural forms extend beyond verbal boundaries and cultural value thrives at neglected edges. Even the apparent confinement of Austin's own

house, "under the willow tree at the end of the village street," only accentuates the futility of such definitions (4). Austin's metaphors derive from practice not viewpoint, and her expression of it reforms western geography. Just as Seyavi's woven bowl weaves marginal experiences into a place for those experiences, *The Land of Little Rain* assembles narrative boundaries into a haptic borderland. The basket suspends the forces of western regional production in the practice of material expression, and produces a portable, permutable encounter with the processes of place.

Tracing Aesthetic Practice

Austin articulates her position on an experiential practice of art in her opening essay of *The American Rhythm*. Although the treatise was published in 1923, Austin began developing it in the 1890s when she was writing the stories that would become *The Land of Little Rain* (*American* 38). The text explains Austin's interest in the "Amerind" as the foundation of American culture and includes her "reëxpressions" of "Amerind songs." Before she proceeds with this work, Austin reorients a discussion of aesthetics from the formal to the experiential. Mimesis, she says, is not representation but "an attempt to understand the Universe, to get inside it by *doing* as it does" (35, emphasis added). Art is not the thing produced but the practice of production.

Austin extends this approach to "esthetic sense," which "might be to the development of the individual consciousness what the mouth is to the

body, the threshold at which the esthetic experience is rendered poignant" (34). Austin's example suggests that the body reacts affectively to a taste in the mouth before the intellect can organize a rational response. "Poignant" connotes both a sharp taste and an emotion shock. By comparison, the "individual consciousness" absorbs the affective response with aesthetic experience at the "threshold" of the "esthetic sense." The vibration of the eardrum or the tapping of a foot are then more authentic to an aesthetic sense than the systematic study of an artistic form.

Austin's practice of "reëxpression" is then not so much an intuiting of indigenous traditions for problematic translation as it is a dialectic of witness and re-enunciation that Austin deploys across her works. *The American Rhythm* specifically discusses poetry, but Austin describes objects and gestures that connect to her approach to *The Land of Little Rain*. Austin's theory of aesthetics as practice suggests an approach to the materialized cooperation of content and expression in "The Basket Maker."

Consider Austin's contrast of Seyavi's basket from the Olancha woman's "bottle-neck trinket baskets in the rattlesnake pattern, [which] could accommodate the design of the swelling bowl and flat shoulder of the basket without sensible disproportion" and the baskets burned during Paiute funeral ceremonies, which Austin covets for her "collection" (*Land* 95, 97). The trio of objects allows Austin to distinguish the baskets' forms and patterns in a traditional study of aesthetic classification. She invokes the

geometric harmony of classical artistic proportions by praising the Olancha woman's basket as being "without sensible disproportion." The Native American trinket basket meets the standards of European art familiar to Austin's audience and places Seyavi's and the funeral baskets in similar context.

This association operates through the logic of the collection. As Susan Stewart explains, because the collection replaces origin with classification, … its existence is dependent upon principles of organization and categorization" (153). A collection exists because of the collector's desires and standards. The act of collecting then imposes aesthetic principles on the object, akin to the "repressive authenticity" that Patrick Wolfe explains replaces the actuality of the basket with the colonizers' ideas of its beauty (111). Austin's collection admits diverse functions—here the daily utility of a cooking pot, the idiosyncratic privacy of a trinket assortment, or the communal ritual of a funerary urn—and nevertheless omits individual or historical distinctions. Seyavi's quail pattern is just a design element juxtaposed with the Olancha woman's rattlesnake pattern; no longer full expressions of their weaver's lives, the baskets become vacant sites for aesthetic evaluation. Or as Stewart summarizes, such classification based on formal design elements makes "temporality a spatial and material phenomenon" (153). The baskets can sit side-by-side only as decontextualized things.

Austin escapes from this seeming "repressive authenticity" when she

comments that "the satisfaction of desire … is a house-bred theory of art that makes anything more of it" (*Land* 96). Seyavi's baskets materialize a narrative of creative expression that outpaces the imposition of foreign conditions on them and discloses Austin's true appreciation of them. To be "house-bred," as Austin is, assigns to such a "theory of art" the power of organization and an admission of the failure of that structure to include every manifestation. The house places categories of the urban or rural, private or public, female or male, and also limits such categories to that origin. This "theory of art" is "house-*bred*," not house-bound (emphasis added). As with Edward Soja's process geography, in which "an already-made geography sets the stage, while the willful making of history dictates the action and defines the story line," Austin opens *The Land of Little Rain* in her brown house under the willows but wanders through the Mojave for the remainder of the collection (*Postmodern* 14). Seyavi's "works of art," like Austin's "essays" at the desert edges, emphasize the practice of working over the product of that work (*Land* 95, 10).

In *The American Rhythm*, Austin articulates this alternative aesthetic approach to practice rather than form. She understands artistic form as disconnecting personal experience from production to replicate patterns of foreign meaning. Artistic practice, or what Austin locates in a mimesis as "making," uses a combination of habituated gestures to realize "the meaning of American experience in terms of activity" (*American* 35, 36). She

illuminates this distinction through examples of European poetry and "Amerindian" pottery. English poetry forces English syllables to the meters of communal Greek "foot music," which are patterns foreign to the English poets' experiential imagery or rhythms (10). The "ceremonial [pottery] bowl unearthed in one of the pre-Columbian pueblos" instead materializes an aesthetic threshold between object and subject, between representation and history (51). The bowl's "adequate suggestion of birdness" asserts a selvage between the "picture of a Thunderbird" and the "ideograph of a thunderstorm" (51, 52). These examples express Austin's shift away from conventional artistic forms. The poem and the bowl instead become equal opportunities for authentic expression. She argues that art is neither a consequence of its form nor is it directed toward a single sense, and instead "occupies a space without filling it" to "register through every sense" (23, 51, 7). Together, this imaginative "coördination" of gestures detaches from historical causality or narrative significance to express an honesty of individual experience and disclose aesthetic practice (34, 7, 57).

Austin salvages indigenous experience to express her aesthetic sense:

> I have a naturally mimetic temperament which drives me toward the understanding of life by living it. If I wished to know what went into the patterns of the basket makers, I gathered willows in the moon of white butterflies and fern stems when they were ripest. I soaked fibers in running water, turning them as the light turned, and did my ineffectual best to sit on the ground scraping them flat with an obsidian blade, holding the extra fibers between my toes. (40-41)

As with her shift of mimesis from representation to "doing" or "making," here

Austin situates herself alongside the basket makers to do as they do. She does not trace the basket's patterns but rehearses the makers' habits, gathering and preparing materials. The mimetic inheres not in the basket or its patterns but in the actions of making the basket. The basket then becomes a space of those gestures, not the product of them.[7]

Austin concludes this brief narrative of her own basket making with a return to her method of "reëxpression": "When I say that I am not, have never been, nor offered myself, as an authority on all things Amerindian, I do not wish to have it understood that I may not, at times, have succeeded in being an Indian" (41). She replaces "authority" with "being" to again shift aesthetics from a study to a sense, from imposed categories to unmediated responses. "Being" is a form of "reëxpression," Austin's process of "[saturating] myself in the poem, in the life that produced it and the environment that cradled that life" to write from her own experience rather than translate language (38, 37). "Being" includes the affective register, its effect on the consciousness, and a subsequent change in the individual's "threshold" of "esthetic sense" (34). After gathering willows, Austin could remember the heft and texture of the fibers and reimagine the thickness of the basket. The "threshold" or border becomes part of the individual's affective terrain. Austin has so wholly absorbed the habits of gesture into her consciousness that she includes the indigenous community, the natural environment, the practice of basket weaving, and the woven baskets in her

aesthetic repertoire. From these she salvages a place in which she can re-express the marginal as central.

Austin's anecdotes throughout *The Land of Little Rain* depict a similar redrawing of boundaries through activity. The singing and dancing in Las Uvas create a "California of America" (147). The "jigging coyote trot that only western-bred horses learn successfully" keeps pace with the country's "decorative scheme" (83). "The thin, far roadways of rabbits and what not of furry folks that run in them" will lead to water "no matter what the maps say, or your memory" (22). Through aesthetic experience instead of form, Austin finds authenticity is a practice of expression.

Authenticity in artistry invokes Walter Benjamin's assertion in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," that "the presence of the original is the prerequisite for the concept of authenticity" (220). This presence, the art object's "aura," is the singular "authority" of the object, its material persistence and innate quality of "historical testimony" with which an audience comes into contact (221). Such authenticity could connect Austin to a specific past made tangible as Seyavi's bowl, the Olancha woman's basket, and the burnt urn. "The Basket Maker" could narrate the actuality of such objects in a precise context of place, time, user, or use. Such inherent authenticity dismisses Austin's preference for the practice of art rather than its product and the always multiple results of Seyavi's weaving and Austin's writing. However, Austin and Benjamin share interest in the *work* of art and

Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller" offers insight into the consequences of Austin's aesthetic theory.

"The Storyteller" explains a flow of wisdom, from the Storyteller's gathering past or distant knowledge to a present communion of telling. The Storyteller brings a sense of time's flow to those caught in repeating daily rhythms. The Storyteller also expands his audience's understanding of space to admit the foreign among the familiar. Benjamin establishes a cooperation of gesture and narrative in a practice of artistry. Benjamin first presents the potter's handprint: "The traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (92). The handprint distinguishes the handmade pot from the industrial printed thing and marks the moment of the object's origin. The handprint's intimate touch also locates authenticity in the gesture of producing, the practice of pottery making. The print defines and dissolves the boundary between subject and object, whether potter and pot or art object and art principles. The handprint signals the habit of "handed" practice (*American* 64).

Such habituated gestures must accompany a story's telling. Benjamin explains, "storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and that art is lost when stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving or spinning to go on while they are being listened to" (92). Art and work, the teller's telling and the audience's weaving, are the activity of Austin's mimesis. Austin further includes her own witnessing, listening, and

writing in this activity of retelling. She walks paths others have walked before and hears stories others have heard before. Her stories then repeat through written retelling and audience reading. Austin's aesthetic practice includes all these gestures. Seyavi's basket is then the material site in which such gestures appear suspended, the place of haptic perception. Benjamin concludes as Austin does that the artist's task is to "fashion the raw material of experience, his own and that of others, in a *solid, useful, and unique* way" (108, emphasis added). Seyavi's basket manifests a combination of aesthetic traditions from which Austin evolves a theory of practice. Austin's aesthetic of making authenticates lived experience.

Weaving Commodity Flows

Unlike the potter's impression on a clay vessel, Austin's woven basket resists such a maker's mark: "Seyavi's bowls are wonders of technical precision, inside and out, the palm finds no fault with them" (*Land* 95). Whereas the artist's work evinces the artist's hand, the technician's work erases evidence of the technician. The palm, as it were, finds no fellow palm. The basket is something between art and technique, both wonderful and precise. It is a site of "nature-culture," a quasi-object, "much more social, much more fabricated, much more collective" than its material presence initially suggests (Latour 7, 55). In the item itself, Seyavi's "technical precision" aligns the basket with the uniformity and utility of the

generation's "preferred iron pots" (*Land* 96, 95). The basket becomes a site of economic networks, "made … for love but sold … for money" (95). Austin downplays this transaction by translating profit into the "wit" with which Seyavi raised her son, omitting Austin's purchase of the funeral basket, and denying reproduction "at any furbisher's shop … if your purse allows" (98, 97). In the basket, Austin creates a selvage between production and commodification: "If you had ever owned one of Seyavi's golden russet cooking bowls with the pattern of the plumed quail, you would understand all of this without saying anything" (96). As with a story read rather than told, Austin's understanding is owned, not purchased, practiced, not explained.

The basket discloses Austin's approach to such commodities through possession rather than exchange. Austin separates owning the basket from buying the basket, and reasserts the basket's physical persistence beyond economic relations. The material qualities of Austin's basket also differ from the "physical properties of the commodity" that frame Karl Marx's use value of the item (Marx). Austin's basket is a fixed object that possession immobilizes outside of economic flows; the basket is also a mobile site that suggests relations other than utility. The basket invokes the forces of fashion. Thorstein Veblen offers a contemporary approach to fashion in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class* and juxtaposes the common object with the fashionable item:

> The cheap, and therefore indecorous, articles of daily consumption in modern industrial communities are commonly

> machine products; and the generic feature of the physiognomy of machine-made goods as compared with the hand-wrought article is their greater perfection in workmanship and greater accuracy in the detail execution of the design. Hence it comes about that the visible imperfections of hand-wrought goods, being honorific, are accounted marks of superiority in point of beauty, or serviceability, or both. (106)

Articles of "daily consumption" exhibit the "technical precision" Austin notes in Seyavi's work, as such objects betray no flaws to their consumer. They are less expensive than the "hand-wrought" items Veblen distinguishes by and for their flaws, the "visible imperfections" of their idiosyncratic manufacture that make them more expensive. For Veblen, the trace of the potter's handprint is visible in the item's display and necessary to the item's exchange value.

In Veblen's logic of conspicuous consumption, the imperfect hand-wrought article locates an aesthetic practice in leisure class consumption of the expensive. The hand-wrought object is expensive because it is handmade, and beautiful because it is expensive. Austin does not suggest what Seyavi's baskets may have cost but she does capture Seyavi's unvarying quail pattern: "Her works of art are all of the same piece," unified by the "design in colored bark of the procession of plumed crests of the valley quail" (*Land* 95). This design, then, brings together the basket's exchange value and alters its use value. For Veblen, accuracy is cheap and repetition common, so Seyavi's baskets are quotidian commodities, "cooking pots really" (95). For Austin, precision is poetic and repetition authenticating, and the basket's superiority comes from its reenactment of Seyavi's life, its expression of "the golden

spring of her wedding year" (95). The basket inverts Veblen's distinction between the machine-made and hand-wrought to suggest an alternate mode of women's economic consumption.

Austin continues this shift as she redefines fashion:

> In our kind of society, when a woman ceases to alter the fashion of her hair, you guess that she has passed the crisis of her experience. If she goes on crimping and uncrimping with the changing mode, it is safe to suppose she has never come up against anything too big for her. The Indian woman gets nearly the same personal note in the pattern of her baskets. (95)

Austin uses "fashion" four times in "The Basket Maker," but only this instance invokes Veblen's interest in women's dress. Veblen depicts women's appearance as an index of social exchange, and such fashion becomes a force over which women have no control but which they must direct to support social organization. A woman consumes and wears "dress and other paraphernalia" to vicariously demonstrate the wealth of her male "head of household" and the freedom from physical labor such wealth permits (Veblen 119). Austin understands a woman's appearance to assert her own command of her biography. A woman chooses to alter her hair according to her own experience, which may follow 'the changing mode" (*Land* 95). For Austin, "fashion" implies the style of expression as well as its method and combines the word's two meanings—from the French for appearance and from the Latin for making ("Fashion"). Fashion becomes another practice of aesthetics and of salvage. Instead of Veblen's model of a wife who consumes fashion for ceremony, Austin reassembles a way for a widow and divorcee to offer

ceremony for consumption.

The basket combines individual choices and abstract principles to reform social relations. As a mere commodity, a single woven bowl could index the exchange of all baskets and erase Seyavi's experience into the reified labor of an "Indian" basket maker. As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich explains, baskets eschew such conventional commodification. She explains that early national economic records don't include baskets since "the materials of which they were made were of no particular interest to colonists": "Where Indian women found abundant fibers for weaving, the English saw only dark forests, waste fields, and dismal swamps. But baskets were there" (56-57). Basket-weaving brings together marginal materials and marginalized practices to assert the weaver's role in salvaging social relations.

Following Elizabeth Klimasmith, who finds a similar play on women's consumption and production in Austin's 1912 novel *A Woman of Genius*, I understand Seyavi's basket as a double gesture of self-expression and self-commodification (Klimasmith 131).[8] Seyavi produces a living persona and continuing profit. Seyavi's woven bowl is so much herself that both her wares and her body appear purchasable yet sidestep such commodification. Austin's conditional framing— "*if* you had ever owned one of Seyavi's golden russet cooking bowls"—shows the possibility and consequence of exchange and denies the exchange itself. The basket reveals women's labor and by

extension reintegrates Paiute experience into the Owens Valley's community. Veblen subordinated women's choice to men's social and economic constructions in the 1890s, but Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante erased Paiute culture for their reports of the Mojave in the eighteenth century.[9] In Seyavi's basket, Austin gathers gestures of resistance to create a place for persistence.

Intertwining Object Studies

Beneath Austin's reformation of the female producer in relations of commodification is what Beth Harrison calls the unmistakable irony of Austin's cultural comparison (100). Seyavi's basket is no more fashionable than a woman's crimped hair is functional, and Austin juxtaposes basket weaving with hair styling to call into question the cultural importance of either practice. Austin's interest in such evaluation discloses her response to contemporary anthropologists' positions as ethnographic witnesses and cultural relativists.[10] Noreen Grove Lape explains that while Franz Boas developed cultural relativism to oppose the prejudices of evolutionary or progressive anthropological narratives, Boas still objectified his ethnographic subjects for his "salvage project" (126, 131).[11] Austin prefers empathetic identification to exemplary study, and *The Land of Little Rain* offers a living alternative to memorial ethnography and vivifies cultural practice through the material object. Austin understands the techniques of basketry but

subsumes these details of Seyavi's practice in her artifactual study. Unlike Austin's detailed descriptions of Paiute activities in *The Basket Woman* and *The American Rhythm*, "The Basket Maker" interprets Seyavi's technique through Austin's knowledge of basketry. Unburdened of the labor of cultural authentication, Seyavi can participate in the valley's rhythms while Austin assembles the basket's connections.

Consider how Austin describes the process by which Seyavi collects her materials: "Twice a year, in the time of white butterflies and again when the young quail ran neck and neck in the chaparral, Seyavi cut willow for basketry by the creek where it wound toward the river against the sun and sucking winds" (*Land* 95-96). Seyavi is alive and active among the cooperating seasons and opposing forces of "sucking wind" and river's flow, but the environment, not Seyavi, repeats the gestures of basket weaving. Austin expands the naturalized pattern to include "when the quail went up two and two to their resting places about the foot of the Oppapago" (95). As in *The American Rhythm*, "the patterns of the basket makers" derive from their lived experiences rather than aesthetic design elements, but Austin omits the work to soak, bleach, and scrape the fibers (*American* 40-41). Instead, Austin replaces the skill of Seyavi's "knotted fingers" with the movement of the quail (*Land* 98). The quail repeat the actions of basket-weaving, first "up" as warp, then "neck and neck" as weft, and finally encircle the basket as "plumed crests" (95).

Having been "saturated with the same elements," this cooperation of "the weaver and the warp" appears to naturalize the skill of weaving and replace cultural production with a natural history object. Tim Ingold describes this material thing as a manifestation of "*autopoiesis*": "Since the artisan is involved in the same system as the material with which he works, so his activity does not transform that system but is—like the growth of plants and animals—part and parcel of the system's transformation of itself" (61). Divorced from an embodied cultural practice, Seyavi's "works of art" become the artifacts of natural processes (*Land* 95).

Such isolation of the object addresses the nineteenth-century ethnographic practice of interpreting indigenous culture through its material production.[12] Catherine E. Fowler and Lawrence E. Dawson's study of "Ethnographic Basketry" for the Smithsonian Institution in the 1970s extrapolates 1900s Paiute life from the Institution's artefactual record.[13] Fowler and Dawson summarize Otis T. Mason's observations from his exhaustive 1902 "Aboriginal American Basketry: Studies in a Textile Art Without Machinery," which he published as the curator of the Division of Ethnology in the United States National Museum's 1902 *Annual Report* (488-510).

Fowler and Dawson explain that Owens Valley weavers made a variety of baskets:

> Principal types in twining include: burden baskets, collecting baskets, winnowing-parching trays, seed beaters, water bottles,

> hats, cradles, and perhaps in former times, cooking and boiling baskets. Those in coiling include mixing-boiling baskets, eating bowls, treasure baskets, cups or dippers, and flat sifting-gambling trays. (710)

Fowler and Dawson's report focuses on the groups' basket forms and their uses, a variety which Seyavi in *The Basket Woman* reproduces:

> [The Basket Woman] would come walking across the mesa with a great cone-shaped carrier basket heaped with brushwood on her shoulders, stooping under it and easing the weight by a buckskin band about her forehead. Sometimes it would be a smaller basket carried in the same fashion, and she would be filling it with bulbs of wild hyacinth or taboose; often she carried a bottle-necked water basket to and from the spring, and always wore a bowl-shaped basket on her head for a hat. (Austin, *Basket* 2)

In the less fictive descriptions of *The Land of Little Rain*, when Austin walks toward the Paiute campoodie on "The Mesa Trail," Austin abbreviates a similar catalogue: "one sees the women whisking seeds of *chía* into their spoon-shaped baskets, these emptied again into the huge conical carriers, supported on the shoulders by a leather band about the forehead" (*Land* 88-89). Austin features Seyavi in "The Basket Maker" for her baskets' design rather than their utility: "Not that [Seyavi] does not make all kinds, carriers, water-bottles, and cradles—these are kitchen ware—but her works of art are all the same piece" (95). Austin subordinates the purpose of Seyavi's baskets to their performance. Austin demonstrates intimate knowledge of regional indigenous practices, gained through occasions "to pass and repass" through the valley, to repeat what period ethnographic studies derived from single visits (15). Where scientists seek to expose the habitual from the material,

the artist encloses practice in product.

Fowler and Dawson further detail the two techniques of basket-making used among the Owens Valley Paiutes in the 1890s and 1900s: twined and coiled weaving. Twined baskets produced a familiar striated woven texture as the weaver twisted the weft fibers between each upright warp (Figure 14). Twining more exactly matches the quail's movements, "neck and neck in the chaparral," and Seyavi's song: "I am the white flower of twining, /Little white flower by the river, /Oh, flower that twines close by the river" (95, 96). Seyavi weaves by the river and becomes part of the weaving, wearing "the white flower of twining (clematis), on [her] body and [her] hair" (96). Such twined weaving created closed and open mesh utility baskets of all shapes and functions, from watertight containers to openwork specifically for the harvest of Pandora moth larvae, collected like Seyavi's willow branches "in the time of white butterflies" (Fowler 714, Austin, *Land* 95).

The coiled weave of the cooking bowls required the weaver to gather multiple fibers and wrap them with grass or bark and then coil the wrapped bundle into a round shape (Figure 15). At intervals, the wrap would include previous rounds to attach new rounds to the established shape. If wrapped compactly, the coiled baskets could also be water-tight. Fowler and Dawson note that the coiled method also provided greater possibilities for decorative expression. A wrap of contrasting colors would create a design in the basket's weave, or a design could be embroidered, overstitched, or painted onto a

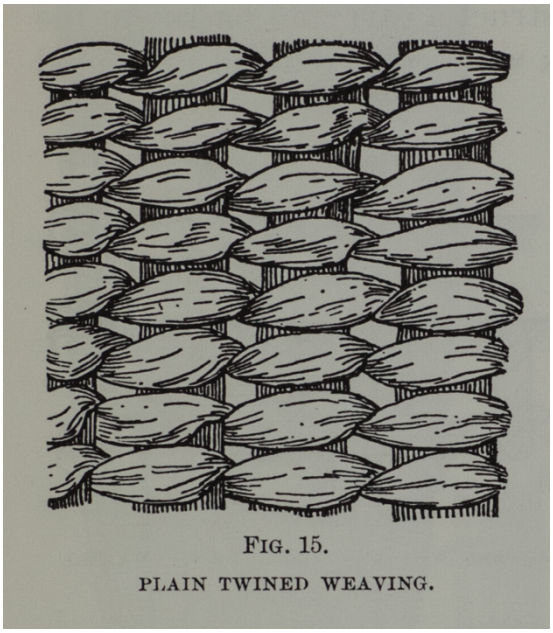


Figure 14. "Fig. 15. Plain Twined Weaving." Otis T. Mason, "Aboriginal American Basketry," *Annual Report*, Government Printing Office, 1904, p. 232. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

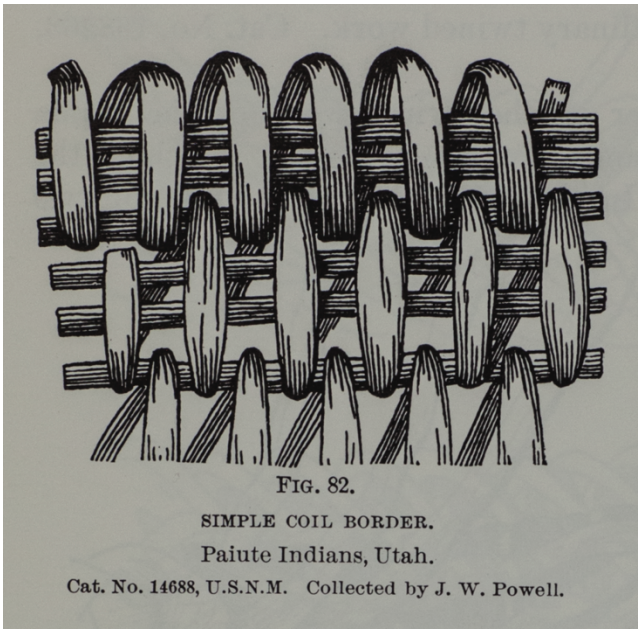


Figure 15. "Fig. 82. Simple Coil Border. Paiute Indians, Utah. Cat. No. 14688, U. S. N. M. Collected by J. W. Powell [1870-1875]." Otis T. Mason, "Aboriginal American Basketry," *Annual Report*, Government Printing Office, 1904, p 274. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

basket (732). Austin describes the quail plume pattern in colored bark on Seyavi's "water-tight food baskets" as smooth enough for Austin's palm to find "no fault" with it, which suggests the woven bowl is a coiled object (*Land* 95).

Though Austin does not explain Seyavi's weaving technique, E. Boyd Smith illustrates Seyavi's baskets as coiled. In the original 1903 publication, six of Smith's sketches accompany "The Basket Maker," including three studies of baskets and three images of indigenous people.[14] Smith's illustrated baskets complement the material history. They include a coiled basket with a complicated design of diamonds, zig-zags, and diagonal lines that contrasts in linear severity the basket's coiled form (Figure 16). According to Fowler and Dawson, these designs are Paiute symbols for women and men (713). The coiled basket then suggests Seyavi's life, gathering together her relationships with her husband and son into the material means of her independence. This basket appears on the title page of "The Basket Maker" and again under its final paragraph (Figure 17). The same spiraling form, the repeated design, reiterates Austin's approach to the practices that create it and continue beyond it. The narrative of Seyavi's life continues between the baskets, but the baskets manifest the practice of that life.

A drawing of a bottle-necked trinket basket also appears alongside Austin's description of the Olancha woman's works, though the image

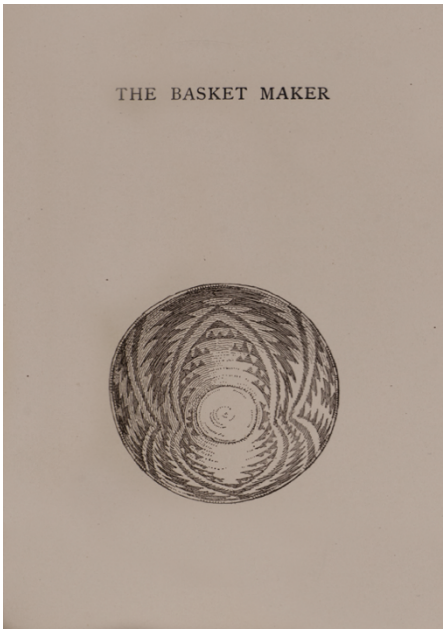


Figure 16. Drawing of coiled basket, from E. Boyd Smith. Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903, p. 162. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

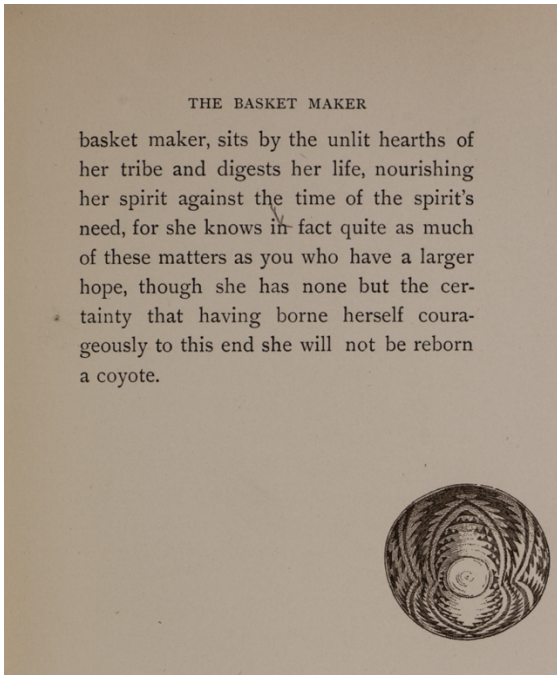


Figure 17. Drawing of coiled basket, from E. Boyd Smith. Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903, p. 179. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

includes a figural design in addition to the distinctive rattlesnake diamond shapes (Figure 18). Fowler and Dawson suggest that these representational elements may have been requested by tourists or included to attract tourists, but would have come from the weaver's experiences and imagination nonetheless (732). The illustration also depicts a finishing technique that turns the leftover warp and weft into a decorative fringe, a design choice that incorporates the material selvage into the object's space. The fringe is an interesting addition because the coiled technique usually wraps any excess materials into the basket's edge. Smith's illustrations suggest that while the Olancha woman negotiated margins, Seyavi redefined and occupied them.

Smith's caricatures present Seyavi's life in three scenes: her protection of her young son, her basket-weaving to raise a man, and her continuing to weave to support herself. The images include the counterpoint of biological reproduction and material production. Across the illustrations, Smith replaces Seyavi's son with her wickiup, baskets, and gestures of weaving. In the first image, her cowering child and her clothing's unkempt fringe frame Seyavi's stance of vulnerability (Figure 19). She gazes toward the viewer, which exacerbates the sense of her exposure. Like the bottle-necked trinket basket, here Seyavi appears to negotiate boundaries.

By Boyd's third image, the seated Seyavi controls the place assembled by her own actions. She displays several baskets in front of her wickiup while she twines a new basket. The finished objects' clean geometric shapes appear

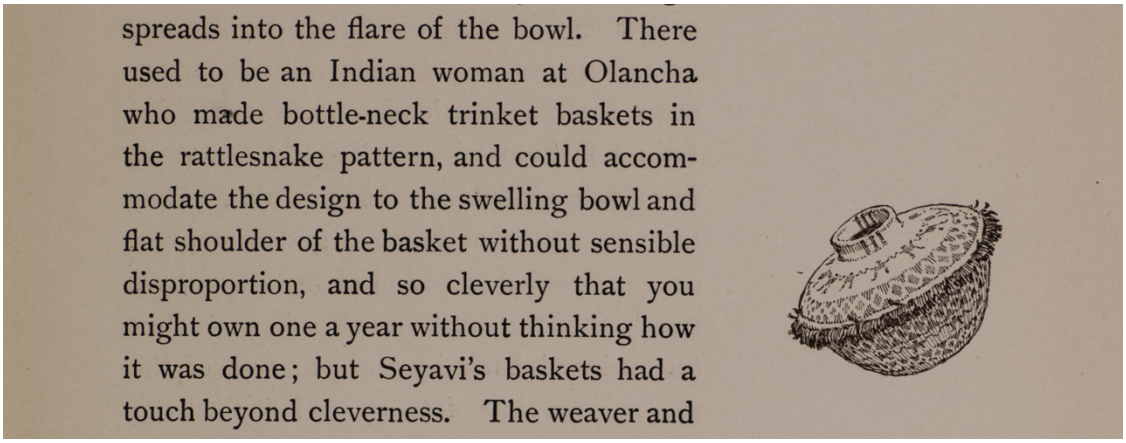

spreads into the flare of the bowl. There used to be an Indian woman at Olancha who made bottle-neck trinket baskets in the rattlesnake pattern, and could accommodate the design to the swelling bowl and flat shoulder of the basket without sensible disproportion, and so cleverly that you might own one a year without thinking how it was done; but Seyavi's baskets had a touch beyond cleverness. The weaver and

Figure 18. Drawing of bottle-neck basket, from E. Boyd Smith. Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903, p. 169. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

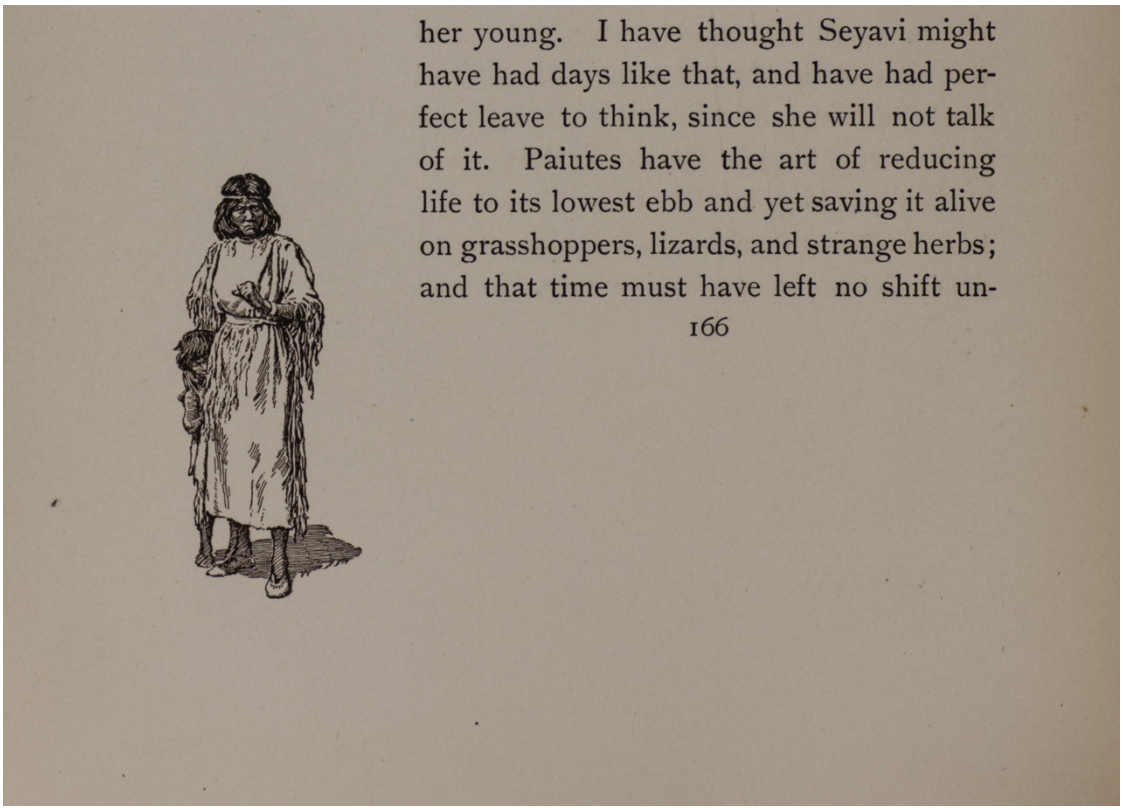

her young. I have thought Seyavi might have had days like that, and have had perfect leave to think, since she will not talk of it. Paiutes have the art of reducing life to its lowest ebb and yet saving it alive on grasshoppers, lizards, and strange herbs; and that time must have left no shift un-

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Figure 19. Drawing of Paiute woman and child, from E. Boyd Smith. Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903, p. 166. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

to the viewer's left and suggest historical closure while the chaotic fibers in Seyavi's hands gesture in all directions to indicate future possibility. The unfinished basket inverts this tension as Seyavi gathers her entire life into her own design. The basket-in-progress repeats the shape of the finished baskets to reveal all things to be a practice. Seyavi again meets the viewer's eye but with the equanimity of self-possession (Figure 20).

The sketch resembles a photograph of a Havasupai basket maker in Mason's "Aboriginal American Basketry," in that "the most interesting feature … is the association of the basket maker with her home" (518). Period ethnologists photographed the wickiups of several southwestern tribes, but few show weavers at work near or in their habitations. Here the weaver sits in front of her wickiup, next to her finished wares, and continues to weave (Figure 21). Her seated presence brings together the foreground baskets and the background mountain into her place. The wickiup's shade frames her highlighted face. The shelter confines her. Her immobility denies her individuality just as the standing woman's motion blurs her own face.

Both figures are forever trapped in the ethnologic anonymity and repressive objectivity of a Smithsonian photographic record. If the viewer imagines taking a few steps around the structure to the right, Boyd's sketch reappears. The weaver is in front of her wickiup and clear-eyed in the light of day. This shift in viewpoint makes the weaver larger than her confines. We can no longer see the second woman—perhaps she has put down

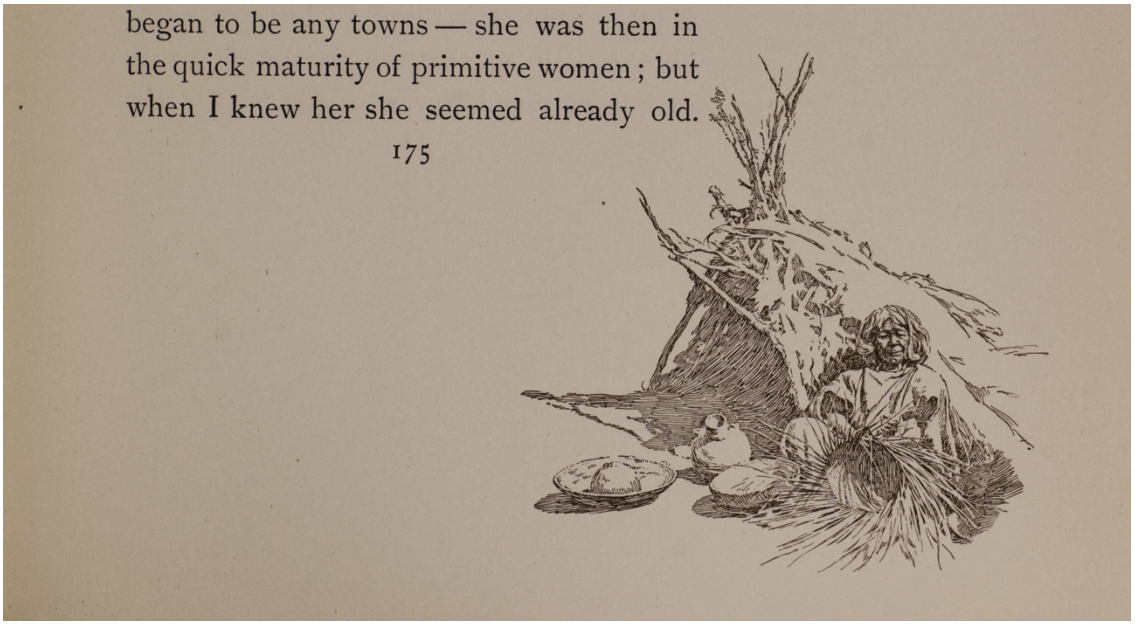

Figure 20. Drawing of Paiute woman and wickiup, from E. Boyd Smith. Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903, p. 175. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Figure 21. "Plate 231. Havasupai Basketmaker." Photograph by George Warton James. Otis T. Mason, "Aboriginal American Basketry," *Annual Report*, Government Printing Office, 1904. Reproduction courtesy of Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

her burden basket and is resting and gossiping elsewhere in the campoodie—but now we can see inside the weaver's wickiup. The shelter's opening no longer asserts a binary of inside and outside, placement and rootlessness, but now suggests an invitation, an inclusion, a possibility. Boyd's image extends the basket's tensegrity to suggest the interplay of forces in Seyavi's situation. She is seated but upright, sheltered but part of a larger region that she imagines and assembles. She appears to have salvaged a selvage for herself.

Deleuze and Guattari help transfer Seyavi's basket from a comparative ethnological tradition to a critical spatial imaginary. As a "technological" model of space, the basket is Seyavi's technology and technique and Austin's paradigm and practice. Deleuze and Guattari suggest the basket as a site of spatial mixing, the border at which "two spaces in fact exist only in mixture":

> No sooner do we note a simple opposition between [smooth space and striated space] than we must indicate a much more complex difference … smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space. (474)

The weaving in Seyavi's hands evinces this constant flux. It organizes natural matter into a functional place, and yet object and practice disclose alternative spaces beyond it. Inside and outside, cultured and wild, colonized and deterritorialized exist together through the weaving. The basket-in-progress serves as an example of Martin Heidegger's "unconcealedness" akin to his Greek temple—much as "the temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible spaces of the air," the basket's intimate place prompts an awareness of all space (54, 41). It practices alternative occupation.

Unlike Deleuze and Guattari's other examples of technological space, they specify that the technician of marginal spaces is a woman, the "she" quilting the patchwork that both materializes and "represents" movement (476-77). Claire Colebrook explains that this shift into gender awareness accompanies a similar shift away from conceptual definition: "whereas concepts usually have a sense, or orient thought, the feminine line gives the sense *that there is something to be thought*, but with no sense of a concept, or *what* is to be thought" (78). The site assembled from such a plurality of materials and experiences—the patchwork's patches or Seyavi's willow fibers—is no longer linked to the conditions of production or the constraints of history, but is a persistent site of perpetual practice. For Austin, the basket is not the disconnected record of manifest memory but the affective exploration of a self in place.

Narrating Regional Experience

Despite Austin's attention to Seyavi's practices in "The Basket Maker," Austin admits that Seyavi no longer weaves the willows. She is silent, blind, and still, nested within wrappings. Seyavi retires "into the privacy of her blanket" or "behind the thin, twig-woven walls of the wickiup" to digest her life (*Land* 99). Seyavi's position repeats the suspended processes of her quail pattern basket, singular and fixed yet mobile and continuous. She survives inside her weaving and persists through her weavings. Austin gathers her

own real-and-imagined places in the basket as well. The weaving mobilizes Austin's aesthetic sense to gather the competing threads of art objects, commodity productions, and material history into a practice of place. The basket's spirals enact the possibilities of what Neil Campbell calls "affective regionality," the "always 'more-than-representational'" experience and understanding of space (5). Akin to Seyavi's willows, the fibers of Austin's art are narrative threads brought together in a new form of women's productivity. "The Basket Maker" coils Seyavi's life to re-express the history of the Paiute community and the ecology of central California.

Austin traces Seyavi's patterns to give the weaver's life context. Austin locates Seyavi's campoodie at the edges of Soja's "firstspace," the imposed maps of "Naboth's field" and "the cañon," near both a stream and the foothills, but expands Seyavi's memories of that margin to imagine a secondspace (*Land* 83).[15] Seyavi never reaches the boundaries Austin identifies, since she gathers willows by the creek "where it wound toward the river" but "never quite reached the river" (95-96). In the same place, she gathers willows for her baskets during two seasons of the year and transforms those the fibers into the site of every season of her life: during the spring "mating weather," "the golden spring of her wedding year," and "when, after pillage, it was possible to reinstate the housewifely crafts" (96, 95). The older, seated Seyavi continues to turn these seasons in her mind as she turned her basket-weaving in her hands, and the basket, wickiup, valley, and

story create a selvage for her experiences. When "it came [Seyavi's] turn to sit in the dust on the sunny side of the wickiup, with little strength left for anything but looking," Seyavi continues to revolve, following "the shadow of the wickiup around" and remembering her life (98).

Austin extends the basket's coil to include the cycles of birth and rebirth that perpetuate Seyavi's practices, from Seyavi's "philosophy of life" that a "woman who has a child will do very well," to Seyavi's "larger hope" that "she will not be reborn a coyote" (95, 93, 99). Austin does not emphasize Seyavi's son's individuality but rather includes Seyavi in women's familiarity of birth. This cycle of pain and life repeats in the coyote "that stands off in the scrub from you and howls and howls" and in the stars nightly "wheeling to their stations in the sky, [making] the poor world-fret of no account" (17). Like Seyavi's weaving that repeats beyond each basket, the story does not conclude but churns within these revolutions like blood and breath. Beginnings and endings disappear in the cycle as the coiled basket's edges disappear into its form.

Tara Hart explains that these cyclical patterns disclose Austin's understanding of the unique temporal fragmentation of women's lives into "times" of beauty, childbirth, and life after fertility (93). Only men, Austin suggests, can inhabit a "timeless space," the imaginary stillness that juxtaposes an individual, linear progression toward death (Hart 93). Austin describes that women "felt, as they hung suspended between hopes that

refused to eventuate, life slipping away from them" (qtd. in Hart 93). Each basket, then, marks a moment but participates in a perpetual practice. Each basket materializes "an elastic concept of time," as Elizabeth Ammons describes it, and continuously recreates space (94). Through the repeated gestures of women's work, Austin assembles a place for occupation, for life and labor.

Such spatial possibility contrasts the linear definition of biographical and historical narratives. "The Basket Maker" could be read through Seyavi's son's coming of age, from his birth and his father's death, through his surviving war and famine in the "caverns of the Black Rock" eating "tule roots and fresh-water clams … dug out of the slough bottoms with [his] toes," to his becoming a man, reared by Seyavi but finally standing alone to face an unknown world (*Land* 93, 98). Seyavi's son's story inverts that of the Paiute people, whom Austin follows from their "last stand at the border of the Bitter Lake" to when "the government … gathered into the Northern Reservation only such poor tribes as could devise no other end to their affairs" (93, 98). Each event forecloses the possibilities Seyavi's baskets present, isolating a life and bounding the land. These narratives evince one reading of the "art" Austin ascribes to the Paiutes of "reducing life to its lowest ebb and yet saving it" (94). The seemingly inevitable plot of settler-colonial violence provides the necessary linear contrast to Austin's spatial pattern. Just as Seyavi's quail plume design relies on haptic disparity, the visible contrast of

the colored bark and "golden russet" fibers from the faultless spiral of the woven bowl, so Austin returns to Seyavi's experiences to juxtapose histories of indigenous erasure (96). Austin weaves Paiute narratives into a site of poetic resistance to social determinism, into a place of persistence.

Austin negotiates similar forces throughout *The Land of Little Rain* and depicts the land itself as a composition of extremes of height and depth, flood and drought, mobility and fixity. Spiraling out from Seyavi's wickiup are the "brown wattled brush heaps" of the campoodies, the "hummocks of *Lupinus ornatus*" that "look in fullest leaf, except for color, most like the huddled huts of the campoodie," and the "hummocks" of the burrowing owls (94, 86). The reproduced shapes ally the Paiute with their environment and repeat Austin's lessons in woven practice. The valley resembles a basket, "a mere trough between hills" that rises "steeply from the bench lands" (93-4). Austin sees the coil of the basket, the wrapping of the blanket, and the wickiup's "thin, twig-woven walls" in the shrubs that "clothe the benches and eastern foot-slopes of the Sierras," through the fir-tree that "loves a water border, loves a long wind in the draughty cañon, loves to spend itself secretly on the inner furnishings of its burnished, shapely cones," with Las Uvas "under the twilight thicket of vines, under a dome of cottonwood trees, … wild vines that begin among the willows [and] lap over to the orchard rows, take the trellis and roof-tree," and around the dry lakes and marshes [where] the herbage preserves a set and orderly arrangement" (83, 119, 143, 12). This

practice of weaving living forces contrasts the "sculpture" of sand drifts, the engraving of a "water sign," the "impression" of Jimville, the erection of a "fence," the taxidermy of a "flat, horned, toad-like creature" for two bits, and the reified "effort" in a "pound of wool" (9, 28, 65, 76, 89, 90). Austin explains that she "had occasion to pass and repass" a meadowlark nest and that it is equally possible "to pass and repass about one's daily performance an area that would make an Atlantic seaboard State" (15, 16). This repeated practice produces an understanding of place from haptic perception. Austin's gathers experiential variety and affective possibility, the real-and-imagined, into a new expression of "westness."

Austin suggests that a woman's work can transform these frontiers into territory. Historical and cultural conventions restrict Paiute women to a relationship of hunter and hunted. They cut "their long hair to make snares when the [quail] flocks came morning and evening to the springs," but "the warring of rifles and bowstrings, this influx of overlording whites" turned "the women [into] the game of the conquerors" (124, 94). A woman's "wit" can expand the point of transition to a place of persistence. Austin frames "The Basket Maker" in terms of this wit, first as the technique with which Seyavi fends for herself and her son and then as the tool with which she weaves her baskets and raises her son: "This was that Seyavi who reared a man by her own hand, her own wit, and none other" (93, 98). Wit is a practice not a possession, an active skill rather than an essential quality. "The sufficiency of

mother wit" removes Seyavi from social constraints to stimulate her weaving practice (93). Wit is the mother that teaches her how to keep house and construct a life, and wit sustains her son. This wit is more than indigenous instinct, a "wit to win sustenance from the raw material of life without intervention" (98). It extends beyond survival to expression, to the "cleverness" of Seyavi's quail plume design, the discretion of silence, and the corrective of laughter (95, 94, 99). Wit connects material practice to spatial imagination.

Wit is Austin's term for the skill of the woman artist who weaves nature and culture into the space of self. This selvage brings together women's history and biology to deform relations of power and reform networks of possibility. The basket inserts an individual among and between "constructions of culture and gender," rather than "beyond" them, as Stacey Alaimo suggests (85). As the salvage craft of wit, narrative weaving uses those "things to be learned of life not set down in any books" and translated into a "voice that *carries*" (*Land* 99, emphasis added). The basket mobilizes a regional imaginary that brings together the real-and-imagined, the past-and-potential, the here-and-elsewhere, into a scalable, boundless site of women's aesthetic practice, a perpetual cooperation of art and work. *The Land of Little Rain* then is less an arrangement, an arbitrary organization of stories like a collection of baskets, than an assemblage that weaves the sketches in an affective experience of regionality.[16] The work of art practices the habits of

place to create new conceptions and extensions of physical space.

Conclusion

Seyavi's basket orients Austin's aesthetic of *The Land of Little Rain*, through which Austin gathers the prejudices, histories, and possibilities of life in the valley. Just as Seyavi reproduces her quail plume design from the stillness of her wickiup, so Austin reassembles her experiences into an expression of persistence. The volume's stories collect not meanings but materials, things made every day, to disclose the practices of rather than the perspectives on the American West. Austin salvages these elements from the structures of art, economics, and history to explore possibilities through a mimesis of making. The *work* of art combines the communal and individual, the routine and unique, the actual and imaginary. These tensions don't resolve but cooperate to produce a perpetual site of engagement. Repeated gestures continue to gather the threads of experience. Seyavi's weaving collects and materializes habits. Austin's text accumulates and articulates possibilities.

Narrative weaving draws more from Seyavi's basketry than material production. The basket discloses how women's work transforms the marginal into the territorial and expresses an alternate regional spatial imaginary of the "experienced, lived, performed, felt" (Campbell, *Affective* 5). A basket weaves nature and culture together and transforms the boundary between

them into a selvage in which experience and understanding cooperate. The actions of Seyavi's basket-making and Austin's passing and repassing territorialize the valley. Lives rendered marginal by national, economic, agricultural, and social structures become the central materials of regional production. Women alone, Austin suggests, negotiate these borders and can weave striated and smooth, real and imagined, into a place of possibility. In women's hands, Austin finds the technique to render haptic the process of regional conception. Women's work connects individual practice to the perpetual reformation of affective regionality.

Austin's textual salvage craft challenges existing interpretations of fin de siècle regional production. Audrey Goodman suggests that "Anglo" writers, including Austin, understood the American West as "an aesthetic space where premodern traditions resisted social and technological change" (*Translating* xv). But weaving allows Austin to reform the concepts of tradition, technology, society, aesthetics, and space (xv). Bill Brown describes the region as a consequence of anthropology's emphasis on "a materialized milieu," a "proper place" of encounter and use (92, 135). Yet Austin's attention to mimesis as making revives the relations and practices such spatial definitions erase. Hsuan Hsu similarly explains that "regional identification—which often takes the form of nostalgia for past modes of production—coalesces from the outside in," yet Austin reclaims the practice of indigenous production to assemble a world from the inside out ("Literature"

62). Austin weaves narratives of the national and local, individual and communal, repeatable and unique, past and potential, natural and cultural into a place of variety, a network in which all narratives can appear and can potentially cooperate. This selvage brings together the mobility and possibility of affective regionality. Austin suspends the momentum of history and the structures of society in Seyavi's weaving. Her basket discloses a space for her life in the margins, and Mary Austin's *The Land of Little Rain* engages this dynamic regionality through repeated, intimate encounters. Austin assembles ideas and forestalls narratives of the American West to locate the experience of "westness" as a spatial practice.

Notes

[1] My interest in "authenticity" and in Austin's desire to "authenticate" an alternative narrative draws from Walter Benjamin's definition of authenticity from "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction": "the authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced" (221). Benjamin's approach intertwines two threads of any inquiry into authenticity, of the characteristics of the object itself and of the narrative in which the object participates. Janell Watson and Maurizia Boscagli address the object as either an "imitation" or a "fake" and the "authentic," or real, only, original, etc. (Watson 30, Boscagli 50). Susan Stewart focuses on the narrative and frames the idea of the authentic as an always imaginary construction. While Benjamin suggests a history that is singular, linear, and accessible through the object, Stewart sees history as another gesture of imitation, constructed using or projected onto the object. For Stewart, the object or "souvenir" is akin to the quotation, removed from a previous context and made to serve as a trace of it in a "restored" but really alternative and new narrative, an "imaginary context of origin" (19, 150). Neither Austin's basket nor her short story collection authenticate or imitate, and instead disclose the tension between material and narrative relations. Hsuan Hsu calls this tension the "authenticity effect," by which objects and narratives rhetorically suggest authenticity while the abundance of such elements "undermine the direct, unmediated" experience of the authentic (Hsu "Authentic" 310).

[2] As Tim Ingold explains, "The basket holds together, and assumes a rigid form, precisely because of its tensile structure," its "*tensegrity*, according to which a system can stabilize itself mechanically by distributing and balancing counteracting forces of compression and tension throughout the structure" (56, 69).

[3] Austin's Chisera character in her 1911 play *The Arrow Maker* links woman artists across Austin's various works. Carew-Miller sees Austin's chisera figures as her means of "exploring the problems and possibilities of a gifted woman's relationship with her community" (114).

[4] Austin gives aspects of her personality these names in *Earth Horizon*, and their juxtaposition erodes Austin's credibility as autobiographer. Austin writes of her young character-self "Mary" as a sort of family acquaintance whom Austin has known and watched since childhood, but about whom she remembers stories incompletely (41). Austin explains that "I-Mary" arrived after Mary's mother clarified the letter "I" to young Mary as not her eye but as "I, myself, *I* want a drink, I-Mary" (46). "I-Mary" becomes an internal self, "associated with the pages of books, who provides "a sense of something

assured and comforting that you had expected and never found elsewhere" (47). "I-Mary" contrasts the vulnerability and isolation of "Mary-by-herself," who has a "need of being taken up and comforted" that Mary's mother refuses to satisfy (47). See Karell.

[5] My approach to Austin's autobiography as critique rather than account follows my similar interpretation of Willa Cather's response to a review of her 1927 *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Critics have employed Cather's letter as a resource from which to parse the narrative's historical sources, aesthetic approach, and affective trajectories, but have largely ignored the degree to which Cather's response offers an interpretation of her own work. The letter appeared in *Commonweal* one month after the magazine's review of *Archbishop*, though Cather had completed the text of the novel one year prior to its publication. Following Hans-Georg Gadamer, for whom temporal distance is a "positive and productive condition enabling understanding," such time invites critical reconsideration of work completed at a distant and irrecoverable moment of origin (297). Cather's letter therefore elaborates rather than explains her work. Austin's autobiography addresses an even greater lapse in time, published in 1932 and written about experiences as early as the 1870s. Notwithstanding her acute attention to experiential detail, Austin's sixty-year-old memories cannot help but be influenced by her active aesthetic practice of "reëxpression" during the intervening years.

[6] See Introduction; Latour's "quasi-object" occupies a middle ground between objective and subjective inquiry, and Soja's "thirdspace" is a composite terrain of received structures and experienced variations that results in what Neil Campbell calls a critical "thirding" of "both/and also" (Latour 37, Campbell, "Critical" 60).

[7] Austin's writing becomes a translation of these gestures into prose rather than a use of their products as metaphors in her writing. The difference draws from Latour's use of translation, which "creates mixtures between entirely new types of beings, hybrids of nature and culture," rather than from a more general approach to signification, which replaces the material thing itself with an idea of and sign for that thing (Latour 10). Latour's translation connects Austin's artistic efforts to the indigenous women's techniques rather than subordinates their labors to Austin's art. Though Austin learns to weave from indigenous women, Austin's produces written works which suggest that Austin understands their weaving expresses their experiences and writing and language express's Austin's own.

[8] Klimasmith's work complements Lori Merish's investigation into economic consumption as a mode of women's affective socialization; see Klimasmith 144 and Merish 6.

[9] See Blackhawk 97-102.

[10] Anthropology includes both ethnography and ethnology. In 1878, The *Encyclopedia Britannica* clarified that "ethnography embraces the descriptive details, and ethnology the rational exposition, of the human aggregates and organizations" ("Ethnography"). Twentieth-century use further specifies ethnography as the study of a single group and ethnology, a comparison across groups.

[11] Harrison and Lape explore Austin's reaction to Boas's influence, through neither establishes a causal timeline of Austin's encounter with Boas' work. "Cultural salvage" appears in Boas's work from the 1880s, but Austin admits to having read "Boaz" to prepare *The American Rhythm* "by 1910" (*Rhythm* 64, 43). The intervening gap suggests that while Austin's later work investigates ethnological aims and methods—especially *The American Rhythm*, *The Trail Book*, and *Enjoy Your Museum IIIB: Pottery of the Rio Grande*—her earlier work in *The Land of Little Rain* and *The Basket Woman* reflect an untutored approach to her experiences. I consider it likely that the financial independence Austin gained from *The Land of Little Rain* equipped her to build her house and wickiup workspace in Carmel, California, and granted her access to the intellectual community and resources that would influence her later work.

[12] Brown connects anthropological materialism to the period's burgeoning interest in geographical situation, as curators like Mason and Boas replaced objects gathered under formal similarities into their regional networks of production and use (84-89).

[13] Hoyer uses Fowler and Dawson to read storytelling in *The Basket Woman* as "mythology-in-progress," as a narrative example of my salvage practice (134).

[14] Marjorie Pryse's 1987 republication of *The Land of Little Rain* omits three of these six illustrations—the second coiled basket, the fringed trinket basket, and Seyavi weaving at her wickiup. Pryse additionally truncates the introductory "Note on the Illustrations" to not credit E. Boyd Smith with the "delightful marginal sketches" "impracticable to enumerate."

[15] Critics employ Soja's "firstspace" as the material, received, spatial structures of roads, grids, and map lines (Campbell "Critical" 60).

[16] Ammons suggests that *The Land of Little Rain*, "more than anything else, resembles a collection of Seyavi's bowls. Each individual unit represents a variation on the same form. … We can move the units, arrange the bowls in any order, and the result varies yet remains the same. … All the pieces tell us that we are part of the earth" (94).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: WESTERN PATCH WORK

At the end of the nineteenth century, many literary narratives of the American West repeated historical assumptions and genre tropes while material objects from the West indexed commodity flows and a national fetish for ethnography.[1] Writers like John Wesley Powell, Elizabeth Bacon Custer, Owen Wister, and Mary Austin turned from plots and props to techniques of material assemblage to depict the diverse relations and dynamic tensions of the West. These writers engage in a practice of salvage, in which they separate materials from prior contexts of production or sentiment and combine them in new associations. Their salvage work appears as assemblages—scrapbooks, taxidermy animals, clothes, and weavings—and extends the methods and materials of these assemblages to the structures of their texts. Each work's composition foregrounds the incongruities of its elements, and each text becomes a borderland, or selvage, in which conflicts remain unresolved. The assemblages expose readers to "affective regionality," the feelings of "contingency, precarity, vulnerability" that occur between geographic places and rhetorical explanations (Campbell, *Affective* 4). Each

text, then, presents the writer's experience of "westness," of the fantastic and real, speculated and remembered, vast and intimate American West.[2]

This salvage craft in western literature challenges scholars' interpretations of the West as a subordinate component of the "American" nation in the late nineteenth century. In his 1893 lecture, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Frederick Jackson Turner explained that western communities challenged eastern states' "sectional" traditions to force a national consensus on issues such as commerce, infrastructure, and slavery: "nothing works for nationalism like intercourse within the nation" (26-27). Philip Deloria locates this intercourse of nation within individual actions rather than government policy. He describes that, in 1901, boys in Dan Beard's "Sons of Daniel Boone" organization "learned Americanness … by recreating the lives" and labors of "frontier scouts" (*Playing* 97). During the same period, indigenous people learned "Americanness" by wearing the "white man's clothes" inside houses on reservations and within Richard Henry Pratt's various Indian Schools (*Playing* 104). In each case, western places or people created national unity through common practice.

Just as Turner used the mathematical conclusions of the 1890 Census to absorb "the isolated bodies" of westerners into a democratic citizenry, so many western stories after 1900 blurred individual experiences into generic patterns (1). Early twentieth-century western fictions exaggerated regional activities into the mannerisms of local color caricatures who affirmed a

dominant "American" culture in their derogatory contrast to it. For instance, the Mormons in Zane Grey's 1912 *Riders of the Purple Sage* are far less hospitable than John Wesley Powell found them forty years earlier, still the cliff dwellings in southern Utah's "Surprise Valley" yield pieces of pottery "strong enough and suitable" for Venters and Bess to become cliff dwellers themselves (108, 97). And in homage to Wister rather than to his Virginian, Grey's feared-and-desired gunslinger Lassiter wears black clothes and black hat that give him free range of a western society's borderlands, though Lassiter's attire would come to signify the western story's violent plot and the man's silhouette (8-9).

By the 1920s, western places and the practices of people in them distinguished the West from America, and contrasted a national narrative of cultural inheritance with the regional experience of cultural diversity. Walter Benn Michaels explains that the Immigration Act and Citizenship Act the United States Congress passed in 1924 privileged "being" American over the possibility of "becoming" American (31-32). "Americanness" was either inherited or not, and an individual either included in or marginalized by "America." In the West, an individual could still learn the gestures of western life, on a commercial guest or "dude" ranch in Wyoming or on a Fred Harvey Company Indian Detour in New Mexico.[3] Writers revived a West that Audrey Goodman describes as "an aesthetic space where premodern traditions resisted social and technological change" (*Translating* xv). Hsuan Hsu

suggests that writers created "regional identification" by imposing "a form of nostalgia for past modes of production" on the West rather than presented or praised the persistence of such modes in the West ("Literature" 62). Mary Austin's account of her Paiute basket weaving lessons in California first appears during this period in *The American Rhythm*, which she published one year before she built the house in Santa Fe in which she would live the rest of her life and from which she would study and support the indigenous arts community there (Goodman, *Translating* 117-18, Austin "Enjoy"). Austin understands "being" as a verb rather than as a noun. Her weaving becomes the activity of "being an Indian" among a living, indigenous community, rather than an invented "American" inheritance from marginalized or "vanished" indigenous people (*American* 41).

Trails

Austin's writing from this period articulates her approach to social divisions and spatial borders. Her 1918 *The Trail Book* animates a composite experience in which culture lives in a selvage between national institutions and western practices. The story follows young Dorcas Jane and her little brother Oliver into a museum's display cases, after the diorama figures come alive and "the glass disappeared and the trail shot out like a dark snake over a great stretch of rolling, grass-covered prairie" (1). They walk the plains as a "stuffed" Bull Buffalo tells the children about the Buffalo People, indigenous

community, and Pale Faces (7). They detour through early North American history and meet a Mastodon, a Coyote, the Iroquois, and the Lenape. Then Dorcas Jane meets Corn Woman, who tells her the rituals and "medicine" of the Corn Spirit (51). A Road-Runner leads the children across "the plains of Texas" in the footsteps of Cabeza de Vaca, Coronado, and the "tall stakes of *sahuaro* marching wide apart [*sic*]" to reach Zuñi and Acoma (157). Among these pueblos, a Condor tells the children of the conflict between Spanish missionaries and the Zuñi people. *The Trail Book* concludes with Oliver alone in the "Indian room," after his "teacher had just told them that our country was to join the big war which had been going on so long on the other side of the Atlantic" (179). A young Cheyenne "warrior" tells him the Medicine of the Arrows and camaraderie between the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Sioux, Kiowa, and Apaches before combat with the Pawnees fractured the peace (184, 187). The book ends when the Cheyenne's hand on Oliver's shoulder becomes the hand of the museum attendant "come to tell him it was closing time" (190).

To be sure, *The Trail Book* repeats patterns of the "Indian" pieces popularized by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* and Hamlin Garland's short stories, among others. But as Austin simplifies the stories for her juvenile audience, she, like Powell in *Canyons of the Colorado*, includes the indigenous vocabulary she heard while walking the trails of the American Southwest. She even defines and offers pronunciation for the various terms in two appendixes to the children's book. Austin arranges her vignettes to make

readers aware of each display's frames. The text sets each diorama as a separate chapter in its progress toward a temporal closure that mimics the era's interest in "vanishing" Americans. Yet Austin's taxidermy animals and ethnographic mannequins live in the displays and interact with each other as well as with the visiting children. The figures do not reenact history as a spectacle for the children's consumption or as a symbol of their cultural inheritance, but invite the children between the displays into the spaces and societies where multiple stories gather.[4] At these thresholds, the figures vivify what Eric Santner calls "a dimension of *undeadness*, the space between real and symbolic death" that exists between experience and narrative (xx).

This "undeadness" is the "restlessness" of the museum's figures and material objects, an "excess of animation in the face of historical violence and destruction" (Santner 80). The changing relations of Austin's salvage elements juxtapose the narratives that organize the museum's displays, and the scenes' animation teaches Dorcas Jane and Oliver to see "history" as "a locus of extreme excitation and agitation" (Santner 80). Austin creates a selvage between the museum's crypt-like halls, in which the children's father repairs the radiators, and the display's sun baked prairies scented with campfire smoke and "the spring scent of young sage" (Austin *Trail* 48, 6). Oliver experiences this transition space as "feelings," "a kind of pricking of your skin and a tightness of your chest, not at all unpleasant, and a kind of feeling that the furniture has its eye on you, or that some one behind your

shoulder is about to speak" (6, 3, 180). Oliver's sense of these affective possibilities makes Austin's stories more than didactic. The American West in them is alive in practices that Dorcas Jane can learn and trails Oliver can tread beyond the museum's halls.

Traces

Willa Cather's 1925 *The Professor's House* explores a similar threshold between eastern institutions and western spaces, as European history professor Godfrey St. Peter's old house becomes a sort of museum in which Tom Outland's excursion into the Blue Mesa south of Pardee, New Mexico, is a central exhibit (184-84).[5] The second of the novel's three books, "Tom Outland's Story," follows Tom along an ancient trail into the Cliff City to find the "rew-ins," tools, clothes, and bodies of the mesa's "original inhabitants" (210, 212). Like Austin's Oliver, Tom considers the mesa exciting enough to prevent him from sleeping after his first visit and to prompt future excursions into the stone town before Tom also faces World War I (202, 260).

Unlike Austin's ethnographic figures, the inhabitants of Tom's Cliff City do not speak for themselves. Instead, Tom and his acquaintances Rodney Blake, Henry Atkins, Father Duchêne, and Dr. Ripley posit histories for "a dried human body, a woman" and "three bodies, one man and two women" Tom finds in the cliff chambers (212-13). As accidental trophies of the amateur anthropologists' hunt for artifacts, the preserved bodies

resemble Elizabeth Bacon Custer's taxidermy objects.[6] Tom does not pose the bodies according to his desires or needs, as Franz Boas and Otis Mason did the mannequins in their "life-group" museum exhibits, but Tom arranges the bodies into a narrative of the "fine people" on Blue Mesa, "who had the hardihood to build there, and who lived day after day looking down upon such grandeur" (212).[7] This narrative allows Tom and his companions to dismiss the latter group of bodies as "old people," "who were left behind when the tribe went down to live on their farms in the summer … and had died in the absence of the villagers" (213-14). The bodies are as insignificant in their physical uniformity, "wrapped in yucca-fibre [*sic*]" and "all in the same posture," as they are significant in their historical utility (213).[8] For Tom, the silent, desiccated bodies authenticate a narrative of colonial conquest by means of the erasure of indigenous people through which he inherits "the pots and pans that belonged to my poor grandmothers a thousand years ago" (242).[9]

The lone woman's body opposes this desire for narrative closure. The men cannot quite explain the body's persistent materiality, but not for lack of trying. Henry names the figure "Mother Eve," which venerates her in the men's discoveries even as it faults her for her and their civilizations' conditions. The body's posture evokes later Christian events. It is "stuck up in a high arch," "lying on a yucca mat, partly covered with rags," with "a great wound in her side" (212-13). Tom and Rodney think the woman "had

been murdered," because "her mouth was open as if she was screaming" (213). The men think she was "a young woman," and her open mouth mars their fantasy of a sleeping beauty with "a look of terrible agony" (213). Their interpretation imposes their views of death on her body. Her open mouth is the expression her face assumed as her muscles released her jaw and limbs, and not the façade of peaceful rest sculpted by a mortician. Father Duchêne dismisses these sacred and profane suggestions with an outdated expression of cultural superiority: "in primitive society, the husband is allowed to punish an unfaithful wife with death" (222).[10] But Father Duchêne's present tense certainty derives from his own missionary experience. He can only suggest the woman's history and twice begins his thoughts about her with "perhaps" (222).

As if a change in context can clarify the body's meaning, the men remove the woman's body from its resting place twice, first to another room in Cliff City and then to Tom and Rodney's cabin (213, 221). Rodney tries to move the woman's body a third time after he sells it to the German Fechtig as another artifact, but "Hook's best mule" cannot navigate the narrow trails with the "extra wide" box built to carry it, and both fall "to the bottom of Black Canyon" (244). Rodney mistakes his inability to remove the woman's body from Blue Mesa as her refusal "to leave us," rather than his inability negotiate the mesa's physical limits (244). The body at the bottom of Black Canyon condemns the explorers' pretentions. It circulates beyond the

narratives and economic values Tom and his cohort impose on it. It occupies a borderland between western places and eastern meanings.

The indigenous woman's body asserts a "dimension of *undeadness*" in "Tom Outland's Story" that Cather extends into St. Peter's life in Hamilton (Santner xx). St. Peter's attic office serves as a work room for the family's dressmaker Augusta, and two dress forms claim the professor's space. A "headless, armless female torso, covered with strong black cotton" stands on a wooden chest, near a "full-length female figure in a smart wire skirt with a trim metal waist line [and] no legs" (*Professor's* 18-19). The dress forms invoke but invert the traits of taxidermy, and are as fascinating in their skinlessness as the indigenous woman is in her corporeality.[11] Like Tom, St. Peter imposes emotions on the dress forms. The full-length figure takes on "a sprightly, tricky air, as if it were going out for the evening to make a great show of being harum-scarum, giddy, *folle* [*sic*]," while the torso invites an intimacy of domestic comfort, "as if you might lay your head upon its deep-breathing softness and rest safe forever" (18). The forms' materiality opposes these presumptions. The torso presents "the most unsympathetic surface imaginable. Its hardness was not that of wood … it was a dead, opaque, lumpy solidity" (19). The full-length figure is conversely transparent: "one could see all too well, no viscera behind its glistening ribs, and its bosom resembled a strong wire bird-cage" (19). Each dress form is both alive in St. Peter's imagination yet dead to the touch and, "if you touched it you suffered

a severe shock, no matter how many times you had touched it before" (9). St. Peter keeps the dress forms in his office after his family decamps to their new home, and even tells the dressmaker to buy new forms so as to keep his "ladies" where they belong (22).

As the woman's body transgresses Cliff City interiors and Black Canyon exteriors to create a selvage of indigenous persistence, so St. Peter salvages the dress forms to construct the space in which he negotiates the terms of his enclosure and exposure. His house, his job, and his family constrain him while his travels, his writing, and Tom Outland free him. Only the dress forms stand sentinel on the threshold between these states. They repeat the solidity of St. Peter's body, "built upon extremely good bones," and the necessity of clothing to admit and protect St. Peter in society (13). As attuned to attire as Owen Wister, St. Peter wears his "dinner coat" to be "sympathetic and agreeable" to his guests and obedient to his wife's domestic boundaries (36). But the "activity of [Tom's] skin," which melts Tom's "stiff white collar" and turns "his handkerchief" into a "rag" in Hamilton's humid summer heat, tempts St. Peter beyond such sartorial social strictures.

The dress forms organize St. Peter's research notes in place of the filing cabinets "he had never spared the time or money to buy" (33). Augusta keeps her "many little rolls of patterns, cut out of newspapers, and tied with bits of ribbon, gingham, silk, georgette" in the same "upholstered box" as St. Peter's "piles of notebooks and bundles of manuscripts" (23). Just as August

pieced together her materials into the shapes of St. Peter's wife and daughters, so St. Peter gathers his notes in "this room. It was here they were digested and sorted, and woven into their proper place in his history" (26). The material pieces of St. Peter's research resemble the scraps of John Wesley Powell's textual assemblage, "digested and sorted" over decades. Cather's careful comma and additional verb place St. Peter's work in the company of Mary Austin's basketry. St. Peter entwines his "ideas" about his "excursions" "in the Southwest on the trail of his adventurers" with his notes to arrange his eight-volume text, *Spanish Adventurers in North America*, and create the "proper place in his history," the place for his own affective responses to eastern establishment and western exploration (26). The shock he feels when he touches a dress form, "no matter how many times [he] had touched it before," reveals this selvage between flesh and fabric, writing and weaving in which St. Peter finally learns he must live, "without joy, without passionate griefs" (18, 282). The dress forms locate a physical space for St. Peter in which he can control social relations, and they assert the affective limit of St. Peter's experiences.

Techniques

Weaving presents the most persistent practice of spatial salvage. A weaver can bring together diverse elements to create a place from experience and possibility. A weaver of fabric works within boundaries, between

beginning knots and lateral turning points, the width of the woof and "frame of the warp" from which Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari delimit the apparatus of "the State" or the so-called fabric of society (475). Laurel Thatcher Ulrich notes that "the reach of the weaver's arms" originally determined the width of this machine, and the "Loom of Time" in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* turns Ishmael's mechanical employment into gestures of individual free will: "This warp seemed necessity; and here, thought I, with my own hand I ply my own shuttle and weave my own destiny into these unalterable threads" (Ulrich 93, Melville 179). In each case, the warp or length of the fabric becomes an unrolling of time beyond the weaver's experience but along the trajectory of his actions.

A weaver of baskets is both apparatus and actor. The weaver changes the material edges of space as the weaving extends into space. Tim Ingold describes the basket as an "emergent interface" between material and practitioner, which is akin to Bruno Latour's "quasi-object" that entwines the physical, "natural" world with the ideas and activities of "society" (Ingold 57, Latour 53). The activity of basket weaving is an exploration and reconfiguration of the weaver's relationships to society, history, and the economy. Weaving asserts the weaver's existence between such connections, and creates a new space in which to explore the alternative conditions and consequences of these relations. The basket becomes a site of intellectual engagement, a metaphor for composition, as well as a place of physical

encounter, a domain assembled between boundaries that changes the authority of those boundaries.

Basketry combines traditional practices of indigenous communities with gestures of "survivance" by indigenous artists.[12] Basketry differs from the baskets themselves. Ethnographers collected baskets in museums as relics of "primitive" cultures on which they imposed history, and tourists commodified baskets as souvenirs of "authentic" western experiences, the props in their personal narratives.[13] Yet these baskets evince the continuing and prolific activity of basketry, the weaving a figure like Seyavi practices throughout her life to express her experience. Seyavi "sold [baskets] for money" but continued to weave, to repeat traditional techniques as the actions of her survival (Austin *Land* 95).

Austin's contemporary Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Bonnin) explains beadwork in similar terms in her 1900 fictionalized memoir *American Indian Stories*. The first-person narrator sits beside her mother and watches her careful movements:

> This was the beginning of my practical observation lessons in the art of beadwork. From a skein of finely twisted threads of silvery sinews my mother pulled a single one. With an awl she pierced the buckskin, and skillfully threaded it with the white sinew. Picking up the tiny beads one by one, she strung them with the point of her thread, always twisting it carefully after every stitch. (74)

The narrator's mother performs beadwork as she attaches beads to buckskin that become necklaces, belts, and moccasins, but the narrator frames the activity in terms of weaving. The sinews are each "finely twisted" and twisted

together into a "skein." The narrator's mother disentangles one "finely twisted thread" from the skein and twists it "carefully" as she stitches it through skin and bead. This "twisting" repeats like the "twining" of Seyavi's willow fibers and clematis vines (Austin *Land* 96).

As the narrator's mother twines sinews into thread and places beads in her design, she also combines her subjective experience with the physical space of that experience. She twists together the connective tissue of nature, sinews from animals on the Dakota plains, and the colonial markers of culture, colored beads proffered in trade for much more valuable materials. This composite thread transforms a familiar domestic gesture into proof of her survival and the means to resist the "sham" of the "paleface," to take the river, the land, and her daughter (Zitkala-Ša 69).[14] Twisted into necklaces, belts, and moccasins, the mother's sinews, beads, and buckskin encircle the narrator. They protect her as she "roams over the hills" and they connect her to her friends as they pretend "to offer them as gifts to one another" (75). They entwine the narrator in a place and a community. They bring the narrator into a tradition of repeated gestures and equip her to create "original designs" from her experiences (74). Thus, the narrator chooses to call the "canvas" "tepee" in which her mother twists her threads a "wigwam," which is a woven dwelling, "a form of basketry," as well as a canny critique of cultural composition (Zitkala-Ša 73, 70, Ulrich 45). Zitkala-Ša's "wigwam" is neither the specific construction of Algonkian people nor the term imposed on

all indigenous dwellings by English-speaking colonists (Ulrich 44, "wigwam).[15] In "wigwam," Zitkala-Ša assembles her own practices and claims a place no word or social system can signify.

Basketry provides a way to negotiate "westness" in literature from the beginning of the twentieth century, and basketry can equip twenty-first-century explorations of selvages other than physical. For example, poet Gail Tremblay "began experimenting with alternative media" in the 1990s and now weaves baskets out of the film stock libraries discard as they digitize their collections (Racette 43). She frequently chooses films that represent indigenous people as the unwitting objects of ethnographic study. Her baskets reproduce such films' stereotypical representations as the product of deliberate gestures, and reclaim such actions as traditional knots that occlude the celluloid images with curls and folds of opaque "red" leader material. Each basket creates a haptic encounter with these prolific materials and their continuing consequences to indigenous experience and "American" social spaces. Each basket's "tensegrity" juxtaposes technologies and cultures as well as natural forces and aesthetic forms, or as Sherry Farrell Racette explains, Tremblay's "firm folds and stitches are acts of agency and control" (44).[16] Tremblay's work suggests how salvage can apply to twenty-first-century ideas of "westness," wherein the registers of human experience include the geographical and virtual, narrative and affective.

Notes

[1] See Slotkin *Gunfighter* 69, Brown 88, and Cronon 310.

[2] See Introduction and Campbell, *Affective* 2, 4.

[3] The Dude Rancher's Association formed in 1926 to align the interests of a developed industry (duderanch.org). For more on the Indian Detour, see Woidat 30.

[4] See Brown 87, 95.

[5] See Festa 74.

[6] Taxidermy is a crude metaphor for the anthropologists' activities, but anthropologists' treatment of human remains as ethnographic artifacts exacerbates the problems taxidermy objects pose to historical and personal narratives, and exposes the social consequences of settler colonial systems of mastery and control over indigenous bodies. See Lonetree 12-14, Byrd 21 and 63, and Chapter 2.

[7] See Brown 88-89, 92-99, and Chapter 1.

[8] Susan Stewart writes, "souvenirs of the mortal body are not so much a nostalgic celebration of the past as they are an erasure of the significance of history" (140).

[9] See Michaels 37-40.

[10] See Lape 126.

[11] See Santner 50-51.

[12] See Vizenor 1978.

[13] See Chapter 1 and Chapter 4.

[14] Zitkala-Ša's emphasis on her mother's materials and techniques also invokes contemporary ideas about indigenous assimilation through the use of machine technology. Philip Deloria explains that, "the NIA and other missionary organizations tended to see the adoption of anything from non-Indian culture as a step forward on this developmental trajectory," while others criticized the acquisition of things like cars as evidence of an enduring weakness for "bright and shiny trinkets" on which to squander money (*Indians* 144-45). In his chapter on technology, Deloria includes several images of indigenous women using Singer sewing machines as if to suggest that a Singer was to a woman what the Cadillac was to Geronimo (157-60,

136-37). But the sewing machine presents a different set of problems: it does not enable movement, it does not replace skilled technique, and it does not appear in public settings. See Zakim 136 and 154, and Chapter 3.

[15] See also Bernardin 23-24.

[16] See Chapter 4, and Ingold 55 and 69.

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