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Genres of Resistance: Western-American Womanhood and Authorship

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Abstract

Genres of Resistance: Western-American Womanhood and Authorship traces a genealogy of diverse, Western-American women writers who play with dominant literary genres to recover the histories and narratives written over by the nation's discourses of Manifest Destiny, westward expansion, and American exceptionalism. The project is predicated on Benedict Anderson's argument in *Imagined Communities* that the nation is an invention and that an homogenous, continuous national identity is imagined and sustained through print capitalism, specifically the 18th-century novel and newspaper industry. The project recognizes that, as the American nation moves into the 19th and early-20th centuries, the literary marketplace undergoes dramatic shifts and changes just as the nation is expanding geographically and increasing its global presence. Thus, the project is concerned with how the late-19th and early-20th century women writers considered—María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Helen Hunt Jackson, Sui Sin Far, and an author this dissertation is introducing for the first time into critical discussions, Eva Rutland—use new genres (the short story and the travel essay) and new literary modes (sentimentalism, regionalism, and realism) as a means to speak back to the homogenizing efforts of dominant literary productions. Ultimately, the dissertation argues that the Western-American women writers considered in this project manipulate dominant literary genres to contest and compete for representative authority over the American West—its geography, its history, and its cultural and political identity.

For Harper, my daughter.

May you be as inspired by the women in your life as I was by the those in mine.

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Introduction
Western-American Narratives From the Interstices: Regional Women and Their "Nothing Subjects"

From the mid-19th through the mid-20th century, Western-American women writers have produced literary works that stand to correct some of the myths the American West tells about itself. The challenge for women writers writing from and about the American West is to account for the ways these Western-American myths and histories not only exclude them but also for how they play a role in shaping their own identities and perspectives. The women writers considered in this dissertation navigate the American literary marketplace through a manipulation of these Western-American myths and histories, but also through a manipulation of their own identities as women, as writers, and as minoritized Americans. For instance, Joan Didion, who emerged as a writer in the mid-20th century, struggled throughout her career to form a politics around an identity indebted to Western-American histories of Manifest Destiny, the pioneer spirit, and American exceptionalism. Joan Didion's first novel, *Run River* (1963), is often forgotten under the success of her second, *Play it As it Lays* (1970), and her two earliest essay collections, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968) and *The White Album* (1979). While these three later publications have been praised for their social commentaries and sharp critiques of American sociopolitical institutions, *Run River* is a much more intimate novel, one which remains close to the sort of decaying domestic space Didion herself grew up in in the Sacramento Valley. The novel is marked by its cyclical structure and its existence within a tug-of-war conflict with the history of the American West and the undeniable and inevitable transformation of a Western-American city like the post-WWII

Sacramento, California. The novel tells the story of two families, the Knights and the McClellans of Sacramento's landed aristocracy, both of which have, like Didion herself, ancestral ties to the first Anglo-American families of California, including the Donner Party. The novel begins in August of 1959 with Lily McClellan (previously Knight) discovering her husband, Everett McClellan, has just shot her lover on the banks of the Sacramento River behind their hops ranch. After the first four chapters, readers are shuttled back in time in a section titled, "1938-1959," in which Didion recounts Lily's and Everett's early relationship, their Reno marriage, and detailed accounts of their domestic life together between these years. The last two chapters return to that moment in August 1959 when Lily walks down to the river bank to find her husband standing with a gun over the dead body of her lover. The novel ends with a second gun shot, sounding the moment in which Everett ends his own life.

Many critics have noted that, while good in theory, the novel's structure lends itself to the criticism that "[n]othing 'happens' between the first and second shots fired" (Randisi 41). As in Guy Davenport's 1963 *National Review* article on the novel, critics have questioned the purpose behind Didion's first novel: "[b]ut what do they mean? The details of a pattern are organized and organization is principle. What's that principle?" (Henderson 91). These arguments seem confused rather than provoked by Didion's structure. However, when critics tell us "nothing 'happens,'" what they mean is that the novel deals in intimate, feminine spaces that are seen as inconsequential to national experiences and therefore, "nothing" important. When these critics question Didion's principles in the novel, they are really questioning how such an intimately domestic narrative can lend anything of value to a national literary consciousness or a national

literary identity. In other reviews of the book, published between the novel's 1963 debut and our contemporary moment, there continues to be a devaluation of *Run River* as a consequence of the novel's association with femininity and a domestic literary tradition, rather than for its structure, style, or syntax, all of which are underhandedly praised by these critics. For instance, in a 1963 review from the *New Yorker,* the reviewer writes: "Miss Didion's first novel shows her to be the possessor of a vigorous style that is wasted on her characters—some Sacramento River ranchers and their aimless wives and discontented daughters…but her book gives promise of what she can do when she settles down to dealing with men and women instead of being content to describe human leftovers" (*New Yorker* 13). This early review does not call into question Didion's talent but it does suggest her novel's central concern—the "human leftovers" represented by the "aimless wives and discontented daughters"—is unworthy of literary documentation. The reviewer critiques the novel's centering of what they clearly understand to be insignificant characters living lives in equally insignificant places. Thereby, not only does this reviewer critique the value Didion places on women's experiences and women's concerns, but also the value Didion places on regional experiences like those in Sacramento, versus larger, more homogenous national experiences in the post WWII years.

Other scholars have compared *Run River* to *Play It As It Lays,* recognizing that, while *Run River* is "a standard family-saga type tale of love gone wrong in the Sacramento Valley[…]treated gently by the critics," her "second novel, *Play It As It Lays,* drew critical waves" (Lacy 501). *Play It As It Lays* is a novel whose claim to sociopolitical-critique-fame is rooted in the central character's, Maria's, decision to get

an abortion in a pre-*Roe vs. Wade* America and, possibly more importantly, Hollywood (as opposed to a less iconic region like Sacramento). Published two years after Didion's well-received collection of essays, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Play It As It Lays* deals with many of the same "nothings" that happen in between the two shots fired in *Run River*. Like Maria in *Play It As It Lays*, Lily McClellan in *Run River* also gets a secret abortion after she becomes pregnant as a consequence of her affair with a neighbor. Furthermore, while *Play it As it Lays* documents the abuse Maria suffers at the hands of her husband, Didion's first novel narrates Everett's younger sister's sexual assault by the very man Everett ends up shooting at the start of the novel for having a second affair with Lily. While these kinds of narrative events may be read as "nothing happening" in Didion's first novel, these same women-centered issues become important enough in her second novel to nominate it for a National Book Award just seven years later. While we might attribute this to *Play It As It Lays'* corresponding publication amidst the rise of second-wave feminism in the 1970s, the difference with *Run River* is that it is rendered "regional," and therefore unassimilable to larger national experiences, whereas *Play It As It Lays*, a novel that takes place in the iconic city of Los Angeles, is understood as undeniably "American."

This dissertation argues for a new kind of reading of Western-American women writers, one which acknowledges the ways Western-American women writers work in the interstices of national, regional, and individual histories and narratives. A text like Didion's *Run River* is better understood when appreciated for what it reveals about the struggles women in the American West face to validate and—in the case of Didion's authorship—to document their own experiences against those of the nation and the

region. Didion expresses a consistent awareness for a speechlessness in her oeuvre that shows up as an inability to articulate the complexities of the relationships Didion or her female characters have towards their environments, their fellow Americans, their national histories, and their own families. This trend, traceable throughout Didion's fiction, essays, and memoirs alike, first manifests in *Run River*. Lily McClellan deals with conflict in her married life through silence rather than vocal confrontation. After Martha, Lily's sister-in-law, confronts Lily about having an affair, Lily becomes evasive and tells Martha: "'[d]on't talk about it now'" (Didion 120). Didion writes that "[t]he reconciliation [with Martha] made her [Lilly] quite as uncomfortable as the scene downstairs had; things said out loud had for her an aura of danger so volatile that it could be controlled only in the dark province inhabited by those who share beds" (120-121). Lily's misgivings about her own marriage, family, and place in society come with "an aura of danger" when spoken out loud because these misgivings defy the myths her pioneer family heritage tells about itself. Her experiences fall in between the cracks of what her family, regional, and national narratives tell her that she is or what she represents. Lily's marital disputes and her unfulfilled feelings towards her family can only be "controlled" in "the dark province inhabited by those who share beds" because family sexual politics—the continuous reproduction of the pioneer family myths through producing heirs—is her only chance to survive her Western-American world.

National histories and the intimate histories of families become united in an agenda to maintain a quickly disintegrating myth about American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny. As Benedict Anderson suggests, historical narratives play an important role in codifying national identity. However, Anderson also recognizes that this history

must be read "*genealogically*—as the expression of an historical tradition of serial continuity" (Anderson 195), at the same time that it must also be read as a strategic history that relies on "'forgetting'" the fact that national formations and identities are imagined (205). Anderson's framework for evaluating the impact historical narratives have in the construction of national identity helps realize the links between Lily's and Everett's marriage and national scripts for freedom, opportunity, and equality. As their marriage stands to represent the continuous perpetuation of a pioneer history and genealogy and thereby, a national democratic idealism, Lily and Everett's coming together is described as having "been, really, no decision at all: only an acquiescence" (Didion 63). From Lily's perspective, her marriage to Everett "seemed as inescapable as the ripening of the pears, as fated as the exile from Eden" (63). As a "fated" occurrence, Didion names Lily's and Everett's marriage as an inevitability of Manifest Destiny and the pioneer heritage they both represent. But it is also "fated as the exile from Eden," suggesting that, like the fall of man, Lily and Everett are the remaining vestiges of a failed Manifest Destiny. The marriage is described as "natural" the same way Anderson recognizes the "imaginings of fraternity, emerging 'naturally'" in nineteenth-century American literatures to foster a national community (Anderson 203). As a family that represents Manifest Destiny and the United States' national identity, the McClellan family has a responsibility to at once further the genealogical progression of this national history and to remain silent on the historical gaps or amnesias that this genealogy relies on. Didion's female characters' struggles with speechlessness are their struggles with the incongruencies or the "forgetting" that is required to sustain such regional family histories and national narratives.

As is evident in Didion's *Run River,* Western-American regional narratives are important for the temporal progression of national narratives. As the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny suggests, the United States nation relies upon idealistic images of the western territories to reclaim the imagined national community's faith in national programs of democracy and expansion in the post-Civil War era. This dissertation will trace the ways Western-American women writers address these narratives and resist the exclusionary power of dominant images of Western-American progressivism. Though Didion has had more authority in her literary career than her predecessors, her many novels, essays, and memoirs remain grounded in an inability to speak to and to name her sense of despondency with national and regional narratives. Rather than considering how this speechlessness interacts with the shifting national narratives of this era, scholars have tended to write this tendency in Didion's writing off as a characteristic flaw and have understood it as expressing "nothing" significant to her larger sociopolitical criticisms. For instance, for the majority of *Run River,* Martha is dating Ryder Channing, a man from Tennessee who has moved to California in the hopes of striking it rich in the real estate business, which is now taking the place of gold and agriculture as California's boom business. The McClellan family is skeptical of Ryder throughout the novel and for good reason since he is the catalyst that ultimately leads to the irreparable fissures in Lily and Everett's marriage. Ryder ultimately breaks his relationship off with Martha after he is seduced into a marriage with a San Francisco socialite and the daughter of a real estate mogul. A few weeks after his marriage, Ryder returns to the McClellan family home and sexually assaults Martha while she is home alone. The scene is quick and jarringly violent. "'I'm trying to sleep,'" she tells him, and then, "Fifteen minutes later he had her

down on the floor; she had refused to go near the couch. ‘You want it,’ he said. She had her legs crossed and her face turned away from him. ‘I do not.’ ‘What difference do you think it makes now.’ He pushed her skirt up around her waist. ‘After I’ve screwed you maybe four, five times a week every week for the past five years’” (Didion 214-215). Surprisingly, some critics read this scene as consensual. Katherine Henderson describes this scene as, “Ryder stops by the ranch, finds Martha alone, and seduces her without love or tenderness” (Henderson 99). Seduction, whether it is loving or not, is not what happens here at all and to say that it is is a failure to see into the gaps and erasures Didion’s novel attempts to bring to light. This scene is a clear depiction of a rape justified or protected by the fact that Martha had been involved with Ryder prior to the encounter. Didion is clear in describing both Martha’s resistant body and her vocal protestations. Martha “refuses” to go near the couch, her legs are “crossed,” face “turned away.” It is also clear from the way Didion describes Ryder in this scene that he is here to take Martha’s body regardless of Martha’s desires. He forces her clothes off and verbally assaults Martha by telling her nobody will believe she didn’t consent after her relationship with him over the past four years. This leaves Martha speechless, unable to defend herself against not only Ryder’s violent force, but against their relationship’s history he has just perverted and used against her as a sexual weapon.

As with all sexual assaults, Ryder’s attack on Martha is one of power and domination and Didion includes it in the novel to suggest that California’s old social order, one of landed aristocracy and historical precedent, is being challenged. But what is so striking about this scene is how Didion places it in the novel to show how the debilitating consequences of founding a family identity and tradition on the national

promise of Western-American progressivism and freedom becomes the genealogical burden of women. While Didion has been known as a kind of "Prima Donner" (Homans) and an aristocratic elite of the California Valley, *Run River,* along with her other novels, memoirs, and essays, depict women in a number of sacrificial positionalities to the nation and national identity. Upon first read, *Run River* may appear to be about the "nothing" happenings "between the first and second shots fired," but the novel is really about Lily's and Martha's inheritance of a specifically feminine burden. As their mothers die or age out of their roles as matriarchs, Lily and Martha are left to care for their ailing and impotent fathers, their insubstantial husbands and lovers, and their vulnerable sons and nephews as these men attempt to re-entrench an old and quickly dying history. Didion's female figures absorb the loss these men face as their role in American society is overrun in the post-WWII era by a new masculinity and a new national identity codified in a globally expanding capitalist economy and a scientific military presence on the world stage. It is an era in which Theodore Roosevelt's rugged masculinity and pioneer spirit is being replaced by Franklin Roosevelt's welfare state and a global, rather than simply a national, consciousness. Whether Didion's female characters are sacrificing themselves to marriages that push the genealogical and regional pioneer narrative just a little further—as with Lily—or incurring the brunt of the enigmatic transition from that pioneer history to a mid-twentieth century California grounded in real estate and land speculation—as Martha does—Didion is tuned into the ways women pass these burdens down a female genealogical line to protect and shield the family's men from the ineffectiveness they come to represent by *Run River's* critical 1959 moment. In this dissertation, I trace Didion's speechlessness back to the rise of nationalism in the late-19th

century and the rhetorical role women played in its rise as well as in resisting it. María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Helen Hunt Jackson, Sui Sin Far, and fellow Sacramento author, Eva Rutland contextualize the speechlessness in Didion's work, while also evidencing the variety of narratives that are, throughout the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries, competing with national narratives for legitimacy.

In *The Women's Review of Books*, Jan Zita Grover writes that "Didion can only be fully understood as a regional writer—more particularly, as a middle-class Anglo Californian who came of age in a place nobody recognized as having a legitimate culture of its own" (Grover 8). What Grover argues is true. Didion's value to a United States political consciousness has always derived from her regional role, which placed her as both outside and inside the national imagination. We see the parameters of her insider and outsider status when, as suggested earlier, we compare the dramatically different receptions of *Run River,* a Sacramento Valley novel, and *Play It As It Lays,* a predominantly Hollywood novel. However, what is missing from Grover's analysis of Didion's value to national literature is that Didion also represents a deeply intimate or domestic figure, a figure at odds with public life even while her writing explores the cultural implications of the separate spheres and, as is more explicit in her later works, the United States' role in a global community. Therefore, I bring together a regional and domestic reading of the women writers in this dissertation. While it is not new to read women writers either regionally or with an eye for the domestic elements of their narratives, I agree with Susan Friedman who argues in *Mappings* that a more expansive, global approach to feminism does not mean sacrificing attention to the local or to the domestic. Friedman insists that "the considerable body of feminist theory on the family,

the home, and domesticity should not be abandoned. I am suggesting rather that we add to and revise what has been done by understanding the geopolitical dimensions that weave in and among the domestic" (Friedman 114). Though scholars such as Amy Kaplan have inaugurated this kind of research, there is still work to be done to consider the role of the regional domestic space outside of the constricting limitations of national narratives, whether they be of national-domestic or imperial concerns, and to situate these spaces on terrains of global struggle and in relation to global identity formations.

While Kaplan's important work on the role of the white, middle-class American domestic space in imperial conquest began this work, it also opens doors for us to look to the fringes of such an argument and to ask what we might uncover when we read regional and domestic women's writing from a perspective open to the permeability of these borders and definitions, and to the variety of different renderings of regional or domestic settings. For example, Kaplan argues "domesticity is a mobile and often unstable discourse that can expand or contract the boundaries of home and nation, and[…]their interdependency relies on racialized conceptions of the foreign" (Kaplan 26). But if, as Kaplan suggests, white, middle-class, and largely Protestant women are helping to define the nation through racialized conceptions of foreign domestic spaces, then how do those racialized populations speak back? How do they resist or challenge such national constructions? This dissertation will take an intersectional approach to regionalism and domesticity to understand the role the separate spheres ideology played in nationalist projects of expansion, and how those projects impacted Western-American women from various racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds. It is important that this dissertation looks to the American West for it is in this geographic region that Manifest Destiny is being

played out, and where the new national narratives that will carry the nation into Didion's 20th century are being written. By evaluating four Western-American women authors writing and living between 1860 and 1960—María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Helen Hunt Jackson, Sui Sin Far, and a relatively unknown African American author from California, Eva Rutland—this dissertation will aim to trace a genealogy of Western-American women writers, culminating in Joan Didion, that take on the burden of writing to challenge and to redefine the role of the region and the domestic in nation-building projects and in globally constituted identities.

To understand the ways these women respond to nation-building projects, Benedict Anderson's argument that the nation is imagined through late 18th and early 19th-century print culture, particularly the novel and the newspaper, will provide an important touchstone for this dissertation. Anderson argues that the novel and the newspaper contributed to the "idea of 'homogenous', empty time,' in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (Anderson 24). The novel's rendering of multiple characters living multiple lives all within the same time but in separate geographies, and the newspaper's tendency to be read ritualistically each day unites a community of readers in time regardless of whether or not they will ever actually meet. Anderson recognizes that national consciousness developed out of this "new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together," and that these communities were largely established through "print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (36). Such a persuasive argument leads this dissertation to ask

how the role of print-capitalism in fostering national cohesion becomes more complex in the era of Manifest Destiny and the expansion of national borders into territories that previously belonged to Spain, Mexico and Indigenous populations. How does the nation reconcile what seem to be competing histories in its new regions? And how does the nation consolidate these histories into a singular, progressive national narrative? In response to these questions I would still answer as Anderson does, print-capitalism. However, I find that the story grows more complicated as we take into account the late-19th and early-20th centuries' shifting modes of literary production and the equally shifting scales of value placed on various literary genres and publications. If Anderson's argument is focused on the proliferation of daily newspapers and novels in vernacular "print-languages" in the 18th century as nationalisms are on the rise around the globe, then my argument recognizes that as the U.S. print industry moves into the mid-19th century, new adaptations of these old forms are competing in and transforming the American literary marketplace and therefore, American national narratives. As Anderson points out specifically of the American context, the problem print-capitalism addressed wasn't so much uniting a national body of readers around a unified language, as it was in other parts of the world, but around a unified understanding of the diverse geographies contained within national borders. A different kind of translation was required, one rooted in the expansive geography of the growing United States rather than in language (Anderson 62-64). It is my contention that late-19th century changes in American print capitalism such as the rise of literary magazines and realist modes of writing offered the nation ways to consolidate these geographies into a more homogenous national identity. And yet, these very same genres and modes of writing also provided platforms for the

women of this dissertation to work from within the interstices to correct and resist this consolidating work as well.

Scholars such as Amy Kaplan, Stephanie Foote, and Donna Campbell have drawn our attention to the importance of serialized magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harpers*, and *Century*, spanning roughly from 1865 to the 1920s, and the concurrent rise of literary modes such as realism and regionalism. As Stephanie Foote indicates, "Regional writing's dissemination in high cultural venues, its appearance in the late nineteenth century (a moment when the newly reunited states were becoming not just a powerful nation but also a powerful imperial force), and its substantive preoccupation with dialect as the formal corollary of something like ethnic self-expression combined to make it a genre uniquely suited to imagine a homogenous past for a heterogeneous nation" (Foote 6). Regionalism, a mode of writing that found its home and its largest readership in the literary magazines of its day, works to bring together the otherwise disparate geographies newly accumulated by the U.S., and to emphasize the continuity of these different regions through a historical discourse of Manifest Destiny. Additionally, Donna Campbell draws our attention to how this rise in magazine culture and regional writing also corresponded with a rise in female authorship. Arguing for the ways literary modes such as naturalism rose to combat the success women writers garnered with their regionalist short stories and sketches, Campbell links the undervalued nature of regionalist writing to its "feminine" associations (Campbell 4-5). Given the proliferation of magazine culture, regionalism, and female authorship in these later decades of the 19th century, it is no surprise that most of the women writers included in this dissertation wrote for magazines, and that they contributed to a journalistic regionalism in some of

the day's leading newspapers and periodicals. It would seem then that if, as Anderson argues, newspapers and periodicals contributed to a national narrative and a sense of national cohesion, then the four women included here participated in codifying such a unity of national identity through their contributions. And yet, in her autobiography, published in just such a national magazine, Sui Sin Far, the daughter of an English father and a Chinese mother, provocatively states, "I have no nationality and am not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality" (Sui 230). As with Didion, Sui Sin Far positions individual and national identities in opposition to one another. To have national identity means to forfeit individual identity and to participate in the overriding narratives that subsume individual cultural and historical narratives. When we consider such statements in relation to women writers' literary productions, we can question to what extent *all* print culture contributed to a homogenous national identity and culture, and to what extent all authors wanted to. Ultimately, this dissertation aims to suggest that literary scholars have become too reliant upon nationalist readings of texts and authors, especially regional texts and authors, and that this reliance has encouraged us to overlook important, seemingly contradictory, characteristics of 19th and 20th century works that challenge the notion of nation rather than celebrate it or seek to be a part of it.

While I read the literary works of these women with an awareness for the ways their literary societies are attempting to create what Anderson has called "homogenous" national time, I also recognize the need to work backwards and unravel this time to find its origins. In her book, *The Intimacies of Four Continents,* Lisa Lowe draws connections between European colonization, the conditions of migrant labor, and American slavery to remedy misconceptions of liberalism's contributions to national consciousness and the

fragmentation of history along national and continental borders. Lowe argues that: "What some have represented as a linear temporal progression from colonial abjection to liberal freedom actually elides what might be more properly conceived as a spatial dynamic, in which forms of both liberal subject and society in the imperial center are possible only in relation to laboring lives in the colonized geographies or 'zones of exception' with which they coexist, however disavowed" (Lowe 16). Lowe encourages us to revisit narratives of progress and to widen the purview through which we evaluate them as "progressive." Histories such as Manifest Destiny are just the kinds of histories Lowe would recommend we read for their global manifestations and consequences. Although there are a number of arguments that critique American Manifest Destiny and the way it used the rhetoric of progress and civilization to justify its means, Lowe provides the framework for taking this critique further to engage with the ways Manifest Destiny is "intimate" with other global and national histories and thereby, to understand how it creates "intimacies" with seemingly contradictory populations, ideas, and histories. Lowe uses "the concept of intimacy as a heuristic, and a means to observe the historical division of the world processes into those that develop modern liberal subjects and modern spheres of social life, and those processes that are forgotten, cast as failed or irrelevant because they do not produce 'value' legible within modern classifications" (17-18). Here Lowe is offering a heuristic device for evaluating the literatures produced by those racialized domestic others of Kaplan's study. Lowe "unsettles the meaning of intimacy as the privileged sign of liberal interiority or domesticity, by situating this more familiar meaning in relation to the global processes and colonial connections that are the conditions of its production" (18). With the help of Lowe's framework, this dissertation aims to analyze the

"intimacies" between the diverse women writers considered in this dissertation—diverse because of their ethnic and racial identities as well as for their temporal locations in American national history and Western-American regional history.

Although women's writing has been read for what it says about domesticity and national identity in a variety of ways already, I situate my argument in the interstices and voids created out of national notions of domesticity and gendered identity. Jane Tompkins, Ann Douglas, and Francesca Sawaya are just a few scholars who have written compelling arguments about women authorship and domestic genres. However, many of these arguments focus on white, middle-class womanhood and domesticity, forgoing a more complex analysis of the "intimacies" between different manifestations of domestic spaces. What my dissertation aims to do is draw attention to the ways, as the American West is being incorporated into the nation, domesticity becomes an arena of contact between Anglo-American settlers in the region, newly incorporated populations, and immigrants. As previously mentioned, Amy Kaplan's chapter, "Manifest Domesticity," points out "that domesticity is a mobile and often unstable discourse that can expand or contract the boundaries of home and nation, and that their interdependency relies on racialized conceptions of the foreign" (Kaplan 26). Kaplan uses this understanding of the domestic in order to argue for the ways Anglo-American, middle-class women contributed to a civilizing and imperialistic mission from within the domestic space. But I contend that by reading against the linear grain of women's writing and these histories of American imperialism and Manifest Destiny in the American West, we uncover "intimacies" between women and their domestic spaces and other national and geopolitical projects.

If the domestic space is important to this dissertation because it serves as a kind of "contact zone" (to echo Mary Louise Pratt) through which "intimacies" are revealed across racial, ethnic, and national borders, then regionalism and the various genres these women writers use to narrate these domestic spaces are equally important for what they offer about the dialogic nature of literary production and national, and cultural identity. In their 2003 collaborative work, *Writing out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture,* Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse identify regionalism to be less about place and more of a "discourse" that "concerns the consolidation and maintenance of power through ideology" (Fetterely & Pryse 7). Central to their argument is their understanding of regionalism as a predominantly female mode of writing because it "marks that point where region becomes mobilized as a tool for critique of hierarchies based on gender as well as race, class, age, and economic resources. Here we would point to the parallels between the process of creating regions and the ideological construction of 'separate spheres' for men and women" (14). That is, Fetterley and Pryse recognize the ways women are regionalized within the literary marketplace and therefore, their writing is rendered insignificant to larger national narratives.

But more importantly, Fetterely and Pryse are part of a scholarship that initiated the contemporary debate in American literary regionalism which seeks to extricate regionalism from a preservationist agenda, which saw regionalism as a project to protect and isolate American communities from the rapid industrialization taking place in many American cities, and to read it with an eye for the tradition's formation of an identity politics. Critical Regionalism forges a new framework for analyzing regionalist texts and authors by recognizing the interconnectedness rather than the isolation of regions and the

always in-flux identities of individuals within a region. Douglas Powell, like Fetterely and Pryse, argues in *Critical Regionalism: Connection Politics and Culture in the American Landscape* (2007) that regionalism is not a genre of place per se instead, he defines it as a "strategy" deployed to "provide a rhetorical basis for making claims about how spaces and places are connected to spatially and conceptually broader patterns of meaning" (Powell 4). "When we talk about a region," Powell continues, "we are talking not about a stable, boundaried, autonomous place but about a cultural history, the cumulative, generative effect of the interplay among the various, competing definitions of that region" (5). We saw this "interplay" with Joan Didion's *Run River* at the start of this introduction. Not only did we see the competing claims to the Sacramento region between the McClellan family—a family which represents the history of California's first Anglo-American settlers—and Ryder Channing—a man who represents the changing patriarchal and capitalist order in the post-WWII years—but we also saw the competition between Lily McClellan and her husband, Everett McClellan, as they each struggle to express their individual experiences against dominating regional and national histories and narratives. Regions are terrains of struggle and, for a dissertation concerned with the role of women in nation-building projects, there is no region more at odds with itself than the American West—evidenced by its many competing histories—nor any faction of that region more unstable than the domestic space, where those histories are passed down and internalized.

While much of the scholarship on regionalism has focused on the short story and the rural narratives that take place in isolated communities such as Sarah Orne Jewett's pinnacle example, *The Country of the Pointed First*, this dissertation participates in a

regionalist analysis that expands what constitutes regionalism to show the diverse sociopolitical and socioeconomic messages regionalism has to offer the nation. The four women this dissertation considers experiment with regionalist writing through a number of different genres as they attempt to describe their experiences in the American West's urban centers—San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Sacramento. This experimentation, though often criticized and judged by their contemporary societies for being feminine and therefore "nothing" (as we saw with Didion) is, I argue, testament to the urgency with which they were resisting dominant ideologies and imperialistic logic that took their land (Ruiz de Burton), disrupted immigrant and working-class families (Sui Sin Far), and restricted them within gendered, ethnic, and racialized categories. For example, we see Helen Hunt Jackson first publish *A Century of Dishonor* in 1881, a didactic political treatise on the plight of the Native Americans that received poor public acknowledgement. Taking the same political agenda but fictionalizing and sensationalizing it in the sentimental romance *Ramona,* published in 1884, Jackson achieves a much larger audience and political exposure just three years later. Similarly, scholarship surrounding Sui Sin Far often takes up her use of the fictional sketch and short story. Where early critics of hers find Sui Sin Far to be using the sketch form because she is a subpar author, more contemporary scholarship has sought to understand the cultural value of the sketch form and what it allowed her to do politically. Like Jackson, many of the sketches Sui Sin Far published in *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* (1912) are fictional translations of journalistic exposes and profiles she wrote for western-based magazines such as *The Californian* and *The Westerner*. My argument is situated in the place where these genres seem to overlap, repeating arguments about and perspectives of

certain regions in slightly different terms so that these Western-American women writers can make their experiences or the experiences of their subjects more visible. By the time we reach Joan Didion's early writings of the 1960s, we see an outright blending of these genres that, no doubt evidence of her postmodern influences, is also, I argue, part of a genealogical tradition of Western-American women writers experimenting with various genres to achieve the greatest influence, requiring them to at once entertain their readers with exotic or titillating images, as regionalism was wont to do, but not at the expense of their own political agendas.

Aside from creating a dialogue across genres, Critical Regionalism also lends this dissertation a framework for considering the region against global, not just national, histories, narratives, and identities. Tom Lutz argues in *Cosmopolitan Vistas: American Regionalism and Literary Value* (2004), that "The hallmark of local color and later regionalist writing, then, is its attention to both local and more global concerns, most often achieved through a careful balancing of different groups' perspectives" (Lutz 30). Like Powell, Lutz recognizes that regionalism's value is in the way it compares or balances the multiplicities that make up a region. Critical Regionalism provides a framework for drawing out the American West's "intimacies" as they emerge in the cultural encounters and exchanges between diverse communities. However, Lutz makes what I consider to be a problematic distinction between regionalism, a genre of writing that focuses on preserving "local folkways," and "literary regionalism." Lutz argues that "Literary regionalists and the majority of their critics and reviewers were attuned not to 'infantile delight' but to social thought in these texts, and they assumed what was important about representing local customs was their relation to other locales" (14). Here

Lutz insinuates that the "local folkways" are nothing more than "'infantile delight[s],'" and have little to offer "other locales," an evaluation not so different from the kinds of criticisms we see Joan Didion receive for writing about "some Sacramento River ranchers and their aimless wives and discontented daughters" (*New Yorker* 13). The problem lies in the assumption that "local folkways" have nothing to offer national or, as Lutz is more interested in, universal narratives. Like we saw with Didion and the ways her narratives about women and women's issues were read as "nothing," Lutz reads local culture and depictions of local people as "nothing," or, to use his word, "subliterary" (31). It is my contention then that there is still work to be done to expand what literary scholars of regionalism recognize to be "important" to national and global narratives of identity. As Didion, Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, Sui Sin Far, and Rutland all make clear, national notions of what is important are codified in the nation's violent process of overwriting and subsuming certain histories and identities. It is for this reason I locate my analysis of these writers in the gaps and interstices of the dominant national histories they run parallel to. This dissertation draws out what have been understood as peripheral and subsidiary moments in the nation's literary history and shows how they challenge the dominant national histories and identities that pushed them aside.

But what Lutz, like Powell, has to offer this dissertation is a new direction in considering the relevance of regional texts. These Critical Regionalist arguments suggest a direction in regionalist scholarship that trends towards a centering of the dialogic nature of regionalism's attention to local, national, and even global identities. It accounts for the multiplicity of and the "intimacies" between racial, ethnic, and gendered identities all cohabitating—whether in isolation from one another or more collaboratively—to render

visible the "consolidation and maintenance of power" that Fetterely and Pryse have argued is central to the tradition (Fetterely & Pryse 7). To this I would also add a focus on the different genres in which we see regionalist writing emerge. When we look closer at the multifarious publications the women in this dissertation produced, we not only connect the marginalization of women writers to the regionalist mode, but also see how they fight back by appropriating disparate genres to get their narratives heard.

The premise of this dissertation is that arguments such as Lutz's and Powell's are missing an intersectional framework that draws out the significance of the ignored or "subliterary" texts to national and global narratives and identities. In their introduction to the 2013 intersectionality special edition of *Signs,* Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall caution us away from thinking about intersectionality as primarily concerned with identity. Rather, "what makes an analysis intersectional," they claim, "is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing—conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power—emphasizes what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is" (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall 795). These authors encourage an intersectional analysis that does not make assertions based on the difference of the individual, but based on the way systems of power create those differences—differences which are always shifting to match the changes in dominant culture—and exclude individuals from dominant narratives. Intersectionality is about power, not about identity, and recognizing this helps avoid stagnating or simply unproductive arguments that link someone's identity to the reasons for their experience

rather than understanding their experience as the reason for their socially constituted identity. Additionally, new trends in intersectionality studies have noticed the glaring avoidance of thinking intersectionally outside of U.S. borders or as a transnational or transterritorial phenomenon. In her contribution to the same special edition of *Signs,* Vrushali Patil argues that, while intersectionality has replaced the term patriarchy in dominant feminist analysis, it, like patriarchy, has failed to account for the "fluid and changing" nature of intersectional identities as addressed by the authors of the introduction. Patil suggests "that while analyses have often been keen to deconstruct borders of race, gender, sexuality, culture, and so on, nation-state borders are disproportionately reified" (Patil 853). Patil reminds us that terms such as "'woman' and 'man' are not merely descriptive terms but rather by products in the interstices of other discourses, the meanings of which have changed historically and discursively with the shifting meanings and alignments of other categories…it is important to note that all of these emerged in tandem with the nation-state, industrial capitalism, and the burgeoning social and biological sciences" (862). In other words, Patil recognizes the problems with an intersectionality studies that, like literary studies, becomes preoccupied with nationalizing identities and thereby, reifies the power in nation-state borders to create difference and evoke programs of exclusion based on that differnece. Patil offers a framework for evaluating the ways the Western-American women writers included in this dissertation write from within "the interstices of other discourses," and run parallel to, but in challenge of, the histories of "the nation-state, industrial capitalism, and the burgeoning social and biological sciences." Patil's framework is useful in drawing out the

interconnected but often separated systematic oppressions that differentiate between ethnic, gendered, and regional experiences.

In this dissertation, I approach both domestic and regional spaces intersectionally to facilitate the crossing of borders and the uncovering of "intimacies" across these borders. To return to Benedict Anderson and Lisa Lowe, intersectional methods of analysis help to revive the "constellation of 'times'" (Lowe 60), and the "residual intimacies" (19) that Anderson finds print-capitalism to be consolidating in its creation of a national "homogenous time." It also lends itself to uncovering relationships and the historical crisscrossing between domestic spaces, regionalisms, and genres. Such an intersectional analytical approach to regionalism and domesticity serves my argument because these Western-American women writers are working within a literary power system that dictates what is "literary" and what is not, but also within an imperialist power system that determines not only what identities are "national" identities, but what literary forms and narratives represent those national identities. Additionally, in the period this dissertation takes up, the definitions and constraints of these power dynamics and identities are constantly in flux. The 19th and early 20th century American West is unstable as it attempts to negotiate who to extend citizenship to, who to exclude, and how to clearly define the border between the two.

This dissertation will be constructed of four chapters organized chronologically to emphasize a genealogical trajectory in the ways women writers of the American West utilize, manipulate, and resist through various regional genres. The first chapter considers Californio author, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, and her two sentimental romance novels, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885).

Originally from Baja California, Ruiz de Burton voluntarily chose to relocate as a refugee after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which dictated that Baja California was to remain a part of Mexico. Soon after her relocation to Monterey, California, Ruiz de Burton married General Henry S. Burton, the man who lead the invasion of her Mexican village. As the wife of a prominent American military general, Ruiz de Burton had the opportunity to travel the U.S. extensively and lived on the East Coast during the Civil War years. Her marriage also gave her access to important politicians and political figures on both sides of the Civil War including President Abraham Lincoln and Confederate President, Jefferson Davis. These apparent contradictions in Ruiz de Burton's biography have created polarizing scholarly approaches to her life and works. Where much of the scholarship on Ruiz de Burton stagnates over whether or not we can consider her a subaltern figure, I want to resituate the parameters of the debate to consider her within the shifting terrain of late-19th century print capitalism. That is, I want to place her authorship at the center rather than at the periphery of her politics. In the last decades of the 19th century, during which time Ruiz de Burton wrote and published, literary magazines such as *Harper's Weekly,* the *Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's,* and *Century Magazine*, grow in popularity and begin to influence a national literary value system. Not only are certain genres and modes of writing deemed more representative of American life than others, but important influencers of these magazines, including William Dean Howells, Frank Norris, and Henry James, also determine who is fit to contribute to American authorship. Additionally, these literary magazines and the growing popularity in dime novel westerns describe the American West to an East Coast audience in exoticized and often reductive ways that help to

promote settler colonialism in the region. Ruiz de Burton, I argue, directly responds to these literary trends and, through her novels and newspaper contributions, attempts to speak back to the stereotypes and characterizations of the American West promulgated by these publications. Though many scholars find Ruiz de Burton and her novels to be arguing for a place within American national identity for herself and her Californio community, I find her to be less concerned with national citizenship and more concerned with correcting the U.S.'s attempts to nationalize the West. As a "contact zone," I borrow from Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* to discern the ways the American West is being categorized by late the late-19th century American literary market and how Ruiz de Burton's novels serve as "autoethnographies" that respond to "those metropolitan representations," and "differ from what are thought as 'authentic' or autochthonous forms of self-representation" (Pratt 9). Such a reading allows us to see past some of the obstacles in studies on Ruiz de Burton that struggle to reconcile her resistance with her apparent assimilationist tendencies.

In the second chapter, I emphasize the "intimacies" between a figure like Ruiz de Burton and the second author this dissertation will consider, Helen Hunt Jackson. At once taking up the plight of Native Americans in the American West and justifying the dislocation of Californios, Jackson's political treatise, *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) and sentimental romance novel, *Ramona* (1884) give us an opportunity to trace the "intimacies" between the regional histories of westward expansion and the Southern Reconstruction era. Despite being a white woman in American society with a successful literary career already working in her favor, Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* failed to garner the kind of public sentiment Jackson had hoped to rally for the Native American

cause. Almost immediately Jackson takes up the same cause in a fictionalized and sensationalized version, *Ramona.* While *Ramona* certainly did gather more national attention than *A Century of Dishonor,* it was not exactly the kind of attention Jackson had hoped for either. As well noted by scholars studying Jackson's works, Jackson intended for *Ramona* to be the next *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and to do for Native Americans what Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel did for African Americans. Instead, the sentimental novel contributed to a growing travel industry that exoticized the American West and romanticized the violence against Indigenous populations. To this day, tourists flock each year to Hemet, California to see *Ramona* in its stage adaptation, harkening back to the tourism the novel first inspired. Using Lisa Lowe's heuristics of "intimacy," this chapter recognizes the ways *Ramona,* despite having been read for its Native American advocacy, is an expression of Jackson and her society's growing anxieties of the rapidly changing postbellum nation. The chapter sets a precedent for how the rest of the dissertation will evaluate a Western-American progressivism that has come to define and characterize the mythologies of the region to our contemporary moment. Jackson's character, Aunt Ri, represents a post-Reconstruction, white, rural poor Southern population that understands itself to be disenfranchised by the emancipation of the slaves and the incorporation of this large population into the paid work force. I argue that the fictionalizing of Jackson's Native American advocacy in the sentimental novel, *Ramona,* reveals the "intimacies" between various labor groups and highlights some of the tensions and apprehensions that underly even Jackson's progressive programs. As a means of emphasizing these "intimacies," this chapter will also deploy Pratt's concept of "anti-conquest," which recognizes how "bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in

the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (Pratt 9). Pratt uses the term "anti-conquest" to describe the seemingly innocent rhetoric deployed in travel literatures that simply seek to know and understand foreign populations and geographies. In their quest for knowledge, Pratt recognizes how travel literatures contribute to the exploitation of their subjects even while posing as a sincere and interested party. Jackson's *Ramona*, while it does raise awareness for the dispossession of the Native Americans in California, still remains invested in the very systems and power structures that lead to Native American oppression.

In the third chapter, I argue that Sui Sin Far's writing and authorship purposefully defies national categorization. Like Ruiz de Burton, Sui Sin Far unsettles scholars. Born Edith Eaton, the daughter of a British father and a Chinese mother, she renames herself Sui Sin Far once she begins writing about the Chinese and Chinese American populations for Western-American-based literary magazines such as the *Westerner.* While some scholars find this name change problematic—a racialization of herself and therefore, a racialization of the Chinese communities she writes about—these same scholars also question the "authenticity" Sui Sin Far claims to be capturing in her short sketches and journalistic exposés. Having moved from England to New York at a young age and then from there to Canada where she spent the majority of her childhood, scholars wonder how a woman who never even learned the Chinese language could purport to authentically write about Chinese-American experience. Once again, I think we can understand these challenges to Sui Sin Far scholarship by thinking about her as an avid contributor to national magazines and newspapers and what these avenues allowed her to do. Though Sui Sin Far is contributing to a national body of literary writing in these

national newspapers and magazines, she is only able to wield her literary authority so much as editors control and limit what she is able to publish. That Sui Sin Far is denigrated for writing sketches and short stories is central to the scholarship surrounding her. As outlined earlier, many contemporary critics are successfully rewriting the ways we understand Sui Sin Far's use of the sketch and short story. I want to contribute to this discussion further by drawing emphasis to the ways the sketch—what Gregg Camfield has determined as the result of backlash to the sentimental romance—is also closely related to a culture increasingly exposed to journalism and concerned with the "real" portrayals of society. Employing Anderson's *Imagined Communities,* this chapter seeks to understand how the demands placed on literary contributors to such magazines and newspapers change the way a national identity is consolidated and therefore, how Sui Sin Far is actively challenging this consolidation in her writings on Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans.

In the fourth chapter, I introduce a relatively unknown writer, Eva Rutland, and her 1964 autobiography, *When We Were Colored: A Mother's Story.* The maternal memoir narrates Rutland's experience with raising black children in the early-integrated city of Sacramento, California in the 1940s and 1950s. Rutland writes from Sacramento at the same time Joan Didion is writing her first novels and essays but, while Didion's Sacramento narratives come with a clear nostalgia for California's pioneer past, Rutland critiques Sacramento's early claims to racial integration and a progressive regional identity. Rutland calls out the incomplete or inconsistent aspects of Sacramento's integration programs and claims that "another problem with being a mama today is integration" (Rutland 109). Rutland identifies an ambivalence in Sacramento's

progressive rhetoric towards race relations and senses the region's hesitancy to engage in national discussions of racism and slavery as a way of disowning that history as its own. But Rutland refuses to allow Sacramento and the larger Western-American region to regionalize racism to the South and progressivism to the West. By deploying what Riché J. Daniel Barnes terms a "strategic motherhood," Rutland's memoir brings an American South, fraught with a youth-led movement for racial equality and justice, into the American West, a region of the U.S. that has declared itself beyond racism. If, as Kaplan has argued, American imperialism in the West was closely related to the end of American slavery in the South, then Rutland's writing instructs us on how American racism informs a twentieth-century, Western-American progressivism.

As a means of concluding this dissertation, I briefly return to Joan Didion as a mid-twentieth century product of the women who wrote before her or, in the case of Rutland, who wrote contemporaneously with her. The conclusion looks to the ways Didion also plays with genre, shifting between nonfictional and fictional forms to elucidate some of the struggles Didion faced as a privileged Western-American woman. Returning to Didion allows this dissertation to end by pointing to the global consequences of regional narratives and knowledges. I demonstrate how Didion's California cannot be separated from Didion's 1970s and 1980s characterizations of more global geographies and subjects. I compare Didion's descriptions of California's 1960s counterculture in her famous essay, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," to her fictionalized account of global instability and American cultural imperialism in *A Book of Common Prayer* to highlight the methods by which Western-American regional narratives become retemporalized and reiterated to meet the nation's needs in an increasingly global world.

Chapter One
The "Autoethnographic" Heroines in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's Sentimental Novels, *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don*

On August 14th, 1895, the *New York Times* announced the death of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton in Chicago, Illinois. "Senora María de Burton, claimant to an immense estate in Mexico, which had been granted to her grandfather by the King of Spain for valiant services, died yesterday," the obituary begins. "For nearly a year she had lived in Chicago, carrying on negotiations for the sale of her heritage, which she valued at $5,000,000" (*Conflicts* 604). A late 19th-century reader of the *New York Times* would come to find from this obituary that, in addition to her scandalous involvement in a legal battle over a Mexican estate, Ruiz de Burton is also the heroine of her very own romantic plot. "General Henry S. Burton," the obituary continues:

> during the Mexican war in Lower California, captured Tedos [sic] Santos, the town in which she was living, fell in love with the heiress, and carried her away with the regiment. Six months later they were married. She was a beautiful Spanish girl, and had little knowledge of the English language, but entered a convent and gained a complete education. For twelve years after she had completed her education, General and Mrs. Burton lived happily in New York City (604-5).

This obituary presents two conflicting images of Ruiz de Burton. She is on the one hand a fierce defender of her legal right to inherit and own property and, on the other, a vulnerable, Mexican beauty in need of her valiant American General husband to "carry her away" to the civilized American East Coast. Though it is her obituary, Ruiz de Burton is not the active subject here, rather, her husband is. Her husband "fell in love with" her and "carried her away," placing Ruiz de Burton in the background of her own life's narrative, much like the sentimental heroines of the era's popular novels. Here we not only see the complexities that make up Ruiz de Burton, complexities which have

polarized scholars seeking to understand her place in the late-19th century U.S. sociopolitical landscape, but we also see the ways popular 19th century distinctions between the American East and the American West further complicate a figure like Ruiz de Burton as both a 19th century Mexican-American woman and a 19th century literary contributor. This obituary demonstrates Ruiz de Burton's placement in the middle of the civilized-East, Barbarous-West dichotomy popularized by the 19th century's literary establishment as it sought to incorporate the West into the nation but maintain an elevated, paternalistic role for the American East in Western-American affairs.

As her own 19th-century society was ambivalent towards her, so too do contemporary scholars struggle with how to place Ruiz de Burton and her novels. Originally from Baja California, Ruiz de Burton was one of the Baja Californians who took advantage of the U.S. government's offer to relocate to the U.S. when it was determined Baja California would remain part of Mexico. It was shortly after this relocation to Monterey, California that Ruiz de Burton married Henry S. Burton, the military general who led the invasion of her Mexican village. The marriage proved scandalous and controversial. More infuriating to her fellow Californios than her marriage to a U.S. military leader, was her marriage to a Protestant. After the U.S. invasion of California, an agreement was reached between the vicar general of the Californias and the U.S. military governor forbidding the marriage between Catholics and Protestants. This agreement, as Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita point out, "was broken on July 9, 1849, when the Catholic María Amparo Maytorena Ruiz married the Protestant Captain Henry S. Burton…before a Protestant minister, Samuel H. Willey, shocking both the church establishment and *Californios*, especially the women" (Sánchez & Pita,

Conflicts 10). The marriage was considered "heretical" by many, and Ruiz de Burton was "banished" from Catholic society (11). The couple then moved East while Burton served in the Civil War, giving Ruiz de Burton the opportunity to acquaint herself with prominent politicians and leaders of both the Union and the Confederacy, including President Abraham Lincoln and Confederate President, Jefferson Davis. After the death of her husband in 1869, Ruiz de Burton returned to San Diego, California where she wrote her novels and began litigation over her estates, a project that would remain unfinished at the time of her death. In this bit of biography, we glimpse a version of Ruiz de Burton who is quick to adapt to new situations and to grasp at new opportunities for power and influence. Ultimately, Ruiz de Burton is a woman with little regard for borders—national, regional, or cultural—and recognizing this brings to our attention the ways her novels also transcend borders as a means to destabilize the literary and political structures that lend themselves to forming the imagined national community.

Since her rediscovery in the 1990's, Ruiz de Burton, author of *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), has occupied a difficult position for literary scholars. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, the scholars responsible for the recovery of Ruiz de Burton's works, consider her a subaltern figure, fighting against American imperialism, capitalism, and racism. José Aranda and others have recently argued that Sánchez and Pita oversimplify Ruiz de Burton and her work in attempt to make sense of her many complexities. As Aranda puts it, "to accept Ruiz de Burton as a subaltern, it will have to be conceded that she is so sophisticated a one as to require a major redefinition of subaltern status" (Aranda 563). Aranda's point is that Ruiz de Burton is far too fluent in dominant American culture and politics to be considered

counter-hegemonical. When scholars engage in discussions of Ruiz de Burton's subalternity then, they are negotiating what seem to be conflicting aspects of her character. As a member of the Californio elite, a social class that establishes its superiority through claims to Spanish heritage and land ownership, Ruiz de Burton represents both the colonized and the colonizer. Though dispossessed by American Manifest Destiny, she is also problematically racist towards indigenous and mestizo populations and uses those populations to reassert her own social and racial elitism. Additionally, scholars are divided on how to understand her relationship to American capitalism as it contributes to the nation's imperial projects. While some, such as Aranda, argue that Ruiz de Burton supports "a political future where the civic ethos of an evolving, educated Californio citizenry takes as its founding mythos a nostalgic embrace of Californio ranch culture" (15), and that she "is defending an economic order that originated among nineteenth-century Californios of Spanish/Mexican descent[…]that required little or no change to the social and gender hierarchy of pre-1848 Alta California" (22), others have rejected this claim. Rather than critiquing capitalism in favor of traditional Californio feudalism, Pablo Ramirez reads Ruiz de Burton as relating the dispossession of Californios to the "'rebarbarization'" and corruption of an otherwise productive American economic order (Ramirez 430). That is, Ramirez uses the "lens of contract and consent" in order to argue that Ruiz de Bruton "tries to awaken the public's sympathy for the plight of the dispossessed *Californios* by demonstrating how the politics of conquest have undermined nineteenth-century American's cherished ideals of individualism and contract in the West" (430). Ramirez situates Ruiz de Burton as a kind of American patriot fighting for the founding principles and ideals of a nation that has

become complacent with corrupt politics and business practices as a consequence of Manifest Destiny and westward expansion. Again, we see scholars debating whether or not Ruiz de Burton is a figure of resistance, compelled to fight against dominant American institutions, or if she is an assimilationist figure, who advocates for her own indoctrination into those national institutions. Either way, these arguments reduce Ruiz de Burton to a one-dimensional caricature in much the same way we saw with her *New York Times* obituary.

In this chapter, I argue that many of Ruiz de Burton's seeming contradictions can be reconciled when we stop trying to evaluate her work exclusively in terms of the nation. Rather than reading her as a subaltern attempting to carve out a place for herself in the American national imaginary, I understand her to be more preoccupied with American representations of the far west as uncivilized and in need of Anglo-American rescue. She appears to be less concerned with how California is to be incorporated into the nation and more so with what this incorporation will mean for the West's identity and role in larger, global representations of the region. This chapter follows the suggestion of Brook Thomas and evaluates Ruiz de Burton as a figure operating on multiple terrains and in multiple temporalities. Thomas points out that Ruiz de Burton's second novel is published in a period of overlap between the American Gilded Age and American Reconstruction. Though the novel has received extensive analysis regarding its economic relationship to the rise of American capitalism and Ruiz de Burton's frustration with railroad monopolies in the West, Thomas argues it has not received the attention it needs as a novel that responds to Reconstruction and the problems facing the American South. In this spirit, I argue that Ruiz de Burton's novels have also not been studied enough for

how they cross national, literary, and regional borders. In the late-19th century decades in which Ruiz de Burton wrote and published her novels, the American literary landscape was changing just as rapidly as the national geography. The East Coast literary hub was becoming more exclusive as it began to consolidate who was able to represent the nation and in what ways. A group of mostly white, male editors dictated how the nation was to be represented in print and what histories, cultures, and traditions were to be privileged. Scholarship on the era recognizes the relationship between westward expansion and the professionalization of the American literary market. Newspapers, literary magazines, and popular novels, as Randi Lynn Tanglen argues, were responsible for "negotiating and disseminating attitudes about difference" and articulating "the complex intersections of nationality, ethnicity, and race that informed American, Mexican, Mexican American, and indigenous subjectivities before, during, and after the US-Mexican War" (Tanglen 183). Ruiz de Burton's novels were a part of this negotiation as they circulated and communicated on a literary terrain increasingly preoccupied with erecting borders and controlling the West's representative identity in the post-1848 years. The West of Ruiz de Burton's novels may be a conquered region, but it remains fiercely independent and loyal to the histories prior to United States invasion.

But Ruiz de Burton's clear loyalty to the region's past does not mean she is resistant to the new direction of its future. As many other scholars have suggested, the American West is a "contact zone," to use Mary Louise Pratt's term, within which we see competing histories vying for legitimacy. However, the American West is not just the site of colonial struggle in these late 19th-century decades, it is also one of literary struggle. Pratt defines "contact zones" as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and

grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination," and encourages us to find these "asymmetrical relations" of power in literary manifestations (Pratt 7). Rather than using the term frontier, which derives its meaning from a Euro-centric understanding of what that frontier space means, Pratt uses the phrase "contact zone" to shift "the center of gravity and the point of view" to the colonized and to foreground "the interactive, improvisational dimensions of imperial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by accounts of conquest and domination told from the invader's perspective" (8). The American West has been read as a "contact zone," within which Mexican and Indigenous populations are met with an Anglo-American colonial power with whom it clashes and grapples for control over the region. But Pratt also notes the importance of the word "contact" in "contact zone" for its linguistic reference to "an improvised language that develops among speakers of different tongues who need to communicate with each other consistently" (8). Pratt's framework leads me to argue that the late-19th century American literary marketplace is another iteration of the "contact zone," one which transcends regional boundaries and brings the asymmetrical meetings, clashes, and grapplings to the American East as well. The annexation of the Western territories in the 19th century serves as a catalyst to a literary marketplace that is placing stricter holds on literary contribution and literary value as print media becomes another form of conquer and imperial power. As a representative of the colonized, Ruiz de Burton achieves an "improvised language" through dominant genres that allow her to translate alternative histories, cultures, and traditions through the familiar language of conventional tropes and genre trends.

Ruiz de Burton's use of dominant American genres, such as the popular sentimental novel and the commercially successful travel narrative, is the "transcultural" consequence of her positioning in the Western-American "contact zone," and her way of negotiating for representative control over her own identity and her home region. Pratt recognizes that, though colonized, the subjects of European travel narratives found ways of negotiating representative power with their colonizer and to participate in a "transculturation" of dominant images, texts, and belief systems (7). She terms these literary manifestations "autoethnographies," and defines them as "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's terms" (9). Pratt uses "autoethnography" and "autoethnographic expression" to address how the colonized subject is in "dialogue with those metropolitan representations" of a region and its populations (Pratt 9). This shifting of the center from the European ethnographer's perspective to that of the colonized autoethnographer's emphasizes the agency and competitive power colonial subjects hold in imperial situations. It offers a new point of entry into discussions of Ruiz de Burton by making visible the different matrixes of colonial power at work and by revealing Ruiz de Burton's manipulation of dominant representations within these systems. Ruiz de Burton preforms certain stereotypes to amass a degree of control over her image as a consequence of her negotiations with—rather than her resistance to—dominant culture. While I agree to some extent with scholars who argue that Ruiz de Burton's novels work "to suture seemingly irreparable national, regional, ethnic, and even religious divides in order to posit an American future that includes the Californios" (McCullough 133), an autoethnographic approach to Ruiz de Burton's novels highlights the ways she is less

interested in "suturing" the nation than in renegotiating the structures and foundations that support national narratives, histories, and identity. That is, Ruiz de Burton's novels understand the nation's very structures and foundations to be antithetical to inclusivity. Her resistance is not aimed at finding an "*American* future that includes the Californios," so much as she is interested in finding a future that does not use borders—geographical, ethnic, gendered, or otherwise—to organize people in a series of divides that cultivate difference rather than unification or, in the very least, appreciation for diversity.

The "autoethnography" gives us a framework for examining Ruiz de Burton's sentimental novels as reflections of dominant American culture from her position as a colonized subject within the "contact zone" of the American West. Rather than resisting the sentimental novel's and the travel narrative's power to represent Western-American histories, geographies, and peoples, Ruiz de Burton's novels speak back as a means to compete for control over these representations on her own terms. It is my contention that, by recognizing the ways Ruiz de Burton interacts in the literary "contact zone" of the American West, we can reconcile some of the seeming contradictions that halt Ruiz de Burton scholarship around discussions of her subalternity and resistance to dominant U.S. institutions. To read her novels as autoethnographies establishing lines of communication from West to East, in opposition to East to West, allows us to transcend nationalist renderings of her work and avoid stagnating arguments that want to place her as either a subaltern or an assimilationist. Ruiz de Burton's novels manipulate the sentimental and travel narrative genres to deconstruct the ways they perpetuate arbitrary borders, an imagined national identity, and manufactured national histories that justify violent imperial motives. Her novels should be read as autoethnographic texts that circulate in

dialogue with mainstream literary productions, which attempt to control the Western-American regional identity as it is being initiated into the nation. Her works do not necessarily resist dominant forms—literary or cultural—but instead, Ruiz de Burton's sentimental novels offer alternative ways of using those forms to reassert the Californio histories, narratives, and cultural perspectives dominant versions wish to eradicate. Her novels seek to open communication across regional, national, and cultural borders rather than defend and protect those borders.

Looking to the sentimental heroines of both novels, this chapter argues that Ruiz de Burton's seemingly unconventional sentimental heroines are "autoethnographic expressions" of the popular heroine architype. These heroines help Ruiz de Burton reassert perspectives and histories that dominant genres such as the sentimental romance and travel narrative erase in their efforts to justify American imperialism and encourage westward expansion. Ann Douglas describes a conventional example of the sentimental heroine, Harriett Beecher Stowe's Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as a character her readers "have always been able to identify with[…]even while they worship, or weep, at her shrine. She does not demand the respect we accord a competitor. She is not extraordinarily gifted, or at least she is young enough so that her talents have not had the chance to take on formidable proportions" (Douglas 4). As a sentimental trope, Little Eva is both relatable but exalted, admired but unthreatening. Despite her hyper-religious character, Douglas notes that "Little Eva doesn't actually convert anyone. Her sainthood is there to precipitate our nostalgia and our narcissism. We are meant to bestow on her that fondness we reserve for the contemplation of our own softer emotions" (4). The sentimental heroine reaches its pinnacle in Eva because she functions to turn her reader's

gaze inside themselves rather than towards the public world. The female audience reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* mourn for Eva and become inspired to silently suffer within the "softer emotions" of their religiosity and good intentions. Ruiz de Burton's Lola Medina in *Who Would Have Thought It?* and Mercedes Alamar in *The Squatter and the Don* are thus unconventional from the very first pages of the novels because they are not relatable to the white, middle-class women reading sentimental fiction. Lola's and Mercedes' ethnic and Catholic identity, not to mention their origins in the American West, set them apart and confuse the genre expectations which would conventionally place them in the background as domestic servants or, at the very most, as the representatives of the Western region's need for Eastern-American civilizing efforts and rescue. But rather than replacing or revising the typical heroine with her own, resistant version of them, Ruiz de Burton's autoethnographic novels place conventional sentimental heroines in conversation and in competition with her Californio heroines. Californio heroines are dropped alongside the more typical Anglo-American heroines in her novels' plots and this juxtaposition at once critiques white-washed histories of American imperialism and suggests more global approaches to the West's incorporation into the nation.

Ruiz de Burton's first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?* is an East Coast domestic novel set to the backdrop of the impending Civil War. Ruiz de Burton treats the East Coast drawing room as the domestic "contact zone" through which her heroine, Lola Medina, becomes articulated by her Yankee caregivers. Lola, a Mexican child of European descent is surprisingly absent in the novel despite being the clear heroine. But Lola's absence and relative silence throughout the novel is, I argue, part of Ruiz de

Burton's autoethnographic expression and negotiations with an American literary culture that inaccurately portrays the Western region and its inhabitants as vulnerable, and which Anglo-American literary society readily consumes. The novel begins with Dr. Norval, a Yankee doctor, returning to his New England home after many years exploring and collecting rocks, plants, and other curiosities from the American West. With him he brings the dark-skinned Lola, a Mexican girl he helps rescue from the Native American Indian tribe that captured her and her mother during a raid on their Mexican village. Norval's family, rather ironically for a Protestant, abolitionist family, meets the young Lola with racist disgust and refer to her as another of the Dr.'s "specimen[s]" (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 8). However, when Mrs. Norval discovers that her husband is also the guardian to Lola's large fortune, her attitude towards the girl changes. Soon after his return, Dr. Norval exiles himself to Africa because his criticism of the United States fighting against itself in a civil war is considered traitorous to the Union. After his long absence it is suspected that he has died on his journey and the rest of the novel traces Mrs. Norval's schemes to take hold of Lola's wealth, interfere in the romantic relationship forming between Lola and her son, Julian, and to gain the romantic affections of her partner-in-crime, the Reverend Hackwell. Meanwhile, Lola's skin begins to lighten, revealing her beauty as the reader learns that her dark skin is the result of a dye, which the Native American Indian chief uses to distract Anglo-settlers from noticing and thus rescuing her and her mother. While this novel critiques American imperialism's movement from East to West by placing her Mexican heroine in the East Coast drawing room, Ruiz de Burton's second novel challenges American notions of

Manifest Destiny and national expectations that the West is where American ideals of freedom and opportunity are finally realized.

Ruiz de Burton's second, mostly West Coast political novel, *The Squatter and the Don,* engages with the trend in Western-American travel writing as it promotes Anglo-American settlement in the West. Where Ruiz de Burton critiques larger literary institutions and practices in *Who Would Have Thought It?,* her second novel more explicitly takes on the domination and subordination of the Western-American region through travel writing and travel guidebooks that strip the landscape and the people of their histories and encourage Anglo-American settlement of the region. The novel's many twists and turns, didactic digressions, and literary mashups have particularly stumped scholars on how to understand the competing claims present throughout the novel. Reading the novel as an "autoethnographic" expression of the era's dominant literary genres helps to clear up this confusion and to realize the text as competing for representative power with dominant culture. The novel, as Sánchez and Pita have pointed out, is separated into two paralleling plots—the historical, which traces Californio, Don Mariano Alamar's litigious process of securing rights to his land, and the romantic, which follows the love affair between Mercedes, the Don's youngest daughter, and Clarence, squatter, William Darrell's, oldest son (Sánchez & Pita, *Introduction* 15). The novel begins with William Darrell and his family relocating to the Alamar rancho which is understood to be a rejected land claim and available to Anglo-American settlers. The novel traces the many obstacles Don Alamar runs into in securing his land, including the loss of his property to squatters and the corrupt mismanagement of his affairs in the U.S. justice system. These obstacles, though part of the historical plot, are not completely

separate from the romance plot between Clarence and Mercedes, whose relationship runs into corresponding obstacles that results in the delay of their marriage. *The Squatter and the Don* makes a point to be overtly political, didactic even, but it is also always undercover. It is immersed in an American cultural moment were descriptions of the largely untouched Western-American geography feeds into descriptions of the native populations. It is a novel that directly responds to an Anglo-American literary hub that portrays the West as romantically decayed, vulnerable, and primed for the taking.

Together, these novels and their respective heroines subvert popular genres and genre tropes as a means of representing the West to the East and reversing the East-West line of travel typical in the U.S. literary marketplace. In so doing, the novels also serve Ruiz de Burton in speaking back to and negotiating with dominant American culture on how the new national identity is to be defined in the post-Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo era. In speaking back, Ruiz de Burton's autoethnographic reflections on dominant genres question the nation's very foundation as it disrupts the histories and cultural belief systems that the nation's imagined community relies upon. By reading Ruiz de Burton's novels as "autoethnographies" and their sentimental heroines as "autoethnographic" reflections on the genres' conventions, this chapter argues that Ruiz de Burton must be recognized for the work she does to destabilize the imagined national community, not just assert her right to be a part of it.

Ruiz de Burton's Anonymous Authorship and the American Literary Market

In an 1872 letter to her lawyer, S.L.M. Barlow, Ruiz de Burton presses him about his promise to get her first novel reviewed in major East Coast newspapers. She writes: "I explained to Mr. Lippincott [her publisher] that I wished four copies of my book to be

sent to you & that you would send them to the *World, Herald, Times* and *Tribune*" (Ruiz de Burton, *Conflicts* 437). Learning that the books had been sent directly by the publisher to these newspapers, she expresses to Barlow that, "I am truly disappointed and vexed" that the newspapers failed to publish a review of *Who Would Have Thought It?*. She asks Barlow if it is "too late for you to make good your kind promise? I think not. I will write today to Mr. Lippincott telling him to send *you* a copy, and then you must really do all you can for me[…]I hope you will give me all the benefit of your influence with the New York Press, for I would like to make the venture a little bit profitable. I did not write for glory" (437-38). Considering that this letter starts by soliciting Barlow's help with securing her properties in California, Ruiz de Burton's literary "venture" cannot be separated from her financial and real estate ventures. Her struggles to secure her California properties is mirrored in her struggles to secure review space in the leading newspapers for her novels. Although she claims not to have written for "glory," the letter does suggest she wants validation in the form of literary praise as much as she wants the validation of a "profitable" book release. She tells Barlow that: "I do hope you will read it yourself (for my sake). I would like so much to know what you think of it; you must tell me" (438). She tries to raise his excitement for the book by telling him that the book, which she wrote three years prior, "speaks of the existence of diamonds and rubies, etc., etc. in those regions where they have been lately discovered, and as you are interested in said discovery, I hope that will be a sort of claim of my poor little book upon your kind patronage" (438). She calls it a "prophetic flight" and a "strange coincidence" that she was able to predict the discovery of precious gems in the region before they were actually discovered and thus, positions her novel and herself as privy to insider information that

might prove beneficial to a growing industry in Western-American land and resource speculation (438).

As this letter to Barlow suggests, Ruiz de Burton struggled with representation on multiple terrains, including her representation as a serious literary contributor. Despite having published two novels and a play in her lifetime, Ruiz de Burton the author is completely overlooked in the *New York Times* obituary that began this chapter. Indeed, in a number of obituaries printed in California newspapers, where her novels were better received, Ruiz de Burton's authorship is referenced off-handedly, in a way to suggest that, though she is a "brilliant writer," "her name became prominent some years ago in the famous suit against the International Company of Mexico for possession of the Ensenada land grant" ("San Francisco Call" 606). She is remembered by her late-19th century society as a complication of the Mexican-American War, not a contributor to the national literary canon or to national identity. Even after her death, these obituaries serve to construct a character out of Ruiz de Burton that mythologizes the American West. They paint her as a "beautiful Spanish girl" with "little knowledge of English," and who was swept up in a romantic love affair with a prominent Anglo-American general, while they also situate her in opposition to the nation by emphasizing her resistance against national policies of westward expansion (*New York Times* 604). These descriptions ignore the tenacity and literary prowess Ruiz de Burton exhibits not just through her novels but also through her constant battles with male lawyers and financial advisors who sought to take advantage of her or who simply ignored her. By either downplaying or ignoring her authorship completely, these newspapers, ambivalent about how to understand her, reduce Ruiz de Burton to a romantic caricature or to a threat to U.S.

expansion, and they contribute to a 19th-century literature that represents the American West as both exotic and primitive.

Ruiz de Burton's archive alludes to her awareness for the power in representation and to her attempts to control how she, her region, and her culture were being presented to the public. In an 1884 letter to her friend, Professor George Davidson of the University of California, Ruiz de Burton confides to him that she is writing a second book. She tells him that, "I feel desperate" about the dispossession of Californio families in California and that this has led her to write a book. She asks for his secrecy about the matter, informing him that, "I don't know whether I shall publish it under my own name, so *I want to keep the matter quiet yet.* Only two or three friends know I am writing it. I want to publish it this fall, in September" (Ruiz de Burton, C*onflicts* 505). She explains that this is why she wishes "to get my 3 months' extra pay, and my pension increased, to have this much to help me with the publication[…]If I am able to pay for the stenotype plates I will make something; if not, all the profit will go the pocket of the publishers and book-sellers" (505). It is clear, once again, that Ruiz de Burton means for her second book to be a "profitable" venture. Her second time around, she has a clear understanding of the literary market and the financial burden publishers are to the book's overall profitability. But what's more, this letter to Davidson gives insight into Ruiz de Burton's attempts to gain the upper hand in her authorial representation. Her decision to ultimately publish her second novel under the pseudonym, C.S, Loyal, has been read as an extension of her satirical commentary on national politics and government in *The Squatter and the Don.* While this is undeniably true, this letter to Davidson suggests that Ruiz de Burton's

choice to publish her works anonymously or under pseudonyms was also her response to the caricaturizing of her identity.

That Ruiz de Burton did not know whether or not she wanted to publish her second novel under her own name speaks to the experience she had with her anonymously published first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?*. It is evident in an early review of her first novel, that publishing the book anonymously was intended to draw up interest and mystery around the novel. In an article titled "A Native, Californian, Authoress,--A Literary Incognito Lost in an Interview—A new Sensation for the Public," a reviewer from the San Francisco *Daily Alta California* writes of meeting Ruiz de Burton upon the steamer *California* while in the company of the Texas Pacific Railway party. The correspondent discusses with Ruiz de Burton the mysterious authorship of the novel, to which Ruiz de Burton is represented as coyly trying to dismiss. However, the reviewer seems to trap Ruiz de Burton into outing herself as the author. When asked if she has read the book Ruiz de Burton responds:

> "'Read It?' No! Yes! Why, of course I have!"
> The manner of the answer and a little attendant embarrassment caused the bachelor to look at the charming widow with some surprise and awakened a feeling of curiosity. "Excuse me for repeating your words, Mrs. Burton;" he cautiously ventured to remark; "'but of course I have' seems to imply that you have some particular interest in the work." He was rather rude in his scrutinizing way of looking and speaking. The ruse, however, succeeded. "Why! That's my book! No! Well, there, now, I didn't mean to tell you; but you know it now (*Daily Alta California* 570).

This scene plays out like a scene from a sentimental novel in which the heroine is seduced into confessing her love for the novel's hero. However, instead of confessing her love, Ruiz de Burton is confessing her authorship. The fact that the correspondent is now referred to as "the bachelor" who gives Ruiz de Burton, now "the charming widow," a

"rather rude" and "scrutinizing" look emphasizes the gendered roles that, undeniably, Ruiz de Burton manipulates in order to generate curiosity around a book she had a difficult time getting reviewed in East Coast newspapers. From this reviewer's description of Ruiz de Burton, it appears that she performs the role of a sentimental heroine in order to reveal that she in fact wrote the book the group of prominent California business men she is traveling with are all discussing. She feigns a feminine embarrassment and confusion at being asked if she has read the novel, stumbling over, "'No! Yes!, Why, of course I have,'" and, "'Why! That's my book! No! Well, there, now, I didn't mean to tell you.'" Ruiz de Burton is a calculating individual who has proven her prowess at negotiating with men in powerful positions, such as her lawyers and President Lincoln. Therefore, it is not likely that she would be intimidated by a San Francisco book reviewer. Rather, Ruiz de Burton seems to be very much in control of this encounter as she performs her stereotyped role as the "beautiful Spanish girl" that her *New York Times* obituary makes her out to be. In doing so, Ruiz de Burton accesses a level of power over her representation through these stereotypes for, though her society sees her as a vulnerable, "Spanish girl," they now also see her as a formidable author of a sentimental novel with a sociopolitical bent.

In fact, Ruiz de Burton expressed a trend of appropriating dominant stereotypes to achieve her ends. Sánchez and Pita have also recognized that Ruiz de Burton "knew that womanly wiles were strategies that she could manipulate, and so she did" (Sánchez & Pita, *Squatter* Introduction xii). We see this again in a letter she sent to the prominent San Diego business man and advisor, Ephraim W. Morse in August of 1869, just after the death of her husband while she was still living on the East Coast. After sending Morse

multiple letters about her Jamul rancho in California but receiving no replies, Ruiz de Burton wrote again, urging him to "[t]ell me too please how much I must pay in advanced, you say, and what the costs of the court, etc. Explain it all well to me, remember that women can't vote yet and we are very ignorant individuals" (Ruiz de Burton, *Conflicts* 296). As we saw in the San Francisco book review, Ruiz de Burton plays with dominant society's understanding of "ignorant" women in order to bust open the stereotype. She ironically reminds Morse that women don't have the vote because men like him (it is insinuated) find women to be "very ignorant individuals." Of course, Ruiz de Burton's ability to navigate American political and business spheres speak to her intelligence and awareness for how these arenas operate and lead us to believe she is being coy here. By reminding Morse she is but an "ignorant" woman who relies on men like him to "[e]xplain it all well" and to take care of them through the vote they are denied, Ruiz de Burton attaches herself to a network of men who can help get her novels published and reviewed and who can help her maintain her claims to Western-American properties and thereby, her influence in the region. Interestingly, around the same time he was communicating with Ruiz de Burton, Morse was also a frequent correspondent of Helen Hunt Jackson. He proved vital to Jackson's crusade for the Mission Indians in Southern California by keeping her informed on California's struggles over land ownership. As I will evaluate in more depth in the next chapter, Jackson's interactions with Morse were far less contentious, suggesting Ruiz de Burton's ethnicity, not just her gender, was also a factor in his treatment of her.

But even her ethnicity and the stereotypes it afforded seem to be an arena Ruiz de Burton exploited to garner attention and transmit her novels to a wider, Anglo-American

audience. To start their introduction to *Who Would Have Thought It?*, Sánchez and Pita begin with a look into the same review of Ruiz de Burton's first novel I began this section with. They read the review as another example of Ruiz de Burton's subaltern status rather than as a moment of her resistance. They take focus on the part of the review which, after she is discovered as the author, cites Ruiz de Burton pleading with the correspondent to protect her secrecy as she is concerned "they [the public] know that English is not my native language,…and they would say that my expressions partake of the Spanish idiom and that my English is not good…I only wrote this to see how I saw it in print" (*Daily Alta California* 572). For Sánchez and Pita, this dialogue reveals the correspondent's violent manipulation of Ruiz de Burton. They argue the correspondent "did not accede to her request and in fact published a review of her novel given the author's name and speaking of the 'descriptive and narrative power' of the work as well as of the author's 'critical though perhaps too cynical habit of observation'" (Sánchez & Pita, *Who Would Have* Introduction vii). And indeed, the reviewer does publish this despite Ruiz de Burton's request that he doesn't. But to think of Ruiz de Burton as having no agency in this moment is to do the novel's political work a disservice and to underestimate Ruiz de Burton's fluency in 19th century, dominant American culture. We can surmise from reading Ruiz de Burton's letters that she had few problems writing in fluent English. Not to mention, she was representing herself in court and writing up her own legal documents due to her inability to secure her lawyers' attention. This is not a woman insecure about her ability to write in English for an American audience. Rather, this moment in the review alerts us to the clandestine ways Ruiz de Burton uses this media opportunity to expose the contradictions in the stereotypes used against her. She

points out that an American audience "would think" they see errors in her English because that is what they expect, but "which otherwise they would not notice." She takes this opportunity to explain to the reviewer in a language that seems harmless, vulnerable even, that she is aware of the xenophobia that her ethnic and regional identity, her culture, and her accomplishments are filtered through and judged in accordance with.

It is clear that Ruiz de Burton is aware of her society's expectation that, as a Californio woman, she is to be the exploited subject, not the author, of sentimental novels. It is the very reason her obituaries represent her as a romantic but agentless character. But as this review of her first novel suggests, Ruiz de Burton manipulates these expectations and takes advantage of dominant culture's consumption of popular literary forms in order to translate them back to these audiences in new terms and from new perspectives. As Jane Tompkins suggests, the sentimental tradition is already one built on powerfully subversive foundations. She argues that the women of the sentimental tradition "make submission 'their boast' not because they enjoyed it, but because it gave them another ground on which to stand, a position that, while it fulfilled the social demands placed upon them, gave them a place from which to launch a counterstrategy against their worldly masters that would finally give them the upper hand" (Tompkins 162). Through submission, Tompkins suggests here, women writers and the sentimental heroines they wrote into being found opportunities to slowly gain "the upper hand" on the society's that constrained them. As we see in the review of her first novel as well as in the novels themselves, Ruiz de Burton also makes submission her "'boast.'" However, unlike the more conventional sentimental women Tompkins studies, Ruiz de Burton must submit to demands placed on her ethnic and regional identity in addition to her gendered

identity. Therefore, as it turns out, the anonymity Ruiz de Burton published under was not intended to remain anonymous at all, but to reveal itself as her submissive "'boast'" against 19th century literary practices that relegated her to the shadows of their narratives and plot structures.

Ruiz de Burton's Sentimental Heroines and the Domestic "Contact Zone"

Understanding Ruiz de Burton's non-anonymity as a critique of the ways her American society consumed dominant representations of Californio women and relegated them to the background of national narratives helps us to reevaluate the heroines of her novels as "autoethnographic" reflections of popular sentimental genre tropes. Lola and Mercedes are Ruiz de Burton's metacommentaries on the more conventional sentimental heroine types and the romanticizing of the American West through East Coast produced literatures. Even as Ruiz de Burton recognizes the submissive "'boast'" conventional sentimental heroines engage in, her Californio heroines "'boast'" back as reflections of the superficial roles the conventional sentimental heroine plays, even in her resistance to patriarchal structures and oppressive politics. For instance, in her first novel, *Who Would Have Though It?*, Ruiz de Burton situates women of the Anglo-American Norval family in conversation with her Mexican heroine, Lola Medina. Mrs. Norval is described as having "high principles" (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 75), including a pious frugality, and stands in as the novel's "'great abolitionist'" who "'doesn't mind negroes'" (40). Like other conventional sentimental heroines such as Gertrude Flint in *Lamplighter*, Mrs. Norval is rescued from a modest family history by an educated, hard-working man. Mrs. Norval "lived on a small farm," where she "put up pickles, and made butter and apple-sauce" until her "twentieth year, when one morning,--a Saturday morning,--as she

was counting the eggs to send to market, a young man, dressed as a college boy" made her acquaintance and "fell heels over head in love" with her (49-50). Ruiz de Burton presents Mrs. Norval's history as a romantic fairytale, where the devout and self-sacrificing maiden is rewarded with an upwardly mobile future through an equally charming, though lonely, young man. But, as Mrs. Norval is no longer the daughter of a small farmer but a "virtuous matron" and the wife of a city doctor, Ruiz de Burton's novel shows how such a heroine becomes corrupted by her proximity to wealth and dishonorable men.

Ruiz de Burton's Mexican heroine, Lola Medina, allows her to satirize the romantic narrative Mrs. Norval represents and the problematic ways her Anglo-American society commodifies and consumes such notions of romance, virtuosity, and piety. In addition to rescuing his wife from the small farm her family owned, Dr. Norval also rescues Lola from Native American captivity. As such, Ruiz de Burton considers Mrs. Norval's rescue from rural existence, which is understood as a reward for her piety and a sign of her moral superiority, in relation to Lola's rescue from the West, which is seen as an indicator of her inferiority and primitive infantilism. At the start of the novel, when Dr. Norval brings her home to his wife and daughters, he promises that Lola "'is only ten years old; but her history is already more romantic than that of half of the heroines of your trashy novels" (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 9). Thus, Ruiz de Burton makes clear which romantic rescue mission is truly romantic. Here, at the very start of the novel, Ruiz de Burton takes the opportunity to critique the conventional sentimental novel as "trashy" and its sentimental heroines as less romantic than Lola's "history." *Who Would Have Thought It?*, while taking the form of the popular sentimental novel in order to

appeal to a large, American audience, is also using this platform to reorient the genre to new perspectives and histories. Not only does Ruiz de Burton draw out the contradictions in the sentimental romance genre's representation of "romantic" heroines, but she is also reasserting what is "romantic" about Lola, a figure representing the American West. Lola, the novel makes clear, is not romantic in a nostalgic way that hints to a bygone Spanish-California era now inherited through conquer by Anglo-America, as Ruiz de Burton herself was represented. Rather, Lola is more romantic than the "trashy" heroines of conventional sentimental novels because, despite her time spent in Indian captivity and her devotion to Catholicism over Protestantism, she is the *most* refined character and the truly pious and deserving heroine of the novel. As we watch the slow demise and unwinding of Mrs. Norval as she becomes consumed by her desire to fit into dominant society, we encounter Lola's stable, unwavering dedication to her God, to her love interest, and to the man that rescued her from captivity. By placing Lola into a narrative next to seemingly more conventional sentimental heroines, Ruiz de Burton highlights the shallow and self-serving roles these heroines play in dominant society. Ruiz de Burton thrusts her Californio heroines, unconventional though they may be, into otherwise conventional sentimental plots to implicate the more typical sentimental heroines they star alongside as both actors in and the victims of the nation's imperialist forays in the West.

Thus, I argue that Lola Medina and Mercedes Alamar are Ruiz de Burton's translations, or autoethnographic expressions, of the more typical sentimental heroine archetype. But rather than replacing the conventional archetype, Ruiz de Burton deploys her autoethnographic heroines alongside them to bring to the reader's attention the ways

the sentimental tradition flattens histories, cultures, and identities. Anne E. Goldman writes about satire and sentimentality in Ruiz de Burton's first novel and argues that the novel is a "parody" of the separate feminine and masculine spheres heightened in these decades of the Civil War and Mexican-American War. "Ultimately," Goldman argues, Ruiz de Burton's "insertion of a Mexican heroine into the social space of New England carries a political charge far in excess of reader's expectations about the work of the sentimental novel" (Goldman 61). Instead of saying Ruiz de Burton's "political charge" is excessive to the genre, I argue that Ruiz de Burton's appropriation of the genre and her "insertion of a Mexican heroine" alongside more expected sentimental heroines requires we read from multiple perspectives at once. The novel isn't *more* political than the conventional sentimental novel like Harriett Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* but it is presenting more perspectives and fielding multiple points of entry into national discussions of abolition and expansion. Mary Louise Pratt helps identify this when she explains that "part through the rise of the abolitionist movement, and in part through the rise of travel literatures as a profitable print industry, sentimentality consolidated itself quite suddenly in the 1780s and 1790s as a powerful mode for representing colonial relations and the imperial frontier" (Pratt 85). Though Pratt is writing about the European context, her argument stands for the 19th century U.S. as well. As the abolition movement, print capitalism, and westward expansion ramped up in the mid-19th century U.S., so too did the popularity of the sentimental tradition. Pratt goes on to say that, "the domestic subject of empire found itself enjoined to share new passions, to identify with expansion in a new way, through empathy with individual victim-heroes and heroines" of the sentimental genre (85). Pratt's framework for evaluating sentimentalism allows us to

understand how the American sentimental tradition at once drew sympathy for the African slave to advocate for the end of slavery (as we see in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) and helped justify the colonial domination of Native Americans and Mexicans in the West by inciting "new passions" to civilize these geographies and populations. Ruiz de Burton's appropriation of the genre thus calls out these hypocrisies at the same time that it reorients the genre's perspective on national expansion and official versions of the nation's history.

Pratt helps us to understand how Ruiz de Burton's Lola in *Who Would Have Thought It?,* and Mercedes in *Squatter,* function in a dialogic relationship to these dominant heroine archetypes to translate for an East Coast readership how the West and Western populations should be read and acknowledged. Pratt informs us that the "autoethnography appropriates the idioms of travel and exploration writing, merging or infiltrating them to varying degrees with indigenous modes. Often…it is bilingual and dialogic" (Pratt 9). In this case, Ruiz de Burton appropriates conventional tropes and idioms of the sentimental domestic novel and places them in unexpected conversation with her Mexican-American heroines to shine light on the inaccurate ways popular manifestations of the genre and the genre's heroines portray the West and Western populations. It is important that Lola and Mercedes do not replace these archetypes in the novels, but that they are participating in an exchange with them, which allows us to read new perspectives out of the genre. Where Goldman understands Ruiz de Burton's "revision" as evidence of how she "indicts American nationalism" and "celebrates Mexican patriotism" in the novel (Goldman 74), understanding the "bilingual" exchanges of Ruiz de Burton's text allows us to read her novels as using these dominant genres

dialogically, to open communications instead of closing them off, to expand identity rather than constrict it within nationalist borders. For example, in the first few pages of her first, New England novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?,* Ruiz de Burton deploys her characters and settings in order to encourage readers to read from multiple perspectives at once. The reader's first glimpse of the Norval family is from outside and through the window of their humble New England home. From the perspective of a nosy neighbor, we spot the two Norval daughters, Mattie and Ruth, waiting at the window for their father's arrival after four years traveling the western territories. Mattie, the youngest and less refined of the two, has her face "flattened against the window-pane so that it had lost all human shape," while the socialite Ruth is "rocking herself in a chair, reading a fashion magazine" in a most disinterested way (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 5). In a stylistic move that reverses the focus of the scene, Ruiz de Burton then ushers the reader into the house where we listen to the two girls poke fun at the nosy neighbor with their spinster aunt, Lavinia. As Mattie and Ruth trade puns on the neighbor's unfortunate name, Mrs. Cackle, we are introduced to the novel's heroine, Lola Medina. Again, we first glimpse Lola through a window, but this time it is we, the reader who are on the inside and Lola who is on the outside of the Norval house. Alongside Mrs. Norval and her daughters, we watch Dr. Norval and a "mysterious figure in the bright-red shawl" descend from a wagon and "proceed towards the gate, the doctor again tenderly throwing his arm around the female in the shawl,--for it was a female: this fact Mrs. Norval had discovered plainly enough" (7).

This scene is at once an appropriation of a common trope in sentimental domestic novels and a translation of it. As Amy Kaplan explains in "Manifest Domesticity,"

"[m]any domestic novels open at physical thresholds—such as windows or doorways—to problematize the relation between interiors and exteriors" (Kaplan 43). Kaplan goes on to argue that these thresholds are important sentimental plots as they "are propelled in part by the effort to reconstitute the domestic sphere, both by enlarging its domain beyond the narrow definition of familial bloodlines and by purging it of the foreign bodies this expansion incorporates" (44). Through these permeable door and window spaces the outside and the inside meet. They are, as Pratt would call them, "contact zones," within which cultural exchanges occur and power relations are asserted. The typical sentimental novel, through the "private sphere of female subjectivity" reasserts "narratives of nation and empire," and places the Anglo-American heroine in a position of power over the "foreign" other (Kaplan 44). Ruiz de Burton on the other hand, though she does recognize this threshold as an initial site of struggle, confuses "narratives of nation" and thereby, leaves the reader unsure of who holds more power over whom. There is no closure in this scene and power relations are left undefined as they never would be in the more typical sentimental domestic novels circulating in the literary market. Ruiz de Burton deploys the threshold trope in a way that forces us to ask exactly who is "domestic," or "inside," and who is "foreign," on the "outside." By first placing the reader on the outside, viewing the "insiders" critically for their unladylike behavior and their superficial obsession with fashion magazines, Ruiz de Burton complicates the meaning behind the reader then viewing Lola from the inside as she stands in the outside space the reader once occupied. The reader is unsure who needs to be "purged" from this domestic expansion and who such an expansion benefits, or who we are supposed to align and sympathize with. Is it the misbehaved Norval daughters? Or, is it the dark and

"mysterious figure in the bright red shawl"? It begs the question, if from out there we, the reader, were critically watching the Norval girls, then isn't it also likely that Lola is viewing them, and now the reader, just as critically? Ruiz de Burton begins the novel at this window "threshold" to destabilize what the reader knows about dominant literary tropes and genres and, by placing the reader at once on the "inside" and the "outside," to complicate what we think about the American social hierarchy at the time of imperial expansion.

The threshold we begin at ushers us into new worlds where old social orders are thrown out of power as East comes into contact with West or vice versa. Scholars have been quick to identify Lola as *the* sentimental heroine of the novel, but this overlooks the fact she is not truly central to the novel's plot. As Dr. Norval's early statement suggests, Lola may be "more romantic than that of half of the heroines of your trashy novels," but she is not the only heroine in the novel to be considered (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 9). And this is important to note because Lola's encounters with the novel's other, more conventional heroines is where Ruiz de Burton most acutely provides her "autoethnographic expression" and her translation of dominant representations of the West and its populations. Scholars who center Lola miss that she is relatively absent or silent for a majority of the novel. Lola is removed to a convent early on, leaving the narrative to shift between a series of "trashy" heroines and leaving its truly "romantic" one in the background. Lola's silence and removal from the focus of the narrative, though it has been interpreted as Ruiz de Burton's "biting critique on the containment and silencing of Mexican American women" (Lawrence 393), is better understood as Ruiz de Burton's "autoethnographic" translation of what the sentimental domestic novel misses in

its representations of Mexican Americans and the West more generally. Using Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* as an example, Jane Tompkins points out that the "pain of learning to conquer her own passions is the central fact of the sentimental heroine's existence" (Tompkins 172). The sentimental heroine, rather than being unable to "'face' the grim facts of their lives," find "strength as she struggles to control each new resurgence of passion and to abase herself before God. It is a suffering which, the novelists resolutely insist, their readers, too, must face or else remain unsaved" (173). Lola's silence then, is evidence of her self-control, giving her license over her own representation even as the Norval women attempt to take this from her. Once Lola crosses the threshold and enters the Norval house, the Norval women engage in the pseudoscientific rhetoric of their day to determine if Lola is African, Native American, or a combination of the two. During the Norval women's examination, Lola notably "did not answer: she only turned her lustrous eyes on" them, letting them come to their own, inaccurate conclusions about her parentage (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 8-9). The interrogation of Lola's race continues at the supper table where Ruth asks Lola's name but again, Lola "looked at her, then at the doctor and went on eating her supper silently" (12). Discerning this must mean "'She doesn't understand,'" Ruth and the other Norval women assume a place of power over Lola and her representation. But Ruth is scolded by her father, who speaks for Lola in this moment. "'Yes, she does [understand];'" Dr. Norval responds, "'but, not liking your manner, she disdains to answer your question'" (12). Lola's silence is not representative of her lack of power, her deferrals to men, or even her containment. Rather, Ruiz de Burton writes Lola's silence as a sign of her superiority to and relative control over women who speak too much in the novel and

thereby, fail to meet the high standards of the sentimental heroine trope. The Norval women mistakenly assume Lola does not speak English and that their offensive discussion of her physical features is missed by her. But Lola *chooses* to be silent here, communicating with commanding looks to Dr. Norval who speaks for her, but only to indicate Lola's refusal to engage or make contact with the Norval women. We might read Dr. Norval here as the San Francisco correspondent who "outs" Ruiz de Burton as author, and the Norval women as the reading public who allow their assumptions about the American West and its populations to misguide their interpretations of the text and its author. Lola's silence in the novel, like Ruiz de Burton's anonymous authorship, serves to challenge dominant representations and stereotypes by placing conventional sentimental heroines in conversation with unexpected ones and in unexpected ways.

Bringing the West to the East, Ruiz de Burton imagines the New England domestic space as a "contact zone" within which multiple, differently articulated, sentimental heroines compete for narrative and representative power in the newly expanded home-space. Lola's presence in the Norval house, though silent, disrupts the power dynamics of the New England home and upsets Mrs. Norval's position as head of her household. As the "civilizer" and "regulator" of her household and, according to Manifest Destiny, of the nation, Ruiz de Burton critiques Mrs. Norval's abilities to "civilize" and "regulate," and questions how "civil" these missions into the West really are. Mrs. Norval, who, as a representative of Republican Motherhood, might better fit the reader's expectations of the sentimental heroine, tells her husband in good abolitionist style, "'I do not object to her dark skin,'" rather "I only wish to know what position she is to occupy in my family. Which wish *I* consider quite reasonable, since I am the one to

regulate my household'" (11). Ruiz de Burton uses Lola's place in the Norval house to translate the role of the American West and to critique the "civilizing" or "regulating" rhetoric of westward expansion. Mrs. Norval's attempts to "regulate" Lola's presence in her home by sending Lola to sleep in the servants' quarters with her Irish cook and chambermaid. Despite having spent the first ten years of her life in Native American captivity in the West, the New England servants' quarters prove too much for Lola to handle. She "refused to share the bed of either of the two servants," watched in horror as the two Irish women shed their clothes for the night, and was offered only a "blackened pillow" to make her sleep on the floor more comfortable (23-24). Lola ends up fleeing the loud snores of the two Irish women and spends the night curled up on a rug outside Mrs. Norval's bedroom with Lavinia's dog. The Irish servants are far from the reformed savages of Mrs. Norval's "civilizing" regulation. Rather, Lola finds them so uncivilized and vulgar that she chooses to sleep curled on the floor like a dog rather than in the company of these two Irish maids.

Ruiz de Burton plots this scene in accordance with what Benedict Anderson helps us understand as "a device for the presentation of simultaneity in 'homogenous, empty time,'" to draw comparisons between the Western-American frontier and the New England urban townhouse (Anderson 25). Occurring simultaneously to Lola's encounter with the Irish servants, Dr. Norval is upstairs in his bedroom relating the story of Lola's discovery to his wife. Dr. Norval tells his wife that Lola's own mother kept the most pristine domestic space regardless of her captivity. He goes on to say that Lola's mother's "'surroundings were cheerless enough to kill any civilized woman, but the bedclothes, I noticed, were as white as snow, and everything about her was clean and tidy'" (30).

These two scenes, occurring simultaneously, work in close conversation with one another to suggest that Lola's treatment in Native American captivity was more civil than her treatment in the New England home. Ruiz de Burton places these scenes in temporal simultaneity—in that "'homogenous, empty time,'" in which people lives simultaneous but differentiated lives—in order to reassert alternative histories and to challenge the "civilizing" mission of Manifest Destiny. While Anderson suggests "simultaneity in 'homogenous, empty time'" is a strategy the novel deploys to create an imagined national community, Ruiz de Burton uses it to break up that imagined community and recover what is lost in the name of homogenizing national histories and identities. At the same moment the Irish servant hands Lola a "blackened pillow," Dr. Norval explains to Mrs. Norval that she is accustomed to sleeping on clean bed linens, "white as snow." While Dr. Norval tells Mrs. Norval Indian captivity was "cheerless enough to kill any civilized woman," Lola cries for her deceased mother and is "almost frantic with terror and desolation, and almost stifling with the foulness of the air" (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 24). The New England home is translated into the terrifying, desolate wilderness and the western territories, though posing the threat of Native American captivity and violence, are, in Lola's experience, more comforting and civilized. By writing these scenes in simultaneity, Ruiz de Burton negotiates the terms of her Mexican heroine's role in the New England home and society and establishes a new definition for civilized domesticity.

The Mobile Heroine and Alternative Wests

The domestic "contact zones" in Ruiz de Burton's novels emphasize the histories erased by dominant genres, such as the sentimental novel, as well as the ways this erasure

serves dominant representations of the Western-American region. But, as Sánchez and Pita point out, Ruiz de Burton "goes beyond the domestic sphere" in her novels, "bringing the readers to sites like the White House, Congress, battlefields, military prisons, hospitals, the Southwest desert and other male-centered areas that are seldom the focus of nineteenth-century women's literature" (Sánchez & Pita, *Conflicts* 548). According to Sánchez and Pita, Ruiz de Burton uses these sites to expose "the limitations[…]of a U.S.-dominant view of society and Latin America" (548), and to write a "counter-travel" narrative that resists a European and Anglo-American travel writing tradition that conquered the West through representative power over the region (540). Indeed, Ruiz de Burton does reverse the East to West travel narrative in her novels to one that moves from West to East. However, Ruiz de Burton's novels do more than just "counter" the travel narrative tradition, she negotiates with it and translates its terms back upon itself to question the East's sense of superiority and benevolence over the West.

Anglo-American authored travel narratives of California were popular ways for East Coast audiences to learn about and become acquainted with the newly acquired Western-American territories. As Pratt explains, travel books "created a sense of curiosity, excitement, adventure, and even moral fervor about European expansionism" (Pratt 3). They were, Pratt suggests, "one of the key instruments that made people 'at home' in Europe feel part of a planetary project; a key instrument, in other words, in creating the 'domestic subject' of empire" (3). Again, this framework can be applied to the 19th-century U.S. context as well. Western-American travel books encouraged an East Coast American "'domestic subject' of empire" to feel involved in the region at the same time that they worked to fit the Western-American region into national narratives and

histories. For example, in her study of George A. Crofutt's popular travel guidebooks, Jennifer Raab recognizes the relationship between these guidebooks of the 1860s and 1870s and the increasing number of Americans traveling West on the rapidly expanding railroad system. Raab argues that, while these guidebooks worked to inform travelers about the West, they also "work to 'sell' the West as a place of ecstatic possibility" (Raab 499). The railroad and the telegraph, Raab identifies, threatened to end the myth of the frontier by compressing space and time, which "violated the mythology of the endless frontier beyond the Mississippi by introducing temporality and limitations" (502). Through strategies such as "telegraphic text" and "panoramic illustrations," Raab argues that the Corfutt guidebooks "registered the new transportation technology that enabled their existence while also reproducing the mythic vision of an endless frontier" (505). While a "telegraphic text communicated specific details" (513), including "'*what* is worth seeing'" and how a traveler should see it, panoramic images such as John Gast's *American Progress* provide a "reductive clarity that approaches innocence"(508) and represents the West to an Eastern-American audience "as a vast space of boundless promise" (501). Panoramic and "all-encompassing vistas" that feature in many of the images included in the guidebooks provided an "unencumbered and comprehensive sight [that] metaphorically connects nature and nation, Man and God, as well as past, present, and future, all in a seamless harmony" (501). The "reductive" nature of the images translated a mythic history of the Western region for East Coast travelers that could be easily consumed and appropriated into national narratives of American Manifest Destiny and exceptionalism.

Ruiz de Burton's novels negotiate with these texts by reversing this East to West line of travel, resituating the travelers points of reference, and deconstructing the "reductive" panoramic images used to represent the West and its native inhabitants. It is then that we can read Ruiz de Burton's novels, especially her second novel, *The Squatter and the Don,* not just as "counter travel-narratives," but also as "autoethnographic expressions" of the popular travel narratives circulating at the time. As mentioned, Sánchez and Pita acknowledge that Ruiz de Burton's sentimental novels travel across the separate spheres and the nation's regions to challenge the dominant images representing the West to the rest of the nation. However, what has yet to be acknowledged is that Ruiz de Burton's novels travel from West to East and back again through her sentimental heroines, Lola and Mercedes. As Tompkins points out, "Characteristically, the [sentimental] heroine is trapped in an enclosed space, is under an injunction *not* to do anything, has no direct access to the world she can see from her limited vantage point, and must make the best of her situation" (Tompkins 173). The conventional sentimental heroine rarely leaves the house, let alone travels across the nation's newly acquired territories to give commentaries on places and peoples. Ruiz de Burton's Californio sentimental heroines however, defy this convention by becoming the vessels through which the novel travels from West to East. Lola in *Who Would Have Thought It?* and Mercedes in *Squatter* are the travelers through whom readers come into contact with new domesticities, new cultural ideologies, and new regions, and it is through their observations of their travels that the reader begins to make connections across these borders and to recognize how these spaces are constructed relationally as well as rhetorically. Unlike the more conventional sentimental heroines they are juxtaposed to,

Lola and Mercedes have greater "access to the world" and, though they are "trapped" in racialized and gendered roles in society, they are afforded a mobility that allows them to negotiate with dominant society. As mobile heroines, Ruiz de Burton's Lola and Mercedes call attention to what is missed in dominant representations of the American West, but they also translate back to a dominant, East Coast literary hub how the terms of that representation can be used to flip the script and present the overly-civilized East as the truly primitive region in need of rescue.

Anne Goldman suggests we read Ruiz de Burton's first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, as a "revision of the captivity narrative" in which "it is the preacher who goes native and threatens the good name not of a Puritan blue-blood like Mary Rowlandson, but of an aristocratic 'Spanish' Mexican," Lola (Goldman 64). Held in a kind of captivity in the Norval's Puritanical home and then nearly scammed into a sham marriage with the Reverend Hackwell, Lola is certainly a play on the heroine of the captivity narrative as made popular by Mary Rowlandson. But again, Ruiz de Burton isn't "revising" this character type, she is situating Lola in conversation with the mass-consumed heroines of the sentimental novel tradition in order to renegotiate the representative terms of the encounter between Mexican and Anglo-American, between West and East, and between the nation and the globe. In her first novel, Ruiz de Burton reverses the typical movement of the captivity narrative by having Lola travel from West to East only to land in captivity in a New England drawing room. In so doing, Ruiz de Burton critiques discourses of Manifest Destiny that produce images of a West in need of East Coast civilizing. Lola's ten-year "history" is thrown into contrast with American histories of imperialism and conquer, disrupting the sentimental novel's attempt to justify

these histories based on the rhetoric of progress and American exceptionalism (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 9). As I argued in the last section of this chapter, Lola's experience in Native American captivity was more civil and afforded her more humanity than her experience living in Mrs. Norval's New England town house. Through this comparison, Ruiz de Burton directly challenges panoramic images such as Gast's *American Progress* by questioning who is truly the primitive barbarian in that image, the Native American with the tomahawk, or the Anglo-American pioneer with their bible and their plough.

In her second novel, *The Squatter and the Don,* Ruiz de Burton also changes the direction of travel through her sentimental heroine, Mercedes. The novel begins from the perspective of the Darrell family, an Eastern-American, Catholic family. After the romantic story of William and Mary Darrell's courtship, during which time Mary converts William to Catholicism, the novel proceeds West where the Darrell's seek new opportunities and financial independence. William Darrell, the family patriarch, has taken advantage of the Federal government's Homestead Act and is relocating his family to San Diego where they will settle on a parcel of land on the Alamar rancho with the understanding it is wrongly claimed by the Alamars and that it will be deemed government land in a court of law. Upon arriving in San Diego, William Darrell notices the Alamar house, "with a broad piazza in front," the "flower garden in front," the "several '*corrales'* for cattle and horses," and the "orchard, and some grain fields enclosed with good fences" (Ruiz de Burton, *Squatter* 72). While he "took notice of all these particulars," the narrator tells us he "also noticed that there were females on the front piazza" just before telling the reader that Darrell "was taken to see the best

unoccupied lands to make his selection" (72). In this scene we get a panoramic description of the Alamar rancho, including pastoral images of cattle grazing in fields and "females on the front piazza," just as Darrell is about to stake his claim to 360 acres of that land. Here Ruiz de Burton gives us the kinds of images used to market the Western-American geography to potential settlers. Despite taking note of the Alamar home and its well-maintained structures, Darrell still believes the land is his for the taking. In part, Ruiz de Burton shows us in this scene, that this is due to the "reductive" images that dehumanize Californio women to "females on the piazza" and Californio men to laborers who maintain "good fences" and well-fed livestock, but who do not have proper ownership of the land. But after the first four chapters of the novel, Ruiz de Burton shifts the novel's center from that of the Anglo-American Darrells to the Californio Alamars and begins to tell the unexpected tale of how the Darrell's exceptionally American story of pioneer settlement and rugged homesteading disrupts the histories, cultures, and traditions of those already living in the Western-American geography.

Mercedes, the Alamar's youngest daughter and presumably one of the "females on the piazza," serves Ruiz de Burton in recovering the untold histories of Western-American settlement and in using these histories to speak back to the kinds of panoramic images William Darrell gives us at the start of the novel. When Clarence, William Darrell's son, visits the Alamar home to secretly pay the Don for the lands his father has taken, he meets and instantly falls in love with Mercedes. Believing Clarence to be a squatter, Mercedes' mother, Doña Josefa

initiates Mercedes' travels East to keep her away from Clarence by sending her with her newly married sister, Elvira, to New York where her Anglo-American husband is a

banker. During her journey Mercedes and her travelling companions attend an opera in San Francisco, see the "crashing and thundering of Yosemite's falls plunging from dizzying heights," sit in on a session of the House of Representatives in Washington D.C., and are invited to some of the East Coast's most socially exclusive dinners and parties (Ruiz de Burton, *Squatter* 153). In other words, Mercedes' journey mirrors the journey many Eastern-American travelers and settlers make on their way out West. Only, of course, Mercedes is reversing this journey by moving from West to East, making the West our frame of reference and everything experienced in the East, including corrupt politics in Washington D.C. and the stuffy parties of East Coast socialites, new encounters our sophisticated, aristocratic, Californio heroine may critique.

But Mercedes' travel East is not always about differentiating between the West and the East as most of the dominant travel narratives are wont to do. Rather, Mercedes' residence in the East points out the similarities between Californio culture in the West and New England society in the East. Ruiz de Burton takes advantage of Mercedes' residence in the East as an opportunity to deploy the same language dominant travel narratives use to describe Mexican ranchos to describe New England mansions and to negotiate for the cultural fluency between the West and East, rather than emphasizing their ethnic divides. In describing Mercedes sojourn at a Newport villa, Ruiz de Burton writes that the "villa, shaded by tall elms and poplars, and surrounded by shrubbery and flowers, with a beautiful lawn and fountains in front, facing the ocean, and well-kept walks and arbors in different places on the grounds was certainly a charming abode, fit to please the most fastidious taste" (176). This closely mirrors the same descriptive language used to describe William Darrell taking "note of the particulars" at the Alamar

rancho upon his arrival. As Darrell noted the trees and flowers, so too does this description of the Newport villa focus on the abundance of shrubs and green grass that surrounds the property and gives it a sense of pastoral elegance. In the evenings at the Newport villa, "music and dancing would add variety to their pleasures, until such life seemed to them too charming to be real" (176). Similarly, at the start of the novel, the Alamar's San Diego rancho is also admired for its regular dances, "making the Alamar house very gay and pleasant" for the Anglo-American visitors hosted there (68). Ruiz de Burton shows in this comparison that a language meant to exoticize the West and the lackadaisical cultural retreat it comes to represent in the era's travel literatures can also be used to describe the American East and the frivolously aristocratic parties occurring in mansions along the eastern seaboard.

However, Ruiz de Burton also shows the violence Californios, especially Californio women, face at the hands of this same "reductive" literary language used to disseminate generic images of the American West. Throughout her journey East, Mercedes must dodge Anglo-American men interested in pursuing her romantically. Ironically, Doña Josefa sent her East to keep Anglo-American men at bay only to have her daughter be tricked on trains, cornered at beach picnics, and ogled at dinner parties. Two of these men, Arthur Selden and Bob Gunther, follow Mercedes across the nation, hoping to attract her affections. Selden, the more determined of the two, recognizes his hopeless attempts towards Mercedes but, as Ruiz de Burton makes clear, her unattainability and mythic identity in the East is part of her allure for him. Selden "closed his eyes to the future and let himself float down this stream of sweet pleasures, knowing that they were but a dream, and yet for that reason more determined to drink the last drop

of that nectar so intoxicating, and enjoying being near her, within the sound of her voice, within the magic circle of her personality" (180). Like the panoramic images in the Corfutt guidebooks, Mercedes sustains a myth of the "endless frontier" and a Garden-of-Eden-like sense of hope for Eastern-Americans wishing to find new opportunities in the West. Selden, who is described as "a millionaire and considered 'a catch,'" with many other women vying for his attention, is of an indulgent class of New England Anglo-Americans that can "close his eyes to the future" and pursue what he knows to be "but a dream." He intends to drain the "dream" of Mercedes dry, "determined to drink the last drop of that nectar so intoxicating," in order his competition—Gunther and Clarence Darrell—are left with nothing. As one New England matron suggests, Mercedes is "perfection," leading New England society to question: "Where in the world did such beauties grow," at the same time they predict Mercedes "will be the rage next winter, and I [the New England matron] shall give several dinners and receptions" in their honor (175-176). Ruiz de Burton expresses an anxiety that the West and the "beauties" that "grow" there are a part of an American fad, all "the rage next winter," but which will quickly lose Anglo-American interest to be left unprotected and completely overrun by an unjust system. It seems that she is less concerned with the presence of Anglo-American settlers, business, and government in the region and more concerned that they will not appreciate the region for what it means and represents to her and her Californio society.

As Mercedes is understood by Selden as an "intoxicating" source of pleasure, so too do the popular travel literatures of the era promote the American-West as a health-giving region and a resort destination. This marketing strategy stands at the root of Ruiz

de Burton's fears for the region. Jennifer Tuttle argues that "Ruiz de Burton deftly invokes health tourism and the promotion of Anglo American migration to California" (Tuttle 61) in the figure of George Mechlin, an East Coast businessman who moves his family to "the salubrious air of San Diego" after "he had lost his health by a too close application to business" (Ruiz de Burton, *Squatter* 67). But Tuttle also recognizes that Ruiz de Burton uses "this discourse against itself" by identifying squatters "[a]long with corrupt lawyers, judges, legislators and railroad monopolists" as "a destructive force[…]marking them as malignant forces that contaminate the region and sicken its 'native' inhabitants" (Tuttle 63). Tuttle's argument relies on the Alamar and Mechlin families' bodily degeneration in San Diego after the demise of the Texas Pacific Railroad and their failure to stop the squatters from taking their land and killing their cattle. Both family patriarchs die before the close of the novel and two of the Alamar sons are severely disabled. Though I agree with Tuttle's argument, I see this as only half of the work Ruiz de Burton's critique of health tourism serves in the novel. Ruiz de Burton's commentary on health tourism intersects with the interethnic marriages that occur in both her novels. It has been generally accepted by Ruiz de Burton scholars that the interethnic marriages between Lola and Julian in *Who Would Have Thought It?* and Mercedes and Clarence in *Squatter* envision the integration of Californio and elite Anglo-American society into a new, hybrid culture. Kate McCullough argues that "using region and gender within a domestic/romance plot," Ruiz de Burton imagines "Californio-Anglo unification" and attempts to carve out a place for Californios in American national identity (McCullough 463). McCullough adds, "this is not a call for assimilation—for the Californio Other to adopt the culture of the Anglo-American and abandon a Mexican

heritage," rather, in her interethnic marriage plots, Ruiz de Burton "refashions not merely the Californios but also the American nation" by recalibrating American racial categories and insisting on Californio whiteness (163). However, when we read Ruiz de Burton's heroines as mobile heroines who reorient the way we approach East-West travel and encounter, we can argue that these marriages are less about integration and "unification," and more about repositioning the West, a region both inside and outside of the nation, in global rather than national terms.

In addition to traveling from West to East and reorienting the reference points from which travel discourses describe and make sense of the new places and peoples they encounter, Ruiz de Burton's heroines also reconfigure the powerful role the traveler holds. It has gone relatively unnoticed that both Lola and Mercedes are described at times in terms of contagion. Both heroines are represented as infecting or "conquering" the American East, especially the male characters of the region, and altering the regions stability and power structures. As mentioned, Mercedes and her older sister are well received by East Coast society who, astounded by their beauty, wonder, "'Where in the world did such beauties grow'" (175)? As already quoted, Mercedes and her sister are referred to as a kind of fashionable artifact or exotic crop of the American West, and Mercedes' beauty attracts the romantic attention of prominent East Coast men. This does not go unnoticed by the Eastern-American women who feel Mercedes competition and who consider Mercedes to be collecting "numerous slaves" (181) and "new conquests" while traveling East (195). Nearly engaged to Clarence and aware of Selden's and Gunther's affections, Mercedes tries to discourage them but, as Elvira's Anglo-American husband says, Mercedes "'is like an epidemic'" in the East that can only be stopped by

Clarence, the novel's hero (181). Again, Ruiz de Burton uses Mercedes travels across the nation to reverse the rhetoric of North American colonialism. In this case it is Mercedes, the Californio heroine of the novel, who plagues the East and conquers and tames the east coast, millionaire bachelors. Likewise, throughout the middle-half of Ruiz de Burton's first novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, the dye staining Lola's light skin dark begins to wear off. Lola's transformation leads Mrs. Norval to conclude that the theory Lola must be "of the Pinto tribe was not the correct hypothesis," Mrs. Norval then determines the spots are "some sort of cutaneous disease," and demands Lola keep her distance from the family (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 73). Aside from Dr. Norval, who is soon to leave on his trip to Africa, Julian is the only one of the family who will interact with Lola, trusting his father that Lola is "of pure Spanish descent" (95). But once the spots wear off entirely, Lola begins to attract the romantic attention of Reverend Hackwell and only "Julian's presence would be the remedy" and protection against Hackwell's evil plotting (292). Both of Ruiz de Burton's Mexican heroines contaminate the East, conquer its subjects, and drive them to lose their Puritan "calmness and self-control" (260).

In both novels, the heroine transports an "epidemic" or a "cutaneous disease" from West to East, reversing the roles played by the Americans and Mexicans in the Mexican-American War as well as the health-tourism rhetoric promoted by Western travel literatures of the era. Mercedes is "intoxicating" to her "conquests," who become "completely captivated" by her presence in the East (Ruiz de Burton, *Squatter* 180,195), while Lola's presence in New England changes Dr. Norval, in the words of Mrs. Norval, "from a courteous gentleman and a Christian, into a rough and a Hottentot," and causes both Mrs. Norval and Reverend Hackwell to go insane over their scheming for her wealth

(Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 73). It is noteworthy that each novel posits the Anglo-American hero as the only "remedy" or cure to each of the heroine's inflictions. If, as Jane Tompkins suggests, the sentimental hero represents "both divine and worldly authority," then Ruiz de Burton's sentimental heroes are critiques of that authority and emerge in the novels as the true figures of resistance (Tompkins 183). Tompkins further suggests that the hero marries the heroine at the end of the novel as "the alternative to [the sentimental heroine's] physical death," and "is the principle that joins self-denial with self-fulfillment, extending and enforcing the disciplinary regimen of the heroine's life, giving her the love, affection, and companionship she had lost when she was first orphaned, providing her with material goods and social status through is position in the world" (183). That is, Tompkins recognizes the subsidiary role the hero plays to the heroine and that, though he may have more "authority," he remains bound to serve the heroine in realizing her own higher power, a power achieved through self-denial and self-sacrifice. While Julian and Clarence do offer her heroines an alternative to physical death as the "cure" and "remedy" to the "epidemic" and "disease that each of Ruiz de Burton's heroines become associated with, Ruiz de Burton's heroes do so in retaliation against their own nation and its corrupt institutions. Julian and Clarence are not, as McCullough and others have been quick to conclude, representations of the United States or of American "insiders." Rather, disgruntled with their national government and the corrupt use of capitalism to influence national politics, Julian and Clarence are, by the end of both novels, anti-patriots clearly on the outs with their nation. While Julian in Ruiz de Burton's first novel speaks out against the United States President declaring, "I have fought, thinking myself a free man fighting for freedom; and I awake from my dream to

find that I do not have even the privilege granted to thieves and cutthroats" (Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have* 242), Clarence in her second novel is positioned as a young capitalist with a conscious. Clarence, who is the one character who ends the novel in better shape than when it started, uses his accumulated capital to invest in the Texas Pacific Railroad, a venture that "should bring through San Diego the commerce between Asian and the Atlantic seaboard, between China and Europe," but which both U.S. business and Congress are against (Ruiz de Burton, *Squatter* 299).

Additionally, both Anglo-American heroes travel to Mexico, giving Ruiz de Burton the opportunity to not only renegotiate how Anglo-Americans view the West and Latin America, as Sánchez and Pita suggest, but also to communicate to her Californio society how these men might be useful to the region's future. Julian leaves the United States by the end of the novel, following Lola to Mexico, while Clarence's investment in the mining industry takes him on a continental journey that gives him an epiphany moment in Mexico. Aside from admiring the "transcendent beauty" of the interior of Mexico, "Clarence dwelt, also, upon his visit to Yucatán, where he went more especially to see the ruins of Uxmal. Those ruins which are the irrefragable witnesses of a past civilization, lost so entirely that archaeology cannot say one word about its birth or death" (Ruiz de Burton, *Squatter* 284). It is after this journey that Clarence returns to marry Mercedes and save the quickly declining members of her family from financial as well as bodily ruin. Clarence and Julian are positioned as the novels' saviors because they represent a new, globally-minded capitalist era, while they also reject confining and often debilitating nationalist ideologies. Given their disavowal of national projects (whether it be corrupt railroad monopoles in the West or the Civil War), the unions between Lola and

Julian and Mercedes and Clarence do not represent cross-national "unification" or even cross-ethnic "suturing." Instead, these marriages represent a new future for the West, one divorced of nationalist allegiances, but which ushers the Western region into global economic contact.

To return to the *New York Times* obituary that started this chapter, Ruiz de Burton's husband, General Henry S. Burton, is also described as a sentimental hero rescuing his heroine from the primitive American West. Once again, the obituary reads: "General Henry S. Burton, during the Mexican war in Lower California captured Tedos [sic] Santos, the town in which she was living, fell in love with the heiress, and carried her away with the regiment. Six months later they were married" (*Conflicts* 604-5). In the first sentence, Burton invades, meets, falls in love with, and carries away Ruiz de Burton. There is no separation between the violence of his military incursion into Ruiz de Burton's Mexican village and the romantic twist taken on her being "carried" off with the regiment. The obituary provides insight into how dominant American culture understood the mission to conquer the West as a rescue mission rather than the imbalanced, violent take over that it was. Despite a clear understanding in the historical record that Ruiz de Burton made her own decision to relocate to the United States after the invasion of her village, these lines in her obituary make it seem that Ruiz de Burton was rescued, civilized, and taught to fit the role of a late-19th century American, middle-class housewife. It is then that we can connect her autoethnographic heroines to her own attempts to resist the sentimentalizing of her own life and the reduction of her identity into a one-dimensional plot device that serves romanticized histories of American Manifest Destiny and narratives of westward expansion.

Chapter Two
Negotiating Manifest Destiny: Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* and the Intimacies of the Western-American "Contact Zone"

As I argued in the last chapter, Manifest Destiny is a literary as well as a political project. Since power consolidated through the circulation of popular genres and literary magazines, we might challenge Frederick Jackson Turner's observation that American national character is forged in the geographic frontier. It would instead be more precise to suggest that American national character was written into being through literary representations of that frontier and of what lay beyond it. By offering this correction to the "frontier thesis," this chapter focuses on marginalized authors and their battles to write into being an American West that accounted for them and their experiences. It recognizes the American West as a multivalent terrain of meaning, one that holds different and competing possibilities for different groups of people. While dominant characterizations of the frontier were steeped in masculinist rhetoric of physicality, violence, and depravity, those representations were challenged by women and authors of color who sought to empower themselves through a literary occupation of the American West. Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* is one such example of this literary occupation.

Ramona, published in 1884, takes place in the Southern California region after Mexico's defeat in the Mexican-American War and tells the romantic love story of Ramona, a half-Indian, half-white woman, and Alessandro, whom the novel describes as an "exceptional" Native American man (Jackson, *Ramona* 95). Raised by her adopted Californio family, Ramona's stepmother, Señora Moreno, refuses to allow Ramona to marry Alessandro because he is an Indian. This forces Ramona and Alessandro to flee the utopic but declining Moreno rancho and marry in a tiny Catholic church in San Diego.

They live a few happy years in an idyllic Indian village nearby before the encroachment of Anglo-American settlers in the region again force them to pack up their young child and flee to a more remote village in the Southern California mountains. The second half of the novel veers into a tragedy as Ramona's and Alessandro's infant daughter dies as a result of an Indian Agent's neglect, Alessandro goes mad and is murdered after accidently stealing a white man's horse, and Ramona must be saved by her Californio stepbrother, Felipe, who then marries her and takes her back to Mexico, the site of a final, "untried future" for Ramona (Jackson, *Ramona* 388).

While Jackson's novel takes issue with dominant representations of the American West both by centering Native American characters and through her female-led advocacy for their political protection, this chapter agrees with scholarship that has understood Jackson's "writing about Indians was not first and foremost about collectivity; rather, it was about validating oneself as an author, a citizen, and a person" (Senier 59). Following this line of interpretation, the novel and its author are understood to embody the struggle between a progressive Western-American future and the security of white privilege and domestic femininity. The progressive liberal potential of the American West, a potential which relies on the history of the Western territories as "free states" in opposition to the Southern slave states, thrilled an author like Helen Hunt Jackson, who increasingly became involved in Native American advocacy in the second half of her life. But the progressive potential of the West also created anxieties around political programs that necessitated a reordering of sociopolitical institutions and cultural practices. Take, for instance, the way *Ramona* begins:

> It was the sheep shearing time in Southern California; but sheep-shearing was late at the Señora Moreno's. The Fates had seemed to combine to put it off. In the first place, Felipe Moreno had been ill. He was the Señora's eldest son, and since his father's death had been at the head of his mother's house. Without him, nothing could be done on the ranch, the Señora thought…In truth, it was not Felipe, but the Señora, who really decided all questions from the greatest to least, and managed everything on the place, from the sheep-pastures to the artichoke-patch; but nobody except the Señora herself knew this (Jackson, *Ramona* 1).

These opening lines of the novel determine the powerful role women are to play in the novel's depictions of Western-American life. Señora Moreno, "in truth," runs the household in the wake of her husband's death, a death we can read as representative of Mexico's defeat in the Mexican-American war since he was "killed in the last fight Mexican forces made," linking Jackson's representations of women's rise to power in the West with the Mexican-American war's consequent death of patriarchy (24). As Jackson suggests in this passage, the new Western-American era ushered in by this defeat is marked by the rise of the woman left behind. Jackson initially describes Señora Moreno's power not through her domesticated household chores—cleaning, cooking, mothering—but through her control over "sheep-pastures" and the "artichoke-patch," those economic, business-oriented realms of the Moreno rancho. Jackson makes clear that in the West, a New England separate-spheres ideology is not sustainable. The private sphere of the home and the public sphere of business are one and the same and to control the home is to control the region. In these first few lines, the novel seems to stake a claim for women in the Western-American region and, even more importantly, seems to open up the category of "woman" to include more diverse individuals and responsibilities.

However, the empowering role Jackson reserves for Señora Moreno quickly changes in tone and responds to its own progressivism by lashing out against this strong,

female character. The strength Jackson attributes to Señora Moreno shifts to become sinister, sneaky, and dangerous, and indicates Jackson's anxiety over what Señora Moreno's power might mean to established social orders that privilege Jackson and her authorship. Thus, while the novel appears to place women in an empowered place in Western-American life, it is also ambivalent to what that empowerment means to dominant social orders. Noting that Felipe would have "stared in astonishment" at anyone "crazy" enough to suggest that his mother wields more power over the estate than himself, Jackson's narrator further suggests Señora Moreno is dangerous by stating: "Never to appear as a factor in the situation, to be able to wield other men, as instruments, with the same direct and implicit response to will that one gets from a hand or a foot,--this is to triumph, indeed: to be as nearly controller and conqueror of Fates as fate permits" (11). As mentioned, Señora Moreno's power is not a domestic or maternal power of the sorts found in Amy Kaplan's argument in "Manifest Domesticity." Rather, it is one that has conquered and now controls the "Fates" we saw in the previous passage. In this first passage Señora Moreno charges these "Fates" with infecting her son with a debilitating illness and stalling the sheep shearing, her estate's main source of income. By linking Señora Moreno to these "Fates," Jackson seems to condemn her as a deviant matriarch, willing to sacrifice her own son and home for power over men. Jackson describes Señora Moreno's influence as irrational, vindictive, and emotional. Her ability to "wield other men," including her son, as her own "hand or a foot," and to make these men her "instruments," threatens gendered power dynamics that justify men's strength over women's weakness on purely biological terms. The novel's first chapter ends by concluding Señora Moreno's "power is an instinct and not an attainment; a passion rather

than a purpose" (11-12). As this beginning to *Ramona* reveals, for a woman like Jackson who was adept at navigating the gendered terms of dominant society, the idea of shifting these terms was both invigorating and unsettling.

As biographer, Kate Phillips, notes, Jackson herself embodied her society's ambivalent struggle between the progressive movements of her day—abolition and women's suffrage—and the more traditional, conservative view that "women should eschew public life" and maintain a separate spheres ordering of society (Phillips 85). This chapter argues that this ambivalence shows up in Jackson's texts in a hesitancy towards the very progressive advocacy that inspires most of her later works. We can understand this hesitancy through what Lisa Lowe recognizes to be the "residual" and "emergent" intimacies between the nation's historic engagement with global systems of slavery and labor exploitation and the progressive, liberal rhetoric of American individualism, self-sufficiency and opportunity—understood and articulated in a capitalist sense—that makes up the basis of Manifest Destiny's call for settler-colonialism in the American West. Scholarship on Jackson and her novel tends to ignore their relationship to and situatedness in the nation's end of American slavery and the Civil War. In large part, this oversight is because Jackson's text gets regionalized as "Western-American literature" and therefore, analysis that might connect it to other regions in the United States or to larger national and global concerns such as slavery, is foreclosed. But it is precisely because scholarship has foreclosed these connections that it has struggled to reconcile the inconsistencies and contradictions in Jackson's *Ramona.* By borrowing from Lisa Lowe's notion of "intimacy as a heuristic," I propose we read *Ramona* not for what it says about Native American suffering necessarily, but for how that suffering stands in for and

articulates certain national and Anglo-American anxieties over the end of slavery and the nation's move into modernity.

For Lowe, the term "intimacy as a heuristic" uncovers what she recognizes to be modern liberalism's dependency on the relationship between "the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean and the development of colonial modes of biopolitical violence in Asia that sought to replace African slave labor with Chinese 'free' labor" (Lowe 17-18). Interactions and exchanges between global histories of slavery and migrant labor that rephrase the rhetoric of enslaved, "free" (unpaid) labor to that of mobile, "free" (not enslaved) labor become in this model ways in which modern liberalism maintains racialized divisions between laboring and non-laboring bodies. Lowe's work identifies the way the historical archive fragments these histories into national and regional temporalities that make it difficult to see the interconnectedness of these histories, and in turn, how modern liberalism is complicit in perpetuating racialized, gendered, and exploited labor. Borrowing from Raymond Williams, Lowe argues that late eighteenth and early nineteenth century forms "of national liberal republics made less available the residual intimacies of colonialism and slavery that nonetheless continued as the practical conditions for liberal forms of personhood, society, and government; in other words, settler practices and the afterlife of slavery are residues that continue beyond declarations of independence and emancipation" (19). Lowe suggests a method for bringing together fragmented and dispersed pieces of the archive that makes visible the contingency of liberal notions of sovereignty, citizenship, and human rights—as they are iterated through individual interiority and privileges of the private domestic—on what Lowe calls the "emergent," or "new" articulations of otherwise residual or lingering histories of

enslavement and exploitation (19). Following this method, this chapter argues that Jackson's *Ramona* and the Native American advocacy it claims to encourage is ambivalent towards rather than resistant to the project of Manifest Destiny and the nation's imperial expansion. In other words, we can read for the ways Jackson's advocacy is stunted by a rhetoric of Manifest Destiny, a rhetoric that relies upon the subordination and disenfranchisement of Native Americans, African Americans, and a rural, poor, white population of the post-Reconstruction American South in order to elevate her authorial authority and charitable advocacy. In so doing, however, we see how these communities are drawn into an intimacy with one another as they compete for work, citizenship, and liberty in a post-slavery national economy.

It is also my contention that Jackson inherits a set of genre conventions and national narratives through which she negotiates national expansion and identity, and which contributes to her ambivalent stance on the nation's imperial activity. In her discussion of the sentimental novel and American "women's culture," Lauren Berlant recognizes a trend she calls "a love affair with conventionality" that "emerges from a desire to understand what keeps people attached to disaffirming scenarios of necessity and optimism in their personal and political lives," and which "collaborates with a sentimental account of the social world as an affective space where people ought to be legitimated because they have feelings and because there is an intelligence in what they feel that *knows* something about the world that, if it were listened to, could make things better" (Berlant 2). Berlant identifies a kind of sentimental citizenship in the conventions of the sentimental novel, with the result that citizenship is rooted in the legitimacy of feelings and affective renderings of human suffering at the hand of national politics and

governance. Stating that "to love conventionality is not only to love something that constrains someone or some condition of possibility: it is another way of talking about negotiating belonging to a world" (3), Berlant avoids an oversimplified argument that understands sentimental writing as just another tool of the oppressor. Instead, she repositions the nuances of the genre as an entry point for women writers and readers into civic engagement and belonging, even as the conditions of that belonging remain problematic. While Berlant's assessment of the sentimental novel situates the genre as in compliance with Benedict Anderson's argument that the novel helps consolidate national identity through creating a "homogeneous, empty time" that "gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community" (Anderson 26-27), her study also reveals the ways the sentimental novel works around certain gaps and erasures as a means to gain entry into dominant national narratives. That is, while sentimental women writers find the genre a platform from which they can collectively engage in the nation as an "intimate public," their platform is one rooted in sentimentally abdicating national narratives of oppression, violence, and colonialism. Considering *Ramona* in this light, we can understand that Native American oppression—despite the novel's apparent defense of Native American rights—remains the condition for middle-class, Anglo-American women seeking civic belonging. In accordance with Berlant's framework, problems of Native American removal and displacement become the "unfinished business of sentimentality—that 'tomorrow is another day' in which fantasies of the good life *can* be lived" (Berlant 2). Jackson's *Ramona* thus dooms Native Americans to a perpetual state of dependency in order to secure Jackson's and Anglo-American women's necessity to the nation and feelings of national belonging. This is the "critical" but "ambivalent"

convention Berlant describes as shaping the sentimental tradition and which we find in Jackson's *Ramona* (2). It also sheds light on the ways an author like Helen Hunt Jackson and a novel like *Ramona* have contribute to the nation's project of "forgetting" in order to sustain certain national histories and projects. For decades Jackson's *Ramona* has been called an Indian Reform novel however, as I will argue in this chapter, this is an oversimplified understanding of the work the novel does in popular American culture, one which implicates readers and scholars in the nation's "forgetting."

The ultimate aim of this chapter is to suggest that Jackson's novel is a genre meditation as much as it is a regional meditation of the nation's post-Reconstruction anxieties as they come to a confluence in the newly conquered American West. Jackson's *Ramona* is essentially a sentimental translation of her earlier political treatise, *A Century of Dishonor,* and as such, in addition to revealing the intimacies between dispossessed Native Americans and disenfranchised rural, poor, white Southerners, the novel negotiates between its sentimental attachment to national belonging and the affective pain at making visible "the forcible encounters, removals, and entanglements omitted" by national narratives of progress such as Manifest Destiny (Lowe 2). Scholars have already argued that Jackson and her fellow Anglo-American women activists used Native American advocacy as a means to "'negotiate' and 'infiltrate' patriarchal structures in the attempt to become autonomous citizens and agents" (Senier 59). But this chapter, while agreeing that Jackson finds national belonging in her advocacy, reads Jackson's novel as being less concerned with negotiating and infiltrating patriarchal structures or with reordering oppressive social hierarchies. Rather, *Ramona* echoes Jackson's non-fiction writings on Native Americans, in that the concerns Jackson traces in her earlier travel

essays and political treatise, *A Century of Dishonor,* are mapped in a sentimental novel in which she rearticulates the growing anxieties she and her society have with the fact that the social orders are, by necessity of Emancipation and Reconstruction, changing and dictating the construction of Western-American sociopolitical landscapes and thereby, their place in the national imaginary. In the wake of the 13th and 14th Constitutional Amendments, Americans are thrust into intimacies with new communities once kept divided by a racialized rhetoric of labor which is no longer sustainable. Jackson's *Ramona* and the Native American advocacy it claims to support are shaped by these shifting notions of labor and expresses an uneasy understanding of the resulting change to national sociopolitical power structures. Not only does this framework change the way we understand the relationship between regional histories in the 19th century, but it also alludes to the limitations of "feminine" genres such as the sentimental novel in advancing political initiatives.

The "manly method": Gender, Genre, and the Conditions of Jackson's Advocacy

As biographer, Kate Phillips, points out, Jackson was an early pioneer of the American West, an important context for how we approach her complicated relationship with progressive politics and more traditional, oppressive social orders. With her second husband, Jackson relocated to Colorado Springs, Colorado in 1873, three years before the territory was granted statehood. While her husband was involved in railroad and banking initiatives in Colorado that "transformed this once scarcely inhabited place into a town that by 1874 boasted 3,000 residents, enthusiastic developers who erected some 250 buildings every year," Jackson was using her position as a relatively popular New

England poet and short-story writer to write travel narratives that described the American West's geography and indigenous populations to a predominantly New England readership (Phillips 25). As a pioneer writing for an East Coast audience, Jackson was at the center of U.S. settler-colonial activity. It is Phillips' understanding that, despite Jackson's involvement in settler colonialism in Colorado and the exploitative travel writing industry, she "became a champion of tolerance and grew to possess an unusual appreciation for racial, ethnic, and religious diversity" (27). Similarly, scholars such as James Weaver have argued that Jackson's travel writings reveal that she "comes to embrace an intimacy with nature and with other people [in the West] that reveals her shifting sensibility towards the US imperial imperative" (Weaver 215), a shift that leads her to problematize "the idea of 'conquering' people and places" (216). While scholars have wanted to situate Jackson as an anti-imperialist voice in 19th-century literary culture, her location at the center of American imperialism and settler colonialism complicates this impulse, making it difficult to parse the relationships between her supposed anti-imperialist agendas and her representations of and advocacy for Native Americans. Her advocacy does not, for instance, attempt to dissuade Americans from settling the West, which by definition resulted in taking lands that belonged to Native Americans. In fact, her Western American writings often encourage settlers and travelers to the region.

Jackson is part of the problem even as she critiques settler colonial violence. As such, she is the sort of writer figure that calls for examination under Lisa Lowe's critical position that the "state subsumes colonial violence within narratives of modern reason and progress" (Lowe 2). "To make legible the forcible encounters, removals, and entanglements omitted in liberal accounts of abolition, emancipation, and independence,"

Lowe develops reading strategies that "might understand the processes through which the forgetting of violent encounter is naturalized, both by the archive, and in the subsequent narrative histories" (Lowe 2-3). The archive is thus not about remembering but about forgetting, and it is our job as literary scholars, Lowe suggests, to ask what is being forgotten rather than preserved by the literary archive. Read in this context, Jackson's authorship and literary productions, especially *Ramona,* might yield a more nuanced discussion of Jackson's role as a woman in the American literary marketplace and the obstacles her gender and her unique positioning in the new American West created for her publications and her politics. In turn, our attention to Jackson's precarious citizenship and the urgency with which she shifted between genres and forms, helps make sense of her own contradictory tendencies and the complex and anxious contortions involved in a literary project that wants to both celebrate the nation and its expansion and critique the methods and histories involved in that expansion.

According to Jackson's personal correspondence collected in *The Indian Reform Letters of Helen Hunt Jackson, 1879-1885,* Jackson wrote *Ramona* in order to inform a large, Anglo-American reading audience about the plight of the Mission Indians in California. It is common for scholars to quote Jackson's letter to William Hayes Ward in which she says about the in- progress novel: "there is so much Mexican life in it, that I hope to get people so interested in it, before they suspect anything Indian, that they will keep on. –If I can do one hundredth part for the Indians that Mrs. Stowe did for the Negro, I will be thankful" (Jackson, *Reform Letters* 307). Though this statement has been used to support arguments for Jackson's dedication to the Native American cause, her assertions are complicated by what the archive tells us about her relationship to the

abolition movement and black labor. Phillips documents that Jackson grew up in a household where "beliefs about race had been closely entwined with class prejudice, for it was only through their household 'help' that the Fiske family [Jackson's family] came into close contact with people of different backgrounds" (Phillips 82). Jackson was raised to treat African and Irish "household help'" compassionately but to maintain a degree of separation between herself and them, a separation maintained through labor and citizenship, no doubt. Later on, Jackson's first husband, Edward Hunt, disliked slavery for "the fact that slavery had allowed a black population to grow up in America," a viewpoint that most likely impacted Jackson's own political voice on the subject and foreshadows her support of maintaining Native American sovereignty on reservations rather than the assimilation agendas of her contemporaries (82). While living in Washington D.C. with Hunt, Jackson herself hired a slave named Lucy, from her owner. In a letter to a friend, Jackson writes of Lucy: "I have grown very stylish and keep my servant![…]She is a slave, and all that her master asks for her is $5.00 a month: she takes care of the rooms—sets the table—helps me dress—*puts away* everything that I leave out of place—in short, makes a fine lady of me—all in the quietest pleasantest way around. This is one of the illustrations of the *bright* sides of slavery" (Phillips 84). This letter "subsumes," as Lowe would say, the violence of slavery in a rhetoric that situates the slave woman, Lucy as a "stylish" and profitable commodity that "makes" Jackson into "a fine lady." But of course, this praise of Lucy's inexpensiveness and pleasantness covers up that she is forced labor, that the five dollars a month Jackson pays is not going to Lucy but to her master, that Lucy's docility and dedication is not by choice or by nature but governed by a system that would otherwise invoke physical harm to her body. Jackson

thus participates in the dehumanization of Lucy's laboring body and funds an institution that profits off the forced labor and exchange of human beings. That Jackson identifies "*bright* sides of slavery" at all and that she fails to think about Lucy's relation to slavery (we are left to wonder about Lucy's family and if she was torn away from a parent, spouse, or children of her own in order to provide this labor to Jackson), presses us to reevaluate the popularly cited declaration that she hopes *Ramona* does for Native Americans what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did for African slaves.

Although it could be argued that Jackson's politics regarding slavery shifted after her first husband died and she became interested in the Native American cause, there is evidence in her archive that testifies to the fact that Jackson's understanding of racialized social hierarchies rooted in labor and class distinctions, as articulated in her letter about Lucy, persisted. In the section of *Ramona* in which Alessandro and Ramona are caught in a snow storm and rescued by a poor, white, southern Tennessee family, Jackson uses the racial epithet "nigger" (Jackson 309). As Phillips points out, "'negro' and 'colored'" were in ready circulation as "the more respectful terms of the day" (Phillips 84). The mother, Aunt Ri, describes Ramona and Alessandro as "'real dark; 's dark's any nigger in Tennessee; 'n' he's pewer Injun; her father wuz white, she sez, but she don't call herself nothin' but an Injun, the same's he is'" (Jackson, *Ramona* 309). While this language may be the sort that uneducated whites from Tennessee would employ, it's clear that Jackson distances herself from this language, as the novel treats the family sympathetically and even recognizes them as heroes of the novel. This would seem to confirm that as late as her authorship of *Ramona* Jackson harbored a sense of racial superiority and even engaged in a rhetorical violence against newly emancipated black Americans. It also

suggests that Jackson bought into the "one-drop" rule that categorized an individual as black if there was any evidence of miscegenation. Indeed, miscegenation is Aunt Ri's obsession here: she is skeptical of Ramona's self-proclaimed heritage. The "she sez" Aunt Ri inserts into the middle of this sentence syntactically echoes the split Aunt Ri perceives between the part of Ramona that is white and the part of her that disowns this whiteness and clings to her Native Americanness. "She sez" functions in this way to reject both mixed identities and any notions of equality between Aunt Ri and Ramona. Ultimately, rejecting Ramona as an ethnic other opens up the American West to Aunt Ri and her family as they flee the labor-saturated American South. Ramona is only redeemed in the eyes of Aunt Ri for quietly and pleasantly identifying as Native American, forfeiting her claims to whiteness, and removing herself to a remote mountain village out of the way of Anglo-American innovation and industrialization.

Scenes like these reveal Jackson to be a complicated political figure who, while hesitant to engage in any of the progressive movements of her day, such as abolition and women's suffrage, is also aware of the challenges she faces in society and in literary circles because of her gender. In a letter to her second husband, William Sharpless Jackson, dated December 19th 1879, Jackson relates her excitement at the idea of publishing a treatise on the mistreatment of Native Americans by the U.S. government. In the letter she already names the future title of the work, *A Century of Dishonor,* and asks for her husband's approval of this first Native American project. She tells him: "I feel *'led'* towards it," but also seeks out his opinion, asking: "Are there indications of a reality? Or not?—How do they impress you?" (Jackson, *Reform Letters,* 49). To win his favor Jackson emphasizes "the praise I am getting for the manly method in which I have

stated things—the quiet tone—the repression" in speaking about the Native American plight (50). Jackson associates these qualities, clearly valued in a literary project, with masculinity and a "manly method" of literary production. The resulting work, *A Century of Dishonor,* was praised by some, but lead others, such as her frequent correspondent, Senator Henry Dawes, to worry that she might become associated with "what is technically known as 'lobbying'," which Jackson agrees "should not rest on a woman" (150). Jackson, while aware of the limitations placed on her writing, is also seemingly content to follow the rules of her dominant, patriarchal society and to abide by the demands the literary market places on her authorship.

Jackson's submission to gendered demands of her literary society makes sense considering that, by the time Jackson wrote *A Century of Dishonor*, she was already an established literary contributor with connections to some of the era's prominent literary magazines and editors and therefore, well versed in these market rules, especially as they applied to female writers. After the death of her first husband, Jackson began publishing poems and short stories under pseudonyms, most of which were well received by the reading public and the literary establishment. By the time she married her second husband, she was bringing in a decent income and supporting herself with her publications. But after attending Chief Standing Bear's lecture on the violent removal of his tribe, Jackson famously became what she "said a thousand times was the most odious thing in life,--'a woman with a hobby'" (Jackson, *Reform Letters* 84). And the danger for a literary "'woman with a hobby'" was to walk the fine line between the "manly method" and the era's more acceptable women's methods deployed in sentimental and domestic romance genres. In a follow up letter on December 29th of 1879, Jackson again tries to

reassure her husband on the subject of her project, this time claiming that she is "not writing--& shall not write *one word* as a sentimentalist! Statistical Records—verbatim reports officially authenticated, are what I wish to get before the American people:--& are all which are needed, to rouse public sentiment" (65-66). Thus, Jackson begins *Century* by situating her authorial voice: "between the theory of some sentimentalists that the Indians were the real owners of the soil, and the theory of some politicians that they had no right of ownership whatsoever in it, there are innumerable grades and confusions of opinion" (Jackson, *Century* 9). Sentimentalism and politics are set in opposition to one another, with Jackson declaring that her role as author of *Century* is to find the middle ground and alleviate those "innumerable grades and confusions" that lie between the two. The question scholars have thus had to engage in when it comes to Jackson's literary works is: what, given Jackson's clear hesitation to perform the kind of sentimental work present in Stowe's novel, changes to encourage Jackson to not only write a sentimental romance novel but to then compare it to the preeminent sentimental work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? Jackson's biographer reconciles this move by attempting to rescue Jackson's works from sentimentalism suggesting that they are "best labeled 'regionalist'" (Phillips 34). But this suggests that sentimentalism and regionalism are mutually exclusive, just as Jackson tries to suggest in *Century* that sentimentalism and politics are also oppositional modes of writing, not to mention that Phillips seems to accept the kind of pejorative arguments Jackson and others have made against sentimentalism's political and literary value. Rather than downplaying Jackson's clear move to sentimentalism, I find that even Jackson's early travel writings and political treatise show evidence of a regional sentimentalism, however much she tried to resist it. Regardless of how Jackson felt about

sentimental writers and texts, her work displays an inherited set of genre conventions and a common language with which she is able to describe Western-American geographies, peoples, and expansion. Noting this impulse towards sentimentalism suggests the ways 19th century women writers internalized certain gendered notions of literary production even as they sought to break down those barriers.

Jackson's early travel narratives concerning California and the Far West provide an example of the ways sentimentalism replaced the genre's more masculine adventure tropes. While writers such as Mark Twain, John Muir, and Jack London convey a Western-American region full of rugged terrain and adventurous activity to heighten the masculine efforts required to conquer the region, Jackson's descriptions of the West imply a sentimentalism that draws the West into the family of the nation in affective ways. Manifest Destiny and discourses of U.S. expansion are both national narratives that celebrate American exceptionalism and the spreading of American ideals and regional narratives that express a kind of origin story for the American West. As such, these discourses are incomplete without a sentimentalism to frame the conquering and settling of the American West in terms of reproduction, family, and American perseverance. Ultimately, sentimentalism contributes to what Lowe recognizes as "the economy of affirmation and forgetting that characterizes liberal humanist understanding" (Lowe 39), and what Benedict Anderson identifies as the nation's reliance on "'forgetting' the experience of this continuity" (Anderson 205). That is, as much as Manifest Destiny is used to justify Anglo-American settlement in the West, it is also a narrative that invents a history while it subsumes another. As both Lowe and Anderson suggest, the nation must forget its lack of a past as much as it needs to actively create its future by passing down

inherited national narratives. As it pertains to narratives of Manifest Destiny, the nation must forget that the West is a region with a history and temporal life before the U.S. in order to secure its geography for the nation's future incorporating it into the nation's own, self-proclaimed liberal history and identity. This occurs through sentimental renderings of Western landscapes and temporalities that position Anglo-American settlers as inheritors of a bygone cultural history.

Jackson, on the other hand, uses a sentimental language to challenge dominant understandings of the West as *table rasa* even while that same sentimentality restricts her within nationalist renderings of the American West. In her early travel writing on California, Jackson uses a sentimental language that describes the historical value of the landscape. Take for instance this passage Jackson wrote about the Sierra Mountains in her 1878 travel memoir, *Bits of Travel at Home*:

> Does anybody believe that, if the Pilgrims had landed where Father Junipero Serra's missionaries did, witches would have been burnt in the San Joaquin Valley? Or that if gold strewed the ground to-day from Cape Cod to Berkshire, a Massachusetts man would ever spend it like a Californian? This is the key-note to much which the expectation and prophecy about California seem to me to overlook. I believe that the lasting power, the true culture, the best, most roundest result—physical, moral, mental—of our national future will not spring on the Western Shore, any more than on the Eastern. It lies to-day like a royal heir, hidden in secret, crowned with jewels, dowered with gold and silver, nurtured on strengths of the upper airs of the Sierras, biding the day when two peoples, meeting midway on the continent, shall establish the true centre and the complete life (Jackson, *Bits* 81).

In this scene from her first travels West, Jackson borrows on the ideas and rhetoric of dominant Manifest Destiny and critiques it. While she does relate expansion to the "lasting power, the true culture" and the "physical, moral, [and] mental" health of "our national future," she does not accept the "prophecy about California." Rather, she finds

that the national future "lies to-day like a royal heir" in "meeting midway on the continent," in establishing "the true centre and the complete life" of the nation. This rhetoric of uniting the East and West in the center harkens back to early claims that U.S. progress will bring "the Empires of the Atlantic and Pacific…together into one" (O'Sullivan 34), yet Jackson expresses a skepticism towards the "prophecy" and "expectations" of California rooted in her awareness that California already has its own history. Jackson ties temporality to geography, history to region, when she suggests that California is inseparable from Father Junipero Serra and his missionary history. Even as she erases the history of the Native Americans living in the region before the Spanish missionaries arrived, Jackson rejects Anglo-America's "expectation and prophecy about California" precisely because she recognizes and values the history of Spanish-era California and does not believe California begins with Anglo-Americans and their Manifest Destiny. Rather than erasing this history, as dominant discourses of Manifest Destiny do, Jackson advocates for its inheritance and suggests that part of annexing the western territories is annexing this history as well. In fact, the "royal heir" suggests a union of histories rather than the erasure of one by the other, while it also articulates positioning Spanish-era Californian history and culture as a precursor to American Manifest Destiny.

But the language of "heir" and "two peoples, meeting midway on the continent" relies on sentimentalism in its deployment of domestic intimacy and reproduction as a metaphor to describe the nation's imperial future. This sentimental language, which deviates from the typical language of Manifest Destiny by suggesting a marriage of histories rather than a disavowal of one in favor of the other, is also, as Berlant would

have us see, “shedding prior knowledge on behalf of new promises and consolations” (Berlant 96). Because even in a marriage, especially in the pre-women’s suffrage era Jackson is writing in, there is an erasure of histories and identities “on behalf of new promises and consolations.” As Lowe argues, “Bourgeois intimacy was a regulating ideal through which the colonial powers administered the enslaved and colonized and sought to indoctrinate the newly freed into forms of Christian marriage and family” (Lowe 30), and thereby, Lowe traces “a colonial division of intimacy, which charts the historically differentiated access to the domains of liberal personhood” (18). Intimacy, usually written in terms of bringing together rather than separating or eradicating, is still an imbalanced “division” which dictates access to national identity and participation. Sentimentalism then, Berlant shows us, is about survival. It is a method of “negotiating the contradictions of a critical bourgeoise consciousness” (Berlant 96) with undertones of a “soft supremacy” (99) which ultimately “posits the value of fictive truths and strategic displacements to champion the cause of survival itself”(96). Berlant offers us a way of reading Jackson’ *Bits of Travel at Home* as well as her other writings about the American West for the “fictive truths and strategic displacements” it deploys to enact her own feminine survival in the hyper-masculine world of Western-American conquer and settlement. Jackson’s description of California is a description of California landscape and history at odds with itself. It wants to both celebrate a pre-U.S. history in the region but claim that history for itself as a means of justifying Anglo-American settler colonialism in the region. While, as I mentioned, it does not want to erase completely California’s early history, as Jackson does find value in the relationship between geography and cultural history, it does aim to subsume that history into the “complete

life" to be achieved through the marriage of "two peoples, meeting midway on the continent" and resulting in the "royal heir" of the future. It uses the sentimental, euphemistic language of domestic intimacy—marriage, reproduction, family—in order to create "fictive truths and strategic displacements," but in this language we also see an anxiety and a pain in that this sentimental language is also divided against itself. Jackson is at once participating in national discussions of expansion and thereby, finding belonging there, but she is also working against herself by promoting the kind of paternalistic language that, as Lowe says, "subsumes colonial violence."

In the first chapter, I argued that Ruiz de Burton manipulated popular genre tropes in order to assert alternative cultural and historical narratives into the national literary archive. I could rephrase this to say that Ruiz de Burton's novels challenge the inheritance of national narratives, question the "forgetting" required in their formation, and disparages the sentimental ways these narratives were presented to and consumed by American readers. As a rather successful Anglo-American literary woman and settler in the West, Helen Hunt Jackson at once shares concerns with Ruiz de Burton's narratives—namely the dispossession of peoples in the West after U.S. annexation—and competes with them. If Ruiz de Burton attempts to force the memory of Californio history and aristocracy onto a dominant Anglo-American audience in the post Mexican-American war era by delivering her message in the popular form of the sentimental novel, then Jackson also intends to remember this Californio history. However, due to her particular sociopolitical positioning, her use of the sentimental novel is far more indoctrinated in the genre's conventions. She presents this history more as an artifact of the region, a neutralized possession that is inherited by an American national narrative

through discourses of Manifest Destiny and national expansion. From her initial interest in the American West, as documented in *Bits of Travel at Home,* we can see how her situation as an Anglo-American woman directs her gaze and interactions in the region. But at the same time, *Ramona* is a novel that tells the story of a struggle, not only in regards to Jackson's advocacy for Native Americans, but also the struggle for Anglo-American women to find belonging in a national identity built on the exclusion of women.

"There is but one Indian": The Paradoxical "Life" of the Sentimental Novel

Ramona was Jackson's last attempt to attract an audience for her Native American advocacy. As she explains to an unnamed friend, it was a novel she had hoped to write for a while but "knew I could not do it; knew I had no background,--no local color for it" (Jackson, *Reform Letters* 313). It isn't until she was appointed Agent of Indian Affairs by the Federal government and commissioned to travel to various Southern California tribes that Jackson felt she had "the very perfection of coloring" for a "story that should 'tell' on the Indian question" (313). As Phillips tells us, Jackson felt "the need for people from different regions of the country to understand one another" (Phillips 81), and often expressed in her correspondences, as we see above, a desire to be affiliated with the era's local color writers (35). But Jackson's statement above also raises some questions about the ways she approached local color writing. That Jackson felt the author's need for "coloring" a region or folkway in order that it "should 'tell'" on the subject comes with a sense of the text's exploitation of or, in the very least, manipulation of a subject to "'tell'" on itself. This is a problem of the late 19th and early 20th-century local colorists that Sui

Sin Far is critical of as she reveals the suffering such literary practices create for their subjects.

But Jackson's self-proclaimed dedication to representing the region becomes more complicated when, in this very same letter, written in February of 1884, just months before the novel's publication, Jackson informs her friend that "The success of it [*Ramona*]—if it succeeds—will be that I do not even suggest any Indian history, --till the interest is so aroused in the heroine—and hero—that people will not lay the book down. There is but one Indian in the story" (Jackson, *Indian Reform* 314). This is certainly how the novel reads and is in clear opposition to the entire purpose of local color fiction. The first two thirds of the novel exclusively tell the romantic story of Ramona and Alessandro's forbidden love affair. It isn't until the last third that the novel discusses the violent dispossession and removal of Native Americans from their tribal lands at the hands of the U.S. government. As this letter suggests, the structure of the novel's plot covers up or at least delays introduction of some of this violent history in order that Jackson's audience maintains interest in her characters. But what is curious about this letter is Jackson's claim that there is "but one Indian in the story." Who is the "one Indian" Jackson refers to? If it is Alessandro, then it discounts Ramona's half-Indian heritage. If it is Ramona, the novel's titular character, then it makes an interesting move in forgetting Alessandro, the novel's "exceptionally adept Indian" (Gonzalez 448). In either case, Jackson's comment to her friend ignores the many other Indian characters we encounter in the novel, whether they be Alessandro's relatives, fellow laborers, neighbors, or the tribe that takes Ramona in after her husband is shot to death by an Anglo-American settler. It is hard to believe that Jackson understood her own novel to

have “but one Indian” in it but the fact that she advertised it this way is evidence of one of the many moments where Jackson’s progressive ideas regarding Native Americans clash with her privilege, where her need to find the right “coloring” for her audience intervenes in what the story actually “’tells.’” While her travel writings and political treatise were undeniably about Native American culture and removal by U.S. legislation, her retelling of this story in novel form reshapes the narrative to be about Americans and their Manifest Destiny to expand westward, leaving Native Americans and their experiences in the novel to serve as a kind of subplot that functions to propel the story of Anglo-American agency and perseverance.

It is precisely this kind of forgetting that should draw our attention to the network of “intimacies” evident in the novel, and which positions us to read the novel not as an “Indian reform novel” (Gonzalez 437), as it has popularly been read, but as a post-Reconstruction novel that is concerned with configurations of citizenship and labor as the nation ends slavery and begins imperialist expansion. While Jackson’s novel, by her own accord, attempts to narrate the violence Native Americans experienced in California as a consequence of Manifest Destiny, the use of the conventional sentimental novel only allows her to tell this story from the perspective of domestic femininity and nationalism. Berlant explains that in the sentimental novel, “the emotional labor of women places them at the center of the *story* of what counts as life, regardless of what lives women actually live” (Berlant 19). Berlant helps us recognize that Jackson’s turn to the sentimental novel as a means of acquiring a larger, more persuadable audience, must, by the very conventions that make up the sentimental novel, center that audience as the novel’s “life.” Berlant goes on to say that “sentimental politics[…]works on behalf of its

eradication," meaning that the sentimental novel "violates zones of privacy that give them privilege and protection in order to fix something social that feels threatening," but that this is expected to "be reversed once the national world is safe, once again, for a return to personal life" (22). This results in the fact that "in the heritage of sentimentality the nationally supported taxonomies—involving race, gender, class, and regional hierarchies in particular—still largely govern the horizon of failure and possibility sentimental authors and readers construct" (22-23). What Berlant outlines for us here is that "the politico-sentimental" novel "exists paradoxically" in that it finds existence as an advocate for, in the case of *Ramona,* Native Americans, but that this advocacy work is still governed by "nationally supported taxonomies" or racist, sexist, and classist distinctions that ultimately catch the sentimental novel's female authors and readers in a double-bind where they are at once privileged and oppressed, at once critiquing national histories of violence and reinforcing them, and both advocating inclusion for and rejecting "intimacies" with othered communities.

Following Berlant, we can read Jackson's forgetting of the many Native American characters in her novel as suggesting that these characters are not the "life" the novel is truly concerned about. They are local color background, not liberal persons with potential for citizenship or labor rights. This is the very point, of course, that makes Jackson, her Anglo-American female characters, and her largely Anglo-American female audience interested in Native Americans as a population against which they can measure their own access to citizenship and national belonging. We are to understand Jackson's novel as involving "but one Indian" because the novel is not really about Indians or the violence they endure at all. Instead, Jackson uses the dispossession of Native Americans

and their displacement from their lands at the hands of violent, hyper-masculine, Anglo-American settlers to suggest that the West offers a new terrain for Anglo-American women and the rural poor to reassert their citizenship and national belonging in the wake of Emancipation. Jackson's choice to refashion her message as a sentimental novel is itself a political choice that highlights her desire to have her advocacy heard by a specific reading audience, but which also serves as evidence of her own anxiety over her precarious position in the nation.

The "Intimacies" of Labor and Domesticity in Jackson's American West

Jackson's anxieties over citizenship in her post-Reconstruction era emerge through the novel's discussions of labor and the economic shift from slavery to a wage labor system. Many scholars have noted that Jackson "strengthened the claims of white women to the public sphere through the reconfiguration of colonial difference enacted in *Ramona*," or that the novel's "post-Reconstruction domesticity,"—a domesticity interested in the "'civilization' or 'domestication'" of "'foreign' peoples"—"generated new regimes of gender relations that allowed white women to become more fully enabled social actors" (Gonzalez 441). John Gonzalez traces the novel's use of female characters as domesticating agents that civilize men, especially Native American men, and usher them into American cultural citizenship. "Driven by the invisible but persuasive influence of domestic interiors to desire private property," Gonzalez argues, "Indian men would find the necessary impetus to leave tribal communalism for wage labor" (450). Gonzalez suggests here that Ramona's domesticating powers encourage Alessandro to want to work for wages, setting him on a path of transformation from "the savage, communal Indian" to the "'intelligently selfish,' autonomous, rational actor of classic laissez-faire

economics," thus making "the savage Indian vanish, adding in due time the dark-skinned yet civilized US citizen to the nation's fabric" (451). Wage work, in Gonzalez's argument is the equivalent to liberal personhood and a desire for citizenship and is the impetus to eradicating the savage. Though I agree that the novel links interior domesticity and economic labor, as I noted in my analysis of Señora Moreno at the start of this chapter, Gonzalez's argument reads the novel's discussions of labor without consideration for the "intimacies" the novel's discourses of labor and domesticity share with other regions and populations in the nation, or for its role in U.S. imperial narratives. This kind of analysis maintains an isolated "Western-American" situatedness for the novel and forecloses the ways the novel speaks to national and global systems of labor oppression. Wage labor is not the path to citizenship in these late 19th-century decades, but is instead reconfigured to identify "free," liberal personhood from the "unfree" and the dependent, those "'unfit for liberty' or 'incapable of civilization'" (Lowe 7).

Jackson concludes *A Century of Dishonor* by cautioning against extending U.S. citizenship to Native Americans, making it difficult to sustain arguments that see *Ramona* as Jackson's attempt to advocate for their assimilation into the nation through citizenship. "To administer complete citizenship of a sudden, all round, to all Indians," Jackson says, "would be as grotesque a blunder as to dose them all round with any one medicine, irrespective of the symptoms and needs of their diseases. It would kill more than it would cure" (Jackson, *Century* 340). Falling in line with the same paternalistic rhetoric used to deny African Americans citizenship and enfranchisement, Jackson compares citizenship to negligent medicine—the very thing that leads to the death of Ramona's and Alessandro's first child. After Alessandro agrees to sign his name in the Indian Agent's

register, the doctor gives him a medicine to help his child. But "The medicine did the baby no good. In fact, it did her harm. She was too feeble for violent remedies" (Jackson, *Ramona* 320). The baby dies not simply from the Indian Agents' casually racist prolonged neglect, the scene suggests, but, reprising Jackson's argument in *Century,* by their eventual treatment of him as undifferentiated from Anglo-Americans. As in Jackson's nonfiction, this Indian child is "too feeble" for citizenship and literally "dos[ing her] all round with any one medicine" results in her death rather than in her assimilation to liberal personhood, which threatens to end Alessandro's lineage. As Jackson suggests in the first of a series of articles on California she wrote for *Century Magazine*, the best way of "dealing" with Native Americans in the West was to collect them onto reservations (Jackson, *Glimpses* 35). Jackson admires the fading Spanish mission system and writes in this article "that they [Native Americans] looked so kindly as they did to the ways and restraints of the new life, is the strongest possible proof that the methods of the friars in dealing with them must have been both wise and humane" (35). Denying the violence and celebrating the new "restraints" the missions placed on Native Americans not only harkens back to Jackson's letter about Lucy, the slave woman she hired while living in Washington D.C., but also suggests that Jackson values the Native Americans in the West as a controllable, restrain-able population of laborers.

In fact, the lack of organized reservations in *Ramona* is exactly what Jackson points to as the central problem in California. In a conversation between Aunt Ri and the Indian Agent Alessandro approaches for help, the Indian Agent explains his inability to help and indicates that "'It is very different from what it would be if I had all my Indians on a reservation'" (Jackson, *Ramona* 318). That the agent refers to "all my Indians" in the

possessive is evidence of the paternalistic rhetoric Jackson deploys as the basis of her advocacy. It also helps us to identify an "intimacy" between the Spanish mission system the novel admires, the Southern plantation system that the novel wants to get away from but remains somewhat loyal to, and the Indian reservations that Jackson so clearly promotes in both her nonfiction writing on California and her sentimental romance version of the narrative. Jackson opens the novel with Señora Moreno's concern over the lack of Indian labor to help with the sheep shearing. Señora Moreno "did not realize how time was going; there would be no shearers to be hired presently, since the Señora was determined to have none but Indians" (2). Scattered across the region as a consequence of their displacement by Anglo-American settlers, Señora Moreno's concern about the lack of labor is exactly the opposite concern the newly emancipated South has over the excess of laboring bodies. Both systems, the mission system and the plantation system, are threatened by the removal of labor, whether it's at the hands of imperial activity on the part of Anglo-Americans or the progressive politics of emancipation and Reconstruction. The divided loyalty the nation has to a slave-labor economy and the progressive politics that turn to the wage-labor economy is negotiated out in the discussion of Native Americans and the reservation system, which is also under attack by U.S. advocacy groups that want to see Native Americans assimilated into the national imagination by breaking up tribal lands and establishing individual Native Americans as property owners, wage laborers, and indebted citizens.

Alessandro is *Ramona*'s representative Native American. His character is intended to present all that is possible for Native Americans in the American West and for an Anglo-American West that accepts them. The indecisive manner in which Jackson

treats Alessandro's character in the novel, and which culminates in his death out of narrative necessity, attaches to his role as a laborer. In the novel's first introduction of Alessandro we are told that he is a "simple-minded, unlearned man" who is confused but dazzled by the beauty of sunrises because he "could not have been made to believe that the earth was moving. He thought the sun was coming up apace, and the earth was standing still" (Jackson, *Ramona* 53). This description paints a romanticized but ignorant portrait of Alessandro but which is contradicted just a few pages later when we are told that Alessandro is the son of Chief Pablo who, providing him an education in literature and music, "had not done his son any good by trying to make him like white men[…]The Americans would not let an Indian do anything but plough and sow and herd cattle. A man need not read and write, to do that" (56). At odds with the "simple-minded, unlearned" description we first get of Alessandro, this description seems to critique an American system that defines individuals by race over intelligence and education. But then, another few pages later, we are again reminded that Alessandro "was not a civilized man; he had to bring to bear on his present situation only simple, primitive, uneducated instincts and impulses" (59), and that he was most fit for sheep-shearing and performing the very same labor Jackson's narrator just said the Americans only want to see of him. These moments of back-and-forth between presenting Alessandro as the "exceptionally adept Indian" (Gonzalez 448) but which also remind readers that he is "not a civilized man," occur consistently throughout the novel and, I argue, express Jackson's and her larger society's concern about labor in the post-Reconstruction nation.

Pulling from Lowe, we can understand how Alessandro represents "a *figure* introducing this alleged transition from slavery to freedom," and how he is used to

"define and to obscure the boundary between enslavement and freedom, and to normalize both" (Lowe 24-25). In order to understand exactly how Native Americans function to "obscure" and "normalize" the boundaries between enslavement and freedom in *Ramona*, I turn to Jackson's Aunt Ri and how her location in the West and her conditions for being there help us to extract the "intimacies" between the shifting labor systems in the declining Spanish West, the emancipated South, and the Native American reservations which were under debate. Aunt Ri's character invites readers to critique the passive submission and blind patriotism an uneducated class of white Southerners invested into notions of nation and national identity at the same time that she serves as evidence of the damage done to citizens indoctrinated in the nation's "forgetful" renditions of national histories. As I argued earlier, Aunt Ri asserts her whiteness over Ramona and Alessandro. While scholarship has chosen to overlook this to make arguments about Aunt Ri's role as Jackson's vision for female empowered advocacy and the idealistic notion that people can grow and change their politics, Aunt Ri also uses a paternalistic rhetoric of superiority over Ramona and Alessandro and establishes the parameters with which both Jackson's politics and the sentimental novel work. If, as I argued in the last chapter, Ruiz de Burton's sentimental heroines stood as autoethnographic translations of the harsh restrictions and absurd loyalties that New England society concedes to as a condition of their enrollment in national identity, then Jackson's Aunt Ri is the Southern-American iteration of this sort of subscription to national ideals. But, unlike New England society, Aunt Ri's Southern-American family suffers from an inadequate understanding of national politics and their implicated relationship to those politics.

Aunt Ri is a character through which Jackson's mostly Anglo-American women readers are able to familiarize themselves with an otherwise unfamiliar geography and social situation. In terms of Anderson's understanding of the role print capitalism plays in the imagined national community, Aunt Ri is the novel's device to forward the reader's ability to "relate themselves to others" of the American West in the name of forming national cohesion (Anderson 36). Typically, scholars have been drawn to Aunt Ri as the novel's "figure of hope" and reform (Padget 849). Aunt Ri and her family (the Hyers) are introduced to Ramona and Alessandro on their travels to California as a last effort to heal their son, Jos, of his illness, situating the Hyers as participants in the West's popular and, as many have argued, exploitative health-tourism industry (an industry Jackson herself participated in). What interests scholars most about Aunt Ri however, is that Ramona cures her of her prejudice against Native Americans and her misconceptions of Western-American histories and in turn, Aunt Ri cures Ramona of her fevered delirium after she witnesses her husband shot to death by an Anglo-American settler at the end of the novel. In a nod to the magazines and periodicals Jackson herself contributed to, Jackson writes that Aunt Ri draws her prejudiced ideas about Native Americans "from newspapers, and from a book or two of narratives of massacres" (Jackson, *Ramona* 308). Aunt Ri's education of the Western geography and peoples comes to her through literary periodicals that circulate in the Eastern and Southern United States, and which influence how their readers come into contact with the new region and its cultural history. Of course, as alluded to in the last chapter, these publications were often interested in marketing the West for travelers and settlers and therefore, portrayed the West in romanticized and exoticized ways. Aunt Ri generically represents the popular readers Jackson's

sentimental novel targets, and which *Century of Dishonor* had failed to attract, and asks them to be more critical of the images they consume through popular literatures.

Even so, Jackson's Aunt Ri is a character whose understanding of Ramona and Alessandro is filtered through a literary occupation of the American West that intentionally "forgets" certain histories as a means of fueling a blind love for country and a sense of American exceptionalism. Jackson writes that it is Ramona's apparent love for her child, her being "'bound up 'n thet baby's yer could ask enny woman to be'" (Jackson, *Ramona* 308), and her clean, orderly domestic space that changes Aunt Ri's perspective and ignites in her a passion to "make a business o'findin' out abaout" the forced removal of Native Americans by the U.S. government, just as Jackson did herself (314). Scholars have used these moments in the text to suggest that Jackson deploys Aunt Ri as "a woman-centered critique" of Western-American settlement and that it envisions "women as the most effective agents of social change" (Padget 849-850). And though this may be in some way true, Jackson's Aunt Ri is still a deeply ambivalent character apprehensive about her precarious national belonging and democratic voice. She is the nexus of the anxieties post-Reconstruction Americans experience over the expanding nation, progressive ideals such as emancipation, and labor, and she brings these anxieties to the American West, a region where the nation is supposed to renew itself. Aunt Ri's zealous declaration to "make a business o'findin' out abaout" the Federal Government's involvement in the mistreatment of Native Americans is spoken out of her understanding that, as a citizen, she has the right to inquire into civic matters. And yet, when Ramona tells Aunt Ri that she believes the politicians in Washington D.C. are responsible for their dispossession in the West and asks: "'Is it not in Washington all the laws are made,'"

Aunt Ri cannot confidently answer this simple question (313). And neither can the men in her family, indicating that it is not simply her gender that is ignorant of national politics, but her socioeconomic place in society which is to blame. Aunt Ri answers Ramona with: "'I believe so,'" but immediately defers to her son, asking him: "'Ain't it, Jos? Its Congress aint't, makes the laws?'" (314). But Jos just repeats Aunt Ri with the same, insecure response of: "'I bleeve so![…]They make some, at any rate. I donno's they make 'em all'" (314). This dialogue, which indicates Ramona is better versed in American political systems than Aunt Ri and her family, also shows how an uneducated population of Anglo-Americans passionately believes in a system it does not understand.

While Aunt Ri has been considered the novel's model of "post-Reconstruction domestic logic of racial tolerance and inclusion" (Gonzalez 445), scholars have failed to take note of how, more than a feminine figure of domesticity, Aunt Ri is a member of the South's uneducated, rural, poor class of white Americans that considered themselves displaced after Emancipation and certainly after Reconstruction and the passing of the 13th and 14th Constitutional amendments. As such, Aunt Ri is indicative of the "intimacies" between the progressive rhetoric of Manifest Destiny—a rhetoric that encouraged Anglo-Americans to travel West and establish claims to the land and thereby, the nation—and the racialized labor tensions in the North and South emerging as freed slaves competed for labor in both the industrialized cities of the North and the farming towns of the South. David Roediger helps us see this context of the novel more clearly when he argues in *Wages of Whiteness* that "the working class formation and the systematic development of a sense of whiteness went hand in hand for the US white working class" (Roediger 8). During and just after the Civil War, Roediger points out,

"workers nurtured a sense of grievance based on the notion that they were being exploited as whites and that favor was being, or was about to be, lavished on Blacks" (171). The confusion over how definitions of "free" were to be interpreted now that "No longer could a counterpoint with slaves define whites as 'free labor'," were accompanied by the poor, working white's need to separate themselves from the formerly enslaved (175). With the distinction between free and unfree labor collapsed, wage labor itself, a form of labor which places the laborer in a position of dependency, became a way to distinguish between citizens and the disenfranchised, encouraging the white working class to turn to race as a way of distancing themselves from the newly freed black population. Whiteness, Roediger argues, emerges as an identity only after Emancipation and serves to alleviate anxieties about citizenship and national belonging amongst a class of poor, working-class, whites holding the same jobs as the previously enslaved black populations. Though Roediger's study focuses on the consequences of Emancipation on the urban North, reading *Ramona* as a post-Reconstruction novel rather than confining it to a traditional "Western-American" analytical framework helps us identify the ways Jackson's Native American advocacy is also concerned with the parameters of citizenship and national belonging now that labor no longer serves as a proper distinction and how her novel brings together the histories of Manifest Destiny and Southern Reconstruction. It helps us read scenes where Aunt Ri's attention to Ramona seems charitable with an eye for the power struggle happening between Aunt Ri and Ramona as the new national conditions make a meeting such as the one between Aunt Ri and Ramona in the mountains of the American West precarious and unstable. Roediger's study mostly focuses on the tensions between black and white labor in the urban North but his findings

encourage us to consider the tension that also arose between the freed slave populations in the South and poor, white farmers who, although many owned their land, labored on it themselves unlike the owners of large plantations that employed workers to work the land for them. In a similar way the white workers of the industrialized North felt their wages and labor power threatened by freed slaves, so too can we understand Aunt Ri and her family as threatened by the changing tides of rural labor in the South.

Through the Hyer family, who are on their way to California because their son's doctor prescribed California as his only chance at life, Jackson incorporates the era's health-tourism boosterism that encouraged many Anglo-American families to travel West. However, Jackson's treatment of health-tourism in the novel also links the shifting definitions of free labor in the North and South to the pioneer history of westward travel and settlement. Jackson's initial descriptions of the Hyer family racializes them based on their poverty and their need to work rather than hire their labor out, much like the urban industrial white workers in Roediger's study. As one example, Aunt Ri's son calls her "mammy," a term that, at this time in the South, was almost exclusively reserved for black nannies of white children (Jackson, *Ramona* 307). Additionally, Jackson writes that :

> It was the way in the Hyer family to make the best of things; they had always possessed this virtue to such an extent, that they suffered from it as a vice. There was hardly to be found in all Southern Tennessee a more contented, shiftless, ill-bestead family than theirs. But there was no grumbling. Whatever went wrong, whatever was lacking, it was 'jest like aour luck,' they said, and did nothing, or next to nothing, about it (306-307).

That they met "Whatever went wrong" with a passive reservation to their misfortunes aligns the Hyers with the disenfranchised who could do "nothing, or next to nothing,

about it." Described as "contented" by their poverty and "shiftless," Jackson conflates poverty and labor with unfree and black. The Hyers eventually differentiate themselves through their mobility and the "'good luck'" they are afforded in being able to go to California as the doctor suggests. Suffering from "hemorrhage after hemorrhage," the Hyer's son, bleeding to death, forces them to sell "their little place for half it was worth," buy a "covered wagon, and set off, half beggared, with their sick boy on a bed in the bottom of the wagon, as cheery as if they were rich people on a pleasure-trip" (307). This kind of health-tourism to the West, as Jennifer S. Tuttle explains, was usually practiced by members of the "urban, white, privileged-class," who were "at the forefront of American cultural and economic development" (Tuttle 59)—like Jackson herself—and therefore, held professions that "overtaxed their nervous systems" (58). The illness most associated with health-tourism to the West was neurasthenia which, as Tuttle suggests, was created out of a "nationalistic" discourse that "went hand in hand with the forces of Manifest Destiny" (59). It suggested that the brainwork of newly emergent professional class debilitated the body's physicality and the only cure was to experience the rugged terrain and warm climate of the West. But the Hyers invoke a different kind of health tourism, one tied to poverty and disenfranchisement, and which links Southern Reconstruction to Western settler-colonialism in ways that have not been attributed to the novel before.

A member of the rural, working class, the Hyer's son is not on "a pleasure-trip" to calm his nerves so that he might return to the taxing job of building the nation's wealth and culture from behind a desk. Rather, Jos Hyer hopes to recover and "'to git settled 'n some o'these towns where there's carpenterin' to be done'" (312), as part of a pioneer

national narrative backed by the Federal government and reserved for the disenfranchised white populations of the post-Reconstruction South. More than just conflating Jos' hemorrhages with job competition in the South, Jos and his family are fleeing the possibility that they will become dependents to a wage-labor economy that has been established in the American North and which is encroaching on the American South in the post-slavery decades. Jos is in search of work such as "carpenterin'," skilled labor that maintains his economic individualism, access to property ownership, and separates him from the massive populations of freed black laborers who work agricultural and factory jobs for wages in the North and South and, undeniably, from transient Native American laborers such as Alessandro who travel up and down the Southern California coast laboring on Señora Moreno's and other Californio's ranchos. In Lowe's framework, Alessandro may be considered "a *figure* introducing this alleged transition from slavery to freedom," and he is used in the novel to "define and to obscure the boundary between enslavement and freedom, and to normalize both" (Lowe 24-25). Albeit, Alessandro is "free" in the sense that he is not enslaved, but Native Americans are also that migrant labor force that serves to "obscure the boundary between enslavement and freedom" precisely because their role as laborers dehumanizes them and establishes them as dependents on Anglo-American paternalism. In other words, Alessandro and Ramona serve to maintain the façade of the Hyers' privileged national belonging and their ability to participate in civic matters and allows for the governing bodies of the nation to take advantage of this uneducated, impoverished class of white Americans in sustaining a base for the imagined national community.

While Jos Hyer's mobility from South to West gives him purchase on a white identity connected to land ownership and control over his own labor, for Alessandro and the rest of the Native American laborers, mobility emerges in the form of dependent, migratory, agricultural work that racializes them at the same time that it restricts their access to a stationary domesticity tied to citizenship. The novel takes its tragic turn when Alessandro's Native American village is ransacked by Anglo-American settlers while he and the majority of the village's men are working on Señora Moreno's rancho. Alessandro returns to his village to find a white family has moved into his home. Through a crack in the window he sees "A table was set, in the middle of the floor, and there were sitting at it a man, woman, and two children. The youngest, little more than a baby, sat in its high chair, drumming with a spoon on the table, impatient for its supper" (Jackson, *Ramona* 232). This scene evokes what Lowe theorizes as the "'political economy' of intimacies, by which I mean a particular calculus governing the production, distribution, and possession of intimacy" (Lowe 18). Alessandro's access to domestic intimacy is stolen while he is away laboring for an economy that values him for his labor but not for his humanity and provides the opportunity for this white family to claim their own rights to domesticity. He is kept outside of it, literally, and reduced to looking through a window at an almost parodic depiction of a doppelganger family, whose sameness to his only emphasizes their difference: they are white and their healthy baby cries for food. Though this is the consequence of the racist-imperialist program of Manifest Destiny, of which this Anglo-American family is a key player, this family is also displaced and dispossessed by the abrupt move from a slave economy to an industrialized society. Their move West is predicated on the understanding that the West

offers an economic freedom indicative of national belonging that has been lost to them in the other regions of the changing nation. In her argument about global labor relations, Lowe recognizes "a constellation of asymmetrical and unevenly legible 'intimacies'" that reveal "'close connexion,' that is, the implied but less visible forms of alliance, affinity, and society among variously colonized peoples beyond the metropolitan national center" (Lowe 19). Lowe helps us understand that, when Alessandro finds a white family living in his house, Jackson alludes to the ways racialized conceptions of domesticity and migratory labor serves to distinguish between Anglo-American settlers and Native Americans in the novel as well as to the "'close connexion[s]'" between the disenfranchisement that brings these Anglo-American settlers West and the dispossession of Native Americans at the hand of Manifest Destiny.

The West's stratification of labor and domesticity brings Anglo-American settlers and Native Americans into competition for civic participation and national belonging. At the same time, the West is also a new terrain on which Jos and the Hyer family can reassert old or, as Lowe would say, "residual" discourses of subordination to create "'emergent'[…]social worlds" (Lowe 19). Described as "contented laborers in the fields," Native Americans are understood in the novel to be "natural enough" laborers who have "born in them" an affinity for agricultural work (Jackson, *Ramona* 95). As a member of a "race [that] was never meant for anything but servants," the liberally educated Alessandro is represented in the novel as an "exceptional instance," but it is suggested that even this exception labors because it is natural rather than a way to make money or a pathway to property ownership and citizenship (95-96). Exceptional as he may be, Alessandro is not "so exceptional, but that if you were to offer him, for instance,

the same wages you pay Juan Can," the novel's Mexican property manager, "he would jump at the chance of staying on the place" (96). Alessandro himself says that "it was not for the wages" that he works for the Moreno rancho but because "it would be a pleasure to me to be of help to you" (107). In a post-Reconstruction United States, where the old stereotypes of black laborers as naturally inclined to the work and eager to serve at the pleasure of their white masters that once served to justify their enslavement are being proven wrong and unsustainable, concurrent representations of Native Americans as "noble savages" now replace those images of black labor and introduce a new population of "free" wage laborers. Lowe argues that "[w]hat some have represented as a linear temporal progression from colonial abjection to liberal freedom actually elides what might be more properly conceived as a spatial dynamic, in which forms of both liberal subject and society in the imperial center are possible only in relation to laboring lives in the colonized geographies or 'zones of exception' with which they coexist, however disavowed" (Lowe 16). Thus, we can read Native American communities in Jackson's *Ramona* as a "'zone of exception,'" that serve to "elide" the progressive temporal pattern the U.S. appears to follow from slavery to freedom, and which positions Native Americans as the new population against which citizenship is made exclusive. Jackson's renderings of Alessandro as naturally inclined to manual labor and insistent on working to please his benevolent employers rather than for fair wages indicates that Jackson's own advocacy for Native Americans recognizes them as part of the "'zone of exception'" against which the Hyers define their citizenship at a time when citizenship is made increasingly unstable. This reading of the novel brings to the forefront the beginnings of a progressive Western-American identity that is couched in strategic "forgettings" and

which overlooks the fact that Western-American progressivism—a regional identity that will go on to play itself up in succeeding decades, such as the early-19th century's fight for women's suffrage and the 1960s civil rights movement—is built upon the racialized divisions of labor initiated from the very start of the United States' reign over the region.

By focusing on the ways "Aunt Ri discovers how mistaken her impression of Indians[…]really was," scholars such as Gonzalez and Padget have also ignored the notion that Aunt Ri's political power arrives on the conditions that set up the domestic oppression of Ramona and the reduction of Alessandro to laborer. After Ramona relates to Aunt Ri their forced removal from their village and the home they built themselves, Aunt Ri responds in disbelief: "I don't bleeve the Guvvermunt knows anything about it,'" and declares that "'I'm an Ummeriken'" with "'suthin' to say abaout the country I live in, 'n' the way things had oughter be,'" (313-314). Once again, Aunt Ri reasserts her belief in the narratives of citizenship that have been fed to her but which ultimately reveal her disenfranchised positionality at the bottom of the Anglo-American sociopolitical hierarchy. Previously described as "contented," "shiftless," and "beggared," Aunt Ri's sudden declaration that she is an American with "'suthin' to say'" is predicated on the erasure of the histories Alessandro and Ramona represent. As other scholars have addressed, the novel does not make room for Ramona and Alessandro in national identity nor does it create a pathway for their citizenship since the novel ends with Alessandro's death and Ramona's removal to Mexico City. Rather, Ramona and Alessandro serve the novel through their suffering and the empowerment Aunt Ri draws from their suffering. The "say" Aunt Ri offers, while it does stand to differentiate her from Ramona and Alessandro, is empty of real political clout. Despite her demand that her "say" will save

Ramona and Alessandro, Aunt Ri also says in this scene that "'They're drefful shftless lot, these yere Mexicans; 'n' the Injuns is wuss" (313). She quickly reassures Ramona and Alessandro that "when I say Injuns, I don't never mean yeow, yer know thet. Yer ain't ever seemed to me one mite like an Injun" (313). Her advocacy for Native Americans then is about making all Native Americans appear to her as Ramona and Alessandro do, which is not "'one mite like an Injun'" at all. The imagined advocacy she discusses in this scene and the actual advocacy she engages in as the novel progresses participates in the erasure—making Native Americans appear not to be "one mite like an Injun"—and the "forgetting" of the violence that disrupts the "fictive truths and strategic displacements" that the nation has asserted as explanations for Native American poverty and for their inability to be assimilated (Lowe 96).

The "say" Aunt Ri offers is empty because it seeks to make a pet-project out of an "exceptional" instance rather than confronting the "forgotten" histories that have condemned an entire population to the suffering Alessandro and Ramona face. Her "say" is spoken without reference to the systems of power which not only leave Alessandro and Ramona dispossessed, but Aunt Ri and her family as well. His child sick, Alessandro agrees to go with Aunt Ri to visit the Indian Agent to solicit the help of the government doctor. But when the Agent wants to write Alessandro's name down in his ledger, Alessandro becomes distraught and asks Aunt Ri not to "'let him write, till I know what he puts my name in his book for'" (318)! Jackson's narrator then describes that the agent, "with a look of suppressed impatience, yet trying to speak kindly," explains to Aunt Ri that "'There's no making these Indians understand anything. They seem to think if I have their names in my book, it gives me some power over them'" (318). Aunt Ri, instead of

understanding Alessandro's concerns about the implications of this power, asks the agent, "'Wall, don't it?[…]If yer hain't got it over them, who have yer got it over? What yer goin' to do for 'em'" (318)? Once again, Alessandro seems to have a better understanding than Aunt Ri of how Anglo-American imperial powers work to suppress and contain Native Americans for the benefit of Anglo-American settler-colonialism rather than for ensuring Native American safety and health. For Aunt Ri, power is taken for granted and recognized deferentially, it is something to submit oneself too for what is believed to be the greater good of the imagined national community. Aunt Ri's blind patriotism and ignorant understanding of political systems position her as a mediator, one who believes it is not the Federal government that has necessarily wronged Native Americans, but Native Americans who need the help to transform themselves into viable candidates for American citizenship. When Alessandro continues to refuse to sign the Agent's ledger, Aunt Ri tells him not to "'be a fool'" and that "'hevin' his name 'n' they book'" is "'only so the Agent kin know what Injuns wants help, 'n' where they air (318-319). Essentially, Aunt Ri explains the purpose of the Agent's ledger in much the same paternalistic and civilizing rhetoric used previously to justify the plantation system in the South and to defend the Spanish mission system of California's past. The ledger functions, as the missions did, to keep tabs on Native Americans and to entice them with the security of health, shelter, and labor, and to become dependent upon U.S. institutions of power. As a subject of that power herself, Aunt Ri's good intentions towards Ramona and Alessandro remains fraught with her ignorant understanding of national imperial projects and politics. Aunt Ri and Alessandro are drawn into an intimacy in these

moments of the novel as the dispossessed Alessandro and the disenfranchised Aunt Ri compete for their individual civic voices to be heard.

The "Marvelous Rescue": Sentimentalism and "anti-conquest"

With Aunt Ri's character, Jackson mediates her own ambivalent allegiances to a progressive stance on Native Americans in the West and the nation's foundational social orders that afford her a privileged role in American society. As a means of understanding Jackson's conflicting political stance on Native Americans and her own positionality in American sociopolitical hierarchies, it is helpful to consider Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "anti-conquest" narrator. Pratt uses the term "anti-conquest" to "refer to the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (Pratt 9). Pratt describes the author of "anti-conquest" texts as "'the seeing man,'…he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (9). With "anti-conquest," Pratt refers to the seemingly "innocent" or well-intentioned author of travel narratives whose mission for knowledge and understanding about a geography and peoples becomes imperialistic in its attempts to possess the subject through naming it and its particulars. In the last chapter, I argued for reading Ruiz de Burton's two novels as "autoethnographies" that spoke back to dominant forms of literary representation. Helen Hunt Jackson is not only a member of the dominant literary establishment to whom Ruiz de Burton is speaking back but she also represents a group of Anglo-American authors who, however "good" their intentions are, demand control over how the Western geography and peoples are to be represented. Pratt's "anti-conquest" framework helps us to appreciate the struggle Jackson underwent as she tried to bring certain issues concerning Native Americans to the Anglo-American

public while it also allows us to remain vigilant of the violence she perpetuated through these representations.

Jackson's "anti-conquest" tendencies lie in her intentions to provide alternative representations of Native Americans to Anglo-American readers as a means of promoting Indian reform legislation, but which ultimately flatten Native American identity into a generalized, one-dimensional image of their picturesque suffering. While we know from her extensive research and political writing in *Century of Dishonor* that Jackson harbors a sincere concern for Native Americans, her sentimentalizing of Native Americans in *Ramona* also reveals the limitations she has towards their incorporation into American society. Although it could be argued that this is a consequence of the era and that Jackson's inability to see Native Americans as fully fledged citizens has less to do with her political agenda and more to do with her indoctrination in era-specific social regimes, Jackson's contemporary Native American advocacy groups prove this an insufficient conclusion for understanding Jackson and her writing. For instance, the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), of which Jackson was in correspondence but never officially a member of, believed that conflicts with Native Americans in the Western territories could be resolved by forcing U.S. citizenship and assimilation on Native Americans. The program, which was at odds with the reservation system, sought to break up tribal ownership and encouraged Native Americans to adopt an American individualism that valued individual land ownership and familial, rather than tribal, domesticity. Jackson, on the other hand, "pursued a more moderate agenda. Her primary goal was to protect Indian rights and keep their land base intact" and, as late as her 1883 report for the Interior Department, Jackson supported the U.S. government purchasing

Californian lands to be reservations for the Mission Indians (Mathes 200). While Jackson's resistance to WNIA's approach to Native American advocacy seems progressive and enlightened in that it understands the value of Native American tribal culture and history, Jackson's insistence that citizenship was not the right path for Native American incorporation into the United States implies Jackson's advocacy for a paternalism that positioned Native American populations as replacement slave labor.

Jackson's paternalism appears most sharply in a series of rescues depicted *Ramona.* For example, the first time Aunt Ri meets Ramona, Ramona and Alessandro are caught in a snow storm and sure to die if it weren't for the "marvelous rescue" performed by Aunt Ri and her husband (Jackson, *Ramona* 303). Aunt Ri's husband, mistakenly identifying Ramona and her child as "'no'-count Mexicans,'" takes Ramona's baby and "puts the crying babe into his wife's arms." The baby "recognized the motherly hand at its first touch, and ceased crying" (304). Mimicking the historic practice of separating salve women from their newborn babies, Jackson uses this rescue as an opportunity to take the baby from Ramona and Alessandro and deliver it into the "motherly hand[s]" of her Anglo-American matriarch, at which point the child calms and becomes content with Aunt Ri. Aunt Ri asserts herself as a superior mother and immediately determines the child shouldn't "'bein' aout'n this weather," and goes to "warm up some milk for it this minnit'" (304). Of course, as we know, Ramona and Alessandro are "aout'n this weather" because they have been driven from their home by Anglo-American settlers however, the blame is still thrust back onto Ramona and Alessandro. While the scene serves to sentimentalize the plight of Ramona and Alessandro as they are in search of a new home, it also works to convey their need for Anglo-American charity. This scene conflates

Ramona's and Alessandro's rescue with their possession and adoption by the paternalism of Aunt Ri and her family. Pratt discusses "anti-conquest" in terms of the 16th century European travel writer who produced travel books that "gave European reading publics a sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity with respect to the distant parts of the world that were being explored, invaded, invested in, and colonized" (3). But we can also apply this concept to the 19th century sentimental writer who, as Jackson's *Ramona* accounts for, defines the responsibility Anglo-Americans have to those racialized and ethnic populations being absorbed into the nation through westward expansion.

As one of the most memorable scenes from the novel, Ramona and Alessandro's rescue from the snow storm is also one of the most manufactured and conventionally sentimental scenes the novel offers. The political inflections of the scene can be better understood through Lauren Berlant's analysis of sentimentalism's most famous example, *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Berlant argues that facets of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* get adapted in a number of other sentimental texts. She finds that "almost every adaptation of the novel involves an elaborate dramatic staging of the scene in which Eliza cross the Ohio River riding rafts of ice" (Berlant 44). Despite taking only two pages to narrate in the original novel, Berlant recognizes that this scene "emblematizes powerfully the will to survive so central to the scene of women's culture, lifting feminine agency out of the attenuations of the everyday toward a form of sovereignty beyond the materiality of power. Electrified by the awesome power of the mother to harness her own sublimity to the natural sublime, Eliza transforms into a species of superpersonhood" (44). Arguably, the snow storm scene in Jackson's *Ramona* can be read as Jackson's rendition of this popular scene and situates Jackson's Native American advocacy within an "anti-conquest" framework that

deploys those "strategies of innocence" that Pratt tells us "were constructed in relation to older imperial rhetoric's of conquest" (Pratt 9). We know that Jackson admired Stowe's text and wanted her own novel to do similar work, so it wouldn't be surprising for Jackson to replicate the novel's most sentimentally impressive scene in her own novel. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* Eliza crosses the Ohio River to her freedom in the North and in Jackson's text, Ramona is crossing the Southern California mountains in a snow storm to her freedom from Anglo-American settler colonialism. Eliza is greeted on the other side of the river by a white man "helping her up the bank," while Ramona is greeted by Aunt Ri and her white family who rescue her from sure death not too far from their destination (45). Additionally, both Eliza and Ramona are making this journey as mothers, increasing the stakes and the sentimentalism. But ultimately, as Berlant suggests of the sentimental novel, these scenes are not asking for their readers to *do* anything, only to feel something. In each case, the white "helping" hand is simply in the right place at the right time. Upon meeting Ramona and Alessandro, Aunt Ri is still the racist Southern stereotype guided by the "newspapers, and from a book or two of narratives of massacres, and from an occasional sight of vagabond bands or families they had encountered in their journey across the plains" (Jackson, *Ramona* 308). She most definitely did not seek to help Ramona but, finding herself to be the only one who is able to help Ramona and her child, proclaims: "'Injun or no Injun, they've got to stay naow. Yer couldn't turn a dog out 'n sech weather's this'" (305). Aunt Ri chooses here to let Ramona and her child into the warmth of their shelter not out of a commitment or compassion for humanity, but because a dog could not even survive the weather outside. While Aunt Ri technically does the right thing by inviting Ramona, Alessandro, and their child into her shelter, it is not

necessarily for the right reasons. Just after she compares Ramona to a dog, she further talks herself into letting them in by noticing the baby's eyes were blue and concluding, "'I bet thet baby's father wuz white, then. Look at them blue eyes'" (305). This reiterates long standing, imperial arguments for rescuing whiteness from ethnic or racialized others. Aunt Ri's assumption that the baby's father is white gives her, a white mother, permission to step in and retrieve the child from its ethnic mother. With the help of Pratt's "anti-conquest," we can identify how Jackson's "strategies of innocence" are actually codified in a rhetoric of colonialism and conquest and how this language is hidden in a dual rescue mission—one that seeks to rescue Ramona and her child from the storm and another, more violent mission that seeks to rescue the white child from the ethnic mother.

By reading Jackson's *Ramona* as a post-Reconstruction novel with "anti-conquest" tendencies, this chapter reveals how the novel's political advocacy on behalf of Native Americans derives from intersecting, "intimate" histories of subordination and rescue. The desire to "rescue" Native Americans from dispossession and removal and to collect or, we could say, possess them on reservations is an approach inseparable from the nation's histories of enslavement, Emancipation, and Reconstruction. At the same time, the rescue missions in *Ramona* are predicated on the conquest of California from Mexico and the demise of the mission systems. Jackson's novel describes Californio and Mexican cultural history as an artifact that, as much of Jackson scholarship explains, draws Anglo-American tourists to passively consume the region. While much of this scholarship has evaluated what this means tourism to the region itself, few have thought about the national and literary consequences of Jackson's depictions of Californio and

Mexican life. Published in 1884, one year before Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don, Ramona* invites comparisons to Ruiz de Burton's novels and the Californio history she represents because it too takes up the issues of land dispossession in Southern California following the United States' acquisition of the region in 1848. However, where Ruiz de Burton's novel emphasizes the dispossession of elite Californio populations to the detriment of Native American presence in the novel, Jackson restricts the voices of Californios in order to stress the mistreatment of Native Americans by both Californio communities and Anglo-American settlers. Though there is no evidence that either Jackson or Ruiz de Burton knew each other or read each other's works, *Ramona's* literary success was predicated on the literary establishment's erasure and silencing of an author like Ruiz de Burton. Jackson portrays Californio populations in much the same way she does the landscapes, as part of the crumbling romance of the past and the ruins of a cultural history that make for an interesting Anglo-American travel destination. Her Californio characters are conflated with their history and inserted into the text to mourn an exotic, bygone era. Jackson describes Señora Moreno early on in the novel: "Through wars, insurrections, revolutions, downfalls, Spanish, Mexican, civil, ecclesiastical, her standpoint, her poise, remained the same. She simply grew more and more proudly, passionately, a Spaniard and a Moreno; more and more stanchly and fierily a Catholic, and a lover of the Franciscans" (Jackson, *Ramona* 23). Like the Spanish history she represents, Señora Moreno is described as entrenched in what *Ramona's* readers would recognize as a bygone and backwards civilization. Her pride and passion for her Spanish heritage, her once-powerful family estate, and her fiery dedication to Catholicism are at once what make her romantic and admirable but also what render her vulnerable and

pathetic. Her refusal to submit to Anglo-American culture and U.S. institutions makes her a threat to the U.S., but her worship of a history and a lifeway that, aesthetically beautiful as it may be, has been so thoroughly conquered by American expansion and capitalism render her threat benign. As I pointed out in the last chapter, Ruiz de Burton was caricaturized as a complication of the Mexican-American war in her *New York Times* obituary and we certainly see Jackson contributing to this kind of representation of Californio women through her caricaturizing of Señora Moreno as the last, romantic vestige of Spanish California and as a myth to be consumed.

Despite scholarly conclusions that the parallels between Jackson's and Ruiz de Burton's novels "seem to have been purely coincidental as there is no evidence that Jackson knew of Ruiz de Burton nor that she read her work," there is evidence that Ruiz de Burton's and Jackson's San Diego associations overlapped, providing insight into the mechanisms through which Ruiz de Burton was silenced and Jackson celebrated. (Jacobs 226). Ephraim W. Morse, the man from whom Ruiz de Burton had such trouble getting responses to her letters, was a frequent correspondent of Jackson's. As one of the first and most prominent Anglo-American settlers to the San Diego region, Morse played a key role in the city's expansion, primarily in advocating for a rail road line to the city. According to the San Diego History Center, Morse "early learned the Spanish language and was regarded as a friend by the native population" (San Diego History Center). Given Morse's knowledge of the region and his supposed closeness to native Californians, he proved invaluable to Jackson who often solicited him for favors ranging from researching land titles to providing historical context to events, such as the Temecula removal, which ended up featuring prominently in *Ramona.* Ironically, at the

same time Morse was helping Jackson to raise awareness for the plight of the Native Americans in Southern California and to mythologize the Spanish-era history Californios and their ranchos represent in the region, he was also ignoring Ruiz de Burton's letters and requests for help securing ownership to her own land titles in California. If the Mexican-American war stripped Californio society of their economic and political power in the region, then figures like Morse and Jackson prematurely memorialized them by acknowledging their romantic history but denying their claims to the future. Narratives of American Manifest Destiny relied upon Californios in order to appropriate their mythological history and secure a national claim to the region, but demanded that these populations become ghost-like, silent representatives of the region's romantic past, holding no claim to its future.

This claim is also supported by the conclusion of Jackson's *Ramona* which poses Ramona's and Felipe's choice to exile themselves to Mexico as a last opportunity for them to seek conquest and restore their privileged place on the continent. But the novel also ends without fear of Ramona's and Felipe's conquest. It is neutralized through a language that associates their move to Mexico in the past and entirely removed from the Anglo-American future. Ramona chooses to leave for Mexico to "spare her daughter the burden she had gladly, heroically borne herself, in the bond of race" (Jackson, *Ramona* 387). It is also described as Ramona's last "untried future,[…]a future which she would embrace and conquer for her daughter" (388). But the very idea that Mexico represents a "future" is denied by the novel. When Felipe asks Ramona to marry him before leaving for Mexico, Ramona replies that "'You could not want me for your wife, Felipe, when part of me is dead'" (389). In the language of the conqueror, Felipe responds by asking

her to "'[o]nly give yourself to me, my love, I care not whether you call yourself dead or alive" (389)! Just as Felipe is pursuing a love conquest that has little more to give, so too does the novel suggest that Ramona's and Felipe's move to conquer their future in Mexico is an empty threat. Jackson's novel serves as a nexus for the local and the global and the regional and the national anxieties emerging in the post-slavery, industrializing world. Where the novel has been typically read through a Western-American lens that appreciates Jackson for her diligent fight for Native American rights, by reading the novel for the confluence of issues that make its characters and its plot settings possible draws our attention to the ambivalence American progressivism had towards national projects of imperialism, conquest, and capitalism.

Chapter Three
Sui Sin Far's Genre of Intervention: The Sketch and the Twisted Truths and the Inauthentic Real of American Literary Realism

In "The Inferior Woman," the second short story to appear in Sui Sin Far's 1912 collection, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, Sui Sin Far's Chinese character, Mrs. Spring Fragrance, contemplates writing a book about Americans. "As she walked along," Sui Sin Far writes, "she [Mrs. Spring Fragrance] meditated upon a book which she had some notion of writing. Many American women wrote books. Why should not a Chinese" (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 28)? Mrs. Spring Fragrance decides that she "would write a book about Americans for her Chinese women friends," since the "American people were so interesting and mysterious" (28). With her character, Mrs. Spring Fragrance, Sui Sin Far points out the imbalance in a literary market that allows for Anglo-Americans to represent Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants, but which does not allow for Chinese Americans to represent Anglo-Americans, or even themselves. Mrs. Spring Fragrance determines her "first subject will be 'The Inferior Woman of America,'" a figure, as the story suggests, who represents the 19th-century's New Woman (34). To learn about the "Inferior Woman" and to collect material for her book, Mrs. Spring Fragrance secretly listens in on a conversation the "Superior Woman," a woman who represents chastity, domesticity, and moral superiority, has with her mother about the "Inferior Woman," who, in the story, holds a rather coveted clerkship position in a male-dominant law firm and lives independently in a house she shares with another woman. Although the story tends towards defending the "Inferior Woman," Sui Sin Far concludes the story when Mrs. Spring Fragrance declares to her husband that, "'I love well the Inferior Woman; but, O Great Man, when we have a daughter, may Heaven

ordain that she walk in the groove of the Superior Woman'" (41). This story epitomizes the strategic ways Sui Sin Far addresses representative power in the turn-of-the-century literary marketplace and how she criticizes the way that literary marketplace deals with the incorporation of new Americans in an era of increased immigration from Asian countries such as China.

While Mrs. Spring Fragrance chides society for their judgmental treatment of the "Inferior Woman," she remains loyal to the laudatory ways society admires the "Superior Woman." This story serves Sui Sin Far in conveying the power in dominant images and representations as they become internalized by the nation's citizens but also by the nation's immigrants. Mrs. Spring Fragrance recognizes that, while dominant American society admires her Chinese immigrant "husband because he is what the Americans call 'a man who has made himself'," they condemn the Anglo-American "Inferior Woman who is a woman who has made herself" (39). "The Inferior Woman" draws out the similar ways the Anglo-American "Inferior Woman" and the Chinese immigrant are caught in dueling power structures that pitch these figures against one another as a means of containing their representative power and their national belonging. Sui Sin Far points out a network of representative power that works on multiple levels to sustain a homogenous identity for the nation—white, masculine, middle-class—and to contain whatever identities happen to threaten it in the turn-of-the-century moves towards modernity. In this chapter, I evaluate Sui Sin Far's representations of Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants as they interact in circulation with the dominant literary establishment's representations of ethnic Americans and immigrants. In so doing, this chapter argues that Sui Sin Far does more than simply challenge the dominant

representations of the Chinese and Chinese immigrants in the United States. Rather, I suggest that her fictional sketches undercut an entire literary tradition, American literary realism, which consolidated national identity through what it portrayed as "real" and "truthful" depictions of America's underrepresented classes.

Scholars have praised Sui Sin Far's journalism and collection of short sketches, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, for their "realistically drawn portraits of Chinese, Chinese Americans, and Caucasian American people" at a time when the U.S. was expressing its extreme xenophobia through the 1875 Page Law and the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act (Ling 109). As the daughter of an English father and a Chinese mother, Sui Sin Far, born Edith Eaton, chose to take the name Sui Sin Far as she began her writing career to "acquire an ethnic authenticity" when she could have "passed" as white (Ling 21). S.E. Solberg, the scholar credited with reintroducing Sui Sin Far into academic conversations in the early 1980s, frames her reentry into literary discourse by suggesting that "She was not a great writer; she has only one book (a collection of her stories) to her credit, but her attempts deserve recognition" (Solberg 27). Solberg finds more value in Sui Sin Far's politics than in her literary style, and goes on to argue that:

> Sui Sin Far had to find a mode that would enable her to deal with her own experience (as the classic editorial injunction has it), but to do that meant to fall outside the boundaries of any of the "maincurrents" of American writing. She was not a regionalist nor nationalist[…]She is not naturalist or local colorists, and her essays at humor, which tend to fall short of the mark in any case, can hardly be looked upon as falling in the Mr. Dooley or Mark Twain "native American" styles. She was trapped by experience and inclination into working within a sub-genre of American prose: what, for lack of a better term, we might call Chinatown Tales. Such classification of subject matter (Chinatown, or more broadly, the Chinese in America) breaks down an established literary form, the novel, into sub-genres defined by content, not form or stylistic skill (Solberg 32).

Despite a number of scholars who have since defended Sui Sin Far's authorship and texts from the accusations Solberg makes against her "Chinatown Tales," I quote Solberg at length to show how this early scholarship on Sui Sin Far has shaped the conversations we continue to have about her and how this separating of content and form remains a larger problem in discussions of minority writers more generally. Solberg identifies Sui Sin Far as "trapped by experience," an experience he understands to be "outside the boundaries" of American identity and therefore, "of American writing." Solberg finds Sui Sin Far could not measure up to the Mr. Dooleys or the Mark Twains, those "'native American'" writers, and disassociates her with a number of literary modes ranging from regionalism to the humorist tradition. Solberg indicates that she "breaks down an established literary form," not in a productive way that challenges those established forms but in a way that, unlike the novel, is "defined by content, not form or stylistic skill." Solberg separates the "content," or politics, from Sui Sin Far's regional sketch and misses entirely that in fact, her writing, whether it be her fiction or her journalism, is defined by the relationship between her form and her content, more like than unlike Mark Twain's, in fact.

Since Solberg's reintroduction of Sui Sin Far, scholars have centered their analysis of Sui Sin Far's work on how "real" her depictions of the Chinese in North America are. She is attributed as "the first Chinese American writer to depict truly the Chinese in America with empathy" (Wang 244), and "Like [William Dean] Howells," as Vanessa Holford Diana argues, "Sui Sin Far demands in fiction a *truthful* depiction of Americans" (Diana 160). Scholarly discussions have continued to focus on Sui Sin Far's "*truthful*" representations of the Chinese in North America as more important than the literary package in which they are delivered. For example, in her 1993 chapter,

"Audacious Words: Sui Sin Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance,"* Elizabeth Ammons argues against Solberg's claims that Sui Sin Far was not suited to writing novels by stating that "Sui Sin Far succeeded at what she attempted," and "that she did not share the midtwentieth-century bias against short fiction, sketches, and vignettes as inferior 'sub-genres' of the novel" (Ammons 117). This is an important insight and just the kind of analysis we need, but then Ammons concedes that, "Although her stories at times deal in clichés, they also counter stereotypes with realistically drawn portraits of the Chinese, Chinese American and Caucasian American people" (109). Ammons suggests that the clichés in Sui Sin Far's fiction are unfortunate but can be overlooked and forgiven because of the work her writing does to "counter stereotypes with realistically drawn portraits." But it is my contention that the clichés are just as important to understanding Sui Sin Far's writing as are her moments of overt challenge to dominant images of Chinese immigrants and Americans and that these clichés can be better understood when considered within the context of her literary form.

When trying to argue for Sui Sin Far's value to American literary studies, the scholarship makes clear the tension between Sui Sin Far's politics, her literary forms, and where she fits into larger American literary structures. Solberg initiated a scholarship on Sui Sin Far that wants to understand her in relation to the era's literary turn to realism. Scholars compare her stylistically to the works of William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and Henry James and politically to the realist program of raising awareness for the ways "Men are more like than unlike one another," a program laid out by Howells himself (Barrish 6). Henry B. Wonham helps to identify this impulse to understand Sui Sin Far in relation to realism by pointing out how literary realism "performs the work of liberation,

disentangling the human individual from the distorting grip of ethnic typology," and thereby, offering minority writers a form that matches their often politically resistant content (Wonham 4). Wonham identifies a tradition that links "the political significance of realism to the larger projects of emancipation for blacks and equal rights for all Americans" (4). Realism's program to create the "'odour' of reality" (Henry James words), offers minority writers the opportunity to right the record on how they have been represented by dominant literary society (Barrish 55). But to use Howelsian realism as a measuring stick for literary merit leads scholars to miss the interventions and disruptions writers of color and women writers such as Sui Sin Far bring to a literary tradition that remains in the control of a white, male authorship, and which makes minority writers visible as objects rather than as human subjects with complex relations to the world around them.

Scholars do not just claim that Sui Sin Far represents more realistic portraits of the Chinese in America than her contemporaries. They also insist that she is representing Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans "truly" and "*truthfully*." This language goes beyond the task of realism, as Henry James points out, and confuses scholarly attempts to place Sui Sin Far's politically inflected sketches. James suggests that "[t]he point is not literally to perpetuate a hoax on readers, to deceive them into taking a fictional work about fictional people as belonging to a non-fiction genre, such as journalism, history, or biography," but to present the events and individuals "as if" they really existed (Barrish 55). Here James emphasizes that, though realist fiction has the responsibility of portraying life-like representations of American experience, it is still a genre of fiction and not to be expected to tell the truth as a piece of journalism or an historical essay

might be. The "as if" is a crucial phrase, one he replaces with the word "impression" in other contexts (42). This language rejects the idea that literary realism tries to tell truth out of fiction, or that it even wants to, and informs our understanding of Sui Sin Far's own literary agenda because of the ways she shifts between fictional sketch and nonfiction journalism. Though nonfiction genres such as the historical essay, biography, and journalism are not without their biases or sensationalism, they *are* different genres delivered to their reading audiences with different intentions and expectations. As such, Sui Sin Far's fiction and journalism, even as they intersect and influence one another, need to be treated differently. When scholars argue that Sui Sin Far uses realism in her "short stories, articles, and essays to pioneer the act of self-representation for a people who existed in late nineteenth century mainstream American imagination and literature as uncivilized, heathen foreigners" (Diana 161), they blur the boundaries between Sui Sin Far's genres. Thereby, scholars of this argumentative vein also confuse the different functions intended by Sui Sin Far's genre play and conflate her own experience with that of her subjects and Sui Sin Far is not her subjects. Though she is of Chinese descent and an immigrant, her life narrative is much different from those she writes about and therefore, it is not in fact "self-representation" she is working to achieve in her fictional sketches or even in her journalism, but a different kind of proxy representation than the realist tradition provides for Chinese Americans and immigrants. By outlining these clear boundaries between Sui Sin Far and her literary subjects, we can better understand her political and literary agendas. She is not, I argue, matching poorly drawn images of Chinese Americans and immigrants with her own, corrected versions. Rather, Sui Sin Far is taking on the entire literary realist program of representing "real" and "truthful"

versions of American life and destabilizing the methods by which the tradition gains its information on and retells the stories of its subjects.

Other scholars have battled with questions of Sui Sin Far's authenticity and authority to represent Chinese communities in North America. These scholars debate to what extent Sui Sin Far is considered "inside" or "outside" of the Chinatown communities she writes about. Scholars such as Lorraine Dong, Marion K. Hom, and Xiao-huang Yin have all drawn attention to her use of stereotypes to describe Chinese men and women and made suggestions that, for all her efforts to resist dominant forms of racism, Sui Sin Far "was as bound by social conventions of the day as mainstream American writers" (Yin 109). This scholarship claims that Sui Sin Far "fell prey" to these stereotypes because of her own ignorance of Chinese culture and language barriers that inhibited her from becoming a true "insider" (109). Not only does this framing perpetuate the same discriminatory rhetoric used to bar authors such as Sui Sin Far from participation in national literary production, but it also suggests that realist writers never used stereotypes in their own works. In fact, stereotypes are an important and often overlooked characteristic of literary realism, which is why, I argue, Sui Sin Far deploys them in her fictional sketches. In the late-19th and early-20th centuries, the shift from literary romanticism and sentimentalism to realism was about power. As Amy Kaplan argues in *The Social Construction of American Realism,* the literary turn to realism was about reconsolidating power as that power was threatened by new and diverse populations, geographies, and technologies ushered in by the modern age. Kaplan explains that late-19th and early-20th century "realism has become a fictional conceit, or deceit, packaging and naturalizing an official version of the ordinary" (Kaplan 1). But,

like any other artform, "[r]ealists do more than passively record the world outside; they actively create and criticize the meanings, representations, and ideologies of their own changing culture" (7). That is, realists determine the "official version" of American life by actively choosing what to include and what to exclude, thereby asserting what is "real" national identity and what is threatening to it. While Howells and other realists determine realism to be "'democracy in literature'" (Barrish 6), Wonham helps us recognize that the role realists played in representing underrepresented subjects was still about power. Wonhom recognizes that caricature comes to popularity in literary periodicals at the same time as literary realism, and he argues that caricature functions to control literary realism's democratic pulse. Wonham points out that in many of the leading literary periodicals, including *Century*, in which Sui Sin Far published, realist fiction was published next to caricaturized images of ethnic and racialized immigrants and Americans. Wonham argues that "the art of caricature may have been the era's bluntest and most effective means of policing itself in the domain of class and ethnic representation, for caricatures' humorous excess allowed magazines such as *Century* to address the demand for 'real life' while ensuring that undesirable elements of 'reality' remained at a safe distance" (Wonham 22). That is, by placing caricaturized visuals of the very racialized, ethnic, gendered, and impoverished individuals realist fiction attempted to empathize with, literary periodicals maintained a degree of control over how their mostly white, middle-class readers were internalizing images of these perceived others of American society. But the stakes of caricature are higher for authors such as Sui Sin Far who feel the push against their politics not only in their published writing, but also in their very identities as ethnic writers.

Using American democracy as its battle cry—as has historically been done to justify U.S. involvement in wars and oppressive institutions—literary realism is the American literary establishment's reactive response to modernity's threat to the homogenous imagined national community. Just as emancipation, immigration, and westward expansion result in the incorporation of new and diverse peoples, geographies, and cultures into the nation, these changes to the nation are also brining new literary forms of expression to the national imagination. The novel and the newspaper are forms that have contributed to maintaining what Benedict Anderson recognizes as the nation's reliance on "'homogenous, empty time' (Anderson 24). Anderson describes "'homogenous, empty time'" as "marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (24). The novel and the newspaper "provide the technical means for 're-presenting'" an homogenous or official national historical temporality as well as to account for the narrative trajectory of that time (25). Anderson accounts for the ways the newspaper, a daily periodical, brings the imagined national community together through a set of official events of the day while the "old-fashioned novel" accounts for the "simultaneity in 'homogeneous, empty time'" by narrativizing and accounting for the different daily occurrences different individual Americans experience (25). But modernity challenges this manufactured homogeneity as new genres such as the short story, and new modes of writing such as regionalism, arise to challenge and fragment novelistic time and continuity and to demand new reading practices and perspectives of their audiences. Anderson suggests that the "old-fashioned novel" and the newspaper establish a relation between an individual and her "240,000,000-odd fellow-Americans," of whom she "will never meet, or even know the

names of" (26). The new literary forms emerging at the turn-of-the-century then, including Sui Sin Far's regional sketches, stand to show the inauthenticity of this relation by expressing new identities and temporalities that are subsumed by the dominant histories represented in the novels and newspapers of the imagined national community. Furthermore, by realizing the relations of power between realist writers and their Western-American subjects, Sui Sin Far's regional sketches depict a superficial Western-American progressivism couched in Anglo-America's anxieties and ambivalence towards American democratic ideals.

Sui Sin Far's sketches reveal the oppressive forces behind realism's project of telling truthful stories of America's otherwise ignored communities and calls out its fascination with the American West as one inundated with fears about the West's diversity and potential to overthrow the nation's long-standing sociopolitical hierarchies. Sui Sin Far's sketches are built on the understanding that realism rises to correct the turn-of-the-century's threat to national homogeneity through the "realistic" portrayals of the very communities that threaten old orders of national cohesion. Amy Kaplan helps us understand this impulse in Sui Sin Far's writing when she argues that realism's inaugural authors—William Dean Howells, Henry James, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser—"tend less to regulate conflict by formalizing otherness than to negotiate conflict in the narrative construction of common ground among classes both to efface and reinscribe social hierarchies" (Kaplan 11). Realism, Kaplan suggests, works with a rising "culture of surveillance, in which the realist participates in the panoptic forces which both control and produce the real world by seeing it without being seen in turn" (7). Kaplan points out that realism, fearing the fragmentation of national identity at the hands of modernity,

seeks to make known these new and different populations. Realism uses the technology of surveillance and observation, itself a modern technology, to control national identity by making "it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways" (Anderson 36). While realism's interest in women, people of color, immigrants, and the urban and rural poor does stand to give the appearance of a more democratic literary mode that accounts for difference, Kaplan and Wonham help us to see how Sui Sin Far is responding to the fact that realism's democratic impulse is in actuality a new way of homogenizing the nation rather than diversifying it.

While Howells locates realism's power in showing how "'men are more alike than unalike one another,'" and in allowing "them 'to know one another better, that they may be all humbled and strengthened with a sense of their fraternity'" (Wonham 44), Sui Sin Far's sketches reorder the realist narrative to show the exact opposite—that the realist project draws out particularities and distinctions that accentuate difference rather than likeness. In "The Inferior Woman," we see how Sui Sin Far critiques a realist tradition that, though it may make room to represent Chinese immigrants, does so for the knowing power it generates for Anglo-American readers. As we saw at the start of this chapter, by positioning her Chinese character, Mrs. Spring Fragrance, as the author of a book on Americans, Sui Sin Far reorders this realist narrative and makes the "mysterious" Americans known to her Chinese friends (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 28). Wonham has also recognized that realists, including Howells, employ "unreal ethnic 'types' who neatly define the colorful fringes of social reality" (36). Barrish provides an example of this with his analysis of the ways *A Hazard of New Fortune*, Howells' 1890

novel, at once explores and rationalizes urban poverty. Barrish notes that the "omniscient and focalized narration[…]goes in and out of various characters' consciousnesses," but "[n]otably, the narration never attempts to give the reader a view from inside the consciousness of a striker. Nor do we ever see slum life from the perspective of somebody who lives there" (Barrish 103-104). This interest in women, people of color, immigrants, and the urban and rural poor indicate that these "profoundly new ways" of relating are also reasserting power structures that allow dominant culture to see but not be seen themselves. Rather than indicating the strengths of a diverse nation, realism's strategies for exploring minority communities seeks to homogenize the knowledge the reading public has about these communities in order to reassert a unified imagined national community, much like caricature does. Realist strategies in narration and perspective offer up new literary subjects to be sure, but they are often equally as flat and one-dimensional as the caricatures running alongside realist stories in the leading periodicals. Sui Sin Far, as we see from "The Inferior Woman," does not just challenge the outcomes of realist fiction—those one-dimensional stereotypes that portray Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in generalized terms—but also flips the scripts of realist tropes to discredit the entire realist tradition and its intentions of portraying "real" American experience and the "truth" about American social outliers.

In this chapter, I argue that Sui Sin Far's form and content cannot be separated or excused away. Rather, I find the politics of her narratives inform the way they appear on the page, and the pages on which she is given to write—whether they are from Western-American periodicals such as the *Westerner* or *The Land of Sunshine* or more nationally revered periodicals such as *Century*—influence how her characters and plots interact with

their readers. Sui Sin Far was not necessarily interested in depicting "true" or even "real" Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. Instead, Sui Sin Far's strategy is to re-deploy realist tropes thought to capture the "air of reality" in ways that highlight the genre's own biases and prejudices. In so doing, she points out that, though it may have democratic and progressive intentions, realism nevertheless uses its investment in telling the "real" American experience to exploit ethnic Americans and immigrants at the behest of securing the privileged position of white Americans for citizenship. In her 1909 autobiographical essay, "Leaves From the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian," Sui Sin Far declares that she loves "poetry, particularly heroic pieces. I also love fairy tales. Stories of everyday life do not appeal to me. I dream dreams of being great and noble" (Sui 222). The "real" of "everyday life" does not seem to be what motivates her as contemporary scholars want to argue. Rather, Sui Sin Far is interested in something more romantic than the "real." She values "poetry," "heroic pieces," and "fairy tales," the genres in which she imagines she can become "great and noble" and interest her audience in alternative realities. These more fanciful genres serve Sui Sin Far in pointing out where realism's democratic program fails the ethnic, immigrant, and poor communities it intends to represent. Vanessa Holford Diana and others have also considered the ways Sui Sin Far manipulates literary realism to combat racism in literary representations of ethnic and racialized communities. Diana argues that Sui Sin Far's writing "represents an adaptation of mainstream realism because it focuses on Americans who had, before she wrote, little voice in American literature" (Diana 160). I revise such an argument to suggest that Sui Sin Far is not writing about Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans because they have not been focused on before, but because the way they have been focused on is, in

Sui Sin Far's clear opinion, harmful to the ways they are perceived by other Americans. This is to say that Sui Sin Far is not trying to represent Chinese immigrants and Americans more accurately. Rather, her agenda is to expose the strategies literary realism deploys, including stereotypes, to represent the Chinese, as well as other ethnic and racialized communities, as insincere and ambivalent to the project of celebrating a diverse national identity. Such an argument brings forth the paternalistic foundations of the American West's claims to progressivism and the literary establishment's role in fostering what appear to be inclusive sociopolitical ideologies that, when taken down to the studs, serve to alleviate the fears of white Americans as the nation's increasing diversity threatens their privilege and exclusive claims to the nation.

Resisting Caricature: Sui Sin Far's Editorial Battles

In her autobiographical essay, published in the *Independent* in 1909, Sui Sin Far writes that, during the course of her writing career, she met "some funny people who advise me to 'trade' upon my nationality. They tell me that if I wish to succeed in literature in America I should dress in Chinese costume, carry a fan in my hand, wear a pair of scarlet beaded slippers, live in New York, and come of high birth. Instead of making myself familiar with the Chinese Americans around me, I should discourse on my spirit acquaintance with Chinese ancestors" (Sui Sin Far, "Leaves" 230). Scholars have been drawn to this passage because it clearly shows the racism Sui Sin Far experienced as she worked to get her writing published. These "funny people," whom we can assume are editors based on their authority to advise her on how "to succeed in literature in America," instruct her to caricaturize herself with "Chinese costume," including "a fan in my hand," and "a pair of scarlet beaded slippers." The reference made to being of "high

birth," an aspect of her identity Sui Sin Far could not in fact change, is a nod to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which included a section that allowed for "every Chinese person other than a laborer"—code for "every Chinese" "of high birth"—to continue traveling to the United States (Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882). Sui Sin Far's disgust with this request is apparent in the ways she calls these "funny people" out for violating realism's commitment to the "air of reality." She ends this passage by noting how they discourage her from "making myself familiar with the Chinese Americans around me," indicating that their interest is not in representing Chinese immigrant and Chinese American experience, but in the commodification of exoticized images and stereotyped eccentricities Chinese communities in North America had come to stand in for in dominant society.

But to some extent, Sui Sin Far *did* embrace caricaturized versions of herself and the Chinese subjects she writes about in order to get published. Sui Sin Far's choice to adopt an ethnic name in place of her given name, Edith Eaton, is a rebranding of her authorship, one which associates her with the Chinese subjects she writes about and which brings an air of authenticity to her writing (Ling 21). While this is not entirely the same as adorning "Chinese costume" and citing Confucianism as the "funny" editors she met advised her to do, it is making some concessions to a literary market that profited off of minority authors telling upon themselves in what appeared to be realistic ways. As Dominika Ferens and others have suggested, Sui Sin Far's writing reflects "an odd combination of willingness to exploit certain popular genres and conventions in order to gain a foothold in the press, and a commitment to clearly unpopular causes, subjects, and themes" (Ferens 118). But as Ferens also argues, this "odd combination" to exploit

herself and defend Chinese immigrants against stereotype might be evidence of "editorial constraints" (118), and it is possible Sui Sin Far might have been "coerced by the editors into making these stylistic and thematic adjustments" to neutralize her political voice (125). Ferens' suggestion about Sui Sin Far's relationship to the periodicals of her day falls in line with Wonham's claims that caricature served "as a strategic control on the magazine's own democratic experiment [with realism], ensuring that ethnic identities remain fixed and discernible in the bewildering flux of a multiethnic society" (Wonham 26). From her well-documented relationship to Charles Lummis, editor of the Western-American periodical, *The Land of Sunshine,* it is clear that Sui Sin Far's authorship was caught in the era's and the American Wests' push and pull between its "standard of authenticity" and the exoticizing of Western landscapes and peoples "to attract settlers [and tourists] from the East" (Staples 177). When Lummis took over the magazine in 1894, his editorial goal was to reflect a "vision of the West that grew literature and art as well as oranges and grapes" (177). He initiated a new "literature direction" for the magazine and, as Joe Staples argues, proved to be "an influential early voice in creating and sustaining a genre of the region because he had the power of inclusion and exclusion" (177). Martha Cutter also notes that, under Lummis' editorial control, *The Land of Sunshine,* renamed *Out West* in 1901, "tended to contribute to the 'yellow peril' school of journalism by portraying gambling and opium use among Chinese Americans" (Cutter 262). Authors such as Bret Harte and Charlotte Perkins-Gilman published alongside Sui Sin Far in this magazine, both of whom are noted in literary studies for their use of racist stereotypes towards Chinese immigrants. Bret Harte's1870 poem "Heathen Chinee" is one example of the kind of Sinophobia expressed by these authors

and which was celebrated by their contemporaries. Lummis was himself a renowned author who published racist descriptions of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans such as: "'The Chinaman does not come to stay. He comes to go as soon as he can afford to. He has no children—and if he does, in the one case of a thousand—they are Chinese children; pretty, picturesque, dear, but irreconcilably alien'" (Cutter 263). But even Lummis could not exclude Chinese voices from his vision of a Western-American magazine that intended to tell of the "authentic" West.

In a 1900 column penned by the editor, "In Western Letters," Lummis introduces Sui Sin Far to readers with praise. He indicates that she is, "[s]o far as I know, the only Chinese woman in America who is writing fiction is the delicate little Sui Sin Fah, a 'discovery' of this magazine three or four years ago" (Staples 178). Lummis authenticates Sui Sin Far's writing by suggesting she is the only Chinese woman writing in the U.S., but he also exoticizes her by denying the half of her that is English and introducing her as "delicate little Sui Sin Fah." Lummis also takes credit for discovering Sui Sin Far and appears to claim her authorship for himself and his magazine, despite the many previous articles she had published with Canadian newspapers and periodicals. But if Lummis seems to play up Sui Sin Far's Chinese-ness for his magazine's readers, in his personal correspondence with her, Lummis chooses to ignore her ethnic identity. As Martha J. Cutter points out, Sui Sin Far's letters to Lummis are double-signed with Edith Eaton and Sui Sin Far. Even though Sui Sin Far emphasizes her penname with an underline, Lummis "ignores this alternate identity, and constantly addresses Sui Sin Far as 'Dear Miss Eaton'" (Cutter 272). This "disregard by Lummis" (272) is evidence of the struggle Sui Sin Far faced in representing herself not only as a literary persona but as a

professional woman. Lummis dictates when and where Sui Sin Far is to be Chinese and when and where she is to be white, all while profiting off her stories of Chinatown.

The consequences of this kind of control over Sui Sin Far's identity is explored in her fiction, which makes evident Sui Sin Far's consciousness for the ways her identity was racially manipulated to fit certain market trends. In "It's Wavering Image," the white reporter, Mark Carson takes advantage of Pan, a half-Chinese and half-white woman, in order to get access to the most culturally intimate spaces of Chinatown for a news story. Once his romantic interest in Pan has secured him a story and he is about to leave Chinatown, Carson demands Pan gives up her Chinese identity and leave Chinatown with him. He tells her: "'you do not belong here. You are white—white'" (63). And when she challenges him by asserting that Chinatown is her home,—what we might read as her literary underlining of Pan's choice to identify as Chinese—Carson's argument becomes more violent, demanding that "'[y]ou have no right to be here,'" and that her "'real self is alien to them [the Chinese]'" (63). Carson reverses the rhetoric used to legally exclude Chinese immigrants from citizenship by suggesting the white half of Pan gives her "no right" to live in Chinatown. Her rights are tied to the ways Carson perceives Pan's ethnic identity, not in how Pan self-identifies. While Carson exploits Pan's Chinese-ness to get the inside scoop on Chinatown, in private—as he declares his love to her—he denies her Chinese identity in order to rationalize his romantic feelings for her. Many scholars have been drawn to this story for the ways "Sui Sin Far portrays Carson as a predator and unscrupulous ethnographer, posing a double threat of sexual and cultural violation" (Diana 173). Scholars read this story as Sui Sin Far's indictment of the kind of "yellow journalism" that seduces Chinese immigrants for a "true" story about Chinese immigrants

and Chinese Americans to satisfy the curiosity Anglo-Americans have for what they perceive to be its mysteries. Focusing on the references to Robert Louis Stevenson in "Its Wavering Image," Kimberly Macellaro compares Stevenson's famous *Jekyll and Hyde* to "Its Wavering Image" to argue that Carson is an example of "a historical departure from the crisis of late Victorian masculine embodiment to a new, performative white masculinity-in-transition" (Macellaro 56). Together, these arguments bring to our attention the performative nature of ethnographic or "realistic" journalism and literature and their ambivalence towards dealing in biracial and mixed identities. Carson represents both the exploitative, ethnographic journalist, putting on charms to pull a story out of Chinatown and the new call to masculinity that, as Amy Kaplan recognizes in "Romancing the Empire," uses ethnic women as a justification for conquer. Similarly, Sui Sin Far's *The Land of SunShine* editor, Lummis, also uses Sui Sin Far's Chinese-ness to entice his readers with images of Chinatown, and to "discover" for his readers these exoticized areas of California. But, in the intimate correspondence between them, Lummis insistently denies her ethnic identity to justify their communication as fellow authors. Sui Sin Far's letters to Lummis indicate the delicate balance in the literary imperial mission to market ethnic authors for consumption but to control the dissemination of their narrative voices and perspectives on dominant culture. But it also reminds us that ethnic authors had to contend with this balance as well, though in different ways from their editor and publisher counterparts.

Sui Sin Far's letters to Lummis, as well as her sketches, highlight the finesse with which she had to present her content to the audiences of literary periodicals that balanced literary realism out with caricatures of ethnic Americans and immigrants. Mary Chapman

has recently discovered a previously unknown story by Sui Sin Far, "The Success of a Mistake," published in 1908 in the *Westerner,* a Seattle-based promotional periodical that sought to encourage settlement in the region. The story features an Anglo-American woman reporter, Miss Lund, who pilfers stories out of Wah Lee, a mission Chinese man who was a slave in China before he fled to the United States and becomes a laundryman. The story begins with Wah Lee telling Miss Lund about a traditional Chinese mother who, having secured a husband for her oldest daughter, Anna, travels from Seattle to San Francisco to find a wife for her son, Charlie. Upon publishing the story, Miss Lund accidently switches the facts and writes that Mrs. Wong went to San Francisco to find a husband for Anna rather than a wife for Charlie. After suffering "an accident which confined her to her room for several weeks," Miss Lund returns to Chinatown to discover that her mistake has caused harm to the Wong family (Sui Sin Far, "Success" 271). The Wong's daughter's betrothed, believing the article to be true, breaks off the engagement, leaving Anna free to confess her true love to Wah Lee, Miss Lund's informant. Ultimately, "The Success of a Mistake" ends with Anna and Wah Lee's marriage and Miss Lund's rather harmful mistake is literally laughed off by all the characters except for Mrs. Wong, the traditional Chinese mother, who feels her reputation is damaged. In her analysis of the story, Jean M. Lutes points out that "The Success of a Mistake" "merits attention as an obvious precursor to 'Its Wavering Image,'" which was originally published in Sui Sin Far's collection of short sketches, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance,* in 1912 (Lutes 283). Lutes also identifies how the story "draws directly" from an article Sui Sin Far wrote for the *Los Angeles Express* in 1903 about a similar Chinese engagement (281). Indeed, many of Sui Sin Far's stories and articles are rearticulations of similar narratives.

There are a number of instances where Sui Sin Far seems to fictionalize earlier non-fiction articles or revise previous fictional sketches. This recursive trend in Sui Sin Far's writing oeuvre, which will be explored in more depth later on in this chapter, is evidence of both her struggles to properly communicate her political intentions in the popular magazines and periodicals she was publishing in and the degree of control she amassed over her writing towards the end of her career.

In the case of "The Success of a Mistake" and "Its Wavering Image," the four to five year gap between their publications, as well as the platforms in which they each were published helps to account for the different ways she treats Chinese identity and the sensationalism of Anglo-American journalism. Both stories, as Lutes points out, deal with Anglo-American journalists pillaging Chinatown for a story. However, in "The Success of a Mistake," the imperialist, Anglo-American journalist is treated forgivably whereas, in "Its Wavering Image," Mark Carson is clearly ridiculed and harshly critiqued. In her article "The Queer Newspaperwoman in Edith Eaton's 'The Success of a Mistake,'" Lutes argues that "the more sympathetic portrayal of the white female journalist" in the story "casts the newspaperwoman not as an objective observer [as the newspaperman in "Its Wavering Image"] but rather as a flawed but feeling participant in her own stories" (Lutes 284). Lutes' argument is that "The Success of a Mistake" offers a "woman-centered" "alternative" to the "gritty realism generated in male-dominated newsrooms" (284). But what this argument misses is that this early story, though not as explicit as in "Its Wavering Image," is critiquing the ways ignorant and careless journalism unethically creates a reality out of fictional or simply inaccurate information. That Sui Sin Far uses a female rather than a male Anglo-American journalist helps

neutralize her criticisms and makes them more digestible to her racist, sexist audience by placing the controversial New Woman and, as Lutes argues, the "queer newspaperwoman" at the center of the story's critique (281).

Placing a female journalist at the center of the story's tension appears to critique Miss Lund's sentimental and overly emotional journalism and, as Lutes also argues, to "call attention to one dimension of that emotionality: the queer subtext of the plot, which depends upon the reporter-heroine's sympathetic identification with her source and her charged relationship with a female missionary friend" (280). But where Lutes argues that this "dimension of emotionality" is Sui Sin Far's vision for ethical journalism, I argue that Sui Sin Far deploys Miss Lund in this early story to give her audience something to critique—female journalists and the figure of the New Woman—in order to pass through to these readers new images of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. Underneath the commentary on Miss Lund and her "misrecognitions" (Lutes 284), "The Success of a Mistake" points out the incessantly misappropriated "facts" late 19th and early 20th-century ethnographic journalism and literary realism advertise as authentic, real, and "American" experience. Rather than celebrating the ways Miss. Lund's mistakes "circumvent social norms, inspire misrecognitions, and rearrange the order of things" (Lutes 284), the story directly challenges the ways the "native informant" is misunderstood and misrepresented. When Mrs. Lund arrives at the mission to try to get a story out of Wah Lee, she explains that "'when we Americans ask questions of Chinese people that it is because we want you to enlighten us on subjects about which we are ignorant, and not with the intention of being rude'" (Sui Sin Far, "The Success" 271). And yet, after she realizes a mistake has been made in her article, she quickly places

blame on Wah Lee, her "native informant," and accuses him of "'telling me stories which are not true and causing so much mischief'" (275). When Wah Lee defends himself and suggests that Miss. Lund made the mistake, Miss. Lund responds by saying: "'Nonsense, it is impossible. You told me just what I wrote, Wah, otherwise it would not have been written'" (275). After looking in her notebook, Miss. Lund eventually realizes that she in fact did make the mistake that caused "so much mischief." But when Miss Lund declares that only what is written down is true, Sui Sin Far speaks to and criticizes the power Miss Lund and the larger literary society wield against their less-powerful subjects.

It isn't then that Sui Sin Far's stance on the predatory nature of Anglo-American ethnographic realism changed from her depictions of Miss Lund to Mark Carson, the journalist in "Its Wavering Image." Rather, the publication outlets available to each of these stories dictated how she handled the sociopolitical content of them. "The Success of a Mistake" was published in 1908 in the *Westerner,* a Seattle-based magazine with the mission of enticing Eastern-American travelers and settlers to the Western-American region. "It's Wavering Image," on the other hand, was an original to the 1912 collection of stories, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* published by A.C. McClurg in Chicago, the same publisher as W.E.B. DuBois' 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk.* In "The Success," Sui Sin Far had to portray Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans as docile, non-threatening, and submissive to even the most vulnerable Anglo-American—the Anglo-American woman—in order for her story to coincide with the magazine's message that the American West was a safe and productive place to live and visit. Sui Sin Far's "The Success of a Mistake" pandered to some degree to the Eastern-American readers the magazine intended to persuade West at the same time it passed through a toned-down

version of her politics on literary representation. “It’s Wavering Image,” on the other hand, was published by a press with a history of revolutionary ideas about race and ethnicity and therefore, Sui Sin Far was able to present her politics more explicitly and with more emotional investment. But more than anything, what these two similar stories reveal is how often times the “real” and the “true” are evaded or “misrecognized” in order to sell a profitable story.

What’s Real Anyway: Sui Sin Far’s Critique of Literary Realism’s “Air of Reality”

In a laudatory review of Eliza Orne White’s now forgotten realist novel, *Miss Brooks,* Howells congratulates White on the fact that, “’[n]othing happens; that is, nobody murders or debauches anybody else; there is no arson or pillage of any sort; there is not a ghost, or a ravening beast, or a hair-breadth escape, or a shipwreck, or a monster of self-sacrifice, or a lady five thousand years old in the whole course of the story’” (Barrish 47). Barrish cites Howells’ review of White’s novel as evidence that “American literary realism had as a key goal to uncover the interest, the suspense, the drama in moments that others might think of as uneventful or boring—those times when it only *appears* to those looking for obviously spectacular events that ‘nothing happens’” (47). I began the introduction to this dissertation pointing out the ways the phrase “nothing happens” is used by book reviewers to discredit and normalize the violence against women with the example of Joan Didion’s often ignored first novel, *Run River.* Sui Sin Far’s fictional sketches show how a different kind of violence—that against ethnic Americans and immigrants—is also being normalized by Howells’ language in this review published seventy years before Didion’s time. Howells’ praise of White is clearly intended to suggest that her novel does not rely on sentimental or romantic notions in

order to tell her story. But Sui Sin Far's sketches alert readers to the rather exploitative way society's perceived others—ethnic Americans, immigrants, women, and the urban and rural poor—are treated in realist fiction and by a literary establishment that congratulates authors for making this treatment seem as though "nothing happens."

Sui Sin Far's sketches challenge the "nothing happens" celebrated in realist literary fiction by redeploying realist tropes with slight nuances that expose the violence therein and how they operate to distance the reader from the literary subject rather than bring them together in an imagined sense of community. In a number of Sui Sin Far's stories she explores gender through characters that cross-dress. In the two most explicit stories that do so, "The Smuggling of Tie Co" and "Tian Shan's Kindred Spirit," scholars have argued that Sui Sin Far "experiments with gender reversal through cross-dressing" and show how "gender reversal serves as a necessary and effective means of resisting oppressive forces of racism and sexism" (Li 128). In both of these examples, the Chinese female protagonist dresses and presents herself as a man—in one story to a white man and in the other to a Chinese man—in order to express romantic love and sexual desire. But what scholars have been quick to call a "gender reversal" is not a reversal at all. In neither story do female and male characters switch or reverse their roles in social or domestic settings. Rather, the female characters in these sketches adorn masculine clothes, but not necessarily masculine traits, and present themselves to hyper-masculine men in what is better called a gender manipulation than a gender reversal. These sketches serve to show how literary realism's use of third-person limited narration—that narration of observation and interpretation—does not suffice to show us anything "real" about these characters. As realism's most characteristic form of narration, third-person limited

narration functions to observe and interpret through the filtered gaze of a character, using the scientific logic of "seeing is believing" to enforce the "air of reality." Barrish explains that, in third-person limited narration, "readers view a scene as it is filtered through one character's eyes and are privy to that character's inner responses[…]however, the author retains the option of expressing whatever that character sees and thinks in language," giving the author flexibility to do some of that interpretative work with freedom from being "restricted to the character's own linguistic habits" (Barrish 53). Therefore, the realist author's own interpretations comingle with the character-narrator and, as Wonham argues, participates in the reification of certain identity types or, in Wonham's words, "Howellsian realism institutes permanent and inflexible ethnic and cultural categories as a strategy for imagining a homogeneous social order" (Wonham 49). Wonham and Barrish's observations of realism's third-person narrative voice makes it possible for us to recognize the resistant work Sui Sin Far's fiction engages in against the realist literary tradition. She draws out the underlying biases of realism's third-person narration by showing how perspectives and representations change when Chinese immigrant and Chinese American characters are the ones doing the observing and interpreting rather than Anglo-American characters. In Sui Sin Far's sketches, observation is reduced to the superficial and brief examination of what gendered clothing a character wears, an observation that cannot be relied upon to tell us the characters' sex, let alone the "'essence' of the human subject" (Wonham 9).

In "The Smuggling of Tie Co," for instance, Tie Co is a Chinese woman passing as a man in order to secure economic freedom in Canada. She solicits the renegade Jack Fabian, an American smuggler, to take her to New York after learning that his smuggling

business is in a precarious state. First described by the third-person limited narrator as "a nice-looking young Chinaman," the reader remains unaware that Tie Co is actually a woman for most of the story and that her desire to go to New York is a desire to help Fabian out of her romantic love for him. It isn't until half-way through the narrative, when Tie Co tells Fabian that "'I not have wife'[…]'I not like woman, I like man,'" that the reader begins to mistakenly question if Tie Co has queer feelings for Fabian (Sui, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 107). Furthermore, Sui Sin Far's use of direct quotes in this sketch also confuses what is "real" and what is illusion. Tie Co tells Fabian that she does "'not like women'," but that, "'I like man.'" Tie Co's words, in relation to her masculine dress, queer her identity and make her illegible in terms of heteronormative understandings of sexuality and gender. At the end of the story, after Tie Co jumps from a bridge to save Fabian from capture by immigration officers, the reader learns that "Tie Co's body was picked up the next day. Tie Co's body, and yet not Tie Co, for Tie Co was a youth, and the body found with Tie Co's face and dressed in Tie Co's clothes was the body of a girl—a woman" (108). We can better understand the ways Sui Sin Far is playing with gender and literary form in this conclusion by recalling Wonham's argument that "realism and caricature pursue strikingly similar aesthetic aims[…]both programs understand their function in terms of 'penetration' and 'exposure,' and both claim a unique capacity to lay bare the 'essence' of the human subject" (Wonham 9). Wonham identifies that like caricature, realism reifies racialized and ethnic identities as inherently different from Anglo-identities. If caricature "maintains strong ties to[…]physiognomy, the science of reading facial features as indices of character and temperament," then Wonham parallels this by noting that "the enterprise of American literary realism hinged

on the artist's confidence that the essential self[…]can be coherently and reliable interpreted through acts of mimetic representation, a confidence not unlike that of the phrenologist, who claims that an individual's character and destiny are expressed in the features of the face and head" (11). Thus, Wonham helps identify the ways Sui Sin Far is critiquing this kind of phrenological observation in realist literary fiction and its ability to capture "real" American life. In the end, it comes down to observations of Tie Co's body and what it can tell us about her "real" identity and her "real" self. But rather than revealing the truth about Tie Co, Sui Sin Far's conclusion disrupts the power of the body to convey Tie Co's real identity and condemns realism's reliance on third-person observation as a legitimate form of capturing even an "'illusion of life'," as Henry James suggests it does in *The Art of Fiction* (Barrish 42).

"The Smuggling of Tie Co" also deals with the way ethnic immigrants, especially ethnic women immigrants, are curated by realist fiction as the "nothing" plot devices that help deliver white, middle-class, male protagonists to some kind of moment of clarity or epiphany about themselves. As previously mentioned, Barrish notes that Howells struggles in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* to allow the social outliers to speak for themselves and he also relates this to what "we might today call 'liberal guilt' on the part of well-intentioned citizens," including both Howells' Anglo-American protagonist family, the Marches, and Howells himself (Barrish 103). Barrish indicates that *A Hazard of New Fortunes* tested Howells against the very agenda he outlined for literary realism. While his novel intends to "make visible some of the uglier realities of late-nineteenth-century American capitalism: the pool of impoverished people accumulated in cities, the alliance between wealthy capitalists and the executive branch of government," the novel

also "admits that, despite his [Howells'] bitter criticism of American capitalism, he continues to enjoy the luxuries" (105). Sui Sin Far picks up on the hypocrisy evident in realist fiction and exposes it in "The Smuggling of Tie Co." The concluding lines of the story reassure the reader that Fabian's smuggling business makes a strong recovery—something that Tie Co cannot—but that "none of them [the Chinese men he smuggles] are like Tie Co; and sometimes, between whiles, Fabian finds himself pondering long and earnestly over the mystery of Tie Co's life—and death" (Sui Sin Far 109). Tie Co gives her life to ensure Fabian's smuggling business and financial wellbeing, and although Fabian "finds himself pondering" about Tie Co's "life—and death," there remain other Chinese men, due to the restrictive immigration policies in both Canada and the United States, that ensure his survival. Much like the Marches in Howells' *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Fabian serves to help Chinese men move across borders in search of better financial lives but, in doing so, Fabian himself benefits financially from racist immigration politics. Underneath the "nothing happening" of Howells' Marches exploration of urban poverty or Sui Sin Far's Fabian going about business as usual is the violence that continues to get perpetuated by realists narratives that surely make poverty and immigrants visible, but only to remind readers that their unfortunate reality is what makes the readers' middle-class existence possible. In "The Smuggling of Tie Co," Sui Sin Far emphasizes Tie Co's individuality, even after her death, in order to draw attention to the ways realist fiction commodifies these social outliers to satisfy what Barrish identifies as realism's "'liberal guilt'."

As she uses third-person narrative voice in these stories to highlight literary realism's shortcomings, so too does Sui Sin Far rely on clichés and caricature to draw

attention to the ways realism's claims to "real" and "truthful" depictions of underrepresented American communities remain tangled in the era's sociopolitical hierarchies. While scholarship on Sui Sin Far has struggled to understand the impact her use of stereotypes has on her politics, I argue that the moments of contradiction and hypocrisy in Sui Sin Far's fictional sketches are in fact the consequences of her politics. Put simply, Sui Sin Far's form is dictated by the political content of her stories and the resistance work she envisions herself participating in. For example, scholars have compared two of Sui Sin Far's sketches, "The Wisdom of the New" and "The Americanizing of Pau Tsu," which deal with similar themes concerning Chinese immigrant women and Chinese marriage but with slightly different nuances. Written about four years apart, both stories are told in a third person limited narrative voice that moves in and out of different characters to show readers who the characters are and how they relate to one another. Scholars have argued that these stories reveal a progression in Sui Sin Far's own awareness of her positionality and a maturity in her political stance against dominant, Anglo-American society. More specifically, scholars point out the ways Sui Sin Far implements dominant stereotypes and oppressive literary tropes in the first story, "Wisdom," and how she moves away from these in the second story, "Americanizing," to show her progressive political development on the topic of Chinese immigrant women and the expectation that they Americanize. However, reading Sui Sin Far for the ways she challenges dominant literary realism allows us to see that, more than showing a growing political consciousness, these stories are better evidence of Sui Sin Far's increased adaptability as a writer and of her expanding awareness of the innerworkings of realist literary tropes.

In both “Wisdom of the New” and “The Americanizing of Pau Tsu,” Sui Sin Far takes up the issue of immigrant assimilation and Americanization. In “Wisdom,” Wou Sankwei, a Chinese immigrant merchant, sends for his wife, Pau Lin, and their young son from China. Once in America, the conflict of the story arises in the form of a marital dispute between Wou Sankwei and Pau Lin over whether or not their son should be given an American or Chinese education. Wou Sankwei, indebted to two American benefactresses, Mrs. Dean and her niece, Adah Charlton, is eager to provide his son with the American learning that helped him to become a successful business man in the United States. Secret to the other characters in the story but not to the reader, Pau Lin harbors the jealousy, “humiliation and shame of bearing children to a man who looked up to another woman—and a woman of another race—as being above the common uses of women” (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 51). Finding her husband too reverent of Adah, Pau Lin retaliates by refusing to allow her son to attend an American school and to learn English. After the death of their second infant child and Adah ’s insistence that “’it is a mistake to try and make a Chinese man into an American—if he has a wife who is to remain as she always has been’” (57), Wou Sankwei begins to come around to his wife’s wishes for their son and thinks to himself, “should she [Pau Lin] offer any further opposition to the boy’s attending the American school, he would not insist upon it” (59). However, after a “peaceful week in the Wou household,” Wou Sankwei thinks “his wife was reconciled to his wishes,” and so he does not speak his resignation to his wife and, tragically, on the evening before their son is to begin school, Pau Lin poisons her son rather than allowing him to attend an American school. The story concludes with Wou Sankwei’s letter to Adah Charlton in which he says: “I have lost my boy through an

accident. I am returning to China with my wife whose health requires a change" (61). The story, which actually begins with Wou Sankwei in China making the decision to travel to the United States to work towards "Self-improvement" (43), ends on the notion that he has become "'too Americanized'" for his and his wife's own good (57). Sui Sin Far's "Wisdom of the New" reworks the presumably progressive story of Anglo-American missionary women's efforts to assimilate and Americanize immigrants by retelling the story from the point of view of the immigrants themselves. This reworking of the narrative draws out the imperial negotiations that attempt to erase Chinese immigrant culture as a condition for Americanization, but which also refuses Chinese immigrants complete assimilation and identification with the nation.

Similarly, "The Americanizing of Pau Tsu" considers the impossible and often contradictory standards of Anglo-American missionary efforts to assimilate Chinese immigrants into dominant society. In addition to featuring similarly named characters, the second story, "Americanizing," shares a similar plot to that of "Wisdom," though it is told in a much shorter and concise manner. Wan Lin Fo, having established himself as a successful merchant in Seattle and who is also under the guidance of two American benefactresses, realizes one day while speaking to one of them, Adah Raymond, that she has "'inspired in me a love'" for his wife back in China (84). He sends for her, Pau Tsu, who arrives in the United States to find her husband values modern American customs, which makes her uncomfortable. In a shift from "Wisdom," Wan Lin Fo openly expresses his desire for Pau Tsu to "'learn to speak like you [Adah]—and be like you'" (85). Wan Lin Fo buys his wife American dresses and encourages her to learn English for, as he tells her, "'What is best for men is also best for women in this country'" (86).

The story reaches its climax in a moment of violation when Pau Tsu contracts an illness and must see a doctor. Adah Raymond provides the name of her male, family physician, at which point Pau Tsu pleads not to be seen by a man. However, when Adah assures her that "'I understand,'" and that "There are several women doctors in this town,'" Wan Lin Fo declares: "We are in America. Pau Tsu shall be attended to by your physician'" (88-89). In one of Sui Sin Far's most poignant scenes, we watch Pau Tsu's medical examination through Adah Raymond's eyes. Adah, referred to in this scene as "the other girl," stays with Pau Tsu and "closed her lips, feeling that if the wife would not dispute her husband's will it was not her [Adah's] place to do so; but her heart ached with compassion as she bared Pau Tsu's chest for the stethoscope" (89) Adah Raymond later tells her sister:

> It was like preparing a lamb for slaughter[…]Pau Tsu was motionless, her eyes closed and her lips sealed, while the doctor remained; but after he had left and we two were alone she shuddered and moaned like one bereft of reason. I honestly believe that the examination was worse than death to that little Chinese woman. The modesty of generations of maternal ancestors was crucified as I rolled down the neck of her silk tunic (89).

In this letter, told from the perspective of the Anglo-American missionary woman, Sui Sin Far condemns a progressive rhetoric that may have "ached with compassion" for the plight of the immigrant, but which nevertheless continues "preparing a lamb for slaughter" and which participates in the crucifixion "of generations of [modest] maternal ancestors[…]as I rolled down the neck of her silk tunic" (89). Additionally, just as Pau Lin defies her husband in the end to save her son, so too does Pau Tsu react to this assault against her body by disobeying her husband and thus, breaking with the stereotype of the submissive, Chinese wife. This encounter with the male doctor leads Pau Tsu to leave her

husband and to request in a letter that he "obtain a divorce, as is the custom in America" (90). Upon receiving the letter, Wan Lin Fo searches Chinatown with Adah, who blames him for forcing her to see the American doctor. In a reversal from "Wisdom," in which the Adah of that story chides Wou Sankwei for being "too Americanized" for his traditional Chinese wife, the Adah of this story condemns Wan Lin Fo for wanting "your wife to be an American woman while you remained a Chinaman. For all your clever adaptation of our American ways you are a thorough Chinaman. Do you think an American would dare treat his wife as you have treated yours'" (91)? Wan Lin Fo is turned off by this version of Adah and "was wondering how he could ever have wished his gentle Pau Tsu to be like this angry woman" (91). Once Wan Lin Fo finds his wife at the home of a female Chinese herbalist—a clear contrast to the male, Western doctor—he asks Adah to leave and "'come to see my wife some other time—not today'" (92).

Though similar, the slight differences between "Wisdom" and "Americanizing" tell of the prowess Sui Sin Far accumulated over literary realism's strategies for representing the real. Comparisons of these stories have led scholars to name Sui Sin Far's "progress in constructing and claiming subjectivity, in terms accepted by European Americans, for Chinese men and women. At the same time, she seems to progress in understanding her own position in relation to these Chinese characters" (Chu 120). Patricia Chu recognizes that Sui Sin Far "revisits the same romantic triangle with different attitudes towards assimilation, the Chinese, and the proper role of white friends in Chinese American domestic life" (116). Scholars have noted that the first story uses racist descriptions of Chinese characters as "quaint" (Sui, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 47), and ends the story with the traditional Chinese wife's credibility decimated whereas, in

the second story, the traditional Chinese wife is validated in her desires and the Chinese husband comes to her defense against the Anglo-American missionary woman, Adah. By identifying "Americanization" as a revision of "Wisdom," Chu finds that the second story's "critical view of the husband's devaluation of his home culture seems more persuasive and internally consistent, while Adah, the white female character, is given less moral authority" (116). But rather than reading these differences between the stories as evidence of Si Sin Far's "progress" in identifying her character's sociopolitical positionality, as well as her own, I read this revision as her increasing awareness for the problematic strategies realist writers use to determine "real" American experience and "real" American subjects for their literary endeavors. Regardless of the different nuances with which Sui Sin Far wrote these sketches, the critiques they offer remain the same. Both "Wisdom" and "Americanization" are asking readers to contemplate the violence involved in "Americanizing" immigrants and the violation Chinese women especially experience as they are asked to assimilate into American culture without actually being able to participate or have a say in American politics, business, and society. Both stories also take a similar stance on the problems associated with Anglo-American missionary women's interference in Chinese immigrant family life. Considering these two stories share a similar message, the problem that scholars notice between "Wisdom's" seeming underdeveloped politics in comparison to "Americanizing's" staunch defense of Chinese immigrant women is not in fact a problem of her politics at all, but Sui Sin Far's finesse of dominant literary stereotypes to expose the violence Chinese immigrant men and women experience not only in Chinatowns but on the pages of realist stories as well.

Rather than recognizing "Americanizing" for its move away from stereotypes, I read both sketches for how they navigate dominant stereotypes of Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants and for how they track Sui Sin Far's increased awareness for how stereotypes serve ambivalent realist programs. For instance, Jack London's 1913 novel, *The Valley of the Moon,* tells the story of Billy and Saxon Roberts' journey to find a place in California that has not been overcrowded with immigrants in which they can settle down to a simple, idealistic, farming life. Though the novel is published the year after Sui Sin Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance,* its treatment of the Chinese immigrants living in California offers a good example of the kinds of stereotypes realist fiction succumbed to in representing Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in order to tell the stories of other underrepresented Americans, such as the Anglo-American working class communities in the West. Towards the end of the novel, Billy is given advice to head for Stockton where a Chinese man, Sing Kee, has had success in the potato business. Billy and Saxon are told that Sing Kee "smuggled himself into the United States" and is described as building his potato business by keeping "his eyes peeled" and taking advantage of Anglo-American farmers as their farms failed (London 260). The rhetoric of Chinese immigrants smuggling themselves into the United States infers that their entry into the nation is illegal and that their belonging in the nation, already suspicious based on their ethnic identity, is made further so by the conditions of their entry. While Billy and Saxon seem impressed by Sing Kee's work ethic and market savvy, they also find these qualities to be exactly why Saxon "could not find a place for them [the Chinese] in her valley of the moon" (261). What Billy finds admirable—the Chinese work ethic—is also what is wrong with the Chinese in the American West and what becomes grounds

for stereotyping Chinese men as incessantly greedy, effeminate, and inhuman. Billy explains to Saxon that:

> We ain't Chinks. We're white folks. Does a Chink ever want to ride a horse, hellbent for election an' havin' a good time of it? Did you ever see a Chink go swimmin' out through the breakers at Carmel?—or boxin', wrestlin', runnin' an' jumpin' for the sport of it? Did you ever see a Chink take a shotgun on his arm, tramp six miles, an' come back happy with one measly rabbit? What does a Chink do? Work his damned head off. That's all he's good for. To hell with work, if that's the whole of the game—an' I've done my share of work, an' I can work alongside any of 'em. But what's the good? If they's one thing I've learned solid since you an' me hit the road, Saxon, it is that work's the least part of life[…]I don't want to be so tired all the time I can't love my wife (261-262).

Here Billy twists a cornerstone of the American self-made man—hard work—into a fault when it shows up in any non-white individual, mostly because Billy perceives the success Chinese immigrants such as Sing Kee achieve as threatening to his own chance at financial opportunity. Borrowing on Theodore Roosevelt's rhetoric of rugged masculinity, Billy presents the popular stereotype of the feminized Chinese man, in part because he doesn't participate in "boxin', wrestlin', runnin', and jumpin' for the sport of it," and because he has never seen a Chinese man "take a shotgun on his arm." But most telling about this representation of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans is that Billy implies they work so much that they are too consumed to love their wives. Billy wants to work hard for his family, but not so hard that "'I can't love my wife.'" Work is feminized when it is not balanced out by certain physical activities, including loving one's wife. London's *The Valley of the Moon* is an example of how realist fiction seeks to make familiar underrepresented American communities—in this case, the disenfranchised working class of the American West—at the expense of ethnic Americans and immigrants. The Chinese characters in London's novel are used as

another conflict Billy and Saxon must overcome to secure their American dream. As such, London, a highly revered realist writer of the American West, resorts to caricatures and one-dimensional constructions of Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants. As her sketches show, Sui Sin Far is aware of this contradiction in the realist agenda to represent those who have not been properly represented. She points to the systems of power which allows realist writers to stand as progressives, giving voice to the voiceless, but who also make decisions about who is most deserving of that representation.

Sui Sin Far re-presents the stereotypes London and other realists use in their fiction to show the political convenience such stereotypes serve realist writers in their efforts to at once open up American identity and restrict access to it. For instance, Sui Sin Far does write Wou Sankwei in "Wisdom" as an effeminate Chinese man, much like the Chinese immigrant characters in London's *The Valley of the Moon.* At the start of "Wisdom" Wou Sankwei is still in China, listening to "Li Wang, the peddler, who had lived in the land beyond the sea," tell of his experience living and working in the United States (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 42). He tells Wou Sankwei that "'Tis a hard life over there[…]but 'tis worth while. At least one can be a man, and can work at what work comes his way without losing face.' Then he laughed at Wou Sankwei's flabby muscles, at his soft, dark eyes, and plump, white hands" (42-43). With the peddler character, Sui Sin Far draws attention to the origins of stereotypes that cast Chinese men as effeminate and unproductive. She communicates to her readers that, in China, physical labor is associated with the lower classes while Chinese privileged masculinity is recognized in an aristocratic lack of preforming physical labor. Wou Sankwie's "flabby muscles," "soft, dark eyes," and "plump, white hands" are signs of his privileged role in

Chinese society, but which do not translate the same in the gendered notions of America labor and domesticity. Wou Sankwei responds to the peddler's remarks with the resolution to "go to America, the land beyond the sea. Better any life than that of a woman man" (43). Insecure about his masculinity as it is defined by Western standards, Wou Sankwei goes to the United States but, as Sui Sin Far sets up in this very first scene of the story, he is doomed to fail as Li Wang did. For all the hard, physical labor Li Wang says he put into his life in the United States, he still returned to China as a peddler, suggesting the "hard life" he lived in the United States was not simply caused by the labor he put into earning his living, but by the conditions Chinese immigrant men are forced to endure under United States Sinophobia. As Sui Sin Far suggests at the end of the sketch, no matter how much hard work Wou Sankwei puts into his life in the United States, his ethnic identity culturally excludes him from American notions of masculinity and therefore, excludes him from citizenship and full national acceptance. He ends up returning to China with the wife who has just killed their son, very much as the peddler warned him at the start of the sketch. With Wou Sankwei and the effeminate Chinese male stereotype he represents, Sui Sin Far intends to relate the impossibilities for Chinese men to assimilate into dominant American culture, regardless of how many Anglo-American missionary women come to their aid and how submissive Chinese immigrant men are to them. However, in "Wisdom," the political might of Sui Sin Far's stereotypes falls flat. The placement of the peddler character, rather than showing the stacked odds against him, runs the risk of associating his failure to thrive in the United States on his inherent lack of masculinity, thereby preserving the stereotype rather than using it to expose the contradictions within it. This earlier story fails in its political agenda not

because Sui Sin Far is a bad writer or because her political conscious had yet to be developed, but because she still had work to do to study and understand the ways such stereotypes are built and used by realist writers and how they become marketed to an Anglo-American audience.

In the later story, "Americanizing," however, Sui Sin Far reveals her increased adeptness at realist tropes and strategies and retells this story of Americanization in a more politically productive way. "Americanizing" also begins by narrating Wan Lin Fo's arrival in the United States to work for his uncle's merchant business. The reader is told that, "[i]n a few years' time he [Wan Lin Fo] knew as much about the business as did any of the senior partners" (83). Wan Lin Fo is introduced by the third-person narrator as having quickly learned to speak and write in English to "such a fluency that he was never at a loss for an answer, when the white man, as was sometimes the case, sought to pose him" (84). As described here, Wan Lin Fo is the model minority figure who puts in every effort to immerse himself in American culture. And yet, just as "Wisdom's" peddler stands in as a warning of the impossibility to reach full acceptance as a Chinese man in the United States, so too does Sui Sin Far guide readers to recognize that even Wan Lin Fo's work ethic cannot help him attain unsuspicious entry into American life. In this second story, Sui Sin Far deploys the American phrase, "'All work and no play, '" and indicates that hard work without down time is just "as much against the principles of a Chinese youth as it is against those of a young American" (84). Wan Lin Fo, Sui Sin Far writes, "would while away an evening at the Chinese Literary Club, above the Chinese restaurant, discussing with some chosen comparison the work and merits of Chinese sages—and some other things," just as his American counterpart might (84). Though in

both “Wisdom” and “Americanizing” Sui Sin Far treats the same stereotype of the effeminate Chinese man, “Americanizing” has a better handle on the ways stereotypes operate in dominant realist fiction to isolate Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants even as it claims an interest in their “real” experience. By deploying the popular American, “all work, no play,” phrase as a means of mediating between Anglo-American business men and Chinese businessmen, Sui Sin Far takes on the kinds of arguments London uses in *The Valley of the Moon* to discredit Chinese immigrants’ work ethic by positioning them as an impotent, sexless people who do not love their wives. “Americanizing,” rather than trying to show the problems in the stereotype through another Chinese figure such as the peddler, relies on showing likeness between Chinese and American men rather than differences as a means of exposing the contrived nature of stereotype and caricature. Sui Sin Far’s narrator reminds readers that, like Americans, Chinese merchants also invest in what the phrase, “’All work and no play,’” stands for and therefore, they engage in extracurricular social activities, though they may be at Chinese clubs and restaurants in Chinatown versus the American clubs and restaurants Anglo-American men frequent after hours. In the first story, “Wisdom,” Wou Sankwei intervenes in his marital problems far too late and chooses to handle the fatal situation by returning to China. Wan Lin Fo in “Americanizing,” on the other hand, recognizes his mistake towards his wife just in time and is able to reassert his masculinity by rescuing her, in a sense, from her exile and isolating her from the seductive lure of the Anglo-American missionary woman within their American Chinatown community. Both Wou Sankwei and Wan Lin Fo represent the submissive, hard-working, impotent stereotypes circulating in dominant literary society however, in the second story Sui Sin Far is able to

shift this stereotype in the end. When Wan Lin Fo makes the decision to retrieve his wife and demand Adah "come see my wife some other time—not today," Sui Sin Far reveals the contrived nature of the stereotype and assumes for her character a restored masculinity and control over his own life (92).

Her increased control over the popular stereotypes of Chinese men in realist fiction is also apparent in the way she relates these stereotypes to how Chinese women are represented to and understood by American society. As Kate McCullough argues, Sui Sin Far's work to dispute the popular stereotypes of her day were complicated by the fact that there were "multiple and contradictory stereotypes in circulation around Chinese masculinity" (McCullough 265). While there were stereotypes depicting the effeminate Chinese man as we saw in London's novel, there were also caricatures and other fiction that depicted Chinese men as sexual predators in much the same way African American men were being portrayed in late 19th and early 20th century American society (265). To navigate these contradictions and to avoid reinforcing one stereotype as a consequence of deconstructing another, Sui Sin Far's fiction often relies on the relationality of stereotypes wielded against Chinese men and Chinese women in order to render them damaging and inauthentic. For example, in "Wisdom," Wou Sankwei's move to the United States in order to recover his masculinity is played out again once his wife arrives with their young son. Wou Sankwei wants his son to "learn the white man's language" (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 48) as he had and even "'handed him over to" a while male character to serve "as a sort of guide, counsellor and friend" (55). In the name of "self-improvement," Wou Sankwei "handed" his son over to Anglo-America and so, in a similar move we have seen in Toni Morrison's *Beloved,* his wife ensures he "'is

saved[…]from the Wisdom of the New'" by killing him to protect him (60). Wou Sankwei, preoccupied with his work and maintaining his relations with his white benefactresses, mistakes his wife's silence as "peace" instead of recognizing it as her grief for the child she understands as having been taken from her. But again, "Wisdom" runs the risk of placing the blame on Chinese women who choose to bring their children up in a Chinatown that "'tis' a mad place in which to bring up a child'" (49). The effect Wou Sankwei's obsession with work and the American program of "self-improvement" has on Pau Lin is extreme and, like the peddler, allows for Anglo-American audiences to continue to interpret Chinese women as needing to be saved from Chinese men who relocate them to American Chinatowns and force them into making deadly choices such as Pau Lin's.

On the other hand, "Americanizing's" Pau Tsu once again reminds readers of the similarities rather than the differences between Chinese women and Anglo-American women. If the typical Anglo-American mother could never imagine herself killing her own child, then she could relate to the modesty and sense of violation Pau Tsu experiences as her husband forces her to see a male doctor. In "Wisdom," Pau Lin is far too assertive for her reading audiences to see beyond the harshness of her character but, reverting back to stereotypes of the submissive Chinese woman, Sui Sin Far is able to find a point of relation between Chinese women and Anglo-American women. In bearing her chest for the male doctor, Pau Lin's violation stems from her husband's overzealous and, as Sui Sin Far indicates in the narrative, superficial need to be as Anglo-Americans are. That he wants her to "'dress like an American woman when we go out or receive,'" gives the illusion of assimilation but, as Pau Lin puts it: "'When I wear that dress,[…]I

will look like your friend, Miss Raymond,'" but she will only "look" as such, never to actually *be* Miss Raymond or the ideal American woman she represents (88). And in fact, Sui Sin Far uses the Adah Raymond character in this story to show how the stereotypes and notions of Chinese as unassimilable are manufactured by an Anglo-American society that wants to at once dominate and control Chinese immigrant populations and to keep them as far away from the American cultural center as possible. As mentioned, Adah blames Wan Lin Fo and tells him that "'You're a Chinaman, but you're almost as stupid as an American. Your cruelty consisted in forcing Pau Tsu to be—what nature never intended her to be—an American woman'" (91). Not only does this refuse Wan Lin Fo access to the American identity, despite all his efforts to Americanize, but it also suggests that the very understanding that Wan Lin Fo adopted—that hard work and determination is what it takes to be a successful American citizen—is what makes him "'almost as stupid as an American.'" Sui Sin Far's "Americanizing" shows an increased awareness for the ways stereotypes are constructed and for how they operate to give the "illusion" of literary realism's investment in immigrants and ethnic Americans.

Analysis of Sui Sin Far's literary form typically focuses on the ways she centers Chinese characters, unlike her realist peers, and narrates their experiences and perspectives from a third-person point of view. Scholars such as Annette White-Parks argue that the "Chinese North Americans repeatedly occupy the fictional center [in Sui Sin Far's works], taking on the role of insiders, while White North Americans shift to the periphery, becoming outsiders, or 'Other'" (White-Parks, "Reversal" 17).Other scholars have relied on this argument to push further and suggest that, "Sui Sin Far decenters whiteness as the standard of what is 'human,' a move that is in fact central to much of her

work," and which, as I have cited before, "represents an adaptation of mainstream realism" (Diana 160). However, these scholars focus on how Sui Sin Far works "to revise, rewrite, and refashion" dominant genres such as realism (162), rather than on how she uses realism's own methods to show the genre's instability when it comes to representing ethnic Americans, immigrants, women, and the urban and rural poor. In two of her most discussed sketches, "The Story of One White Woman Who Married a Chinese" and its sequel, "Her Chinese Husband," scholars have debated how to understand these sketches in relation to her other works. "One White Woman" and "Her Chinese Husband" both center the Anglo-American, Minnie and are narrated from her first-person narrative voice. In the first story, Minnie leaves her Anglo-American husband, James Carson, a social reformer and advocate for women's suffrage, and shortly thereafter, marries a Chinese merchant, Liu Kanghi. The second story narrates the struggles Minnie faced as a white woman married to a Chinese man. Minnie is a complicated character who rejects the idea of women's suffrage and cares only "'for my husband to love me and be kind to me, for life to be pleasant and easy, and to be able to help a wee bit the poor and sick around me'" (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 68). While her first husband is unable to give this to her, it is exactly what she finds in Liu Kanghi. She explains that her first husband "had been much more of an ardent lover than ever had been Liu Kanghi," but she questions whether his passion had been "real or feigned" whereas, "[t]here was nothing feigned about my Chinese husband" (78-79). The authenticity she finds with Liu Kanghi is important to Minnie but, as Sui Sin Far indicates through the use of the first-person narrative voice, Minnie's search for

authenticity is impeded by her internalized belief in separate spheres ideology and her society's conflation of femininity with vulnerability.

If these stories have confused scholars it is because they have failed to recognize the irony Sui Sin Far brings to the story through its narrative voice. Although both sketches feature stereotypes of Chinese men and Anglo-American women, Sui Sin Far's deployment of these stereotypes serve in her overall political mission to show the relational ways xenophobia and sexism work in U.S. socioeconomic power structures. Jane Hwang Degenhardt points out that these stories are evidence of the ways "Sui Sin Far strategically orients her stories against Progressive gender roles in order to situate the Chinaman's *national* difference in opposition to the *racial* threat created by Progressivism's perceived endangerment of white female sexuality" (Degenhardt 656). That is, Degenhardt argues that Sui Sin Far uses her society's fear of African American men and their perceived threat to Anglo-femininity in order to usher Chinese masculinity—stereotyped as effeminate and therefore, opposite of the stereotypes used to depict African American men as sexual predators —into the national imaginary. Others such as Xiao-huang Yin, cite "One White Woman" and "Her Chinese Husband" to show that Sui Sin Far "fell prey to the stereotypes of the day and unwittingly repeated the racial pattern established by mainstream writers" in regards to Chinese men (Yin 109). Both of these scholars try to make sense out of what seem to be contradictory, oppressive ways Sui Sin Far deals with the fraught sociopolitical relationship between Anglo-American women and ethnic and racial men. While they are right to note the use of stereotypes, Degenhardt's and Xia-huang Yin's conclusions conflate Sui Sin Far the author with her characters and, as I have pointed out before, Sui Sin Far is not her subjects. These

scholars also miss entirely that these stories are also Sui Sin Far's only stories to feature an Anglo-American, female protagonist *and* first person narration. These differences from her other sketches give Sui Sin Far room to explore the source of these dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity and to show how they work within a xenophobic rhetoric to shape civic inclusion and exclusion. Minnie's character is superficial, hardly the figure we expect to lead a revolution in either women's politics or racial politics. By narrating these stories through Minnie's own voice, Sui Sin Far is able to capture the deeply entrenched and interconnected social oppressions that lead Anglo-American women to perpetuate their own dependency upon men and support a set of racist presumptions that work to exclude Chinese men and women from national identity.

Through Minnie's first person narrative voice, Sui Sin Far pinpoints American notions of "true love" as a cultural fabrication that lends itself to the promotion of oppressive gender identities and a sexual politics that infantilizes women. In *Mrs. Spring Fragrances'* titular story, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance," Sui Sin Far engages in the cultural differences between the Chinese practice of arranged marriages and the American notion that "'[l]ove, in this country, must be free, or it is not love at all'" (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 24). In "One White Woman" and "Her Chinese Husband," Sui Sin Far revisits this tension of arranged love versus "free" love and suggests that the "free" love in America is not in actuality free, and that it comes with as much, if not more, of a sacrifice to women than Chinese arranged marriages do. Scholars have understood Minnie to represent Sui Sin Far's critique of the New Woman figure and the suffrage politics she stands for. If the sketches had been told in the third-person narrative voice as her other sketches featuring Chinese protagonists are, then this might have been a

stronger argument. However, Sui Sin Far's intentional use of first-person narrative voice to tell the story of "One White Woman Who Married a Chinese," offers Minnie up for critique as a representative of dominant Anglo-American society. Barrish notes that "Although many realist writers experimented with first-person narration,[…]most ultimately opted against it as too limiting" (Barrish 51). First-person narrative voice is limiting because it "restricts a work's narration to the vocabulary and sentence structures that the fictional character serving as narrator would plausibly use" (51). First-person narration does not allow for much flexibility and holds the author accountable to the character-narrator in ways third-person narration does not. Therefore, Minnie is not necessarily a reflection of Sui Sin Far's politics. Instead, she is an expression of Sui Sin Far's observations of the extent to which gendered stereotypes and racial stereotypes are intertwined and imbricated in the very foundations of American democratic society. Much like "The Inferior Woman," the story with which I started this chapter, Sui Sin Far's politics in the Minnie sketches are closely intertwined with their form. Sui Sin Far uses the first-person narrative voice to indicate the relational violence enacted upon white women and Chinese immigrants at the hands of the toxic masculinity that shapes not only American domesticity but American racism and xenophobia as well.

By providing Minnie with a first-person narration of her marriages, Sui Sin Far reveals Minnie's concerns to be first and foremost with her own femininity. "One White Woman" ends with Minnie narrating that, though she recognizes her Chinese husband "has his faults," she loves him because he "has never sought to take away from me the privilege of being but a woman. I can lean upon and trust in him. I feel him behind me, protecting and caring for me, and that, to an ordinary woman like myself, means more

than anything else" (77). But when Liu Kanghi first proposes to Minnie she tells him that she needs time and requests that he "'[b]e my friend a little while longer'" (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 75). Liu Kanghi then asks her: "'Do you have for me the love feeling,'" to which Minnie replies that "truthfully" she did not know (75). Minnie only makes up her mind to accept the proposal after James Carson, her first husband, corners her on the stairs to her apartment and violently demands she return to him since, as he says, "'once your husband, always your husband'" (76). During this encounter James charges Minnie with having "'sunk'" into love with "'[t]he oily little Chink'" who "'has won you'" (76). At this point, Minnie narrates that she was "no longer afraid of him," and stood up to James by answering, "'[y]es, honorably and like a man[…]You were unwilling to protect and care for the woman who was your wife or the little child you caused to come into this world; but he succored and saved the stranger woman, treated her as a woman, with reverence and respect" (76-77)! It is then she realizes "'what I did not know before—that I love him'" (77). Minnie's fear—a fear for her threatened femininity—abates not because Liu Kanghi loves her and wants to provide for her—if this were so she would have accepted his proposal right away—but because the Anglo-American James Carson once again perceives her as vulnerable and in need of saving from the "'oily little Chink'" that has "'won'" his wife. In other words, Carson once again recognizes Minnie's femininity and falls in line with dominant gender roles that place him as the protector of Anglo-American femininity. With this first-person narration, Sui Sin Far breaks down Minnie's illogical thought process as she comes to the conclusion that her own value is tied to the performance of Anglo-American masculinity and domination.

Through Minnie's voice, Sui Sin Far remarks upon the turn-of-the-century's tug-of-war between extending democratic privileges to Anglo-American women and thereby, supporting a New Woman in American society, and the call for Anglo-American men to reassert a rugged masculinity. Amy Kaplan argues in "Romancing the Empire," that female protagonists in historical romance novels serve "both as the damsel in distress for the hero to rescue and as the eye of the world for which masculinity is performed" (Kaplan 93). The "damsel in distress" trope provides a stage upon which Anglo-American masculinity can be reasserted and performed. The "damsel in distress," by presenting herself as vulnerable and in need of rescue, in actuality rescues Anglo-American masculinity from the threat of feminization. Kaplan's framework for thinking about the role of the female protagonist in imperial fictions also helps us think about the role Sui Sin Far's Minnie sketches play in her larger body of work. Sui Sin Far's choice to equip Minnie with a first-person narrative voice, a narrative voice she does not extend to her Chinese characters in other sketches, reveals that, for Minnie and the Anglo-American women she represents, her marriage to Liu Kanghi is a way for her to enforce these gendered tropes and maintain a degree of control over her own representation in her gendered society. Minnie places herself in a vulnerable marriage to a Chinese man in order to entice the Anglo-American James Carson to come to her rescue, a move which at once secures her femininity and demands the kind of masculinity from her husband she feared his managerial job was leeching from him.

Ultimately, Minnie's marriage to Liu Kanghi is an exercise in Anglo-American gendered racism and reveals the ways white women use Chinese men and other men of color to reinforce racial and gender stratification. In the sequel story, Minnie concedes

that “life with Liu Kanghi was not without its trials and tribulations,” and that, “[t]here was also on Liu Kanghi’s side an acute consciousness that, though belonging to him as his wife, yet in a sense I was not his, but of the dominant race, which claimed, even while it professed to despise me” (81). Despite her own attempts to declare herself his inferior, Minnie notes that “in spite of all I could do or say, it was there between us: that strange, invisible—what? Was it the barrier of race—that consciousness” (81)? That is, despite Minnie’s superficial attempts to be okay with being inferior to a Chinese man, her internalized beliefs, actions and cultural behaviors remain that “barrier,” which is not of “race,” but of racism. Minnie narrates a time that her “white blood rose” when Liu Kanghi, whom she now describes as “[i]mperious by nature,” asked her to keep her opinions to herself when socializing with his friends (80).Coming from Minnie’s first-person narrative voice, this stereotype of the “[i]mperious” Chinese man preying upon Anglo-American women takes on a different connotation than the other stereotypes used in Sui Sin Far’s stories that feature Chinese protagonists. The stereotype is evoked only after Minnie’s whiteness is threatened and serves Sui Sin Far to show that, even this Anglo-American woman, who risks her sociopolitical place in American society by marrying a Chinese man, cannot fully submit herself to being Liu Kanghi’s equal, let alone his inferior. Sui Sin Far’s implementation of the first-person narrative voice in these sketches becomes a device through which she exposes the deep-rooted racisms that underly traditional notions of gender and family organization. But it isn’t just through narrative voice and caricatures that Sui Sin Far intervenes in the realist’s literary move to consolidate national identity. Her literary form itself, the regional sketch, is also

important to that intervention as it demands a different reading practice and attention to temporal plot structures than the more revered realist novel.

"Individuality is more than nationality:" The Sketch as Intervention

In what Sui Sin Far herself calls a "personal sketch," published with the *Boston Globe* under the title, "Sui Sin Far, the Half Chinese Writer, Tells of Her Career," Sui Sin Far conveys that her "life has been quite unlike that of any literary worker of whom I have read" (Sui "Half Chinese Writer," 288). In the sketch she tells the story of the obstacles she overcame and, to some extent, those she could not surpass on her journey to become a published writer. Sui Sin Far describes her call to write as her "ambition" (289) and her "impulse to create" (290), but what is most telling about her "personal sketch" is how she relates the way others, mostly Anglo-American men, responded to her desires to write literature and serious journalism. To gain entry into the writing world and to earn money to help her family's financial situation, Sui Sin Far took up a job as a stenographer. She recalls how she would chat with "the senior member of the firm, now Judge Archibald of Montreal," about "books and writers," and how he would "read my little stories and verse as they appeared, and usually commented upon them with amused interest" (292). However, once she began "to tell him that I was ambitious to write a book," she remembers "him saying that it would be necessary for me to acquire some experience of life and some knowledge of character before I began the work and I assuring him seriously that I intended to form all my characters upon the model of myself. 'They will be very funny people then,' he answered with a wise smile" (292). Here Judge Archibald of Montreal suggests that novels, as the more valued genre than the "little stories and verse" Sui Sin Far was writing, do not feature Chinese or biracial

characters and therefore, as a biracial woman, he suggests Sui Sin Far "acquire some experience of life and some knowledge of character" before she sets down to write a novel. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in her 1909 autobiographical essay, Sui Sin Far uses the word "funny" to describe those people she met who advised her to cache in on her ethnic identity by caricaturizing herself. Used again in this 1912 description of a conversation she had with a man about her writing at the very start of her career, Sui Sin Far indicates that he considered any character "model[ed] on herself" would be "very funny people." In these two autobiographical essays, Sui Sin Far's use of the word "funny" goes to show the contradictory and ambivalent ways her society accepted ethnic writers and ethnic subjects. While the ethnic writer's "little stories and verse" are met with "amused interest," the same ethnic writer's attempts to write novels—a genre that stands at the forefront of national literary identity—are condemned as "funny."

Despite realism's program of democratizing literature, the novel remained a national genre dedicated to the project of homogenizing national identity. As an ethnic author, Sui Sin Far herself was often reviewed as a "funny"—read "queer"—literary figure. Even as Sui Sin Far began to publish her stories and sketches in major newspapers and magazines like *Century* and *Ladies Home Journal,* she took note that: "I am not consciously a humorous person; but now and then unconsciously I write things which seem to strike editors as funny" (292). Editors and publishers, made uncomfortable by Sui Sin Far's choice to identify as Chinese and threatened by her ambitions to write novels, dealt with her non-categorizable identity by finding her "funny" and her writing "humorous," despite the lived violence she often portrayed in both her journalism and her sketches. Regardless of this feedback, Sui Sin Far continued to dream of publishing a

novel and, according to letters she sent to various editors, including Charles Lummis at *The Land of Sunshine,* she had finished a novel and was working to find a publisher at the time of her death. However, considering Lummis and Sui Sin Far battled over the length of her contributions to the magazine, this novel, which has yet to be recovered, might have been more of a negotiating strategy than a reality. For example, Cutter notes that Lummis restricted the length of Sui Sin Far's stories and cites letters in which Sui Sin Far told him that another Western-American periodical, *Overland,* was publishing a "'long story in their July number called 'A Chinese Ishamel'[*sic*], which I would like you to read'" (Cutter 269). In a 1912 letter to him, Sui Sin Far notifies him of her upcoming collection of short stories, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance,* and indicates that "'[t]he other book [her novel], which I submitted to McClurg's, was not rejected by them absolutely" (271). Despite her efforts however, "Lummis felt Sui Sin Far was an excellent 'sketch' or 'short story' writer, but that he did not believe her capable of longer works" (269). For all her success at getting her shorter pieces published, Sui Sin Far struggled to be taken seriously by a literary establishment that valued her "little stories" about "exotic others" but doubted her capabilities to write a novel (269). The obstacles Sui Sin Far faced as a writer show up in her sketches and short stories as a growing frustration with the literary establishment. With the sketch and the short story, the only forms her editors allowed her to write in, Sui Sin Far takes to task the nationalizing efforts of the American literary establishment that ultimately restricted her freedoms as both a biracial woman and as a biracial writer.

Like her racialized and gendered identity, Sui Sin Far's literary identity is excluded from national identity. However, as Sui Sin Far understands it, this works to her

advantage as both a biracial woman and a biracial author. Sui Sin Far ends her autobiographical essay by claiming to "have no nationality," and that she is "not anxious to claim any. Individuality is more than nationality[…]I give my right hand to the Occidentals and my left to the Orientals, hoping that between them they will not utterly destroy the insignificant 'connecting link.' And that's all" (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 230). In these concluding lines, Sui Sin Far sums up her own biracial identity as a contradiction to national identity and recognizes the ways national identity erases individual identity. The histories that make up and inform her identity are not contained within any one nation but derive of multiple imperial histories, fighting against one another for domination. As she says, her right side tells the history of "the Occidentals," and her left side that of "the Orientals," and she can only hope they do not completely tear her apart. Therefore, as literary realism and the larger literary establishment is attempting to fix national identity in "authentic" depictions of "real" Americans with homogenous historical temporalities, Sui Sin Far's sketches intervene in nation-building projects to reveal the instability of these narratives as she recalls the individuals and experiences subsumed under the grandiose attempts to define national identity in racialized, ethnicized, and gendered terms. Sui Sin Far's literary agenda, as she alludes to in these last few lines of "Leaves," is one of recovery. The sketches from her 1912 collection, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, seek to recover the individuals and their histories as they are sacrificed to the interstices of the liberal narratives of national identity, citizenship, and expansion.

Sui Sin Far's sketches continue to ask her readers to question the motives and intentions behind a narrative's claim to portray the "real" and authentic American

experience by disrupting and deconstructing dominant histories and identities that become the cornerstone of nation-building genres such as the turn of the century's American realist novel. Greg Camfield suggests that the regional sketch is a countermove to the attacks sentimental writers faced in terms of their authenticity, including Harriet Beecher Stowe and, I might add, Helen Hunt Jackson (Camfield 58). Camfield explains that the regional sketch combatted arguments that sentimentalist fiction "got all the facts wrong" by creating a subgenre of realism "grounded so narrowly and precisely in locale as to avoid criticism about plausibility" (58-59). That is to say, Camfield identifies how local color realists and the regional author assert themselves as experts of these narrow and precise locales in order to command authority in telling "real" stories about the people and places they make as the subject of their writing and therefore, of their expertise. As we have seen, Sui Sin Far's sketches, which also take issue with the ways literary works are judged on a scale of authenticity, find fault with this new era of literature's claims to expertise over its subjects. Camfield names the ways the regional sketch—a genre that kept "sentimental realism alive"—allowed for the success of authors such as Bret Harte, Mark Twain, and Sarah Orne Jewett because the "informality" of the genre allowed them to focus less on proving "plausibility" and more on the sentiment behind narratives of place and identity (58-59). But whereas these authors avoided questions of their "plausibility" and concerns of their "authenticity" by bringing forward obscure identities found in isolated, often rural locations, Sui Sin Far's regional sketches take up the urban centers of the American West and critique a realism that exploits racial, ethnic, and gendered communities, as we saw in previous sections of this chapter.

Sui Sin Far's regional sketch transmits a different version of the American West and demands certain histories, cultures, and eccentricities of the West be recognized rather than written away by the dominant realist novel. If Jack London's Billy and Saxon Roberts flee San Francisco because it is overrun with immigrants who threaten Anglo-American jobs and consume the city in their cultural traditions and customs, then Sui Sin Far rewrites this San Francisco from the perspective of those immigrants. In an article published two years before her death in the *Boston Globe,* Sui Sin Far writes of San Francisco, California. "I fell in love with the City of the Golden Gate," she says, "and I wish I had space in which to write more of the place in which all the old ache in my bones fell away from them, never to return again" (Sui, "Tells of her Career" 293). Sui Sin Far tells of how she "looked out of my window, watched a continuously flowing stream of humanity, listened to the passing bands, inhaled the perfume of the curb stone flower sellers' wares and was very much interested" (293). Where London sees filth and depravity, Sui Sin Far sees "flowing stream[s] of humanity, "passing bands," and "flower sellers'" contributing to the economic success of the city. Sui Sin Far, like many others of her era, travels to the American West as a last resort measure for her health. And yet, whereas those many others found solace in the natural, near tropical environments of San Diego and Los Angeles and who, like London's Billy and Saxon Roberts, travel California in search of a Garden of Eden, Sui Sin Far finds life and vitality in the "flowing stream of humanity" in the much more urbanized center of California—San Francisco. Sui Sin Far is less attracted to what the other regional literatures of her time encourage her to find there, and more interested in what is actually there—"passing bands," "flower sellers," and the ethnic and cultural diversity of this bustling global city.

Furthermore, Sui Sin Far also conveys in this passage about San Francisco the restraints placed upon her writerly agency and the ability for her to tell more about her experiences in this Western-American city. She wishes for the "space in which to write more" of her San Francisco, suggesting that the publication outlets do not make "space" enough for her versions and experiences of San Francisco life because they contradict and oppose the messages being disseminated by London and the other realist and regionalist writers about the American West. Undeniably, this sentiment echoes the desires Virginia Woolf will famously iterate for us in *A Room of One's Own* just seventeen years later. Like Woolf, Sui Sin Far is looking for a "room of one's own," and she finds it in the sketch. In her book-length study of the sketch form, Kristie Hamilton suggests that "it is plain that the sketch's association with privacy and with that phase of the artistic process preceding formal fixity" gave authors "license" to be freer in their expression than if they were to write novels (Hamilton 15). Similar to Camfield's discussion of the genre's "informality," Hamilton describes the sketch as a kind of "pre-writing," which does not take itself seriously and does not expect to be taken seriously by a reading audience. Despite the men who took "amused interest" in Sui Sin Far's "funny," "little stories," Hamilton's assessment of the sketch form allows us to see that Sui Sin Far, as a sketch writer, has the ability to be honest in her artistic representation, even if that does not necessarily mean "real."

Sui Sin Far's sketch does not have to worry about creating an imagined community as the novel does. Rather, Sui Sin Far's sketch is able to show difference without having to worry about how her audience will interpret that difference in relation to themselves, their own communities, and their national belonging. Hamilton also

connects the sketch to American modernity and a "split in the popular prose market[…]with the novel satisfying the demand of unity, closure, and resolution, and the sketch embodying the contradictions in daily life of such a uniform vision" (31). What Hamilton alludes to here is that the realist novel continues to be what Benedict Anderson calls "a device for the presentation of simultaneity in 'homogenous, empty time,' or a complex gloss upon the word 'meanwhile'" (Anderson 25). Anderson further explains what he means by "'meanwhile'" by conjuring up the formula of the traditional and even "penny dreadful" novel that displays acts that "are performed at the same clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely unaware of one another," which "shows the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in his reads' minds," and ultimately "gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community" (26-27). But if the realist novel provides this "hypnotic confirmation of the solidity" of the imagined community, then Hamilton's point is that this unification through the novel was not the only cultural response to modernity's fragmentation of American identity. She suggests that "sketch writers discovered a productive alternative that made the phenomena of modernization familiar" (31). But this familiarity is also the ultimate aim of Anderson's novel and helps us pinpoint exactly what Sui Sin Far's sketches take issue with. Though the people of the imagined national community may never come into contact with every single other member of the community, which is why Anderson argues it is imagined, the novel is creating the assumed homogeneity of its readers and therefore, the novel is making familiar to its readers what is otherwise unknown. This is an imperial impulse of the American realist agenda and its need to know and be familiar with the racialized, ethnicized, and gendered others arriving daily

in the United States and with whom Anglo-Americans were coming into contact with in larger numbers as settler-colonialism in the West increased. To know is to have the ability to control, to contain, and to dominate. But, as Hamilton suggests, even the sketch intends to make its subjects known and thereby, is just as guilty in the nation's literary imperial projects as the novel. This is why we see authors such as Charlotte Perkins-Gilman and Bret Harte continue to use their short fictions to suppress ethnic, racial, and gendered others. Therefore, I recognize that Sui Sin Far's sketches deviate from the sketches and sketch writers Hamilton discusses. Sui Sin Far uses the sketch form and its conventions to deconstruct the violence inherent in the literary agenda of making underrepresented subjects known. Whether those subjects are racial, ethnic, gendered, or rural outliers, Sui Sin Far's sketches are honest about not trying to be "real" or "truthful." Rather, Sui Sin Far's sketch ultimately lifts the "hypnotic" trance American literature places on its readers to imagine the continuity of their experiences and the "solidity" of their "single community." She recovers the discontinuities that make up American diversity and suggests that difference is more important than a consolidated, homogenous national identity.

If, as we explored in earlier sections of this chapter, Sui Sin Far exposes the limitations of realism's strategies to represent ethnic, immigrant, and poor communities, then Sui Sin Far's sketch shows the limitations of the novel's temporal organization to account for histories other than dominant versions that celebrate Anglo-American masculinity and the United States' imperial activities in the American West. For although the realist novel makes moves to "represent the *texture* of the sometimes barely comprehensible and often deeply disruptive changes the nation was undergoing during

the period" (Barrish 59), it maintains a responsibility to help its readers "feel grounded in a solid world with a full, independent existence outside of our own minds" (46). As Barrish discusses, realist writers were trying to make sense of the nation's democratic founding history as it was undergoing rapid change to its population. Realism's dedication to the histories of American democracy, which we know to be imperfect as they apply to people of color, women, and the poor, reifies racialized, ethnic, and gendered identities rather than deconstructs them. In addition to critiquing the "truth" in identity, the sketches collected in her 1912 book, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance,* intervene in nation-building projects as they become reiterated in narratives of American modernity supported by the literary realist novel. In the last chapter, I argued that Helen Hunt Jackson's sentimental novel, *Ramona,* is ambivalent to the project of Manifest Destiny rather than resistant to it. I suggested that Jackson at once celebrates national expansion and critiques the means to that expansion. Sui Sin Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance,* I argue, provides insight into the next era of national expansion as the United States moves into the 20th century, and to the new ways women writers in the American West—where discussions of national expansion and national identity continue to be rooted in the lived realities of global ports, international border disputes, and immigration—use genre to continue to resist the restrictive notion of national identity as it becomes more consolidated and yet more threatened with the quickly globalizing world trend.

In an early piece of journalism Sui Sin Far published in the *Montreal Daily Witness* in 1890 titled "In the Land of the Free," and its fictionalized version, "The Land of the Free," published in *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* in 1912, Sui Sin Far shows the limitations of the era's ability to account for "real" Chinese identity. These narratives

show the ways Chinese stereotypes were normalized by the very projects—ethnographic journalism and the realist novel—that purported to look beyond them. More importantly, "In the Land of the Free" and "The Land of the Free" bring to readers' attention the homogenizing work "making known" does. The article "The Land of the Free," is just a short, two-paragraphs long, and sends a winking message about immigration in the North Americas. The article describes "'Goon'" a "Chinaman from New York" who is "desirous of taking up his residence in Montreal" (Sui, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 179). Once he "touched the free soil of Canada, he was pounced upon by a customs officer, A. Pare, who demanded in name of the Queen of this marvelously free country, $50 or his immediate departure" (179). At this point, the article seems to be building towards a climactic moment of tension between this Chinese immigrant and the customs officer, but instead, Sui Sin Far abruptly ends the article by stating that the money was paid and "'Goon' is now 'washee-washee' as happy as a King" (179). Aside from mocking the racist language attributed to the Chinese, Sui Sin Far's journalistic voice is also mocking the sensationalized reporting of the "real" in the era's newspaper industry. The lack of a climactic moment in this narrative suggests Sui Sin Far's understanding of this situation as both common and ironic. It is common in that the Chinese immigrant did not seem surprised by the customs officer's demands, even prepared for it, and ironic because the article is not reporting on anything particularly "newsworthy," since this arrangement is so common. But when we read this ironic, mocking article against the latter written short sketch, "In the Land of the Free," this same narrative takes on more urgent criticisms and suggests Sui Sin Far was pointing out the frequency with which situations like this occur and which are subsumed by the patriotic rhetoric of protecting national borders.

"In the Land of the Free" is similar to that of its journalistic counterpart in that it is the story of a Chinese immigrant family who must pay to keep their family together in the United States. However, the story exudes an urgency because the family member who is detained is Lea Choo's and Hom Hing's two-year old, only child. The subtle title change from "*The* Land of the Free" to "*In* the Land of the Free," is also important because it indicates that the violence immigrants face isn't just at the time of crossing borders, but continues "in" their everyday lives "in" their new country. The story tells of how Hom Hing, a Chinese merchant living in San Francisco, sends his pregnant wife back to China to give birth to their baby and to care for his ailing parents. Once his parents both pass away, Lae Choo is free to return to San Francisco, this time with her young son. The story opens with Lae Choo whispering to her child, "'[t]here is your home for years to come. It is very beautiful and thou wilt be very happy there,'" as their ship approaches San Francisco's harbor where Hom Hing is waiting for his family to arrive (Sui Sin Far, *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* 93). Lae Choo's promises to her son reherse the progressive rhetoric the United States and the American West espouse as they stand for liberty, opportunity, and equality. But once Lae Choo and her son step onto the pier, the U.S. Coast Guard informs Hom Hing that they must take his son since, though both Hom Hing and his wife have the legal right to be in the United States, their son has never been to the United States before and they "'have no proof'" the he is in fact their son (94). Lea Choo's promise to her son that he will be "happy" in San Francisco is challenged by an American immigrant policy that requires "proof" one deserves the happiness, freedom, and opportunity the nation stands for. Sui Sin Far shows here that the United States does not just restrict Chinese immigrants' freedoms but also takes what is

rightfully theirs—their children, their money, and their labor. The Chinese couple are told their son will need to spend just one night away from them while the Coast Guard awaits permission from Washington to return the child. But ten months go by, during which time the young boy is kept in a Catholic mission orphanage without any contact with his parents or his own culture. After Lae Choo pays a corrupt lawyer in her gold and jewels from China, including a gold bracelet given to her by her parents on her wedding day, she is allowed to retrieve her son from the mission. When she spots him for the first time in ten months, Lae Choo "fell on her knees and stretched her hungry arms toward her son. But the Little One shrunk from her and tried to hide himself in the folds of the white woman's skirt" (101) And it is with, 'Go'way, go'way!' he bade his mother," that the story ends (101).

In the fictional sketch version of this narrative Sui Sin Far is able to show readers what the anti-climatic journalistic version could not, that national histories subsume individual histories as well as individuals. As she declared in her autobiographic essay, Sui Sin Far believed "individuality is more than nationality" (Sui Sin Far, "Leaves" 230). In this sketch, Sui Sin Far renders an image of a stolen history as well as a stolen future—personified in the Chinese couple's young son—and indicates that even in the modernizing age, national identity seeks to homogenize rather than embrace diverse manifestations of nationality. Lisa Lowe argues that "The genealogy of modern liberalism is thus also a genealogy of modern race; racial differences and distinctions designate the boundaries of the human and endure as remainders attesting to the violence of liberal universality" (Lowe, *Intimacies* 7). Similarly, Dorothy Ross highlights how American modernity "turned to women and minorities and to ideas of race and gender—

arenas where the values of liberal modernity were enacted and violated" (Ross 712). While realist writers and the realist novel turn to caricature and stereotype to make sense of this contradiction, Sui Sin Far elevates the ways national identity both values and violates notions of identity. More than just "expressing a variety of Chinese American experiences and issues," as Ammons suggests (Ammons 117), the sketches in Sui Sin Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* take care to show the narratives and timelines that get written over in the dominant temporalities through which realist novels tell American cultural history and experience.

In the newspaper article version, Sui Sin Far critiques the petty greed of the customs officer and indicts a reading audience that finds such a story newsworthy at all. In the fictionalized version of the same story, she suggests the price paid by Chinese immigrants is far too high. The sketch allows her to show what the "true" narrative cannot, that Chinese immigrants were not just bearing a small financial burden to access freedom and opportunity, they were discarding histories, families, and culture in order to find that "The Land of the Free" was only free to those who were white, male, and wealthy. Because, although this sketch ends with a climactic moment in which mother is reunited with son, the son returns to her with a different name—he is "named [Kim] by the school"—and "dressed in blue cotton overalls and white-soled shoes" (Sui 101). In the colonial tradition, renaming and redressing a geographic location in the language and colors of the colonizer is a way of exerting power and dominance over a place and its native inhabitants. By renaming and redressing the young boy, the missionary women are partaking in a colonial tradition against him and his family. That the women choose to give him the name "Kim" instead of a more Americanized name maintains the buffer of

inferiority that, though Americanized through the missionary school, separates him along lines of race from an Anglo-American child. The colonizing efforts of the mission women repackage him to be, as Homi Bhabha would say, "*a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha 122).

With "In the Land of the Free," Sui Sin Far uncovers the violence immigrants experience, even as it is hidden beneath narratives of American progressivism and domesticity. The missionary orphanage in this story is an example of the kinds of "Christian neighborhoods" Amy Kaplan addresses in "Manifest Domesticity," that, promoted by Catherine Beecher, are "settled primarily by women as a way of putting into practice domesticity's expansive potential to Christianize and Americanize immigrants" (Kaplan, "Manifest" 31). As Sui Sin Far represents in this sketch, these Christian neighborhoods, which were increasingly finding their way to the West in the decades Sui Sin Far wrote, "allow unmarried women without children to leave their work in 'factories, offices and shops,' or reject their idleness in 'refined leisure,' to live domestic lives on their own, in some cases adopting native children" (32). In other words, missionary work in the American West gave Anglo-American women an opportunity to carve out new roles for themselves in a society that restricted them based on gender and offered up an image of Western-American progressivism but which, as Sui Sin Far attests to, was predicated on the oppression of ethnic immigrant families. Thus, Sui Sin Far exposes the nation as the invention that Anderson tells us it is and points to farcical constructions of identity as a political move to extricate certain individuals from national belonging and to create the appearance of sameness that the nation can feel reassured about.

Chapter Four
An Alternative "Politics of Respectability" in an Autobiography of Western-American Integration

It is 1952 when Eva Rutland and her four young children board a train in Atlanta, Georgia headed for Sacramento, California. The changing scenery as the train moves across the salt flats of Utah and over the Rocky Mountains seems impossible to Rutland in this moment, but this, she recognizes, is part of moving West. "I marveled at the beauty," she says, "the plains, the mountains rising behind, imagined the pioneers in circle with their covered wagons—perhaps Indians descending from the mountains. I was a pioneer too, I thought. How different was my journey" (38)! As an African American woman, Rutland's journey is indeed different from the pioneers of the American West's mythological history. But the Western-American regional histories and myths influence how Rutland and her family come to know and navigate the mid-twentieth century American West. In her maternal memoir, *When We Were Colored: A Mother's Story* (1964), Rutland's vision of "pioneers in circle with their covered wagons," and "Indians descending from the mountains," conjures the contentious histories of American exceptionalism, Manifest Destiny, and the violent removal of Native American peoples. Rutland, who is herself moving away from the violence of the American South just as the civil rights movement is ramping up, imagines herself as a pioneer as well. On a train instead of in a wagon, Rutland finds her own journey, different though it may be, to mimic the hardships faced by bands of mid-nineteenth century pioneers headed West for new opportunities. She worries over the strained noises the train makes as it works to rise over the Rocky Mountains and thinks: "The pioneers had to be tough. How could one get a *wagon* over these mountains" (39). And, perhaps echoing early pioneers arriving at

their Western-American destination, Rutland writes: “Somehow, miraculously, we arrived safely” (39).

Rutland’s narrative brings her experiences traveling from South to West in the mid-twentieth century into conversation with the narratives of the pioneers traveling from East to West nearly a century before her time. The pioneer histories of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are cross-regional histories that tie new territories and new politics into the national imaginary. These regional histories recount American bodies moving to new places for new opportunities as well as new identities struggling for a piece of American citizenship and national belonging. Rutland’s memoir is a regional narrative, but it is one which draws upon this movement of people and ideas and the corresponding shifts in definitions of insider and outsider that come to characterize the region in relation to, as well as against, the nation. Her narrative also makes visible the tensions between the West’s regional identity as a progressive “double for the US nation,” as Krista Comer phrases it, and its denied relationship to the nation’s violent histories of slavery, labor oppression, and class inequality (Comer, “Accountabilities” 419). Comer points out a trend in Western-American studies that considers California as separate from the rest of the region, “as being west of west” (Comer, *Landscapes* 68). Due to its associations with urban centers such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, its “economic might and corresponding political clout, its population density and diversity, its unusual history of class formation and politics, [and] its home-base relationship to Hollywood,” Comer recognizes that California is exempted from the “’real’ West” in studies of Western-American history and culture (68). Comer argues that California’s exclusion comes from the fact that its history “echoes the dominant western story in that

it is, fundamentally, one of paradise lost. The good days are always in the past" (68). Here Comer highlights an important aspect of the Western-American psyche, which is that, as the nation moved into the twentieth century, the West struggled to keep its identity tied to the American "paradise" it had come to represent throughout the latter half of the 19th century. By the mid-twentieth century, the West represented a "paradise lost," an opportunity lost, and a failure of the United States to reach its democratic ideal through Manifest Destiny. Therefore, as Comer suggests, the West, and California in particular, attempts to resurrect this sense of paradise in a hyper-progressive identity that is "fundamentally" an identity of loss and mourning for the pioneer history we see Rutland recount in her memoir, and which sustains a sense of exceptionalism and hope for American democratic ideals.

Comer's arguments about California help to identify the ways Rutland's memoir at once idolizes the mythic West and remains skeptical of it. As a Critical Regionalist, Comer suggests regions and regional identity are relational rather than isolationist, dialogical rather than permanent. In his book *Critical Regionalism,* Douglas Powell similarly suggests that "region is always a relational term" (Powell 4), and he offers "a model of region making as a practice of cultural politics" (8). Powell's use of Critical Regionalism evaluates the histories, myths, and stories that sustain a region's sense of its own difference and uniqueness from the rest of the nation. Importantly, Powell's Critical Regionalism recognizes that these histories and stories are themselves "growing, changing conflicted cultural artifact[s], just like the region it helps define. And looking critically at the story itself provides a crucial starting place for understanding how the identity of the place is rooted in conflict and change as much as in permanence, stability,

and continuity" (14). Powell's framework offers an opportunity to evaluate the American West's pioneer history and the myth of its progressive sociopolitical identity as a "cultural artifact," and to recognize that Rutland's Western-American story is critical of the story the West tells about itself. While the American West sets itself geographically and temporally separate from the rest of the nation, especially the American South and its history of race-based slavery, Rutland's memoir challenges this divide and reunites the American West with the rest of the nation's past and present practices in racism, imperialism, and racialized and gendered labor oppression. While the narrative remains loyal to a sense of Western-American idealism and hope for the future, I argue that Rutland's maternal memoir also disrupts notions of Western-American exceptionalism and is skeptical of the West's self-proclaimed progressive regional identity for the very reason that she witnesses the ways the West builds this identity on an estrangement from the Jim Crow South and the rest of the nation's history with race-based slavery.

As a middle-class, well-connected black woman in Sacramento, California, Rutland and her memoir provide a unique insight into the inner-workings of a Western-American city as it must confront an era of diversification and dynamic change. In her book on Western-American women writers, Comer recognizes that "to date we do not have a series of memoirs by countercultural participants that are somehow comparable to those of radical northeastern feminists, memoirs wherein, say, cultural feminists map out their evolving political identities" (Comer, *Landscapes* 52). Comer's point is not that these memoirs or "countercultural participants" do not exist in the West, but that there is still much work to be done to recover them. In bringing Rutland's memoir into academic discussions of the American West, I contribute to the work of establishing a genealogy of

Western-American women whose lives stand in as oppositional forces to national homogenization, imperialism, and racism and help to develop what Comer calls a Feminist Critical Regionalism for Western-American studies. Originally published in 1964, *When We Were Colored* chronicles in ten witty chapters Rutland's experience with motherhood. The narrative begins with her own 1930s childhood in a black neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia, quickly moves to her marriage to Bill Rutland, a civilian engineer for the Tuskegee Airman, and leaves us in Sacramento, California, where Bill Rutland is eventually transferred after the integration and decentralization of the U.S. Air Force. What is most striking about the narrative is Rutland's debunking of the image of the American West as it had been advertised to the rest of the nation since the mid-nineteenth century. Whether discussing matters as insignificant as the kinds of trees California has—"I had really expected palms like the ones on my husband's postcards, but elm was good enough" (Rutland, *When We Were* 40)—or as politically entangled as race politics, Rutland comes to realize that the West is more complicated than the utopic images distributed across the nation would make it seem. Most importantly, Rutland identifies that California's claims to early integration policies are not without their "subterfuge" (43). As she explains, "[i]ntegration in theory is a fine, high-sounding utopia. In reality I shivered as I watched my children unknowingly shed the warm cloak of segregation, their happy isolation" (40). Although Rutland sets herself against the more militant movements lead by Malcolm X—she likens Black Muslims to the Ku Klux Klan and believes that, like Ross Barnett of Mississippi, Malcolm X "preach[es] hate and racial supremacy," (128)—Rutland's stance on Sacramento's integration practices echoes that of Stokely Carmichael. Carmichael argues that integration policies are rooted in "the idea that

'white' is automatically better and 'black' is by definition inferior" (Carmichael 299). Similarly, Rutland recognizes that, in attending integrated schools and living in integrated neighborhoods, her children are vulnerable to forms of institutional racism that she was not exposed to as a member of the South's segregated black community.

Born in 1917, Rutland grew up in Atlanta, Georgia in a house her grandfather built after he was freed from slavery. The neighborhood was "a strange mixture of races and classes and creeds," and some distance from the all-black neighborhood in which Rutland went to school and in which her family did most of their shopping and socializing (Rutland, *When We Were* 4). Rutland graduated Spelman College in 1937 before marrying Bill Rutland, who was just beginning his career as a civilian engineer for the Tuskegee Airmen. Rutland describes the segregated apartment they lived in on the Air Force base as having "cement floors," over which she worried, "thinking, 'What if I should drop the baby'" (15)? Once the Air Force integrated and decentralized, Rutland and her family were first relocated to Ohio and then to Sacramento, California, where the family settled long term and enmeshed themselves in a thriving, middle-class black community. Rutland started her writing career in the early 1950s when her children were school-aged. She was successful at getting a number of her fiction and nonfiction short stories published with women's magazines such as *Ladies Home Journal, Redbook,* and *Women's Day*. A few of these stories show up in altered forms in her maternal memoir, *When We Were Colored: A Mother's Story*, which was originally published by Abingdon, a Christian press, in 1964 under the title, *The Trouble With Being a Mama.* The memoir was rather successful and remained in print up until the summer of 1972. Throughout the late 1960s, as she dealt with an eye condition that caused her to go slowly blind, worked

as a secretary for the California State Legislature, and helped her husband run for the School Board, Rutland dedicated the majority of her writing time to a manuscript that was provisionally accepted for publication by Abingdon called *In Defense of Uncle Tom*. The manuscript was ultimately declined by the press after it became apparent that the press and Rutland had different intentions for the project. In the late 1970s through the 1990s Rutland continued writing, but she turned to writing romance novels published by Harlequin Books. Although Rutland's agent once said she was "not a particularly prolific writer," Rutland published over twenty romance novels during this period of her life and wrote two plays, one of which was performed at a Monterey, California festival (Marigolis to Rutland 1968). In addition, she contributed a novella titled "Choices," to *Girlfriends*, a collection of stories by black women published in 1999 by Harper Paperbacks and which was also nominated for the NAACP Image Award. In 2000 Rutland received the Golden Pen Award for Lifetime Achievement and in 2003 she published a 414-page, semi-autobiographical novel, *No Crystal Stair.* Rutland continued to make appearances in Sacramento bookstores and on the local news up until her death in 2012. As this quick biography indicates, Rutland was successful in publishing in a number of different genres and with a variety of publication platforms. Her failures however, say more about the sociopolitical world she was writing in and the publishing market she was up against than it does about her capabilities as a writer. In the last chapter, I argued that Sui Sin Far struggled for self-identification against an American society and American literary market. We saw how editors and publishers wanted to emphasize and exoticize her Chinese half in order to capitalize on a turn-of-the-century trend in Orientalized narratives and commodities. In similar ways, Rutland's mid-

twentieth century society and literary establishment wanted to sentimentalize and thereby, caricaturize the middle-class, black mother as a foil to the militant black leaders of the 1960s and 1970s. But, as I will argue in this chapter, Rutland's deployment of black motherhood is a more complex documentation of the ways motherhood intersects with and is informed by black womanhood, racial and class inequality, and the unyielding histories of race-based slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

Rutland's motherhood is just as radical as the black militant groups her editors and publishers wanted to present her as an alternative to. Although Rutland distanced herself from Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and the leaders of more militant civil rights movements, Riché J. Daniel Barnes's analysis of black women's "strategic mothering" allows us to better understand how Rutland's politics align rather than oppose some of these black leaders' beliefs. Barnes defines "strategic mothering" as a form of mothering that accounts for "the myriad ways in which Black mothers continuously navigate and redefine" their roles as mothers, laborers, and citizens (Barnes 2). For Barnes, whose study evaluates a group of late twentieth-century black, middle-class women in Atlanta, Georgia who leave their professional jobs in order to be home with their children, "strategic motherhood" accounts for the ways black motherhood, "particularly for middle-class Black women, has historically centered [black mothers] as caregivers, culture bearers, and community builders, and since the turn of the twentieth century such responsibility has been rooted in racial uplift" (3). Barnes acknowledges that black motherhood has always been "multifaceted and multipurposed" with responsibility for "their own biological children," "for other children in the community and indirectly responsible for the community as a whole" (3). This "responsibility" and the "strategic

motherhood" developed out of that responsibility is "rooted in racial uplift," and in what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham calls "a politics of respectability." In her study of 19th century black Baptist women, Higginbotham argues that, through the black Baptist church, black, middle-class women became "conveyers of culture and vital contributors to the fostering of middle-class ideals and aspirations in the black community" (Higginbotham 14). The Southern, black, middle-class women Higginbotham considers "adhered to a politics of respectability that equated public behavior with individual self-respect and with the advancement of African Americans as a group. They felt certain that 'respectable' behavior in public would earn their people a measure of esteem from white Americans, and hence they strove to win the black lower class's psychological allegiance to temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners, and Victorian sexual morals" (14). As Higginbotham suggests, this program was "assimilationist" in some ways (200), but it also presented itself as simultaneously "progressive and conservative" (26). While black middle-class women affirmed traditionally Anglo-American forms of respectability and social values, Higginbotham shows how, by attempting to present themselves and their families as "respectable," black, middle-class women subverted the paternalistic racism of a society that wanted to maintain black dependency on white charity. It is this "progressive and conservative" strain Higginbotham locates in black women's political identity that allows me to argue that Rutland's role as a black, middle-class mother is anything but apolitical. In fact, I argue that Rutland's maternal memoir refashions the rhetoric of "radical" race and gender politics into a rhetoric of respectability, that masks itself in what appear to be conservative, middle-class, family values, but which strategically deconstructs those very same values from the inside.

Rutland's memoir intervenes in the racist programs set in place by dominant, white society, but she also intervenes in a history of black political advocacy and ideology. Though analysis of the black middle-class throughout American history has remained a rather small portion of studies on black American communities, Higginbotham's work has led to a number of other studies that evaluate the black middle-class in similar ways. Most notably, Riché J. Daniel Barnes and Mary Pattillo-McCoy both conduct studies of late-twentieth century, black, middle-class neighborhoods. While Barnes, whom I have already mentioned, evaluates black, middle and upper-middle class women in Atlanta who give up lucrative and prestigious careers to become stay-at-home-mothers, Pattillo-McCoy evaluates the differences between white, middle-class neighborhoods and black, middle-class neighborhoods in Chicago. Both Barnes and Pattillo-McCoy draw upon Higginbotham's work to explain certain political tendencies or socioeconomic ideologies fostered in the black, middle-class communities they study. For example, Barnes and Pattillo-McCoy recognize a black, middle-class move to conform to dominant, white society's middle-class conventions as a means of presenting themselves "respectably." Together, Higginbotham, Barnes and Pattillo-McCoy's arguments seem to suggest a consistency in black, middle-class values from the late 19th century through the late-20th and into the early-21st centuries. But Rutland and her maternal memoir disrupt this continuity by offering an alternative politics of respectability in the mid-20th century that critiques the politics of respectability she was circumscribed in growing up and which Barnes and Pattillo-McCoy suggest continues into the late-20th century. Definitions of black, middle-class identity have largely overlooked mid-20th century renderings of black, middle-class ideology as well as the

way region has lent itself to what Patricia Hill Collins recognizes as black women's and mothers' "oppositional knowledges" (Collins 13-15). As Barnes helps us to see, Rutland's "strategic motherhood" must help her children navigate through the racists images and representations threatening their self-determination but, unlike the women in Barnes' or Higginbotham's studies, Rutland must also contend with Western-American forms of early integration. Though the Wests' integration politics claim to have moved past issues of racial inequality and segregation, they lead to their own structures of institutional racism and inequality. Therefore, I recognize that Rutland's "strategic motherhood" must get even more "strategic" as it offers an alternative "politics of respectability," one which questions what "respectability" means and how it is used to covertly segregate an otherwise integrated society, and which confronts the exclusionary logic and imperialist impulses of traditional, middle-class domesticity.

Rutland's "respectability" calls out the inconsistencies and ambivalence in her Western-American, middle-class community's sense of its own socially "progressive" identity. For example, Rutland compares her own childhood in Atlanta, Georgia in the 1920s to that of her children's childhoods in Sacramento, California in the 1940s and 1950s. Rutland points out that, as a student in the all-black school system of Atlanta, Georgia, she "was educated in a segregated school where Negro history was a required part of the curriculum and where you learned about Crispus Attucks and Booker T. as well as George Washington" (Rutland, *When We Were* 104). The education Rutland received, which understood black history and black artists to be just as American as George Washington, is what gives Rutland the confidence to reassert her rights to citizenship in moments of racism by declaring: "I was emancipated," and thereby, just as

entitled to safe housing, quality education, and participation in the democratic process (45). Rutland is encouraged by the fact that the children in the Western-American, integrated classroom are able to shed the "warm cloak of segregation," but she is also sensitive to how "if you are a Negro child in an 'integrated' school, you don't exactly understand why the chip is there and you don't know what to do about it. You put your head on your desk when they [white teachers] talk about slavery, and the other kids snicker and look at you" (102-103). Instead of feeling empowered by what they learn in school, Rutland fears that, by shedding the "warm cloak of segregation," her children will also put their heads down on desks in shame of their family history. The shame, she realizes, is specific to her children's location in the mid-20th century American West and "can lead you astray" (103).

In the West, where dominant culture considers the histories of slavery and emancipation to be irrelevant to Western-American history and progressivism, Rutland fears her children will also feel irrelevant and lack the self-knowledge or self-determination to participate in their societies and challenge these covert forms of the Wests' institutionalized racisms. Rutland's narrative retaliates against these racisms through an alternative politics of respectability that is resistant to Sacramento, California's color-blind rhetoric and the integration policy it supports. With the help of Sara Ahmed, I recognize that the Sacramento integration politics presented in Rutland's memoir attempt to make "those histories [of race and slavery] disappear by reading them as a form of melancholia (as if you hold onto something that is already gone)" (Ahmed, "Happy Objects" 50). As Ahmed suggests here, even in a society that portrays itself as integrated and progressive, "[t]hese histories have not gone: we would be letting go of

that which persists in the present. To let go would be to keep those histories present" (50). Ahmed helps us locate an evasiveness in Western-American racial politics and to recognize the ways it attempts to move beyond racism by denying that it ever existed in the region or that it is responsible for contending with the consequences of the nation's involvement in race-based slavery and Jim Crow segregation. By associating racism with "a form of melancholia," the American West's progressive rhetoric renders the problem of racism as "something that is already gone" and, if it does affect individuals in the West, it is because those individuals choose to "hold onto" it rather than let it be in the past. Rutland's alternative politics of respectability rejects this idea and, though still dedicated to raising and protecting children, does not insist "upon blacks' conformity to the dominant society's norms of manners and morals" when it comes to topics of race and racism as Rutland's mother's and grandmother's politics of respectability might have insisted upon (Higginbotham 187). Instead, Rutland's alternative politics of respectability identifies those "norms of manners and morals," and education—or lack thereof—to be what fuels Western-American racism and guides her children to find platforms from which they can push against these conventions.

Rutland's positionality as a black, middle-class mother in the mid-twentieth century American West and the maternal memoir that comes of her experience provide new insights into Western-American histories and identities and the literary forms that come forth to speak for those histories and identities. Through what appear to be personal anecdotes of raising black children in an integrated, Western-American city, Rutland reveals the relationality of Western-American progressivism and Southern-American sociopolitical histories of racism and slavery and thereby, challenges a modern national

identity that understands itself to be more inclusive than it was in the past. Rutland's memoir is able to transcend the geographic and temporal barriers the West draws around itself by blending a mostly Southern and Northern-American literary tradition in African American autobiography and a pioneer sensibility that shows up in travel narratives from the 19th century into the early-20th century. Scholars of African American literature have long suggested that the autobiography played an important role in African American politics and literary contribution, noting that "African-American literary history begins with the self-consciously politicized autobiography" (Mostern 11). Critics such as Paul Gilroy, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and bell hooks have recognized the ways autobiography offered black individuals an opportunity to create and recreate their identities in American history and culture from the slave era, through emancipation, to our contemporary moment. As Kenneth Mostern suggests, the very act of telling their life experiences is political in an American society that denies African Americans humanity, making the "tradition of African-American writing[…]one in which political commentary necessitates, invites, and assumes autobiography as its rhetorical form" (Mostern 11). Telling of their lived experiences allowed for African Americans to build political identities and assimilate into American civic life. Arguments such as Mostern's have led other scholars to consider the specific place black women's autobiography occupies within this tradition, given that black women, like white women, were not considered political beings until 1920, only three years after Rutland was born. Johnnie Stover argues that nineteenth-century black women "create a new form in autobiography—not so much a subgenre as a countergenre" to both white and black men's autobiography (Stover 15), which deploys a "mother tongue,"—a black women's coded language

developed out of slave women's resistance strategies—and which "serves these black women writers in challenging nineteenth-century sociopolitical and literary norms" (16). Stover recognizes that, while black, male autobiographers, including Booker T. Washington and W.E.B Du Bois, were more assertively political and whose works "were more obviously individual-centered celebrations of heroism and freedom won" (28), black women had to make their texts "palatable" to a white, mostly female, audience (35). Therefore, their autobiographies not only had to create a cross-racial community with white women, but they also had to deal in the "bits and pieces" of domestic existence and the "'incidents' and 'sketches,' of one's life" (51) which, as Stover quotes Harriet Jacobs, were also what provided the "'loophole of resistance'" in black women's autobiographical writing (17).

Rutland's narrative and many of the subversive tactics it deploys stem from this tradition of black women's autobiography and its undercover resistance. Stover points to a "typical slave narrative form" in which black women had to "establish themselves as 'American women'," and this necessitates that black women autobiographers start by "establishing who she is—where she was born, who her family was, and who her owners were" (Stover 93). Though Rutland is writing in the mid-twentieth century American West, her narrative still begins by "establishing who she is" in Atlanta, Georgia by introducing herself through her family lineage, including her grandfather, a slave freed at Emancipation, and the impact her ancestry has on where her family lives, works, and socializes. Additionally, Rutland's memoir deploys a kind of "mother tongue," which uses what Stover calls "subtle resistance" and "a masking of intent" to pass her politics through seemingly frivolous topics concerning family and domesticity (18). Stover's

assessment of black women's autobiography allows us to see Rutland's memoir as participating in a tradition that uses the "bits and pieces" of domestic life to emphasize the political power therein, rather than taking the "more obviously individual-centered celebrations of heroism and freedom won" of black masculine autobiographical tradition (28). But Rutland's narrative also deviates from the tradition Stover articulates for black women's autobiography by taking it West. Out of necessity, Rutland has to adapt her "mother tongue" to speak a language of resistance that makes sense in the Western-American geographic and political region. If Stover recognizes that, in order for black women to find a publication outlet and a reading audience, they "had to deal with the duality that straddling two cultures necessarily created," then I find Rutland's place in the integrated West encourages her to move past this "countergenre." Rutland does not "deal" with the racist ways her society looks at her and her family. Rather, I credit the Western-American pioneer strain in Rutland's narrative as giving her a platform from which she can directly and far more openly confront a society that expects her to straddle two cultures at all.

Rutland's memoir also borrows from a Western-American pioneer tradition that, as Comer points out, reads "nationalist narratives" out of the Western landscape (Comer, *Landscapes* 12), and which understands the West as "some lingering hope for a world less complicated by 'progress'" (24). That is, conventional writing to come out of the Western-American pioneer tradition treats the West as a "*tabula rasa*," a place where the American character can try again, as Joan Didion describes of her own pioneer family's relationship to the region (Didion, 172). For example, when Rutland declares that the "cloak was gone" in the American West, she is deploying a metaphor that has a clear

relationship to Du Bois' theory of the veil, double consciousness, and a racism largely lived out at this time in the South. Du Bois uses the veil as a way to discuss the "second-sight" all African Americans must contend with, and which results in the African American individual always feeling "his twoness…two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (Du Bois 215). However, Rutland's cloak metaphor is inflected with her experiences traveling from the Jim Crow South, to the slightly less racist Ohio, to the color-blind, supposedly integrated Sacramento, California. Just as we saw Helen Hunt Jackson's experiences journeying West in *Bits of Travel At Home* show up in her political advocacy for Native Americans, so too do we see Rutland's understanding of herself and her black community change as she traverses the Rocky Mountains. Rutland comes to recognize that it is not she or her children who are "twoness," but that it is her integrated, Western-American society that is struggling between "two unreconciled strivings." Sacramento's neighborhoods are at once "placid" and "unassuming" in their acceptance of Rutland's children mixing and playing with white children (Rutland 41) and antagonistic in their judgments that, "[n]egroes were dirty. Negroes were loud and uncouth. Negroes can't be trusted" (46). The cloak Rutland sheds then is her refusal to allow her community to dress her up in middle-class norms and hide her skin, and to call this integration; Rutland's narrative is a refusal to accept Sacramento's complacency in incomplete integration policies that she finds to be just as violent as the more overt Jim Crow segregation of the South. Therefore, Rutland's "mother tongue" deviates from some of the characteristics Stover associates with black women's autobiographical "countergenre" because of the regional specificity of her situated knowledge and lived experiences.

In provocative ways, Rutland's motherhood and its's close ties to Southern histories of slavery, emancipation, and a failed Reconstruction era inform her "strategic motherhood" as well as her politics. By recognizing the inequalities within integrated spaces in the West, Rutland deconstructs the rhetoric and politics of an American West that claims to be "beyond the racial problem," and shows how progressive programs such as integration are embedded in the social hierarchies built by the same racist histories that resulted in the Jim Crow South (Rutland, *When We Were* 72). As such, I argue that Rutland's memoir resists regionalizing American racism and thereby, disrupts a national temporal narrative that suggests the nation is always forward-moving and always progressing towards ideals of equality and justice in a geographic line that reads East to West and South to North. Rather, Rutland identifies how these histories are recursive. Her maternal memoir notes the patterns of cultural exchange that occur between the South and West and traces how this leads to the American West's institutionalization and entrenchment of new forms of racism borrowed from the histories of Southern-American slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

"Strategic Motherhood" and Rutland's Alternative "Politics of Respectability" in *When We Were Colored: A Mother's Story*

In a chapter titled, "Westward Ho!," Rutland confides to readers: "That's another thing about Mamas. We are neither broad minded nor progressive. We just want the children to be happy" (Rutland, *When We Were* 40). In this statement, Rutland seems to want to depoliticize motherhood. However, written at the point in her narrative when she moves from South to West, we can read this statement as declaring her opposition to the kinds of "broad minded" and "progressive" politics espoused in the West and which, as

Rutland also states, lead to her "integration qualms" (40). In "Happy Objects," Sara Ahmed questions what it means "to want 'just' happiness," and pulls out of this speech act that to "to want 'just' happiness" is to want "to offer freedom of a certain indifference to the content of a future decision" for the child (Ahmed, "Happy Objects" 42). That is, Ahmed helps to identify that, when Rutland says she "just want[s] the children to be happy," she is expressing concern about how her children are to fit into normative society. But, from her place in the American West, Rutland cannot even be sure what normative society is. With integration policies that eradicate segregation laws, Rutland is still aware that her black children are not welcome in certain neighborhoods or public places. Rutland's desire for happy children means that she wants them to be able to attend well-funded schools and to be taken seriously as students; she wants them to grow up in neighborhoods with decent housing and with neighbors they are free to play and interact with, and she wants them to be able to strive to be lawyers, doctors, and politicians if they want to. She desires her children to have what most heteronormative white children have always had—safety. But her desire for happy children also means she wants to know how to navigate a society that says it is racially equal but which denies her children this safety and comfort nonetheless. These are political desires, enmeshed in the era's battles against segregated schooling, redlining, and job discrimination. But they are also the things mothers worry about and which mothers strive to help their children achieve in order to be "just happy." Rutland's alternative politics of respectability points out that even the "broad minded" and "progressive" conventions of Western-American, middle-class life are not conducive to her children's happiness, let alone to a national program of social equality and progress.

Stated another way, Rutland also offers her opinion that "we could do with less *progress*" when that progress is serving new programs of de facto segregation rather than progressing initiatives serving racial and gender equality (Rutalnd, *When We Were* 97). She points out the problematic ways progress gets associated with "good" politics and social outcomes and so, Rutland finds herself fighting what is perceived to be the West's "good" politics and progress as she intends to raise happy children who are fully equipped to navigate the world they live in with self-determination. For instance, Rutland does not settle for the progress of the integrated classroom. Rather, as mentioned earlier, she fears that the lack of black history in the integrated, Western-American curriculum will result in black children who shamefully drop their heads to their desks "when they talk about slavery" and the white children "snicker" as an expression of their awkward discomfort on the topic (Rutland, *When We Were* 103). Rutland's motherhood takes on strategic qualities when she "tried to pass this heritage on to my children," and encourages her oldest daughter, Elsie, to continue passing it on to her white teacher and classmates (105). When Elsie has to perform a poetry reading in front of her class, Rutland suggests a family favorite, Paul Laurence Dunbar's "Encouragement." "But," Rutland explains, "reading and laughing about ourselves in the confines of our own living room was quite different from displaying this bit of our past before an audience of white classmates" (105). Elsie fears having to read the dialect Dunbar uses in "Encouragement" to her class and so she chooses to go with "an especially good short one, 'Life.' Good—it was nondialect and would do" (105). When the teacher and the class praise Elsie's reading, Elsie, feeling "Encouraged and proud,[…]timidly offered, 'I know some of his dialect poems,'" to which the teacher asked her to share some with the class (106).

Reflecting on Elsie's success, Rutland understands that "[by] binding her to her heritage, I had set her free," and marks this moment as Elsie's "emancipation" (106) Here Rutland deploys "emancipation" as a metaphor for the self-determination Elsie locates by embracing her black history and ancestry. She is "set free" in the integrated, Western-American classroom not by her proximity to white students and the "progress" of integration, but by reasserting her own black heritage and her right to fully occupy an otherwise white space.

As Elsie's class poetry reading attests to, Rutland's memoir and the alternative politics of respectability she deploys in it are about changing minds more than they are about changing political legislation. Her memoir seeks to disrupt normative, middle-class family structures—informed by strict gender roles, histories, and customs—that, in Ahmed's words, inform the way individuals will "impress" and be "impressed upon" in the world (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 145). Ahmed argues that "[b]odies take the shape of norms that are repeated over time and with force" (145). Though Ahmed focuses on how norms that shape are derived from "the narrative of heterosexuality as an ideal coupling," this same idea can be helpful to thinking about the ways bodies of different races are also instructed towards "an ideal coupling" (145). The concept of "an ideal coupling" serves to direct different bodies away from one another and, as Ahmed says, "orient itself towards some objects and not others, objects that are secured as ideal through the fantasy of difference" (145). Ahmed helps us to see that, in the American West, where superficial forms of integration and a color-blind rhetoric generate the appearance of racial mixing and a doing away with "the fantasy of difference," the idea of "ideal coupling" directs and "orients" white bodies and bodies of color away from one another to maintain a

fundamentally segregated society. Such a framework for evaluating Western-American progressivism complicates our understanding of what "progressive" means to a Western-American regional identity that effaces racial tension by foreclosing any acknowledgement of race at all. What is most "strategic" and radical about Rutland's motherhood then is the way it is informed by multiple regional knowledges and the way her maternal memoir seeks to make these knowledges known in cohesive, relational ways that change the "impressions" individuals have towards bodies that might differ from them in terms of race, gender, and class.

Therefore, notions of emancipation and freedom, which bring with them regional knowledges and understandings of black identity, show up in Rutland's narrative as bodily interactions with the surrounding world, and this sometimes means pushing the societal boundaries of what certain bodies are allowed to do. "Discomfort is a feeling of disorientation," Ahmed argues, it is a sensation in which "one's body feels out of place, awkward, unsettled" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 148). Ahmed continues to suggest that "[t]he availability of comfort for some bodies may depend on the labour of others, and the burden of concealment" (149). When Rutland sees black children's bodies curling in and dropping their heads upon their desks during a lesson on American slavery in the integrated, Western-American classroom, Ahmed's framework makes clear to us that Rutland sees their "disorientation" and the "labour" these black children put into their "burden of concealment" in order that they not make the snickering white children in the classroom any more uncomfortable with their presence—physically, culturally, or historically. The shape these black bodies take are the consequence of the histories of enslavement that, even in the "progressive," integrated Western-American classroom

"impress" upon them to curl in and conceal. Furthermore, the snickering white bodies, which may raise a pointed finger or turn to other snickering, white bodies for reassurance, are taking the shape of their concealed guilt or lack of understanding. Rutland's observation about the interactions between black and white children in the integrated classroom reveal the racism of the American West to be about guilt and shame—the guilt and shame black bodies have for not being able to hide their dark skin in a society that does not want to see it and the guilt and shame white bodies have for the disjointed histories they are raised to ignore and push away as something of the past, something of the South. In either case, the felt guilt and shame, which has a dramatic affect on the ways bodies are shaped and therefore "impress," derives from a lack of knowledge and shared responsibility for the histories of the nation.

Rutland's maternal memoir responds to this guilt by calling into question a conventional, middle-class motherhood that understands children as property to be protected rather than as individuals to be guided into a political agency of their own. Like the politics of respectability of her mother's and grandmother's generations, Rutland embeds her alternative politics of respectability within the affective language of mothers and their love, fear, and hope for their children. However, the ways Rutland expresses love, fear, and hope for her own and other children deviates from the conventional ways dominant mothers and a more traditional politics of respectability express these emotions for their children. To use Ahmed's words, we can understand that Rutland's maternal politics "perverts" dominant motherhood's values rather than conforms to the them (Ahmed, "Happy Objects" 38). As Ahmed suggests, society prioritizes the comfort of some bodies over other bodies, and so I recognize Rutland's motherhood "perverts" those

dominant notions of middle-class motherhood because, rather than striving to make her children among those comfortable in dominant society, she instead demands discomfort for all as they embark on a mission to radically change the way society stratifies along race, gender, and class. In her discussion of queer feelings, Ahmed argues that "[q]ueer feelings may embrace a sense of discomfort, a lack of ease with the available scripts for living and loving, along with an excitement in the face of the uncertainty of where the discomfort may take us" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 155). A version of this argument can be applied to Rutland's situation as a racialized mother who finds "available scripts for living and loving" in her white, middle-class society confining and isolating. Ahmed shows how the "scripts for living and loving" direct the repetitive behaviors and gestures bodies make towards one another, creating norms that "surface *as* the surfaces of bodies," and which contort bodies "into shapes that enable some action only insofar as they restrict capacity for other kinds of action" (145). As a normative "script," motherhood is rehearsed through the language of care for and the protection of children. But, as we saw in the last chapter with Sui Sin Far's character, Pau Lin, who kills her own son in the name of saving him from "the wisdom of the new" (Sui Sin Far 60), the normative "script" of motherhood is volatile and can be perverted in a number of ways. The same rhetoric used to sustain conventional motherhood can also be used to resist it and change its terms. Pau Lin intends to protect her son from Americanization, what she perceives to be the biggest threat to his safety. While it is clear that the goal of motherhood—conventional or revolutionary—is to protect children, it is unclear what they need protecting from. This is especially true in the American West where progressive rhetoric appears ambivalent towards integration and racial politics obscures further what children

need protecting from. Like Sui Sin Far's Pau Lin, Rutland expresses a clear understanding of what is most threatening to her children and it is not in sync with her dominant society. Therefore, she finds a "discomfort" and "unease" with normative motherhood's "scripts" and the kind of politics of respectability she herself grew up on in early-twentieth century Atlanta, Georgia. Rutland's maternal memoir then is a project of undoing these scripts and making others just as uncomfortable with them as she is by disseminating her experiences with racism and motherhood to other mothers, white or of color. In the discomfort and vulnerability that comes with discarding the "available scripts," Rutland finds opportunities to reorient bodies towards one another rather than away from one another. As we saw, Elsie's poetry reading brings discomfort to herself and to her white classmates, but it also changes the "shapes" and "impressions" of the bodies in the classroom as they become "oriented" towards Elsie, Dunbar, and the black history and art he represents.

Rutland's power to reshape bodies towards rather than away from one another also derives from the literary form her narrative takes as it brings together different regional forms of memoir. Stover suggests that "the black woman autobiographer usually balanced the self-celebratory aspects of the memoir and self-revelatory aspects of the confession with an attack on the destruction of the family under slavery and human bondage, many times focusing on the importance of establishing and sustaining the black community during and after slavery" (Stover 27-28). But it would be a mistake, Stover tells us, to think that this focus on community in black women's autobiography is any less political than that of black men's focus on the heroic individual. Rather, Stover identifies that black women's focus on family, domesticity, and the black community is a

form of "subtle resistance," which may be "noted by the oppressor, but it is so mild in nature that punishment is minimal, if there is punishment at all" (18). As a narrative of the women's experience read by other women, Stover recognizes how the black woman's autobiography is thought to be apolitical or, at the very least, politically neutralized by its focus on domestic life. But the "subtle" moves are still political moves and they still have political impact. The reviews and advertisements that followed Rutland's memoir's initial run are telling about how the literary establishment misread her story as "subtle" and therefore, politically irrelevant. The *Sacramento Union* wrote: "A delightfully entertaining book, timely and provocative, about the problems of contemporary American family life. With the wit of 'Cheaper by the Dozen' and the warmth of 'I Remember Mama,' the author compares her mother's slap-dash, child-rearing philosophy with today's highly pressurized -'organization family' approach" (*Sacramento Union, Rutland Papers,* 1964). Although Rutland does consider the differences between her mother's mothering and her own, this is hardly what the book is about. Not to mention, when Rutland does compare herself to her mother, she is really comparing the differences between raising black children in the American South versus raising black children in the American West.

Most of the reviews follow this trend and sidestep the political themes that undergird Rutland's narrative in favor of advertising the memoir as a quaint tale of motherhood. *Publisher's Weekly,* for example, gives the book one line: "A Negro mother reflects on the universal as well as the special problems and satisfactions of rearing children" (*Publishers Weekly, Rutland Papers,* 1964). This short review notes the "universal" themes Rutland covers. Although it does note the "special problems and

satisfactions," which must be referring to Rutland's race, this is vague language that seems to avoid identifying the political commentary Rutland makes on those "universal" themes. In the *Atlanta World,* the book is reviewed at length, probably because Rutland was born and raised in Atlanta. But even this review is hesitant to address the politics in writing a maternal memoir about raising black children in an integrated, Western-American city. The reviewer starts off suggesting that Rutland "apparently didn't have enough to occupy her time, even with a husband, full time job and growing family, so, (you guessed it,) she wrote a book" (*Atlanta World, Rutland Papers,* 1964). The reviewer situates Rutland as a bored housewife whose writing is an endearing hobby rather than a serious undertaking. But, "get this," the review goes on to say, "[e]ven in penning what seems to be a successful venture, she still couldn't get away from that family of hers. And the words and spirit of the novel reveal this: 'Mrs. Rutland has no problems of motherhood that she can't handle, and she's about as happy as a typical mother can be" (*Atlanta World, Rutland Papers,* 1964). This part of the review recalls the stereotype Patricia Hill Collins calls "the strong black woman" or "matriarch," which she argues is wielded against black women to condemn "her inability to model appropriate gender behavior," or, in other words, her inability to remain contained within domestic and family spaces (Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* 84). The reviewer seems to imply that in writing a book, Rutland intended to "get away from that family of hers." This indicates the reviewer's belief that Rutland is trying to "get away" from her proper place in society and that authorship and motherhood are not complimentary endeavors. The reviewer suggests that "successful venture[s]," even though Rutland's "seems to be" one, are not typically about families and therefore, the reviewer does seem to congratulate Rutland

but only on her success at being "as happy as a typical mother can be," and for sharing that in a book. Undeniably, this assessment of Rutland's work misses the mark and situates Rutland as the apolitical, completely satisfied housewife and mother that middle-class identity has come to expect from its women.

But when these reviews are read in tandem with the many letters Rutland received from fans and readers, the power in Rutland's "subtle resistance" becomes clear. As Rutland's fan mail suggests, the memoir resonates most with the reading public—black and white—for Rutland's more politically inflected calls to unite under a shared humanity as mothers and women, and to use this new community to combat a number of racial and gendered oppressions. In 1968, a Detroit woman named Susan writes to Rutland that, "[b]ecause we have a long newspaper strike raging in Detroit," she went to the library and chose Rutland's book. She says the book's "title appealed to me because we have four little girls under the age of six" (Susan to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). Susan writes: "Imagine my surprise to find you are a Negro mama" (Susan to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). This surprise registers more for Susan as a reminder of their similarities and the importance in knowing one's "neighbors regardless of race, color or creed" (Susan to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). As a few of the women who write to Rutland say, Susan tells Rutland that she could not stop reading the book and that, when she "finally put the book down at 12:05 last evening," she "decided I would write to you" (Susan to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). "And then," Susan continues, "at 6:30 AM today I hear the shockingly horrible news that at this moment Senator Robert Kennedy lies in surgery. Dear God where will it all end? I'm not recovered from dear Martin Luther King yet" (Susan to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). More than anything, this

letter situates Rutland's narrative of black motherhood within the turbulent 1960s decade and reveals its political pertinence to the decade's political violence and progressive achievements. For this reader, her experience of Senator Robert Kennedy's assassination is filtered through what she has just read in Rutland's memoir. Though she does not get into specifics about what she found so imperative about the memoir that she felt the need to write to Rutland, this letter reveals that it is the political voice of the narrative which resonates with her as she connects it to Senator Robert Kennedy's death and uses it to cope with the tumultuous years of the late 1960s. Susan concludes this letter with a promise to Rutland that she will "go on being a mama, like you, with 'imperfect children, all about to face an imperfect world'" (Susan to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). In quoting this line from Rutland's memoir back to her, Susan reveals that, for her, the message of the narrative is that all children, white and black, are "about to face an imperfect world," and that it is up to mothers to "go on being a mama" who raises "'imperfect children,'" for they are the ones most equipped to deal with and change that "'imperfect world.'"

The memoir is advertised as a "universal" and "typical" story of motherhood, but what Susan and the other "universal" and "typical" mothers who read it get out of it are new, alternative perspectives on what it means to raise children in an "'imperfect world.'" In his study of African American autobiography, Mostern considers Lejeune's theory of the "autobiographical pact" as it applies to African American autobiographies. Mostern names this pact as "the affirmation in the text of" the author's identity on the title page (Mostern 34). However, Mostern considers how a number of African American texts will leave out names in the titles of their autobiographical works. He names *The*

Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man as one example, but there is also evidence of this in a black woman's autobiographical tradition with *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.* Mostern makes the suggestion that the missing "identity" in the titles of African American autobiographies makes the texts "undecidable" (35). While in some sense this is true for *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man,* which flirts with the distinctions between the autobiography and the fictional novel, in a black women's tradition, this tendency to remain nameless is less "undecidable" and reads as more "open-ended" and "inviting a dialogue between writer and reader" (Stover 29). The lack of an "identity" in the title of black women's autobiography lends itself to an autobiographical "countergenre" that is "not as rigid, as definite" as the typical genre's forms and which speaks to the tendency for black women to represent a "we," or community subject of the text rather than the "I," or the individual subject of the text (29). In the case of Rutland and her "universal" narrative originally titled, *The Trouble With Being a Mama,* Stover helps us to understand how the lack of an individual or even a racial identity in the title is a subversive move rooted in "a masking of intent" that draws white readers, such as Susan, into the narrative without realizing the racialized arguments and specificities present in her tales of motherhood (18).

Once white mothers begin to read the narrative, as Susan herself admits, Rutland accomplishes a "dialogue" that introduces these white women to maternal struggles they at once relate to and cannot imagine. As one example, Rutland and her family quickly learn when they move to Sacramento, California that, though "*there was no colored* section" of town in which they were forced to find housing, this did not necessarily mean they could live anywhere (Rutland, *When We Were* 36). Rutland relates the "rollicking

tale" of her husband's "experiences in a white hotel, served by *white* bellboys and *white* waiters, and his searching desperately through the hotel for a black face to direct him to the 'colored section' of town" (36). When he is finally told that "*there was no colored section*," Rutland explains that "the truth was that this left him rather naked. For he desperately needed a 'colored section'" (36). That is, as Collins, Higginbotham, and Barnes have noted, at least in the Jim Crow South there is a degree of protection to be found in the "colored section" of town. In the hushed racism of the West however, the violence against black bodies emerges through humiliation and a "desperately needed" sense of direction. While Bill Rutland's white colleagues found "[b]rand-new, better-than-average tract homes with an executive air, boasting of built-in modern appliances and situated near the air base where they worked. And for about $250 down," there was "for Bill—nothing" (36-37). "After several rebuffs," Rutland explains, "he began to look for the 'unrestricted' notation and to rely on the real estate man to direct him to where 'they will sell to colored'" (37). Rutland comes to learn that racism in the American West manifests in what is left unsaid or in what is implied by a coded language of exclusion. "'Unrestricted,'" Rutland and her husband come to find out, is how the neighborhoods of the American West distinguish between "white" neighborhoods and "black" neighborhoods. It isn't until Rutland matches the city's "subterfuge" with her own—employing a white friend to act as her proxy in the purchasing of a home while her husband is away on business—that she is able to rise above the power of this language and find a suitable home for her family (43). The "universal" treatment Western-American programs of integration claim to deliver to all individuals, regardless of race, are exposed here as racially coded. By presenting her narrative as a "universal" tale of

motherhood, Rutland is able to attract a white reading audience and include them in on observations of the violence evoked in the West's color-blind rhetoric and its initiatives to conditionally integrate black and white communities.

Though Rutland's move to purchase a home through a white friend speaks to the degree of freedom black families have in the American West compared with in the American South—where this kind of "subterfuge" could have much more fatal consequences—Rutland does face negative reactions to her search to find decent housing for her family, which are expressed through the dominant scripts of motherhood. A "white acquaintance" questions Rutland's decision to move into the all-white neighborhood she chooses for her family by asking Rutland if she will "'be happy…knowing they [the white neighbors] don't want you'" (45). When Rutland responds that, regardless of the neighbors, it is the right house for her family, the acquaintance rephrases the question in a way that calls forth dominant scripts of motherhood and suggests Rutland is deviating from them by placing her children's safety at risk. "'But the children,'" this acquaintance says to Rutland, indicating her belief that in moving into the all-white neighborhood Rutland is thinking about political gain rather than the safety of her family (45). Despite the fact that, as an integrated city, Sacramento, California does not abide by official white and black neighborhoods as in the Jim Crow South, the "[b]ut the children" attempts to police Rutland's movement into this unofficially determined white space and restore racial power orders from within the coded rhetoric of protecting children. As this interaction between Rutland and her "white acquaintance" reveals, this woman's concerns are less for the safety of Rutland's children and more for her own unease at the prospect of black families living on the same street as

her own white family. In an integrated city, racism cannot be spoken out loud and so it is hushed behind the scripts of a middle-class motherhood that pretends to care for black children at the same time that it denies them access to certain neighborhoods and their corresponding residential schools. Rutland's maternal memoir deconstructs these scripts to expose this "subterfuge" and how, like the "'unrestricted'" notation on real estate listings, dominant scripts of motherhood use a specific rhetoric to entrench new systems of racial and gender oppression.

Through her "strategic motherhood" and her alternative politics of respectability, Rutland makes room to question these dominant scripts and to hold the American West accountable for its claims to integration and racial equality. In response to the woman's "'But the children,'" Rutland "smiled" and says, '"[t]hey'll survive.' And grow I thought to myself. I had not forgotten the vulnerability of their position. But this I had learned to accept and strangely enough to appreciate" (45). Rutland's willingness to make her children vulnerable deviates, as the "acquaintance" suggests, from dominant scripts of motherhood that set out to protect children. But, as Ahmed helps us to understand, vulnerability "involves a particular kind of bodily relation to the world, in which openness itself is read as a site of potential danger, and as demanding evasive actions" (Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 69). Vulnerability functions to make us feel the "potential danger" of a situation and to demand our "evasive actions" to escape potentially harmful situations. Dominant scripts of motherhood respond to this sense of vulnerability by seeking ways to close off the "openness" that causes the vulnerability as a means of protecting children from even the threat of danger. But vulnerability is not actual, present danger, it is the "potential" for future danger and it is reliant upon a soical understanding

of what is dangerous and what is not. As Rutland's acquaintance expresses in her question, "[b]ut the children," Sacramento, despite being an integrated city with progressive politics, validates a sense of danger around integrated neighborhoods, at least when they reach the middle and upper-middle class residential areas. Rutland's memoir is about exposing this fabricated sense of vulnerability and danger by challenging dominant scripts assumptions that her children are safe anywhere at all in the integrated, Western-American city. Rather than seeking to close off her children as dominant scripts do, Rutland's "strategic motherhood" acknowledges the dominant scripts priority to "protect" white children rather than her own and therefore, she maintains her children's "openness" as a site for their potential growth as much as it "is read as a site of potential danger." By moving her family into a predominantly white neighborhood, Rutland strategically places her children at the crossroads of dominant scripts and the West's claims to early integration and progressive race politics. She shows that, in any neighborhood in Sacramento, her children face real harm and real vulnerability. In their previous home, dilapidation and redlining threatened her children with physical harm and an attack on their environmental health. In the middle-class, white neighborhood she moves her children into, the suppressed racism of her neighbors leads to her children's psychological and emotional insecurity. By pointing this out and deciding which is the most productive vulnerability to burden her children with, Rutland draws attention to the ways dominant, middle-class notions of motherhood intersect with the West's ambivalence towards racial equality and integration policies.

Of course, this remains a kind of "politics of respectability" in that Rutland continues to strive to provide her children with the same middle-class securities as the

white families in Sacramento. However, I argue that Rutland's is an alternative politics of respectability because she does not allow her society to pretend that her children can have everything white children have if only they work hard or behave a certain way. Rutland's memoir acknowledges the histories of race and racism which place her children at a disadvantage, a disadvantage that only becomes harder to navigate in a Western-American city that refuses to acknowledge those histories. Rutland's hope for her children is not that they will just be able to possess the same houses, educations, and jobs as their white counterparts, but that they will be able to attain these things without the "subterfuge" she herself had to deploy to get them. "Hope," according to Ahmed, "is when the 'not yet' impresses upon us in the present, such that we must act, politically, to make it our future" (184). As such, vulnerability opens the conditions for hope. To have hope means to remain open to what is "'not yet,'" and to imagine how the future is made in the impressions of it "upon us in the present." The close relationship between Ahmed's understanding of hope and vulnerability make it clear that, racial equality in housing is Rutland's "not yet," which entices her to act "politically" through subterfuge to "make it our future." In allowing her children to remain open and vulnerable in the present, Rutland's motherhood is hopeful for their future. By using "subterfuge" to move her children into a neighborhood that does not "want" them, Rutland's "strategic motherhood" hopes for a future in which her children do not have to use "subterfuge" to find a decent home or answer double-sided questions about the suspected danger they put their children in by moving into that home.

Rutland's alternative politics of respectability questions the relation between middle-class values that preach clean houses, polite children, and obedient wives and the

American West's programs for racial equality and integration. She speaks about the year she became so over involved in the PTA, Boy and Girl Scouts, and in supporting her children in various social activities to prove her maternal worth that, as she says, she "almost lost my husband" (Rutland, *When We Were* 70). Rutland explains that the pressure to conform to middle-class standards and values was not exactly something she was "trained" for (13), but which was something expected of her nonetheless. She describes her mother's house and form of mothering as "slapdash" (67). "In Mama's house," she says, "you never knew where anything belonged," and her "method of housekeeping was to fan a feather duster and pull down the shades. She always remembered flowers, though. Even now I can remember coming into a quiet, cool house, a fresh bowl of flowers on the bookcase in the hall and the sun filtering softly through the yellow shades of the dining room window. You had the illusion of peace and quiet order" (67-68). According to this account from Rutland, it seems that the "politics of respectability," which positioned black, middle-class women as "the caretaker of the home, ergo the caretake of the race," and "charged" black mothers "with the responsibility of maintaining disciplined and clean homes, is an "illusion" of "respectability" (Higginbotham 202). While her mother never kept an organized home where there was "a place-for-everything, everything-in-its place kind of operation," she was sure to always maintain fresh flowers to give the "illusion" of cleanliness and order and thereby, avoid association with the racist images of dirty houses and unkempt children perpetuated by dominant society (Rutland, *When We Were* 67). In other words, the flowers were meant to distract "the white gaze" that Higginbotham shows is constantly surveilling black women and their roles as mothers and housekeepers

(Higginbotham 196). Rather than conforming to what dominant society suggests is "respectable," Rutland defends against having to go through this "illusion" and the superficial presentation of cleanliness and order.

Rutland's maternal memoir points out that this politics of respectability leaves a legacy of damage and considers the impact this "illusion" has on her own children in their Western-American city. In an anecdote about her daughter coming home from school one day "screaming, 'This house is so dirty,'" Rutland comments on the internalized racism the politics of respectability enforced. While Rutland admits that her daughter "had a point[…]as I collected the books and crayons and rescued the cracker box from one of the twins," her daughter goes on to say: "'Dirty, dirty, that's what Janey's mother said. She said Negroes were all dirty and they kept dirty houses, and Janey can't play with me, even at school she can't'" (Rutland, *When We Were* 46). Rutland tries to reassure her daughter by saying: "'That's not true. Our house isn't really *dirty* and neither are…' I mentioned a few of our friends who were immaculate housekeepers" (46). But later, when Rutland had time to reflect on this moment with her daughter, she recognizes the inherent problem in her attempts to console her daughter in this way. "I wondered later why I was defending myself. Why should I try to prove to my own daughter that we were as good as anyone else and solely through the automatic, superficial process of keeping our faces and houses clean, of putting up a front" (46)? Here Rutland deconstructs a history of women, black and white, who are valued on a sliding scale based on their ability to maintain clean houses and children and she vows to stop pretending or, "putting up a front" about what makes someone "good." Therefore, we see Rutland's alternative politics of respectability begin to form as she recognizes the

need to reshape how individuals are understood and questions: "What about our hearts and minds," and determines "the next time the subject came up I would place it on a higher plane" (46). In concluding this anecdote in this way, Rutland instructs her reading audience to also question these middle-class norms. Her alternative politics of respectability encourages women across the racial divide to reconstruct and reprioritize what American society should value and what it should hold as "respectable."

"Could I have I forgotten so soon?:" Rutland's National Motherhood

While Rutland's "motherwork," as Collins would call it, is political in and of itself, the memoir she writes and the stories she chooses to include expands her political reach and her subversive intentions to the national, not just the regional, stage. In her introduction to the 2008 republication of her memoir, Rutland explains that her "biggest trouble with being a mama, especially a black mama, was my unfamiliarity with the rapidly changing world into which my children were born" (Rutland, *When We Were* vii). "As I look back," she says of her childhood in Atlanta, "I realize that I lived in two worlds, one almost totally white and the other almost totally black—but not quite. For no matter where I was, policemen, streetcar conductors, and grocery clerks were white[…]When my children were born, the two worlds had begun to mix and herein lies my story" (ix). In reflecting on her memoir's first edition in this way, Rutland realizes that her memoir is telling the story of a "rapidly changing world" and the increasing impossibility for the American West to deny or remain "unfamiliar" with the racial history she grew up with in Atlanta. That is, as I argued in the last section of this chapter, Rutland's narrative brings an awareness to the ways the progressive Western-American regional identity is not so very far from the South's histories of slavery and Jim Crow

segregation. But Rutland's memoir also elevates these regional issues to national importance and recognizes the reliance of the West's progressive rhetoric on nationally sponsored notions of American innovation and advancement. Through her mothering of black children in a conditionally integrated, Western-American city, Rutland finds the need to critique dominant scripts of motherhood but, in bringing her experiences together in a memoir that is then published for the nation to witness, Rutland also finds certain national scripts in need of critique. Therefore, Rutland's alternative politics of respectability, like the politics of respectability of her mother's and grandmother's generations, is responsible to a larger community of Americans who experience oppression under the guise of American freedom, tolerance, and democratic expansion.

From her small place in Sacramento, California, Rutland challenges the democratic process that undergirds Western-American identity as well as a larger national identity. At a high school board meeting, Rutland relates that "[it] was election time and several burning issues were on the ballot that vitally affected the schools. When the legislative chairman asked what she should say about the ballot she was cautioned just to urge the people to vote and for goodness sake don't mention the issues that were too controversial and might spoil the board meeting" (71). Rutland "took issue with this position" and "rather vociferously" spoke up and demanded "*what was the school board for*," if not to democratically discuss and vote for these "burning issues" (71). But the rest of the board followed the advice of the legislative chairman and kept quiet on the "burning issues." Rutland later learned "that several felt as I did but were afraid to take a stand" (71). One board member told Rutland over the phone that "'I was so glad you spoke out at the board meeting[…]I do feel we emphasize the wrong things. Keep it up,

girl—lots of us are behind you'" (71). In her reflection of this moment Rutland is "disheartened" by the fact that the board was "*[b]ehind* me—but not with me," and suggests that "it takes more than one person to buck the tea-party trend and get down to the nitty gritty—the real and not always pleasant things that really affect the children" (71-72). We can infer that the "controversial" and "burning issues" that are silenced at this board meeting are racial in nature. Other board members respond to Rutland's "vociferous" opposition at the meeting as evidence she "cannot think beyond the racial problem," or they worry that "someone offended" her (72). Rutland tries to explain "this was not a personal issue—that I was talking about something bigger than me," but Rutland "could see it was no use" (72). In a narrative that has discussed the role of mothers and motherhood in general terms, Rutland takes this moment to get racially specific and identify that this is the "trouble with being a *colored* mama" (72). Even in this Western-American city that prided itself on being progressive and integrated, the "nitty gritty" and the "things that really affect the children" are overlooked to avoid conflict, defer blame, and maintain the appearances of social stability and progress.

In her memoir, Rutland holds the nation and its supporting functions accountable to the democratic tradition it claims as its own. The PTA and the school board, those political platforms that are supposed to bring change and equality for the children's futures are, as Rutland says, "no use." They flee from the "controversial" rather than work it out, and so black mothers such as Rutland adopt the problems of integration as their own to take care of their own, but also to take care of a community of children, black and white, who rely on these institutions to face the difficult issues and provide the best opportunities for them. Rutland explains that "I have attended two state PTA

conventions and have been so inspired to see *all those people* filling to the rafters the city auditorium—all sincere, dedicated women. But dedicated to what? Council luncheons, potlucks, and school carnivals—avoiding the vital controversial issues that might determine our children's future" (72)? She points out how the PTA and the school board depoliticize the youth and their education by focusing on "luncheons, potlucks, and school carnivals," rather than the important sociopolitical issues such as school busing programs aimed at integrating schools, public school curriculum that create racially imbalanced outcomes, or afterschool programs that discriminate against children of color and children from low-income households. And so, Rutland concludes, "I certainly wouldn't want it breathed in the higher echelons of the NAACP, but another problem with being a mama today is integration" (Rutland 109). Rutland's maternal memoir identifies integration politics as "another problem with being a mama," and makes it one of the responsibilities of motherhood to speak to its ineffectiveness. In so doing, Rutland deploys a "strategic motherhood" that becomes a motherhood for *all* children, not just for her own, not just for black children, not just for children in the American West. It is common for coalitions of black women to extend their motherhood and their political advocacy beyond just that of their own children. As Higginbotham and Stover recognize in their respective studies, black mothers and black women autobiographers remain conscious of how their lives and "motherwork" is needed to help other black children and women in their communities. Rutland also dedicates herself and her memoir to her larger community of women and children. But, as a black woman living and working in an integrated, Western-American city, her community includes other black children and women as well as white children and women. As Rutland's memoir steps across the

regional line so too does it step across the racial line to account for the specific forms of institutional oppression and counter-allegiances her community faces, and to challenge a set of national ideals and criteria for national identification that work to include through a process of exclusion.

Rutland's memoir is sensitive to the ways national identity and democratic voice are distributed on a sliding scale that attributes different levels of privilege to different communities of people based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, and income level. For example, in a chapter of her memoir titled "You Have to Be Rich," Rutland tells an endearing story of teaching her children about the true spirit of Christmas. Although she did not have a lot of money to give away to her four children as allowance, Rutland "set up a system of jobs whereby the children could really earn their money for Christmas" (Rutland, *When We Were* 86). Holding about two dollars each, Rutland takes all four of her children to the five-and-ten for each of them to purchase gifts for their family members. The experience was not without its challenges—one of Rutland's daughters ran out of money before finding something for her father, two of her children got their sibling the same gift, and Rutland received multiple condescending stares from other women over the chaos she and her children were causing in the store—but that Christmas Rutland watched her children "saying hello to the giving, the getting, the thoughtfulness, the pure loving kindness of Christmas" (91). For Rutland it was a win and she "said then, God bless the five-and-ten" (91). But then this chapter about teaching children selflessness ends with a short two paragraphs that raise the political stakes of the chapter by presenting readers with the message that a nation that distributes rights and privileges based on race, gender, income, or region is not a true democratic nation at all. "It was a

real wrench for me to pass up the five-and-ten when the pickets were there," Rutland abruptly explains. "You know the brave young people that decided segregation was wrong anywhere—schools, bus stations, lunch counters—and picketed all over the country. But pass it up I did. This was bigger than my pocketbook. These young people were bigger than me—and I could not let them down" (91-92). Despite being in the American West, where she is relatively accepted in the same stores and public places as white people, Rutland reminds her readers that, regardless of regional privileges, racial privileges, or class privileges, the entire nation is at a loss when its citizens are not treated equally or provided with the same access to the democratic process. In concluding this chapter in this way, Rutland models for her readers how to stand in allegiance with those communities who do not have the same privileges as them and to see this allegiance as essentially American rather than anti-American, radical, or even controversial. Stover indicates that black women's autobiography tends to end in unexpected ways because "the stories of slave women cannot fit" into more typical endings such as "death or marriage of the heroine" (Stover 48). Undeniably, this chapter's ending is also unexpected to Rutland's readers who think they are going to hear an apolitical, frivolously sentimental tale of teaching children the moral in giving rather than getting. However, Rutland's surprise ending elevates the cross-regional histories and knowledges that the nation consolidates within geographic regions and positions readers to digest this analysis from the point of view of children learning to give and sacrifice for the benefit of someone else.

In boycotting the five-and-ten, Rutland acknowledges the relationship between the Western-American pseudo-progressive rhetoric of integration and the racial violence

erupting in the American South as the black youth advocate for equality. Rutland's narrative organization—beginning in the South with her own upbringing, traveling West as a mother herself, and ending with a chapter titled "We The People," which considers the nation's children more broadly—negotiates the exchange that happens between regional identity and national identity and how this exchange impacts notions of citizenship, democratic voice, and sociopolitical mobility. Rutland's memoir also accounts for the ways these regional identities are always in flux or, as Powell helps us to realize, how regional identities are "rooted in conflict and change as much as in permanence, stability, and continuity" (Powell 14). Powell's sense of regional instability and grounding in conflict helps to locate the power in Rutland's cross-regional memoir. She draws attention to the ways individuals not only find themselves in dynamic moments of instability and conflict as they travel from one region to the next, but she also finds that individuals bring this instability and conflict with them into the region. As individuals move across regional boundaries, their other regional experiences and knowledges throw their new regions into flux. In the case of Rutland, she accounts for how her experiences in the South must be acknowledge by the American West now that she is a member of a Western-American community. However, the West can't imagine how an experience such as Rutland's fits into their program of color-blind integration and superficial political egalitarianism. In fact, Rutland's experience stands to contradict the West's sense of temporal progress and a moving away from the nation's past involvement in race-based slavery and segregation.

A letter from one of Rutland's white readers provides insight into how Rutland's readers felt an unease with their regional association and a tension between their

geographic location and their commitment to American ideals such as equality, democracy, and freedom. In a letter Rutland received from Rae Miller in 1968, Miller tells Rutland that she used to live in Modesto, California but recently moved to Fort Worth, Texas and that, "I went just the opposite route as you" (Miller to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968)! Referring to Rutland's move from South to West and the significance of this move to her memoir, Miller's letter to Rutland describes her move from West to South and how this, like Rutland, destabilized her sense of self. Miller explains that, "I have always felt strongly about equality and human worth," but that since moving to Texas she has recognized an "irony" in her "'humanitarianism'" (Miller to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). She writes that she met a black family in Texas whose children play with hers and that, "with all the emphasis that has been put on the negro/white relationship" in Texas, "I found myself acutely aware of it [differences in race]" (Miller to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). Miller confides to Rutland that, when this black family invited hers to go out dancing, "suddenly I was face to face with all I had mouthed [about equality]," and she worried over "[w]hat would I do when I was asked to dance? Especially in a Southern state" (Miller to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968)? Though their date fell through, Miller says that "[f]or the first time, I became <u>really</u> aware that I was white and they were black" (Miller to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968)! Miller narrates in this letter all the dangers and contradictions Rutland addresses in her memoir about the American West's insistent declaration of its own progressive, racially tolerant identity. While in Modesto, California, Miller never thought about race in the ways she was forced to come "face to face" with in the South. But when Miller does move to the South, though this does not stop her from making black friends and allowing her children to play

with black children, it does make her "aware that I was white and they were black." Racism is not always about an individual's politics, as this letter points out and as Rutland's memoir certainly does as well. Racism is also about the location and situated knowledges of those individuals and of those they interact with. Ideas about race and racism translate different across different regional borders and presses individuals to react differently in different regional situations. As Miller stands to show in her letter to Rutland, Rutland's memoir is teaching her readers about how the nation disguises nationally sanctioned forms of racism within a rhetoric of progress that becomes codified in Western-American regional identity, a rhetoric and identity which cannot sustain itself outside of this region's geographic boundaries. This is to say, Rutland teaches her readers about the danger in forgetting national histories in favor of regional ones. She knits back together the conflicting regional understandings of how race-based slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and modern forms of institutional racism impact national cohesion and serve aggrandized ideas about the nation's progressive moves into American modernity.

Rutland's narrative shows its concern for the ways regional knowledges take on different meanings as they traverse regional borders. She notes how these regional knowledges transform the bodies of individuals into a different "shape," as Ahmed would say, and effect the "impressions" they experience as they move across those regional borders. For instance, Rutland recognizes once again that, "I'm all for integration, but it does have its problems. One of its biggest problems," Rutland continues, "is sex" (Rutland, *When We Were* 109). Rutland describes how, as a kindergartner, Billy befriended a Jewish girl named Sally. Sally's mother praised Billy, telling Rutland "'[h]e was the most beautiful child I had ever seen, and I was so glad that Sally was so

unconscious of race or color that it had not occurred to her to mention it'" (113). But, as Rutland indicates, "[t]hat was at six. But suppose Sally should bring Billy home at sixteen" (113), what Rutland calls the "sex-conscious stage" (112). The point is that at six, Billy's blackness is "beautiful" and unthreatening. However, "the same mother would shriek" if Sally brought Billy home at sixteen "[b]ecause at six it is wonderful for Sally to be innocent and open-minded and democratic about race and such, but at sixteen the possibility exists that she might marry the boy, for heaven's sake" (113). While integration allows Billy to go to school with Sally and play with Sally as a young child, the historical knowledges invented in the postbellum South—those knowledges and histories which understand black men as sexual predators and a threat to the purity of white women—still determine how these bodies are to "impress" upon one another as they grow into adulthood. Though Rutland admits that these histories translate differently in the American West and therefore, must be navigated differently, they are there nonetheless and impede her children's free movement through their society.

But in speaking to how these histories remain influential to Western-American progressive politics and how those politics contain the bodies of her children within pseudo-segregated institutions, Rutland also critiques national scripts of freedom, equality, and opportunity. In an extended discussion of the difficulties her children face in the integrated, Western-American classroom that neither teaches nor understands black American history, Rutland once again makes a case for the ways integration is superficial in its progress towards racial equality. "Who has not asked, 'Who am I?' 'When did I come,'" Rutland begins (102). "Many Americans can answer with pride, 'My forefathers came over on the Mayflower.' 'I can trace my ancestry to a castle in Scotland, to a

nobleman of France, to an English peer'" (102). Rutland admits that "[i]t is true that some could be traced to a debtor's prison or an equal disgrace," but she also argues that this "shame has long been obliterated, buried, lost in the vast majority of white faces, leveled off in the leveling sea of American democracy" (102). Rutland shows here that these histories of Anglo-European settlement in the Americas lend themselves to certain national scripts of American freedom, individuality, and equality, and undergird many an American's sense of self, including many of the white students in the integrated, Western-American classroom. However, Rutland also shows how these histories and scripts are imbricated in global histories of colonialism and slavery, and how that imbrication has been silenced and even erased by dominant national scripts in order to promulgate notions of Western-American progressivism and American democratic identity. "But I," Rutland asserts, "have a trademark that shouts to the world that my ancestors came over in the belly of a slave ship. My roots go no further—from royal African tribe or scum, I know not. My ancestry beyond the slave ship is lost as surely as that of my white friends from the debtor's prison. But the mark of my slave ship is not. By the color of my skin ye shall know my shame" (102). Rutland draws attention to the ways her own body and the bodies of her children are not accounted for by national scripts of freedom, democracy, and opportunity. She points out the ways her history is fragmented at the historical juncture of the slave ship, all the history coming before that "lost" and insignificant to national archives. In asserting "[b]ut I," Rutland asserts herself as proof of this past, ignored history and makes it relevant to a Western-American identity that distances itself from histories of slavery, racism, and inequality at the same time it builds itself atop them.

Rutland unsettles the stories the West tells about itself by telling a new story of Western-American pioneerism and struggle. For Rutland in her mid-twentieth century moment, she does not have the difficult task of traversing rugged geography and harsh climate the way the mid-nineteenth century Anglo-American pioneers did. Instead, Rutland must forge the regional divides that have instantiated themselves in geopolitical identities that refuse to acknowledge their continuity across borders or their relevancy to ongoing national problems with racism. As Rutland's narrative carries American histories of racism across regional borders, it becomes clear that histories of slavery and racism are "spatialized" as problems concerning the American South and temporalized as problems of the Civil War era. Not only does this separate the American South from the American West geopolitically, but it also relegates the American South to the nation's past, stuck, in a way, in that Civil War era as it continues to struggle with issues of race, while the American West is situated as the nation's progressive, forward-thinking future. "The differentiations of 'race' or 'nation,'" Lisa Lowe argues, "the geopolitical map of 'south,' 'north,' 'east,' and 'west,' or the modernization discourse of stages of development—these are the *traces* of liberal forgetting" (39). Though Lowe is discussing global regions, her argument helps conceptualize the ways the U.S. nation also spatializes and temporalizes certain histories and knowledges in order to enact a "liberal forgetting" that feeds into national scripts of freedom, equality, and opportunity. This framework for evaluating American regionalism fits with what Comer and others have pointed out as a trend in Western-American writing that understands the West "as a double for the US nation—the story of settling the West is the story of America," and it makes clear that a Western-American sense of progress, futurity, and idealism serves to consolidate the

nation's past histories of slavery and racial segregation in the South (Comer, "Accountabilities" 419-420). Rutland's narrative stands to challenge this consolidation as she moves across regional borders. When Rutland boycotts the five-and-ten in support of the black youth in the American South and calls attention to the important black histories her children miss out on in attending an integrated, Western-American school, Rutland challenges national scripts that, as Lowe helps us to see, "translates the world through an economy of affirmation and forgetting within a regime of desiring freedom" (Lowe 39). The American West has created an identity out of Americans' desire for freedom and the failure of the nation to deliver on this promise to all Americans. If an American individual's situation in New England, the South, or even the Midwest fails to bring them the economic and sociopolitical capital they desire, then they resort to moving West for the opportunity to start over. Throughout this dissertation we have seen this move. Ruiz de Burton's squatter family, the Darrells, move West in hopes to secure the financial freedom New England society stifles for them. Helen Hunt Jackson's Aunt Ri leaves the labor-saturated South in a failed Reconstruction era. And Sui Sin Far's Chinese immigrants show us this same move on a more global scale as they travel from China to the United States' West Coast. In each of these instances, Western-American women writers and their diverse characters fail to be accounted for by national narratives and histories and so they accumulate debts, illnesses, and losses as they struggle against a system that promises them freedom and equality, but which turns out to be the rhetoric of an empty progressivism. Rutland also travels West with the belief that its integrated cities can offer her family something better than they could have in the South. However, just like Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, and Sui Sin Far, Rutland too finds her move West created

new problems and obstacles as the region refused to acknowledge the particular histories which led her to seek freedom and opportunity in the West in the first place. Rutland's memoir, with all its historical and cross-regional insight, draws attention to the "[b]ut I" that is left out of the American Wests' progressive histories and the nation's idealistic democratic scripts.

Regional and national "amnesia[s]," to use Benedict Anderson's word (Anderson 205), are powerful in their ability to rewrite histories that become more readily consumable by the imagined national community. Rutland herself acknowledges the regional and national narratives' mystifying powers to make her forget and to make her believe. In a reflective moment, Rutland critically engages with her own "amnesia." The memoir ends with a chapter titled "We the People," in which Rutland admits to pretending "that the problem [of racial violence] was far, far away" (Rutland, *We The People* 137). As she watched the South's black youth on television, "faced with the controversy over the integrated school, I thanked God that we were not involved," and she "shielded the children from the headlines" to protect them from even seeing the violence against black children and adolescents second hand (137). But in this reflection, Rutland recognizes the problems in thinking this way and understands the power of the manufactured histories and knowledges of the Western-American region that allow her to "pretend" her children were safe. She tells us that "in my selfishness, [she] thanked God that the children were in California, away from the controversy, the ugly strife and turmoil that surrounded boys and girls in some parts of our nation" (138). But then, "[i]t was a lovely sunny day in California," when, across the country the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church is bombed and Rutland, from her place in Sacramento, "came face to face

with my beloved South" (146). And she was forced to ask herself, "[c]ould I have forgotten so soon" (144)? In this last chapter, Rutland deconstructs national scripts that claim to be for "the people," just as she did the scripts of middle-class motherhood. She points to the ways these scripts operate through "forgotten" histories, knowledges, and identities, in similar ways that the scripts for dominant, middle-class motherhood operate through a rhetoric that predicates the protection of white children on the disregard for the protection of children of color. She recognizes the connections Sacramento has to Birmingham and how national scripts, which identify the United States nation as "this lighthouse across the sea, saying to the oppressed of Hungary and Syria, 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,'" work through a discourse which forgets that there are "tired," "poor," and "huddled masses yearning to breathe free," right there in the nation itself, right there in the American West where the nation's ideals are said to reach their full potential (141). Rutland thinks for a moment about how "Bill and I had both lived and worked in Birmingham, many times had attended the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, would perhaps still be there if Bill had gotten the job he had applied for, right outside of Birmingham." "And next came the stabbing thought," Rutland writes, "*it could have been my girls"*(145). "And on that September Sunday," Rutland "admitted that I was not brave enough nor good enough. I could not love my enemies. If it were Pat or Billy or any of mine, I would scream and fight and *kill!* I could not peacefully resist" (147). Despite claiming earlier in the narrative to be opposed to the more militant movements led by Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, Rutland admits in this moment of re-remembering that there is an emotional validity to their strategies. She says that, if her own children were in the line of fire like

those in the church bombing, she could not "peacefully resist." But it doesn't just stop there. Rutland acquiesces to a politics of violence when she indicates that she would "scream and fight and *kill*" to protect her children from the violence of American racism. Not only is this another surprise conclusion that leaves Rutland's readers feeling the emotive power in her dueling regional identities, but it is also a conclusion that never would have shown up in the politics of respectability practiced by the generations of black women before her. Rutland's alternative politics of respectability questions not only the racist practices of her national society, but it also questions the productivity in a "respectable" approach to equality if "respectability" is gauged off of a dominant, Anglo-American sense of the word that proves oppressive not only to black women and mothers, but to white women and mothers as well.

"I still believe you're a writer:" Balancing Motherhood, Womanhood, and Writing

Rutland's archive provides another level of contextualization for the ways her multivalent identity as a black middle-class woman and mother was what gave her publishing opportunities, but which also placed certain holds on her authorial agency and political voice. As discussed in the previous two sections of this chapter, Rutland's writing had the tendency to flirt with the line between the frivolously domestic and the political. It is one way she "masks" the political impulse in her work, which allows her to draw regional comparisons that ultimately challenge national notions of freedom, equality, and progress. From the early 1950s, when Rutland began her career as a published writer, domesticity and what she calls the "small area of everyday living" feature as both the catalyst and the solution to regional and national problems of race,

gender, and social inequality (Rutland, *When We Were* 130). In an early, unpublished short story, "Madge and the Lemon Cream Pie," Madge, a mother of three, decides to hire a housekeeper and nanny so she can go to work outside the house to get a break from the duties of being a full-time mother and housewife. Mrs. McGinnis, the woman Madge eventually hires, is described as "the motherly type" who, "[w]hen you looked at her, clean was the word that came to you" because of her "scrubbed pleasant face, clear blue eyes and white hair that looked as if it were washed every day" (Rutland, "Madge" 10). Mrs. McGinnis proves to be the perfect housekeeper. She keeps the house orderly with "nothing—absolutely nothing lying around," and produces Lemon Cream pies that, "[f]or one slice, Billy [Madge's son] would eat every string bean on his plate, Pat [Madge's daughter] would set the table and Linda [Madge's second daughter] would willing perform any chore Mrs. McGinnis assigned" (14). For a while, all seems to be going smoothly, though Madge is a little jealous that Mrs. McGinnis seems to be able to tame her wild household when she could not. However, the story's conflict arises when Billy and his friend Leland get into a disagreement because Leland makes the baseball team and Billy doesn't. When Madge presses Billy to explain what exactly happened, Billy confesses that they got into a fist fight after Billy called Leland "a name" (21). In a telling moment, Billy also confesses to Madge that "'Mrs. McGinnis says I shouldn't play with 'N------rs'" (19). This is the first indication in the story that Madge and her family are white and that Leland is black. Madge confronts Mrs. McGinnis about her prejudice, but Mrs. McGinnis demands that "'I ain't never had no Niggers in and out of my house and as long as I stay here, ain't gonna be'" (23-24). Madge then asks Mrs. McGinnis to leave

and Bill, Madge's husband, gets the story's last line in which he cleverly says: "'I'm tired of Lemon Cream Pie—too gooey'" (25)!

"Madge and the Lemon Cream Pie" is a typical example of the ways Rutland uses witty humor and the "small area of everyday living" to address the era's pressing issues of race and gender in her writing. But it is also how Rutland emphasizes what feminists have come to phrase "the personal is political," and how she articulates her politics through the publishing channels made available to her. Even a story that seems as innocent as "Madge," proves to be too politically dangerous for her 1960s society and so, it was never published. Simply put, the story makes its readers uncomfortable in ways her maternal memoir, *When We Were Colored,* does not. On the part of publishers and editors, the story is too racially ambiguous. Though the story was originally drafted in the 1950s, as late as 1970 Rutland was still writing to her agent, Edith Margolis, about trying to get the story published, indicating Rutland's attachment to the short story. Margolis states that "it isn't obvious in the version I have" what race the characters are, and that this might be a problem for publishers (Margolis to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Additionally, Rutland writes about a night she read the story to her writing class. In her own words, Rutland describes "Madge and the Lemon Cream Pie" as "a rather charming story (I thought) carrying a subtle message about prejudice" (Rutland, *When We Were* 130). However, after the class ended, Rutland describes how "a lady refugee from an oppressed land came up to me—intense and angry" (130). The woman tells Rutland: "'You should not write about prejudice and lemon cream pies. The message is too *big,* too *important* for that. Do not confuse it with *small* things'" (130). For this reader, racism is "too *big*" and "too *important*" for it to show up in a story about children's

squabbles and mothers' troubles. Rutland responds to this criticism by saying she "cannot help it," and that she believes "prejudice or nonprejudiced is inevitably entwined in the small area of everyday living—the church, the school the PTA, the boy next door, the girl in my class, the man across the street[…]Here at home and in the streets and in the marketplaces the real battle for human dignity is being fought" (130). The reader's problem seems to be with the way racism is used to contextualize a story about the "small area of everyday living," even though, as "Madge" and Rutland attest to, it *is* part of the "small things," and it is where racism does some of its most lasting damage. In many ways, this exchange between Rutland, her agent, and the woman from her writing class about "Madge and the Lemon Cream Pie" is exemplary of the battles Rutland fought as she sought a space for her writing that accepted her complex, interconnected identities as a black woman, a mother, and a politically inflected writer. Rutland's archive, housed at the University of Oregon in Eugene, tells of the many ups and downs Rutland faced as a writer. From the letters to her agent, Edith Margolis, and her editors at Abingdon, to the unpublished manuscripts such as "Madge," and the fan mail, the archive alludes to the compromises and sacrifices Rutland made as well as to the power of her narratives to speak towards sociopolitical change.

Following the publication of her memoir, Rutland spent her writing time working on a far more politically forward narrative, *In Defense of Uncle Tom. In Defense of Uncle Tom* was a book concept first proposed to Abingdon in 1968, four years after the publication of *When We Were Colored.* The original plan for the manuscript included ten chapters which blended bits of her life experience, including her experience as a mother and wife, with critical histories of black figures such as Booker T. Washington and

leaders of the NAACP. The manuscript is inspired by and starts off describing an ongoing, generational family squabble in which Rutland's children accuse her and her husband of being "Uncle Toms." As her children use it, the term refers to a black individual who has "'made some compromise at some time or other to get where we are [a middle-class existence]" (Rutland, *In Defense* 1). Rutland is critical of the term's power to divide the black community into those "[t]rying to justify our middle class bourgeoise" life and "a world where the civil rights struggle is rife with the Burn Baby Burn philosophy and where Uncle Tom is a bad word" (2). Rutland's manuscript is trying to show how at every stage "of the fight for civil rights Uncle Tom has been there" (12). For example, most of the manuscript's second chapter, "In the Back Door," is devoted to Rutland's retelling of Booker T. Washington's life, leadership, and influence. She suggests that the work of W.E.B. DuBois and William Trotter relied on what Washington was able to accomplish by way of compromise with the white establishment. She writes: "Let the Dubois's and the Trotter's agitate for political, civil and social rights—He [Washington] would educate the masses to exercise those rights—to read—decide for himself which way to vote" (Rutland, "In The Back Door" 11-12). If it weren't for Washington, Rutland argues here, the majority of black Americans would not have been able to make the most of their "political, civil, and social rights." She goes on in this chapter to say that, "Washington, in order to get what his people needed,[…]just took the clever, round-about, in the back door way of getting them—'I won't make noises about riding in the jim crow section—I'll just be sure we have the fare; I won't worry about integrated education—I'll settle for education; I won't worry about acceptance—I'll just be sure we're capable; I won't fight the white man—I'll enlist his aid; I'll Uncle Tom

him into thinking we both want the same thing—'" (13). And, "in the final analysis," Rutland posits, "It was [Washington] the realist[…]the compromiser—the 'Uncle Tom,' if you will—who[…]brought more people out of the cotton fields, made education available to Negroes who would not otherwise have had it—who, since he must wear the hat—did what he could to fill the role of leader" (14). Rutland's pragmatism here speaks to her political awareness for results over images. She is less concerned with how someone appears or who someone offends—as Higginbotham's understanding of a politics of respectability is—and more concerned with the outcomes, such as brining "more people out of the cotton fields" and making "education available to Negroes who would not otherwise have had it." Rutland's experiences in the integrated West, her experiences as a mother, and her experiences as a middle-class citizen all contribute to an alternative politics of respectability that situates debates such as Washington's and DuBois' in relation to what they achieved rather than how they appeased or angered white society. Rutland goes on to mention a black college president who, when solicited by a white donor to "'[p]lease sing me one of your spirituals,'" "[h]e sang. He left with a check. Yes, they compromised. But they did <u>not</u> sell out their race! They bought, as far as they were able; education, preparation, some measure of economic security" (17). With this chapter, Rutland reminds potential readers that, for all the black advocacy work securing the "political, civil, and social rights" from the era of DuBois and Trotter to Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael, none of it would have been worth anything if it weren't for figures like Washington and the results they paid for with their own self-sacrifice. Ultimately, *In Defense of Uncle Tom* is a defense for the historical "forgetting"

and “amnesia” practiced by the black civil rights groups on their own racial and cultural histories.

Though the manuscript met with initial excitement from both her agent and her representative at Abingdon Press, Robert Hill, early concerns ranged from the manuscript’s “defensive attitude” about the role of “Uncle Toms” (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers* 1969), to the manuscript’s moderate political tone in an age where the Black Panthers and black militant groups were drawing headlines (Margolis to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1969). The contract for *In Defense* was finally withdrawn in November of 1970 when it became clear that Rutland and Abingdon Press had different opinions on the direction the manuscript should take. In response to the first draft of the manuscript, delivered in August of 1970, Hill regretfully sends a “discouraging report” in which they accuse Rutland of deviating from her “original thesis that any real achievement in society is the result of compromise plus determination and individual effort” (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). After asking her in November of 1969 to change the title from *In Defense of Uncle Tom* to *Don’t Call Me An Uncle Tom,* Hill’s final assessment of the manuscript still charges Rutland with taking a “defensive posture” (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Hill writes: “again and again you are on the defensive in your case for the middle-class black parents and others classed as Uncle Toms” (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). He finds her to “vacillate” between being “proud of the term” and being offended by it (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). To prove his point and supposedly add credibility to his opinion of Rutland’s manuscript, Hill shares with Rutland “the comments of a black staff member” who, in addition to finding Rutland’s premise offensive, is quoted as saying: “’I find that I am wholeheartedly in

agreement with much of what Mrs. Rutland is trying to say. However, it seems to me that the attempt is much too defensive and personal'" (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). But the problem Hill has with Rutland's manuscript is not that it is too "personal." In fact, in a 1968 letter about the manuscript proposal, Hill suggests Rutland consider the possibility that "Uncle Tom" "might be explored within the context of your family" (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1968). The problem Hill has then is that it is not "personal" enough. Hill also mentions on multiple occasions that the manuscript's success rides on the "timeliness" of its publication (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Though "timeliness" seems to ambiguously refer to the black power movement and the manuscript's relevance as a foil to it, it also seems to reference Rutland's own "timeliness" as an author. Since Abingdon secured rights to Rutland's second project as a stipulation of her contract for her maternal memoir, *The Trouble With Being A Mama*, Hill's emphasis on the "timeliness" of Rutland's second manuscript, along with his desire to see "Uncle Tom" "explored within the context of her family," implies that he wants to capitalize on the success she had with her maternal memoir.

Although Rutland makes a strong response to Hill's letter, in which she says she "sees nothing 'timely' about chronicling the accomplishments of black people," and charges him with missing her point entirely, the archive does document Rutland's struggle to write *In Defense of Uncle Tom* and to hone in on the cohesive argument she is trying to make with it (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Her letters to Hill and Margolis during this period indicate her own insecurities in writing what increasingly "seems [to her] to be an important book" (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1969). She questions her own abilities "to do it justice," and seems to fear but also revel in the

polarizing potential of the manuscript's politics (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1969). After December 1968, when an official contract for the manuscript was signed, Rutland's writing begins to slow down. She misses or extends multiple deadlines and by the beginning of 1970, Hill and his aids at Abingdon encourage Rutland to do what she can to finish a full first draft, "so we may see the manuscript in one piece, rather than attempting to chew this over a chapter at a time" (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1969). These years are trying on Rutland's health as her eyesight continues to decline and she writes to Margolis with more frequency about her problems with typing, reading, and researching. But Rutland also expresses "discouragement caused by the interruptions to" her writing—those "interruptions" being her duties as a mother and a wife—and questioned her own identity as a writer. Rutland's letters from 1969 and 1970 are fraught with desires to "get more dynamic and more prolific" (Rutland to Marigolis, *Rutland Papers,* 1972), and "to do a better job than I am doing" (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1969). Margolis consoles Rutland by telling her: "I still believe you're a writer," and assures her that "[t]he problems you have are the problems of a good many women writers, and of course, there's not much you can do about it" (Marigolis to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Not only does this imply that women writers find the mid-20th century literary establishment to be unforgiving of their roles as mothers and wives, but it also suggests that Rutland's writer's block stems in part from trying to negotiate a new writing persona that allows for her shifting perspectives between a mother, a woman, and a published writer.

Unlike Helen Hunt Jackson, who moves from her failed political treatise, *A Century of Dishonor,* to her immensely successful sentimental romance version of the

same story, *Ramona,* to reach a wider audience, Rutland's opposite move from the sentimental memoir to the political history marks her struggles to pull together all the pieces and histories of her identity. Jackson's retelling of *Century* in *Ramona* may question Jackson's ability to venture into certain genres as a woman, but it does not question Jackson's right as a middle-class, white woman to write at all. Rutland's authorship, on the other hand, is far more delicate in that her middle-class identity gives her certain privileges in the literary establishment, but her racial identity places restrictions on the kinds of political topics she is allowed to address in her writing. We can understand this fluctuation and leveraging of her identity better when we consider Stover's argument that, since "the intended audience for most nineteenth-century black women autobiographers was a white-female readership, these black women had to vacillate between the sometimes 'competing,' sometimes 'complementary' nature of that relationship" (Stover 38). Using Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* as an example, Stover suggests that it "might well have been Jacobs' act of establishing a complementary relationship with her readers that had an adverse effect on the general reception of her *Incidents* by nineteenth-century white-male readers" (38). This "vacillating" between "competing" and "complementary" claims is further complicated for Rutland who is trying to establish reading audiences across racial, gendered, class, and regional lines. In response to Hill's accusations that Rutland "vacillates," Rutland says that, because there is "no definition" for "Uncle Tom," and because there are so many ways to look at the topic, "To be honest I must vacillate" (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Rutland "must vacillate" under the editorial pressures to push the thesis that "any real achievement in society is the result of compromise plus determination and

individual effort" and her own political misgivings about this thesis (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Rutland understands that this is not necessarily the message America's black youth want to read. Nor is this the message she pushes in her memoir, *When We Were Colored,* which, as I have shown in the previous sections of this chapter, valued the black youth's stand against Jim Crow segregation in the South, a racialized program rooted in "compromise"—separate but equal—and placing blame on "individual effort" and "determination" rather than on systematic forms of racism. In fact, Rutland ends her memoir claiming that she would kill rather than compromise her children's lives away. What Hill sees as her manuscript's "weakness" and opening for "criticism" (Hill to Rutland, *Rutland Papers,* 1970), is in fact Rutland's moves to pluralize her writerly identity, to be okay with contradictions and inconsistencies, and to allow this all to inflect her political take on the figure of "Uncle Tom."

Unlike her memoir, *In Defense* is not telling the familiar, age-old stories of motherhood and childhood in humorous ways that allow others to relate regardless of race. Rather, writing *In Defense* taxes Rutland's own sense of identity because it is telling, sometimes for the first time, histories of black individuals, black institutions, and black communities in ways that reorient what the nation and what Rutland herself knows about black America and its struggles for equality. One of Rutland's concerns with writing *In Defense* was how to make her point without offending prominent black members of her own Sacramento community. She voices in a letter to Hill that "I am writing about people—real people, many of whom are alive and don't appreciate being called an 'Uncle Tom' and who disagree with my concept of what Uncle Tom has done" (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1969). Rutland's instinct is to change or leave out

certain names, but she still solicits Hill's advice on how to navigate this sensitive issue without losing her argumentative point. In a chapter of *In Defense* titled "Little Doors," Rutland's problem is clear. She starts the chapter off by introducing the impressive resume of a black Sacramento man who holds a number of titles including, Director of Compensatory Education, Associate Superintendent of Public Instruction , Executive Secretary of the state's Advisory Compensatory Education Commission, among many others (Rutland, "Little Doors," *Rutland Papers* 1). When discussing her manuscript with him, this man tells her that "'[y]ou've got no business defending us[…]I'm ashamed of myself'" (1). Rutland explains that "this man is ashamed that twenty years ago he rode in the back of the bus," and that he "'should have done something about it'" (2). When her children ask her "'Why did you take all that crap? No restrooms—no eating places downtown—riding in the back! How did you take it,'" Rutland thinks of "[t]his man who has done so much—is still doing so much for poor Negro children," and his shame (2). She thinks "way way back to when we were riding in the back of the bus. What did we think about" (2)? And then she comes to realize the truth, a truth neither her children nor her readers necessarily want to hear—"'I guess we didn't think about it'" (2). Rutland says she "thought about the pimples on my face[…]And my mother—concocting those delicious meals with ham hocks and greens from the garden—laughing and gay, but often pacing the floor and worrying at night about a son late from his date or her husband working late at the hotel, or the dining car, or the drug store—wherever his current job happened to be" (3). Rutland takes the romance out of the civil rights movement, and reminds the black youth of the late 1960s that their zealous demand for sociopolitical change is only possible because their parents and grandparents "did not think about it,"

but thought about survival and navigating a hostile world instead. But as "defensive" as Rutland may seem to be in this chapter, she is also grappling with her own sense of guilt that, because she did not do something, the children now feel the need to. This is the same guilt we see earlier in *When We Were Colored* when she questions how she could "have forgotten so soon" (Rutland, *When We Were,* 144). As much as the manuscript's "vacillating" stands to show the intersecting identities that influence Rutland's politics, it also stands as evidence of the hindsight with which she views her own childhood and upbringing in the American South. As she says towards the end of *When We Were Colored,* "[p]erhaps because I was born there, spent some of the happiest years of my life there, because my mother and father lie buried there—I really don't *know* why—but I love the South. Somehow, in my discussion I seem to rise to its defense" (143). As much as she wants to, Rutland struggles here to defend her South from a Western-American perspective which vilifies the South in order to draw distance between the two regions' identities, histories, and sociopolitical role in the nation. Rutland does not "*know*" how to reconcile the "happiest years of my life" in the South with the oppression and violence she also knows she experienced there. This hindsight, rather than being nostalgic or offering a set of roots to strengthen her sense of self, is disruptive to her identity and what she thought she knew about her way of life in the South of her childhood. As she becomes more politically motivated in *In Defense of Uncle Tom,* this self-reckoning also disrupts her authorial persona.

It is possible this is why Rutland tells Hill that she is "not too pleased" with the manuscript of *In Defense* either, noting that she "would rather be clever, witty, and maybe slightly sarcastic" than defensive, as Hill and the "black staff member" suggest

she is (Rutland to Hill, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). As we saw in both "Madge" and *When We Were Colored,* wit and clever sarcasm are Rutland's signature moves and this style is successful at drawing in audiences, while also transmitting a sociopolitical take on themes concerned with "the small area of everyday living" (Rutland, *When We Were* 130). But wit and sarcasm do not seem to work for Rutland in retelling the black political histories she tells in *In Defense* and this disorients Rutland's sense of her authorial identity. As a consequence of publishers who request more "context of her family" and then deride her for being "too defensive and personal," Rutland struggles to find her own voice in telling the story of "Uncle Tom." Rutland's publisher's inability to see the relationship between politics and motherhood is another iteration of the misunderstanding Rutland faced with the woman in her writing class over "Madge and the Lemon Cream Pie." Rutland's black motherhood, womanhood, and authorship faces a society that wants her to be black, but uncritically so. That is, as Rutland's classmate found it problematic for "Madge and the Lemon Cream Pie" to introduce politics into a story about mothers and children, so too did Abingdon Press take issue with the manuscript of *In Defense of Uncle Tom* for introducing the experiences of black mothers, children, and middle-class existence into politics. Rutland's failure with *In Defense* is evidence of the ways her society divorces politics from the lives of families and declares the middle-class home an a-political space. As indicated by the archive, Rutland's experience writing, revising, and communicating with publishers about *In Defense of Uncle Tom,* on which she spent at least five years of her life working but which nonetheless failed to see publication, is an exemplary example of how Rutland's writing persona was coopted by a literary

establishment that found her motherly charm a safe way to deal in topics of race and inequality.

Rutland's manuscript for *In Defense of Uncle Tom* was an extension of the project she began in her maternal memoir, *When We Were Colored: A Mother's Story. In Defense* attempts to continue the kind of "motherwork" we see Rutland preform when she encourages Elsie to recite a Dunbar poem in front of her white classmates in order to assert her right to the integrated, Western-American classroom. *In Defense* asserts Rutland's and the black community's rights to share their history and their heritage with an integrating nation and to right the record when it comes to their political fight for basic humanity and citizenship rights. The manuscript failed and proved so difficult for Rutland to write for the same reasons Elsie at first failed and found it so difficult to share her favorite black poet with her white classmates—"reading and laughing about ourselves in the confines of our own living room was quite different from displaying this bit of our past before an audience of white classmates" (Rutland, *When We Were* 105). If for Elsie her regional location in the integrated, Western-American classroom was intimidating to the histories and heritage she brought across that regional border with her, then for Rutland her attempts to elevate this history and heritage to a national level proved just as intimidating. At every step of her writing career, Rutland's content and literary form is influenced by the move she made from South to West and this influence on her writing proved relevant on a global scale as well. In the second half of the 1960s, Rutland and her family lived in Germany while her husband was working with the German military. Rutland tells of the "beautiful new house" they lived in and how it overlooked "the seven hills behind which lived Snow White in the seven valleys with the seven dwarfs.

Breathtakingly beautiful" (Rutland to Bucke, *Rutland Papers,* 1965). She writes to her editor at the time that, "Germany fascinates me in quite a different way than I expected—had always thought of it in terms of Hitler and Nazis and the concentration camps. Never of the beautiful country, the friendly people who love flowers and children" (Rutland to Bucke, *Rutland Papers,* 1965). The juxtaposition in this letter of the Snow White fairytale and the history of Hitler and Nazi Germany is jarring, but it is also a revelation Rutland experiences in relation to the way the American West understands the American South. While in Germany, Rutland found a German publisher excited to accept her memoir for German publication. In letters to this German editor at Oneken Press, Rutland confides that, "[n]o—I do not take a different attitude today from the one I took when I wrote the book [*When We Were Colored*]. You would be surprised to find that many black people still share my views—though all of us recognize that things are not as they should be" (Rutland to Oestarle, *Rutland Papers,* 1970). Although Rutland is "defensive" of her South, she is also skeptical of the West's claims to progressive racial identity for, as she realizes in Germany, the "breathtakingly beautiful" German countryside is what gave birth to both the Snow White fairytale and the world's most devastating genocide.

Conclusion
"Things had better work here:" Didion, Speechlessness, and a history of "Empty revolution"

This dissertation has argued that women writers of the American West have occupied a unique position to the nation. Whether the women of this dissertation were assumed into the nation as a consequence of U.S. imperial projects (Ruiz de Burton), arrived in the American West as immigrants (Sui Sin Far), or traveled to the West from other parts of the nation (Jackson and Rutland), their literary productions reveal a genealogy of Western-American texts written by women that challenge the nation's continuity. Ruiz de Burton and Sui Sin Far raise awareness of the histories of native Californians and the immigrants who, though ignored by dominant national narratives, helped build and sustain them. Jackson's writing disrupts notions of the West's progressivism while Rutland's memoir rejects national temporalities that relegate the American South to the nation's past and appoints the American West as the nation's future. In *The Intimacy of Four Continents,* Lisa Lowe uncovers the ways the nation fragments historical archives to manufacture the progressive narrative of the global West's moves towards liberalism and democracy. The premise of Lowe's book is to re-read national archives for what they leave out and she calls upon the scholar of history and literature to recognize their responsibility to the global impacts of those archives. Reading the women of this dissertation together for what they reveal about the American West and its relationship to other regions within the nation, as well as for their "intimacies" with global histories of colonialism and imperialism, has allowed me to argue that their literary productions stand to challenge the nation's attempts to

homogenize national identity through the erasure of certain narratives and histories that the nation nevertheless relies on for its own existence.

The consequences of such forgetting reveal themselves in Joan Didion's later works as she grapples with an American West that is no longer recognizable to her. It is fitting to end this dissertation with Didion because she resists being coopted by any one political affiliation and any one literary tradition, and this makes her "resistance" work even less clear than the other authors considered in this dissertation. Her affiliation with both 1960s California and New York social scenes position her as spokeswoman for the counterculture. But as a recent roundtable discussion on Joan Didion suggests, "Didion's writings challenge common modes of periodizing post 1945 and contemporary literature," and this has everything to do with Didion's use of "multigenre" and "intertwining of literary aesthetics, political commentary, and life writing from the 1960s to the present" (Worden & Young 581). These critics have begun to address Didion's ability to "appear as a novelist of both the left and the right, a quintessential modernist and a quintessential postmodernist," and have argued that this shifting in and out of politics, genre, and literary traditions "effectively sidelines her" in critical discussions (Steigman 598). Steigman goes so far as to suggest that "Didion's fiction is in the mode of a recovery or revision project" because "her novels have been sidelined by a consensus that holds her nonfiction as her best work by readers who have not known quite what to do with her fiction" (596-597). I find the idea of "recovering" Didion provocative and want to end this dissertation by participating in one such reading of Didion. But I suggest here another aspect of Didion that needs to be recovered is her regional identity, which infiltrates not just her earlier works such as *Run River* and, to some extent, *Play It As It*

Lays, but also her later works of the late 1970s, which criticize the United States' global interventions from a Western-American historical and cultural perspective. Reading Didion as part of a genealogy of Western-American women writers challenging national homogenization and the erasure of certain narratives and histories helps us identify the connections between Didion's writing about Western-American topics and her writing's concerns with more global topics.

I began this dissertation discussing Didion's first novel, *Run River* (1963), and the ways it documents a female relationship to the region, and I will end by suggesting that the disillusionment and political critique celebrated in Didion's later works owe themselves to the missing, fragmented, and erased histories the other women writers of this dissertation express through their novels, essays, and articles. In a 1965 autobiographical essay, "Notes from a Native Daughter," first published in *Holiday*, Didion sets out to tell "what it is like to come from a place like Sacramento" (Didion, "Notes" 172). Published only one year after Eva Rutland's *When We Were Colored: A Mother's Story,* Didion's "Notes" traces her ancestry back to the early pioneers of California and, in even more personal ways than in *Run River*, captures the overwhelming sense of lost identity in the American West. Didion writes:

> Because the land was rich, Sacramento became eventually a rich farm town, which meant houses in town, Cadillac dealers, a country club. In that gentle sleep Sacramento dreamed until perhaps 1950, when *something* happened. What happened was that Sacramento *woke* to the fact that the outside world was moving in, fast and hard. At the moment of its waking Sacramento lost, for better or for worse, its character, and that is part of what I want to tell you about (173).

In this history of Sacramento, Didion identifies that "something happened" in the 1950s, and it is this "something" happening that led to the loss of Sacramento's "character." Of

course, the "something" that Didion does not or cannot name here is Rutland and the other diverse families that are moving into the city in these mid-twentieth century decades. Didion is from one of the wealthy farm families with "houses in town," who bought from "Cadillac dealers" and frequented the "country club." What Didion cannot name then, or what is silenced by her narrative, is the disruption of that history, which she and her ancestry represent. Didion's speechlessness around mid-twentieth century changes in the American West reveals an anxiety her Western American society has in confronting the long ignored histories Ruiz de Burton, Jackson, and Sui Sin Far worked to bring to light throughout the 19th century. As authors such as Rutland and the emerging political and literary movements of the era brought these ignored histories to light in more forceful ways, Didion and her Western-American counterparts are left with no choice but to confront the violence upon which their identities and histories are built.

To see Sacramento through Didion requires a reading of what is left unwritten. It requires we read for what remains absent from the page. This is the kind of archival reading Lowe suggests we undertake to make our understanding of global histories more thorough, and it is also a literary reading practice Toni Morrison argues for in *Playing in the Dark.* Morrison suggests that a key component of twentieth-century American literature is that it must contend in some way or another with the "other," in Morrison's case, the "Africanist persona." Often times, Morrison claims, the Africanist persona is evaded in a literary work, but this "[e]vasion has fostered another, substitute language in which the issues are encoded" (Morrison 9), and that "an Africanist persona is reflexive; an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious" (17). If Lowe suggests we read the archive for what

it does not tell us, then Morrison asks us to read for what the literary text does not show us, whether that evasion is intentional or subconscious. Morrison uses this theoretical framework to critique nationally revered authors such as Ernest Hemingway. She reveals the "other" in Hemingway's expressions of anxiety, fear, and desire for or concerning the self. It is in a similar vein that I identify the absent "other" here in Didion's evasive history of Sacramento. Didion may be unsure what the "*something*" is that led to the "lost" Sacramento character, but by reading Didion as part of a genealogy of Western-American women writers, that "*something*" becomes apparent. The "outside world" Didion recognizes as "moving in, fast and hard" in the 1950s, and which led to Sacramento's "waking," are those diverse populations moving to Sacramento to fill jobs at the Aerojet factory, established in East Sacramento in 1951 or, it references those black populations that are relocated to Sacramento's McClellan Air Force Base after the integration of the Air Force in 1948, of which Rutland and her family are part. The speechlessness that causes Didion to be unable to name the "something" that woke Sacramento from "that gentle sleep" of its first century comes as a consequence of the nation's dominant narratives of Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism. This speechlessness, which we saw in *Run River* at the start of this dissertation, is pervasive throughout Didion's fiction and nonfiction alike and stands to show the long-lasting effects such nationally configured narratives have on the way individuals relate to their communities, to the nation, and to the globe. We come to recognize the extent to which Didion's individual identity is intertwined with national histories of Manifest Destiny and westward expansion and how, in these tumultuous mid-twentieth century decades, Didion is being forced to question an identity that is becoming difficult to sustain as the U.S.

replays its imperial ventures in the American West in other parts of the world in ever more violent and visible ways.

Didion's essays, novels, and memoirs show that what is truly at stake in such an identity are nationally sponsored narratives of progress, democracy, and freedom. Didion locates the American West in "a place in which a boom mentality and a sense of Chekhovian loss meet in uneasy suspension; in which the mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things had better work here, because here, beneath that immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent" (Didion, "Notes" 172). Just as Helen Hunt Jackson both borrowed upon and critiqued the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny in her travel essay, "Bits of Travel at Home," so too does Didion acknowledge the "uneasy suspension" in which the nation relies upon the American West to fulfill promises of freedom and democracy at the same time that she mourns Manifest Destiny's passing. In many ways, Didion confirms Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 "Frontier Thesis" by representing the atrophy and democratic decay that occurs as the frontier closes and Americans find themselves "where we run out of continent." Because the American West is where the continent and therefore, the frontier ends, Didion notes the "ineradicable suspicion that things had better work" in the West. That is, Didion comes face to face here with what all the other women writers in this dissertation also faced. She confronts the way her identity and her family's way of life are predicated on false histories and false promises that must be confronted "where we run out of continent." She pinpoints the "suspicion" with which narratives such as Manifest Destiny are conjured and disseminated to Americans who buy into the nation's ideals of opportunity and freedom for all as they create that opportunity and freedom through the oppression and

exclusion of racialized and gendered "others." But Didion herself places stock in these narratives because they are the very narratives keeping her own identity afloat. In addition to contributing to Didion's speechlessness, this double-bind is the source of Ruiz de Burton's contradictions, Helen Hunt Jackson's ambivalence, Sui Sin Far's rejection of identity altogether, and Rutland's politicized middle-class motherhood. As writers located in the American West, the women writers considered here are also located at that juncture between true histories and fabricated ones, and their literary productions are full of the insecurities that result as a consequence of this friction.

Like the other authors covered in this dissertation, Didion plays with genre to make sense of the American West and its competing narratives. As we saw with her first, autobiographical novel, Didion attempts to explore the Sacramento of her youth, but from the safe distance fictionalizing names, events, and encounters affords her. In her essay, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem," originally published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1967, Didion enmeshes herself in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood to expose the counterculture's flailing sense of disassociation with the nation. She declares that the youth are "less in rebellion against the society than ignorant of it, able only to feed back certain of its most publicized self-doubts, *Vietnam, Saran-Wrap, diet pills, the Bomb*" (Didion, "Slouching" 122). The youth are "ignorant," as Didion says, because they are "able only to feed back" to the nation those unsettling scripts the nation fed to them in the first place, and which Americans understand to make up their "exceptional" identity. But this is also true of the authors considered here, including Didion herself, who combat the homogenizing national narratives disseminated through the nation's literatures with the very same canvas of genres and forms used to override and subsume

their own histories and narratives. Didion recognizes that the youth's disillusionment is a consequence of their dissatisfaction with national narratives, but that their despondency is the result of having nothing else to fight back with. Didion describes them as "sixteen, fifteen, fourteen years old, younger all the time, an army of children waiting to be given the words" (123). And while she has been associated with and often held up as the pinnacle example of an American postmodern literary movement, Didion's critique of the children lacking the "words" is a critique of that very postmodern and avant-garde program. But in identifying that the "army of children" lack the right "words" to fight back, she is pinpointing the problem the other women writers in this dissertation also had. They did not have the "words" or the forms to properly express their own identities through their own cultural histories and therefore, they manipulated the dominant "words" and forms.

For instance, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" was republished in a collection of essays Didion wrote throughout the 1960s also titled, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem.* In the preface to the collection, Didion identifies "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" as "the most imperative of all these pieces to write and the only one that made me despondent after it was printed" (Didion, "Preface" xi). She further explains that she decided to write about the Haight-Ashbury because she "had been paralyzed by the conviction that writing was an irrelevant act, that the world as I had understood it no longer existed. If I was to work again at all, it would be necessary for me to come to terms with disorder" (xi-xii). Finding anxiety rather than productivity in "disorder," Didion remains "despondent" because, as she expresses it, she was "afflicted some of the time by the suspicion that nobody out there is listening," and those that were, missed the point entirely. She writes:

"it seemed to me then (perhaps because the piece was important to me) that I had never gotten a feedback so universally beside the point" (xii). As we saw with Rutland and her manuscript, *In Defense of Uncle Tom*, Didion's audience found "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" to have been "'just in time,' because 'the whole fad's dead now'" (xii). But the congratulations Didion received on the "timeliness" of the piece misses entirely the violence and disruption America's youth experience at the hands of this "fad," regardless of its being "dead now." Didion's "suspicion that nobody out there is listening," is also a "suspicion" that form has come to mean more than the content of a piece of writing and, even more problematically, that the form has become a "fad," meaning it is being replicated and disseminated in mass quantities to the detriment of what young American readers think they understand about their own society and culture. Didion's "Slouching Towards Bethlehem" initiates a commentary on the political ramifications of literature, music, and art that she continues to explore in different ways in her 1977 novel, *A Book of Common Prayer*. *A Book of Common Prayer* again attempts to draw attention to the unromantic violence the nation's youth experiences at the hand of "revolutionary" ideas but this time, Didion also explores the global consequences of U.S. regional identity. While Didion's privileged position in the American West and its impact on her analysis cannot be ignored, a novel like *A Book of Common Prayer* is concerned with the missing histories and narratives that influence a generation of Western-American youth to feel cornered enough to fight back with violence.

This complexly plotted novel begins with a wealthy San Francisco youth, Marin, joining a militant, anti-capitalist group that bombs San Francisco's Transamerica building, the West Coast's symbol of global capitalism. Marin is a fugitive throughout

the story and becomes relegated to the novel's fringes. She is, as Didion says of the youth in "Slouching," "missing" for much of the novel and a representative member of the "army of children." The novel's main focus is on Charlotte, Marin's mother, as she copes with the news that her daughter is both a domestic terrorist and "missing." Charlotte spends the majority of the novel in a Latin American country, Boca Grande, where she makes daily visits to the airport each day in between helping to bring American vaccines and birth control the country's poor, hoping to run into Marin. Her time spent there is narrated through that country's recently widowed matriarch and American expatriate, Grace Tabor. Grace describes a meeting she had with Marin in a hotel room while Marin is on the run in which she calls Marin a "lost daughter[…]who never had much use for words but had finally learned to string them together so that they sounded almost like sentences" (Didion, *A Book* 214). As Marin deplores her mother for being "on the wrong side of a 'people's revolution," Grace, who has lived through the violent rhythms of revolutions and military coups in Boca Grande as a consequence of American capitalism's destabilizing effects in other parts of the world, tries to explain that "'[t]here was no 'right side,'[…]'*There were only personalities"*" (214). Put another way, Didion writes in her 1965 essay, "On Morality," which she originally wrote at the request of *The American Scholar,* that, "I want to be quite obstinate about insisting that we have no way of knowing—beyond that fundamental loyalty to the social code—what is 'right' and what is 'wrong,' what is 'good' and what is 'evil'" (Didion, "On Morality" 162). Didion questions any narrative that poses itself as "right" or engages in a fight against "evil." By her mid-twentieth century moment, Didion understands these terms and any notion of "morality" to be so skewed by the histories justifying Manifest Destiny and the nation's

attempts to expand globally thereafter, that they no longer hold any meaning or provide any guidance to the nation's citizenry. The fictionalized retelling of 1960s San Francisco counterculture through the "missing" Marin who believes herself to be on the "'right side'" of the revolution, allows Didion to draw out the larger, global consequences of the liberal movements germinating in the West. These movements rely on notions of a Western-American progressivism and idealism that, as we saw in numerous different ways throughout this dissertation, are largely fabricated by dominant national narratives to sustain a continuous national identity without taking responsibility for its past.

The imagined relationships keeping the fabric of the national community together are undeniably frayed by Rutland's and Didion's mid-twentieth century moment and hint towards the imminent culture wars in the decades to come. But the women of this dissertation also force us to ask if the imagined national community ever existed at all. From as early as Ruiz de Burton in the 1860s, Western-American women writers and writers of color were using print capitalism as a means of pushing against the notion that the nation was somehow homogenous and continuous despite its obvious diversity and moments of historical amnesia. Sui Sin Far and Rutland even go so far as to suggest that the nation do away with its unattainable mission to homogenize and appreciate individuality and difference instead of invalidating ethnic and gendered identities or forcing them to conform to the nation's terms. And from their privileged position as white, upper-middle-class, women writers, Jackson and Didion still engage with the eternal struggle of breaking with a social system that affords them a degree of power in order to diversify that power by delivering it into more hands and opening it up to more voices. As this dissertation has shown, Western-American progressivism, which has

continued to represent the nation's liberal left and to locate its concentrated power in the American West to our contemporary times, has failed to account for its own origins at the nexus of intersecting regional histories of slavery, Indigenous dispossession and genocide, and settler-colonialism. As a political program that seeks to expand democratic accountability, American progressivism has remained out of touch with its own sense of "liberal forgetting," to use Lisa Lowe's phrasing (Lowe 39). The women writers considered in this dissertation speak from these forgotten places to remind us of these histories and, as Rutland says, of the ways we have "forgotten so soon."

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