

8-2022

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE, GENDER, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN LITERATURE AND FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF "THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED DOGS" & WESTWARD THE WOMEN

Stephanie Fishleigh

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), and the [Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fishleigh, Stephanie, "CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE, GENDER, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN LITERATURE AND FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF "THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED DOGS" & WESTWARD THE WOMEN" (2022). *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. 1529.
<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1529>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE, GENDER, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN
LITERATURE AND FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF "THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED
DOGS" & *WESTWARD THE WOMEN*

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Literature

by
Stephanie Marie Fishleigh
August 2022

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE, GENDER, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN
LITERATURE AND FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF "THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED
DOGS" & *WESTWARD THE WOMEN*

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Stephanie Marie Fishleigh

August 2022

Approved by:

Yumi Pak, Committee Chair, English

Robert Kyriakos Smith, Committee Member

© 2022 Stephanie Marie Fishleigh

ABSTRACT

Often portrayed as static, and neutral, “space,” as it is used in this paper, refers to a literary conception, one which encompasses a sphere of locations as well as settings of events, characters, and objects within a literary narrative. Much to our detriment, humans are often compelled to codify and compartmentalize the world around us, using perceived differences as our epistemological touchstone. This phenomenon extends even to our relationship to space. In examining the interplay between space, geographies, genre, and gender, using two objects of analysis, this paper seeks to further the current scholarship on how gender ideology informs our perception of space and, conversely, how space structures our perception of gender, establishing how spatialization not only dictates access, movement, and status within a community but also how we perceive those who must negotiate these geographies

I argue that spaces are neither static nor neutral but are instead constructs continuously being formed via our perceptions and interactions with them. In fact, by juxtaposing my two objects of analysis, Harlon Ellison’s short story “The Whimper of Whipped Dogs,” and the film *Westward the Women* (1951), and how they present two different forms of space—the western frontier versus the urban city—I aim to illustrate the arbitrariness of these spatial constructions. Instead of being diametrically opposite constructions, two different spaces presented in different texts and genres can be unified and shaped based on how we perceive them in our minds. And in demonstrating the arbitrariness of spatial construction,

I intend to illustrate the harm that the belief in the naturalized and neutral constructions of space can have in larger societal terms.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my partner Peter, without whom this paper would have likely been possible, but whose presence and contribution would have been impossible to have gone without.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	III
CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE, GENDER, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN LITERATURE AND FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF "THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED DOGS" & <i>WESTWARD THE WOMEN</i>	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	4
"THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED DOGS": THE URBAN SPACE AND GENDER	15
<i>WESTWARD THE WOMEN</i> : THE FRONTIER SPACE AND GENDER ..	26
CONCLUSION & SYNTHESIS: WHAT DO CONCEPTIONS OF GENDER, SPACE, AND MOVEMENT MEAN FOR SOCIETY AND CULTURE.....	49
REFERENCES	57

CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE, GENDER, AND MOVEMENT WITHIN
LITERATURE AND FILM: AN ANALYSIS OF "THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED
DOGS" & *WESTWARD THE WOMEN*

Often portrayed as static and neutral, "space," as it is used in this paper, refers to a literary conception, one which encompasses a sphere of locations as well as settings of events, characters, and objects within a literary narrative. Much to our detriment, humans are often compelled to codify and compartmentalize the world around us, using perceived differences as our epistemological touchstone. This phenomenon extends even to our relationship to space. In examining the interplay between space, geographies, genre, and gender, using two objects of analysis this paper seeks to further the current scholarship on how gender ideology informs our perception of space and, conversely, how space structures our perception of gender, establishing how spatialization not only dictates access, movement, and status within a community but also how we perceive those who must negotiate these geographies.

I argue that spaces are neither static nor neutral, and are, in fact, constructs continuously being formed via our perceptions and interactions with them. In fact, by juxtaposing my two objects of analysis, Harlon Ellison's short story "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs," and the film *Westward the Women* (1951), and how they present two different forms of space—the western frontier versus the urban city—I aim to illustrate the arbitrariness of these spatial

constructions. Instead of being diametrically opposite constructions, two different spaces presented in different texts and genres can be unified and shaped based on how we perceive them in our minds. And in demonstrating the arbitrariness of spatial construction, I intend to illustrate the harm that the belief in the static and neutral constructions of space can have in larger societal terms.

The trajectory of this paper is such that I will begin by introducing my two objects of analysis with a brief plot summary of each. I afterward present a review of scholars who have contributed to relevant conversations on space, gender, and gender geographies as they pertain to this paper. Then, by employing a close textual analysis of my texts, I will develop my arguments on these topics. I will conclude this paper by examining the consequences of space, gender, and gender geographies as naturalized and neutral within the larger context of society.

My first object of analysis is Harlon Ellison's short story, "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs," originally published in the 1973 anthology *Bad Moon Rising: An Anthology of Political Forebodings*. Ellison's text falls within the genre of literary horror and is an examination of the violent experiences of his main character, a young choreologist named Beth, who is newly transplanted to New York City from an upstate all-girls university at the beginnings of the Women's Liberation Movement. The story begins with Beth and other residents of her apartment building witnessing a young woman's murder. No one calls the authorities but instead anonymously views the spectacle of the crime. Ellison based this story

on the events of the Kitty Genovese murder that took place in New York in 1964. After this event, Beth becomes involved in a toxic relationship – not only with a suitor but with the masculinized city itself, doing so with the hope of becoming a true member of the city, to belong in the urban space. Central to this text is the concept of movement and belonging in space, and the role that gender has in contributing to this sense of belonging.

My second object of analysis is the film *Westward the Women* (1951) which is referenced early in Ellison's short story. William A. Wellman's Western features the story of a caravan of mail-order brides who must adapt to the frontier space to survive their journey from Chicago to California in 1851. This film is unique in its offering up of counternarratives to the typical Western genre, and as such has been said to be, by some film critics, one of the earliest examples of the sub-genre of the revisionist Western (sometimes also referred to as the anti-Western). The Western film is often viewed as a genre that emphasizes the freedom of action found in rugged individualism. This cinematic tradition evolved from the traditionally nostalgic view of American mythmaking into more complex Western themes that represented more contemporary political and cultural preoccupations.¹ *Westward the Women* is considered one of the earliest examples of Western films to contain elements that stretched the parameters of the genre in intriguing and unique ways. The film features Roy Whitman (portrayed by John

¹ Taken from the introduction to the book, *Ride, Boldly Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*, by Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr, pages 1-8.

McIntire), as a well-established entrepreneur who hires seasoned wagon master Buck Wyatt (Robert Taylor) to lead this caravan. Buck accompanies Whitman to Chicago looking to “recruit” at least 130 women who will become mail-order brides for the men and workers of Whitman’s valley. Interestingly, according to the film’s original tagline, Buck is charged with turning these women into “men” (Eyman, 2012). This notion that these women must be *masculinized* to survive in the frontier space is what originally drew me to read this film against the short story in which it was originally referenced.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I first began this project after taking a course on genre writing in the first year of my bachelor’s program. During that course, I read Ellison’s short story and I was struck by Ellison’s construction of a personified version of New York City. Not only was the city personified but it was also masculinely constructed. I had never before encountered a construction of space that felt more unreal while also recognizing that it was a real place. I knew that this was an invented New York that was unique to the story, but also one that existed in reality. Much like a tourist to a new city, I sought to ground myself in the reality of this space. I looked up various places, the restaurants, the discos, and the streets that were all referred to by name in Ellison’s text, including the film *Westward the Women* that is referenced there. I wanted to immerse myself in the reality of this space. And I found that they were all non-fictional places and streets, but they were *also* fictional due to the context of being in a fictional story. These sites were a part of

a reality that seemed imagined, constructed mentally and physically, by the way the space was viewed by the characters themselves. It was this thought that first began this project. How can a space be both physically and mentally constructed? What are the results of this construction of space? And how does it affect movement for those that must traverse this space?

I believe that there exists a deep entanglement between our reality and our imagination in spatial construction. Reality and our imaginations are viewed as being separate because the concrete and the abstract are portrayed as opposites. But I do not believe this to be the case, especially when it comes to our mental formations. I believe that everything we experience is a form of reality, be it in the form of our thoughts and imaginations or a more tangible form of objects we can interact with, or a space we can occupy.

French philosopher Michel Foucault speaks to a broad epistemological skepticism and an acute awareness of the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power in the form of self-sustaining hegemonic frameworks. My argument is informed by Foucault's ideas about space and reality, particularly the distinction he draws between our mental perceptions of reality and the physical manifestations of that reality in society and culture. In other words, just as I view reality as being both mentally and physically experienced and constructed, Foucault views physical space as reflective of psychic or mental space. After all, we do not exist in a kind of void, or vacuum. Our notions of space reach beyond that of our temporal and geographic

understandings of space² to a mentally formulated conception of space that weaves together the complicated cultural and ideological foundations of space. We must shape our reality according to how we mentally project that reality ought to be. And it is there in that term, “ought,” that ideology is conceived. Not only is this project meant to be an exploration of how mental formation informs spatial construction, but also an exploration of how ideology is central to how space, gender, and reality are constructed and produced.

I focus on how space is shaped by our mental formations as they are influenced by media due to how we perceive the world around us--how we develop our ideology-- is often influenced by, and perpetuated by, the media works we consume daily. If we are what we eat, then media is the “food” we consume most. Media is something we internalize and consider deeply, something that connects to us on deep emotional levels, even when we are unaware of the impact that it has on each of us and how we see the world around us. After all, our knowledge formation is based on what we see and experience. Through media, we can make many of these connections, see things we have never seen, and experience things we have never before experienced. Therefore, to our imagination, what is real and what is imagined are almost indistinguishable.

² Partially taken from, “Letting Go our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of the American Frontier,” by Annette Kolodny, pages 1-18.

Literature as a form of media is deeply evocative in the way that it uses language to form our mental formations and experience of a narrative. Qingwei Zhu and Long Shi have written several papers on the topic of spaces within literature and media. For Zhu and Shi representation is the key to the way that our imagination and literature are linked. They pin-point representation as connected to meaning and thought production (Zhu & Shi 227). Film, like literature, is connected to representation, and thus ideology. I argue that although as forms of media, their delivery differs—one focused on language, the other on visuals and sounds—both film and literature are sources of media that deeply influence the way we construct our mental formations and thus affect how we feel the world around us should be constructed. Ideology is formed out of what we experience, and media in all its forms are a part of that.

In examining Wellman's film, as well as examining the Western film genre, I looked to the audio commentary by film historian Scott Eyman from the DVD version of *Westward the Women*. Eyman's insights provided not only an understanding of the Western genre but also the specific types of film techniques that were utilized in this object as a cinematic construction. As I sought greater insight into the film itself as well as film criticism in general, I found the work of Laura Mulvey and Ben Sachs to be especially helpful. Mulvey clarified for me how visual aspects of film can possess both feminine and masculine connotations, specifically in her theories behind film shots being reflective of what she calls a gaze and the way that these gazes create an object/ subject

relationship. I used much of Mulvey's insights in the formation of my view of how the idea of seeing and being seen behaves within the dynamics of the film and Ellison's text. In my mind seeing and being seen have a great deal to do with power and with judgment. Taken together, I felt that in the concept of seeing in both the film and text, there is an implication of a type of power dynamic, in the way that that which is being *seen* can be viewed as objectified, as being judged, even consumed, whereas the individual in a position to see is empowered, even emboldened by their ability to see and surveil another. Both of these play into how gender is read and depicted in different ways in both objects.

Sachs' exploration of the film's thematic focus on gender politics in the Old West speaks to some of the ways that gender is constructed and understood within film media, specifically within the traditional Western genre, something Eyman also touches upon. In my viewing of the film, meant to gain insight into why it was included in Ellison's text in the first place, I found it to be unlike any other Western film I had previously seen. What made the film unique in my mind, especially when it is read against Ellison's text, is how it constructs space and how gender can and cannot function within it. Both Sachs and Eyman speak to a view of *Westward the Women* as being read as an emblematic exploration of the main issues surrounding gender geographies, specifically as they operate within the Western film and the frontier space. Both found that major shifts in gender ideology are influenced by social and cultural conventions, but that *Westward the*

Women consistently challenges the monolithic and immobile construction of these conventions.

When reading Eyman and Sach's view of the western space against Abraham Akkerman, Liz Bondi, Linda Peake, and Petra Doan's views of the urban space, the issue of gender and space is consistently viewed as inseparable no matter the difference in space, genre, and media. I argue that this idea of gender and space as being inseparable is largely due to the role of media and ideology in our mental formations of space and gender. Foucault similarly argues that mental formations of spatial construction and reality are related to ideology, while ideology is tied to media. Zhu and Shi point to literature as being the key form of media that informs and influences spatial construction, but I argue that film is just as prevalent as a form of media. This argument can also be seen in Mulvey's theories on film and gender as well.

Be it in film or literature, media, or academic conversations, there seems to be an overall trend in the belief that there is a "natural" link between space and gender. Akkerman³ proposes a view of space and gender as being directly linked rather than independent of each other due to his views of gender and space that are largely informed by a westernized literary canon. This canon presents a view

³ Akkerman views infrastructural concerns, such as city planning, as they are developed in society as being done so via a mutual feedback loop. This feedback loop functions in such a way, that our imaginations, fueled by the media we consume, serves as a visualization for what we eventually build around us and live in, reaffirming our imaginations (229). Akkerman posits that the human imagination is responsible for the gendering of space, and that spaces such as the urban are linked to the psychic concept of masculinity almost as though this process occurs *outside* ideology.

of the urban space as being linked to production and commerce, just as Zhu and Shi found, but also links this commerce to masculinity. I find this traditional construction of gender unproductive as well as limiting. This essentialized western way of gender construction as being *only* stable, natural, non-intersectional, and monolithic does not reflect the realities that are found in the contemporary views of the world today, nor in the texts that I study as part of this project. His thoughts illustrate not just the way that media informs our mental formations of space and gender but how much ideology plays a role in this construction of space and gender, cementing for me the importance of exploring the relationship between space and gender further.

Akkerman is not alone in his linking of gender and space. Liz Bondi's views on gender distinctions within the urban space are both similar to Akkerman's and very different. Bondi argues, like Akkerman, that the urban is a space that is divided between the masculinized and the feminized, distinctive from Zhu and Shi who focused more on the idea of linking the urban to production, with Akkerman extending this argument by linking production to the masculine. Bondi argues that the difference between masculine spaces and feminine spaces mirrors the divisions made between the feminine and masculine *understandings* of the world. For Bondi, not only is space constructed in terms of gender but the very way the world itself is constructed is based on gender terms. My issue with this view is it also presents a very narrow view of gender, one that must be viewed as being set in terms of binary opposition, with both Akkerman

and Bondi setting the masculine and the feminine *against* one another in terms of mental constructions. But problems arise when gender is understood in oppositional terms. In both my objects of analysis, we see the issues with viewing male and female genders as conceptually opposed to each other and monolithically constructed. This opposition creates tension, even conflict within both my texts, affecting how space is mentally constructed according to the characters, but also affecting how gender and gender movement are negotiated in both texts.

For example, in both texts, there is a sense of belonging or unbelonging that is constructed along racial, national, and socio-economic lines of gender, with certain characters finding it easier or harder to negotiate and traverse geographies of movement within space based on these concepts and how they are contextualized and naturalized by space. Doan's view of space, gender, and gender movement comes from a place of examining how this oppositional positioning of gender contributes to a sense of conflict between the feminine and the masculine constructions of gender. This is similar to Peake's arguments that those that exhibit features that can be interpreted as being either feminine or masculine and their ambiguity affects how others perceive how they fit into a given space. Thus danger, fear, and safety all become issues that must be considered in traversing gender geographies, or from the exhibiting of ambiguously feminized and masculinized characteristics or gender performances

according to not only my objects of analysis but also according to several of the scholars I have focused on as part of this project.

Doan explores how fear and safety factors into the urban cityscape via her insights as a transgender woman. In looking into how individuals of all genders must negotiate conceptual space, such as the public urban space and the private space, Doan inhabits a unique positionality on this issue because, as a trans woman, she is vulnerable to numerous forms of confrontation and psychic and emotional violence in public spaces. This mirrors the manifestations of aggression and abuse that the main character of Ellison's story experiences as another figure that troubles the intersection of gender and spatial theory, as well as the violence and judgment received by the women of *Westward the Women*. Akkerman and Foucault both identify urban spaces as sites where danger lurks. But the source of this danger is noted as belonging to varying factors according to scholars when it comes to space and gender.

Like Bondi and Doan, feminist geographer Linda Peake identifies the source of urban danger as being due to the inherent tension between the feminine and the masculine. Peake's theories and her field of Anglo-American feminist urban geography⁴ emerged at the same time that the Ellison text is set, the 1970s, and serves as a temporally grounding voice on the topic of shifts in

⁴ Urban geography concerns itself primarily with the ways in which cities and towns are constructed, governed, and experienced. Peake argues that though cities are classified as sites of production, just as Akkerman argues, they are also sites where many different communities live. Peake argues that the city is less a site of production but *reproduction*, as in reproducing the labor that takes part in production, and as such this space and its relationship to gender should be viewed differently.

gender and gender movement, especially in light of the cultural and political aspects of Ellison's story as it was perceived by the larger society at the time the text was first written and published. Peake speaks to the way that at the time Ellison's text takes place ideas of space and gender were being challenged as part of the counter-cultural revolution, and this challenge created very real and very dangerous situations.

I argue that an alternative source of this danger is based on the consequences of the naturalizing construction of both space and gender. In my close textual analysis of both my objects, I found that there appeared to be a problematic implication of naturalization in the mental constructions of space and gender that created conflict, tension, and sometimes danger. There was something in space and gender and its mental constructions that often lent itself to this naturalistic language displayed by the characters in both texts. Both narratives begin with the notion that the way space and gender operate is a given, something that is taken for granted and is not questioned but simply *is* until it is proven otherwise.

In service of exploring this naturalizing language, I turn to Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods who speak to this phenomenon and the role it plays in identity politics and often by implication how concepts like gender are formed mentally. McKittrick and Woods speak to an arbitrary evocation of "nature" and neutrality within the scope of society, especially in the language of how we view gender, race, space, and movement. Their work informs my development of the

idea that space, be it the Western frontier or the urban environment, is often portrayed as an entity that must be codified and controlled due to its association with nature. In other words, the natural must be civilized and therefore conquered. Within the conceptions of space and gender, there appears to be the desire for order reflected in the idea of “man versus nature.” Because once space has been racialized and/or gendered ideologically it is then *allowed* to be conquered. This concept is often the justification made to control and overcome, not only these “naturalized” environments but to also control the movement and behavior of individuals.

Lastly, Jenny Burman’s writings and arguments helped to develop my own as to the larger implications of this naturalized language that is used in spatial construction, helping me to shape my view of how this naturalizing language in genre is similarly problematic. Burman’s examination of the naturalized language that those in authority, for example, the state, often employ to justify and enforce the movements and behaviors of their subjects illustrates how there are parallels of this language seen in both my primary texts. Burman’s evidence of gendered, racialized, and classist terminology focuses on the embodied terms with which figures of authority codify others to control them. These terms can be seen in both texts. Ways that others classify, and label others based on prescriptive language stereotypes communities based on their gender, their race, their lifestyles, etc. to control where communities and individuals can and cannot be allowed to traverse space. Burman emphasizes the role of utility in defining the

roles individuals, and indeed whole communities can fulfill, arguing that this language indicates that according to the state, individuals only have so much value as they might contribute to means of production within society and culture⁵. I also see the worrying consequences of naturalizing spatial and gender construction, specifically in terms of utility, where it can continue to perpetuate harmful and limiting views of communities and create lasting effects on society at large.

“THE WHIMPER OF WHIPPED DOGS”: THE URBAN SPACE AND GENDER

Harlan Ellison is often described as a popular fantasist and social commentator. My research saw many mentions of his contentious nature but also of the passion he had for writing and the admiration he received for his works in Sci-Fi and Fantasy. This particular short story was one that he was said to have warned his readers not to read in one sitting⁶. Ellison’s specific approach to horror, which is exemplified in this text, features the author’s preoccupation with what he referred to as everyday horrors, meant to “reawaken us, and reconnect us to...[that] which we have become desensitized” (Ellison 118). It is said that this particular piece “was inspired by the notorious murder of Catherine ‘Kitty’ Genovese in New York’s Kew Garden neighborhood in central Queens on March 13, 1964. Genovese, a 28-year-old bar manager, was on her way home at about

⁵ This is not unlike Peake’s on arguments involving a Marxist view of spatial construction and gender.

⁶ This is taken from the commentary section that reviews this particular piece by Ellison. It appears as part of Ellison’s now seemingly abandoned website, <http://harlanellison.com/review/deathbird.htm>. This website is unique in that it is one of the only I found that Ellison himself “approved of.”

3:00 a.m. when a man attacked and stabbed her several times” (Loftus, <http://harlanellison.com/review/deathbird.htm>). In the text there is an almost immediate depiction of violence, hostility, and anger directed at female characters as they enter the urban space. It is also in this text that there appears to be a naturalized expectation for violence to be a part of the urban city space—that violence is a part of what Akkerman refers to as, urban decay--the sociological concept that a “non-functioning” city falls into a state of criminality and disrepair over time. This violence being set against a woman can be read as inevitable by Akkerman, who argues that this process is a “female aligned concept, directly opposed to the energies of the male [city] space and its need to exact control and order onto an otherwise chaotic ‘natural’ universe” (Akkerman 238-240). But this victim-blaming is challenged by Ellison’s text where the first event of the story is that of a young woman being murdered—and the perverse pleasure *another woman* gets in witnessing this murder. The text continually decenters the role of witness—of seeing and being seen. This exploration of spectacle has a unique place in Ellison’s text. There is an immediate juxtaposition of gender-specific imagery and of the murder that takes place at the beginning of the writing: “On the night after the day she had stained the louvered window shutters of her new apartment on East 52nd Street, Beth saw a woman slowly and hideously knifed to death in the courtyard of her building” (Ellison 118). We are presented with the domestic image of a private space--Beth’s apartment--that she has attempted to individualize and feminize, via the act of

painting, giving her apartment a “feminine touch.” Here, the private space is confronted with the public reality of the act of murder, a murder that is sexualized by the image of a knife and thus to the act of penetration. This specific violence carries an implication of invasion and violation associated not only with rape but also with voyeurism—the same act of seeing that Beth takes part in. There is something in Beth’s participation in voyeurism that implies what is often viewed as conventionally feminine—the indirectness and passivity of Beth’s violation of the victim in her voyeurism, her indirect pleasure of the violence. All of this spatiality serves to separate Beth from her actions.

The murder is explicitly made a sexualized act, implying that this clash is as much a manifestation of the conflict between the masculinized space and the feminized space as it is a clash between the public space and the private space within the text. Several times via sexualized language the victim, Leona Ciarelli, is described as struggling actively against her attacker. The attack seems to trouble the victim’s signs of femininity through the description of her manner of attack, where the attacker’s phallic knife is described as “enormous” (Ellison 119), and where he is left “soaked...driving him more berserk,” (119) and her being slashed just below her “breasts” (119), a sign of her femininity, which is attacked. Leona is said to throw her head back, which can convey the ecstasy of a sex act or the terror of being assaulted. Leona’s appearance is noted as being neutralized by the act of violence, making it “impossible to tell if she was pretty: terror had contorted her features and her mouth was a twisted black slash” (119).

This is a form of objectification, where the unique features of a face distinguishing the individual are obstructed by violence. Leona finally expires upon a flowerbed, a last image of femininity, on her knees before her attacker, as if to please him or in submission and domestication. Beth indicates a link between herself and Leona by her comment, “She [Beth] could feel the blade sliding into her own body” (120). Leona's murder links sexuality with aggression – to power and domination. The attacker dominates Leona, ergo the masculine dominates the feminine, ergo the public space of the city dominates the private space of the city.

This social construction of gender, the male dominating the female, can be seen in the manner in which Beth *reacts* to this murder. The murder itself is depicted as being likened to a theatrical or film production, with Beth comparing her view of the murder as being a “sort of marvelous line of observation Napoleon had sought when he caused to have constructed at the *Comédie-Française* Theaters, a curtained box at the rear, so he could watch the audience as well as the stage” (Ellison 118). The pleasure of this seeing and its feminine alignment can be connected to Mulvey's writings on film and her interpretation of gazes, their role, and the female form. In the text, the act of looking rather than being looked at reflects the power of surveillance. Beth witnesses the murder from a position of safety and power. This positions her as temporally possessing a masculinized gaze – of both the physical murder of Leona and the psychic murder she experiences vicariously. This spatial distance allows this experience

to be satisfying, almost pleasurable. Beth is described in the text as *enjoying* the experience in some way, at least tangentially through the act of voyeurism: “Breathing deeply. Drawing some sustenance from the grisly scene below. An exhalation of sound, deep, deep, as though from caverns beneath the earth. Flesh pale and moist” (120). The term “sustenance” denotes fulfillment. Beth’s flesh is described as being in a sexual state of arousal, as seen in the repetition of the word, “deep” alluding to penetration and “moist,” to a state of heightened sexual sensitivity. Beth experiences pleasure after witnessing the murder as if it were a type of theatrical production or film. According to Mulvey, one of the things that cinema offers is the pleasure of observing a private world (Mulvey 835-836). The murder itself troubles the lines separating the public and the private.

Directly after referring to this dramatic view Beth recalls that the last film she had watched that night had been *Westward the Women*, indicating a subconscious connection in her mind between the murder and the theatrical elements of the film. It was this close linkage between this idea of seeing and being seen that first sparked my interest in investigating this film further to gain some insight into how this relationship might function within the Ellison text. According to Mulvey, the cinema has the effect of troubling the line between subject and object and the idea that women also passively bear a male’s active gaze. (Mulvey 837). Here, we see it is the shift of the object—the young woman being murdered—to the subject, Beth, who feels empowered by her witnessing of

this violence. It affirms that the object of that violence is a woman other than herself. This moment in the text complicates the idea of the binary between masculine and feminine to an even higher level. In Beth's pleasure at seeing another woman be attacked (who is not herself) she is also simultaneously placing herself in the position of the victim. She is being vicariously murdered. This duality is something that troubles Beth's position as being either the "man" or the "woman" in this attack. She is separate from the event and yet connected at once. She occupies a third space in this event, a space I contend is related to the spectacle of the event but also Beth's mental formations of the event. It is arguable that Beth views this murder as both real but also imaginary, a form of media she is consuming like film or literature. It is something that she is in a position to consume and therefore judge. This concept of seeing is also linked to the concept of judgment. When she realizes that every one of her neighbors had seen what she had seen and done as she had done, she feels that it is suddenly that *she* is being looked at (Ellison 121)—or in other words, Beth is being judged.

This realization extends the idea of seeing and being seen into an issue of seeing and being seen in a public space versus a private space. In the courtyard, in the urban space, Leona Ciarelli, the young murder victim is *allowed* to be seen, and in the privacy of her apartment, Beth is *allowed* to see. In other words, this murder being seen blurs the clear lines of delineation that Beth has psychically created in her mind. To Beth, "out there is danger, in here there is

safety.” Beth’s seeing has erased her ignorance of the unknown danger that exists to women in the urban city space.

This event signals a crisis in Beth—she becomes unmoored in her ability to exist and move within the city space safely now that she has been confronted with this new awareness of violence. Beth questions her right to *be* in this space. After the murder, Beth is distracted and cannot focus on her work creating choreography charts. She decides to call out at work, but the owner, Guzman, is at first irate with her lack of progress. After she explains what happened, “his voice was several octaves lower, and he spoke more slowly” (Ellison 122). Beth describes him as seeming “distant” and pitying (122). Beth immediately afterward meets a character that she views as embodying New York: Ray Gleeson. Ray vocalizes the idea that to be in a space, one must be *of* that space, not just seen in that space, not just moving within and across it—one must *belong* there. This idea of movement and violence is a part of this spatialization. Of living in New York City, Ray argues that he is the way he is, being cruel, misogynistic, and selfish *because* he is a New Yorker: “I’m like this because I’m a New Yorker, baby. Because I live in this f[-]king city every day...because I’ve lived in this great big snapping dog of a city all my life and I’m mad as a mudfly, for chrissakes!” (Ellison 125). For Ray, *he* is not responsible for his actions—the city is. His behavior is but a *natural* by-product of the space he occupies.

According to Ray, there has been a wave of women entering the city recently— “hopping in like grasshoppers, ready to revolutionize the publishing

industry” (Ellison 123). Ray’s condescending tone implies that subconsciously he is threatened, expressing a specifically territorial fear of this “invasion” that aligns with his idea of the conventions of urban space. Ray’s behaviors call back to Mulvey’s views of femininity as being both repellant and desirable to the male gaze, desirable for the act of procreation but repellant because the female form’s lack of phallus speaks to castration (Mulvey 833). Ray desires Beth but is also repelled by her, expressing disgust for the prescribed femineity she embodies. Bondi points to the sense of social destabilization that many associated with the counter-culture revolutions of the 1960s as a factor in this depiction of the urban city in the 1970s as being a site of gender, racial, and cultural clashes. According to Peake, there exists a subtly alluded to perception of destabilization of *any* urban space. Peake points to a type of ‘invasion’ of masculine dominant discourses and power by the feminine presence within the city space, (returning us to the tension created between gender lines), that took place during the 1970s at the onset of the women's liberation movement, which created or perhaps propagated, a sense of resentment or a feeling of being threatened. This feeling of being threatened, of territoriality, is linked to the concept of conquest, and the dialectic of us versus them.

Beth is one example of a figure that is depicted as needing to adapt to move within and across a gendered space such as the masculinized city, where “gender strongly influences the ways that spaces are perceived and the kinds of activities that are possible, acceptable. Or even safe within them” (Doan 649).

Ellison's text, with its murder in the opening scene and the repeated instances of aggression Beth must contend with implies that not only is the city space masculine in this text, but also that the presence of women in this space is unsafe.

Due to this sense of danger, Beth is both repelled and attracted to the violence as she understands it as being a *part* of the city—that the city's violence is specifically masculine violence in Beth's mind, and that it is violence she wishes to embrace to empower herself is all the more telling in a troubling depiction of power dynamics between the masculinized and feminized as it is understood in the context of the story and its depiction of the urban space. For Beth, selfishness, aggression, and even violence are not simply states of being or choices one makes—they are masculinized qualities and are inextricably tied to the urban space. Beth pursues a decidedly abusive relationship with Ray, even after he repeatedly demeans her and treats her poorly, even after he attempts to rape her. This rape further illustrates the tension between the notion of public and private, especially in the urban city space, that a domestic rape, read as a private event, is treated far differently than rape by a stranger, which is read as a public event. The abusive qualities of these behaviors point to a troubling view of masculinization, where violence, control, misogyny, and abuse are naturalized and are therefore excusable. Ray, in many ways, serves to vocalize and personify the superficial preconceptions of space and the city space according to Beth, based on her inexperience and her status as a recent

transplant to the city. He derides the fact that she comes from a sheltered and privileged background at an upstate all-girls college, concluding she must have taken only “electives,” emphasizing the association of femininity with naiveté and passivity, whereas masculinity is aligned with experience and activity in this assumption. Here we can see a bit of the literary conventions surrounding space and gender expressed by Akkerman in Ellison, as upstate New York is often associated with the rural, and thereby with nature. It is as though Beth is meant to personify this idea of gender conventions of the literary rural just as Ray is linked to the literary urban. Ray insinuates that Beth's behaviors should be servile, frivolous, and unhappy because these are the essentialized conventions of her gender. At a dinner party they attend together he states, “like all Bennington ladies...she is enjoying herself most by not enjoying herself at all. It's a trait of the anal retentive. Being here in some else's apartment, she can't empty ashtrays...” (Ellison 124). In this quote we see that Ray views Beth in a stereotyped way, lumping her in with all other women from her college, dehumanizing her, and subjecting her to narrow parameters. But Beth is also guilty of this logic, in her belief of Ray's adamant credence that to survive in the city, one must behave in a particular way. Ray effectively takes away Beth's voice, her ability to come to her own conclusions on how to move and exist within a city, seen in Ray's answering for Beth, taking her voice, and thus individuality and her ability to have her own experiences of the city outside of his influence.

When this abusive relationship ends, the text seems to depict Beth as embracing the apathy Ray insisted is necessary to survive, where each time something goes wrong, as when a taxi ignores her, and a lunch lady is rude to her, *she* is said to respond to the city's overtures. This is ironic in the context of the story—for it is the *city* that is responding. In other words, this apathy personifies the city, and Beth's interactions, her movements, and behavior within this space, function much like Beth's relationship with Ray—she effectively projects her abusive relationship with Ray onto her mental formation of the city.

In Beth's mind, if she is expected to shift from the private female space of her previous experiences in upstate suburban New York into the public male space of Manhattan, Beth must forgo what she believes to be traditional feminine qualities: passivity, empathy, and communal considerations. Beth decides to embrace this view of space, and by embracing this notion, "then, closing the window, she went to give herself, to involve herself in this city to which she had brought her ordered life. And the city responded to her overtures" (Ellison 126). This evocation of Beth's life being "ordered" *before* her move into the urban space is ironic, as by employing the logic of gendered spaces her life should have been in disorder when she lived in the rural natural setting of her alma mater and became ordered as she moved into what is supposedly the civilized masculine domain. Beth finds the opposite to be true, that the city is a site of danger and chaos for her. In this quote we see that Beth has moved from one toxic relationship to another, moving from one masculine figure to another

personified masculinized space, engaging in a kind of courtship that adds a dimension of romanticization to this depiction of space. Each time Beth is cat-called, or when she screams at a waitress in a diner or is eventually confronted by a burglar and is attacked, there appears the repeated refrain, “*the city responded to her overtures.*” Each time Beth tries to reshape space, with her “overtures,” the city—the space—responds negatively. This evocation of “overtures” is repeated in the text denoting its significance but is also indicative of the performativity of space in general, especially within the context of specific genres. Foucault argued that the concepts we associate with space shape how we perceive that space, and our perceptions are always being shaped by ideology. He observed that “The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side” (22). In any given space, how we understand it is constantly being shaped by our thinking, our mental formations, and behaviors within it. Media is always affecting these mental formations whether we are aware of it or not.

WESTWARD THE WOMEN: THE FRONTIER SPACE AND GENDER

The film *Westward the Women* was originally conceived by Frank Capra to direct himself. He instead sold the idea to his neighbor director William A. Wellman. Wellman was well-known, not so much for Western films, but for adventure and action films. His most well-known film is *The Public Enemy* (1931). There are seldom more conventional depictions of gender, and gender

performativity than in the Western film. As Eyman notes, Western films are often known for hermetic conventions--not only in their plots, and settings, but also in their stock events and characters (Eyman, 2012). When an audience goes into a Western film, there are certain conventions that they expect to encounter—just as a reader opens a book written in a specific genre. Audiences expect to see “tough” cowboys, wide stretches of desert or plains, violent “Indians,” and “good” women (Eyman, 2012). All of these conventions are a part of our collective mental formations of the frontier space and the Western film genre. According to Sachs, Western films feature the idea that gender and survival are tied together—especially within the film *Westward the Women*. Only men are viewed as *belonging* on the frontier, something characters adamantly argue at the beginning of the film. Both Sachs and Eyman note that female characters are seldomly central to the Western film’s narrative and are often cast in supporting roles, most often being depicted as being either the saintly rancher’s wife or the pious schoolteacher or the fallen woman acting as a saloon or dance-hall performer.

However, *Westward the Women* features many moments, as well as characters, which subvert the dialectical treatment of women-identifying characters and their roles within the Western genre and the frontier space, including depictions of women who, instead of operating solely within traditionally feminized roles, portray feminized characters in *masculinized* forms of gender performativity. These masculinized gender performances include depictions of

women training with firearms, shooting, fist fighting, defending the caravan, and doing incredibly demanding physical labor such as hauling wagons up steep and dangerous terrain via a system of pulleys⁷. *Westward the Women* features female characters of depth and complexity beyond those seen in early Western films (Eyman, 2012). According to Eyman, in the film's audio commentary, there are some film critics and historians that have described this film as one of--if not *the--*first feminist Western film:

All those films, [that might be described as feminist Westerns] back their way into their status as either "Westerns" and or "Statements"; *Westward the Women* was never designed and executed to be nothing but what it is: the story of a heroic group of women determined to cross America to be what amounts to mail-order brides, except in what we shall see, it's the *women* who chose the men who'll be their husbands. It is a film then, about women's choices, as well as about women's determination.

But it must also be said that in the end, there are still many instances where this material is very troubling in its depictions of race, gender, and violence, where it reifies problematic aspects of the Western film, while simultaneously subverting these concepts.

⁷ This scene is yet another example of how the film is set apart from other Western films. According to Eyman the depiction of the actual *work* of a wagon train is rarely, if ever, actually shown on film—let alone showing *women* performing this difficult and dangerous job.

Buck Wyatt (Robert Taylor) begins the film by having a conversation with Roy Whitman (John McIntire). It is during this initial conversation that the film lays down the basis for much of the thinking regarding gender and gender dynamics within the Western film. Buck is instantly identified as a life-long bachelor and a notorious misogynist—but also a fair, hard-working, and dedicated wagon master. Roy admires the industry surrounding him in the valley that he has nearly single-handedly established himself (another example of masculine work ethic), where he has successfully tamed the frontier space by establishing a whole township in what he calls “Whitman Valley.” But Roy finds himself still dissatisfied--for his valley has everything it needs to be a successful site of development and commerce (a masculinized space) but lacks what it requires to make it a “home” (a feminized space): women.

This is a striking pronouncement, that is steeped in a conception of space we have previously examined—that there is a “natural” order to space, and a part of that naturalization is the spatialization of gendered spaces--a set space for men and women. The domesticity of the feminine can be linked to the Victorian concept of the “Angel in the House,” wherein a female presence in the household provides the idealized notion of “home” -- a wife and mother to selflessly devote herself to her children and to submit to the will of her husband. This way of conceiving the home as a mental, as well as physical space as domestic, private, and associated with femininity is of central concern in the film.

Relating to this concept of femininity is the overarching message that--for both women and men--there are few things as necessary, nor as important, as a marriage at this time—but the *reasoning* behind this necessity is very different. For men, marriage provides a sense of completeness to their lives—something that is not so much needed, as it is desired. Recall that Roy stated that his valley had everything else but what would create a home versus a place to live: women. But for women the opposite is true—they *need* to be married, whether they desire it or not. At the time the film is set, women were expected to get married, for there was what was thought to be a “surplus” of single women living in New England and the Mid-Atlantic region⁸. A single woman at the time was considered socially unacceptable. Contemporaneous texts that were written by female authors bemoan the difficulties they faced as single women. Many women, even in affluent positions within society had difficulties getting an education, finding places that would rent to single women, and finding opportunities for employment or vocational training.⁹ The film makes it clear that, despite the counternarratives that it delivers, despite the envelope-pushing depictions of gender performance and gender roles in the film, the institution of marriage is an invaluable concept in the culture and within the context of society at the time of the film’s setting, and that without a marriage, a single woman

⁸ Taken from Gerda Lerner’s review, “Single Women in Nineteenth-Century Society: Pioneers or Deviants?” page 95.

⁹ Taken from Gerda Lerner’s review, “Single Women in Nineteenth-Century Society: Pioneers or Deviants?” page 96.

faced ridicule and discrimination. It must be said that in the film there are few depictions of romantic relationships based on genuine care for one another, but there is an emphasis on the practical aspects of marriage. In *Westward the Women* marriage isn't depicted solely as an idealized, romantic prospect, so much as it is portrayed as an absolute *necessity* for some of the women's success and survival—a means to an end that many of the women in the film are willing to bleed, sweat, and die for. The marriages that take place at the end of the film are portrayed as warm, even happy, but, as Eyman observes, they are most importantly explicitly shown to be based on the *women's* choice—not the men's choice, centering on female agency as vital to the film's themes.

Roy Whitman and Buck Wyatt arrive in Chicago looking to “recruit” at least 130 women who will become brides for the men and workers of Whitman's valley. Whitman purchased and brought with him at great cost a picture of every available bachelor, and he tells the women to choose the ones who will become their future husbands before even setting out on their arduous journey. However, after the women make this decision the cost of that decision is clear: the women are putting themselves in incredible danger by deciding to take this journey. The price of their freedom of movement despite the limitations of their gender may be their very lives—not unlike Beth in Ellison's text. Beth moving to the city is depicted as a risk, where she is electing by choice to put herself in danger via her very presence in a space where she is viewed as not belonging. However, both Beth and the women of this film decide to take the risk, illustrating their desire to

exercise their own agency. What this says about female agency and gendered geographies is that despite the empowering qualities of female choice, often depending on circumstance, there can be fewer choices and greater risk and for others, there are greater choices and greater safety. Beth is in a seemingly privileged position compared to the women in the film. Beth can negotiate space differently, likely due to differences in her socio-economic status, as well as cultural and ideological shifts within the time she lives. Beth is an educated white woman during the time of the counter-culture revolution of modern New York. In the previous century, the choices available to women were very different, especially for someone like, for example, *Westward the Women's* Mrs. Moroni, an Italian immigrant single mother who speaks no English. But both sets of women, despite whatever options they have available, are still empowered by their sense of agency.

Throughout the film, there is a heavy linkage made between the frontier space – the West – and the notion of “rebirth” and “redemption,” for those that are willing and able to make the journey there from other locations. This is not unlike Beth’s motivations for moving to New York, as well as her “rebirth” as a real “New Yorker.” For many characters--most of the female characters with major speaking roles--these marriages and this journey to the frontier space of Whitman Valley, California, represents a chance to “start over.” Visually this concept of the frontier space as a site of re-birth might be linked to the conception of the natural--with its lack of civilization and manmade structures, its

harsh environs, and the perception of lacking “civilized” (conquered, colonized) inhabitants—the frontier is viewed as a kind of *emptiness*, that must be tamed, must become “ordered,” conquered. This contrasts with the perception of the urban space as being unnatural—civilized, ordered, and imbued with natural features that are manicured and designed. Akkerman viewed difference in space as a manifestation of mankind’s desire for order to be brought to chaos—for the natural world to be civilized-- which he cited as being personified by the masculinized urban space, which he associated with business and economic production—order, and the feminized natural space, the frontier, as being chaotic.¹⁰ This is not unlike Whitman’s reflections on the frontier space—his valley being a center of commerce populated literally with only men.

This line of thinking implies that Man sets out to create an orderly world in which to live, reflecting Man’s orderly mind, with the city space as the ideal reflection of that order. It, therefore, goes to follow using a structuralist framework that if order is masculine, then *disorder* is feminine—the natural. In other words, *Nature* is disorder, and femininity is linked to nature, ergo femininity is disorder.

However, if we look for an example of this gendering of space within *Westward the Women* we find a troubling of these concepts. For example, the film is presenting a very gendered idea of what this redemption entails within the Western genre. For male figures, this redemption can take many forms. Take, for

¹⁰ It must be stated that there is little attention given to the fact that Akkerman focuses largely on only a narrow-Westernized canon, and consequently a largely patriarchal and homogeneous concept of masculinity, problematically positioning space as a site of conquest.

instance, the film *The Magnificent Seven* (John Sturges, 1960), which Eyman explicitly compares to *Westward the Women*. In *The Magnificent Seven*, a group of gunslingers looks to redeem itself by protecting a small village. When Whitman and Wyatt go to Chicago to recruit the women, Eyman sees it as being very similar to the recruitment scene in *The Magnificent Seven*. This interpretation aligns the figures of the women in Wellman's film to those of the male gunfighters in Sturges'.

Indeed, both groups prove their strength and willingness to sacrifice in each respective film; however, each film offers a very gendered portrayal of how redemption can be made possible. For the gunfighters, it is by offering up their bodies for the utility of public protection, masculinely aligned to the portrayal of the frontier as a masculine, public space as well as the men's capacity for violence, by extension. This is seen in Ellison's text as well, where the abusive Ray and the men who attack Leona and Beth personify the masculinized urban public space.. These attacks are a literal manifestation of the masculinized public invasion of the privatized feminine space. Conversely, in the film, it is the privatized feminine space being brought into the masculinized public frontier space.

For the women in *Westward the Women*, their redemption is made possible by offering up their bodies for the utility of domestication, privatization being imported into the public, through marriage and birth, femininely aligned to the portrayal of the home as a female, family orientated private space. Burman

finds that those who traverse lines of gender are not only placed in danger, as argued by Bondi and Doan but that these individuals also become eligible for expulsion from spaces based upon judgments of their bodies—or in other words when their bodies are deemed unsuitable.

In the film, Rose Meyers (Beverly Dennis) is cast out of her home after becoming pregnant outside the institution of marriage. This represents a form of expulsion and control, where those with power and authority are able to decide which individuals can traverse space and how those within a space may behave. In many ways, in the film, just as in Ellison's text, audiences are being presented with a nonnormative construction of space that is not so much liberatory but offers a construction of space that is more plastic than it is dialectical. For the women who are to become citizens of Whitman Valley, citizenship is predicated on their ability to be married and to possibly have and raise children--nothing else. Yet they prove through the utility of their bodies that they are capable of much more. Just like Beth in Ellison's text, these women prove they are capable of both the performance of masculinized and feminized qualities, that deconstruct the binary between the two. Their livelihood and future depend upon the will of a single man at the beginning of the film, Roy Whitman himself, who decides who is worthy and who is unworthy of joining this community.

Although the film may portray the view of marriage as valuable and the value of women as being tied to this institution, it also illustrates that this value is not romantic in nature to all women, so much as it is often a utility to women, just

as it is to men. Just as a man might benefit from a woman, these women hope to benefit from the men; they hope to gain something, although what they gain is not always the same for each woman, nor is what the women gain necessarily equal to what the men gain. Their need, however, is not of their own choice, even if the choice is said to be of central focus in the film, as Eyman observes. These women did not *choose* to have rights lesser than those of men and to find themselves in desperate situations under circumstances against their will. For example, many of the women who wish to travel as brides are widows. Mrs. Moroni (Renata Vanni) is an Italian immigrant with her young son who speaks no English throughout the film, only able to first have her son act as an interpreter. Through Italian and hand gestures, Mrs. Moroni conveys to Mr. Whitman that her husband has died, and by motioning emphatically to a sign reading "California" hung in the town hall, she expresses her desire to go from Chicago to California. Another widow, Patience Hawley (Hope Emerson), is from New England and has lost not only her husband but also all three of her grown sons. Likely, both these women would be reliant on a man for property to be properly inherited and were presumably homeless due to their widowhood. It was often difficult to ascertain what inheritance if any there might have been for adult women at this time, with their holdings and rankings often being left out of wills, letters, and diaries of their husbands.¹¹ In many states, a widow's inheritance was often given to creditors or

¹¹ Taken from Lisa Wilson Waciega's article, "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850," page 42.

to male relatives or heirs who had no obligation to provide for the widow after her husband died.¹² For many single women and widows at this time had to struggle against “gender definitions and ideological constraints which would bind them to dependency and servitude.”¹³ There is therefore an implication that for both women this notion of “rebirth” might be quite literal as they may well be “starting over” in their lives.

There are also examples in the film of women who have chosen to undertake this journey, not only to be “reborn,” but to also “reform.” In the recruitment or “audition” scene wherein each woman signing up for the expedition is interviewed, Whitman judges which women are worthy and accepted or unworthy and rejected. The “audition scene” introduces characters who might be referred to as “fallen women” seeking to reform or redeem themselves through these arranged marriages. First, the audience is initially introduced to Rose, who we discover is a schoolteacher. The character of Rose troubles the Western film’s tension between the duality of womanhood—the fallen woman versus the saint. Rose initially presents as the sainted figure but is later revealed to be the fallen woman instead. When she first approaches Whitman, he finds her *education* valuable, feeling that a written record of their journey would be beneficial. In a conversation between the characters Rose and

¹² Taken from Lisa Wilson Waciega’s article, “A ‘Man of Business’: The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850,” page 44.

¹³ Taken from Gerda Lerner’s review, “Single Women in Nineteenth-Century Society: Pioneers or Deviants?” page 97.

Patience, Rose reveals that she is pregnant after showing signs of fatigue as the women travel on foot. Rose tells only Patience she hopes that this journey and this marriage will give her a baby a chance for a better future, implying that without this legitimacy the baby faces a poor one. Tellingly, Rose hides the fact that she is pregnant out of wedlock and keeps this a secret from all but the other women. She hopes to legitimize her child via this marriage – to have the baby be “reborn,” as no longer a “bastard,” and for herself to be “reborn” as a new wife. This “rebirth” helps her, and her child escapes the social stigma she is currently running from. Here, we see the tie made between marriage and morality. At this time, it was thought that “inside the domestic realm [women] could affirm themselves and exercise marital or maternal powers...live [] in a circumscribed sphere characterized by ‘piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.’”¹⁴ In having a husband, not only is Rose forgiven of her “sins,” but her child as well.

We are also introduced to the characters of Fifi Danon (Denise Darcel), and her companion Laurie Smith (Julie Bishop), who are both working at the local dance hall in Chicago. Both women are presented as visually different from the other women present, marking them as other. They are introduced wearing extravagant dresses, with lower-cut collars, frills, feathers, bows, and intricate designs, sexualizing them when compared to the other women, who wear more

¹⁴ Taken from Lisa Wilson Waciega’s article, “A ‘Man of Business’: The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850,” page 41. This quote also includes a portion from Welter’s “Cult of True Womanhood.”

conservative clothing (Eyman, 2012). The camera introduces them by revealing them to the viewer as a group of similarly dressed women stand in the foreground, complaining that Whitman does not approve of the way that they are dressed. This group effectively blocks Danon and Laurie from sight, giving an element of being focalized when they are finally revealed. As this group leaves, one of them is heard loudly proclaiming, “give up! You’re wasting your time! The old goat don’t like the way we’re dressed...see ya on stage!” Here, Laurie and Danon are revealed for the first time, dressed just as the previous women were. Danon looks up at the next approaching woman – Rose – and it is made evident from her expression that she has just gotten an idea. Danon pulls Laurie away, only to return later, now dressed more conservatively, in dark plain tones, free of accouterments. In a reaction scene, we see a close-up of Buck Wyatt, with a vaguely disgusted expression on his face. As they approach the table at which the men sit on a stage before the rows of chairs in which the women sit, Whitman solemnly asks them, “why do you want to go to California?” Danon and Laurie try to pass themselves off as merely late and Danon begins to tell elaborate tales to prove their value— insisting that her family has been in this country for decades. Whitman pointedly asks them again, “Ms. Danon, *why* do you want to go to California?” The camera shows only Danon’s face in full-frame, the lighting softer. This shift implies that it is Whitman’s perspective that the camera has adopted, he the subject, and Danon the object. She answers in a voice that is quiet but determined, her expression earnest, “we want to change.” The camera

cuts to a reaction shot of Buck as he looks away, dismissively pushing his hat over his eyes. The camera cuts back to Whitman, but instead of a reaction shot, the camera films over Whitman's shoulder, filming the women's reactions to Buck's unspoken skepticism. Both look insulted as Buck drawls, "...a change of what?" Danon immediately snaps back, "of scenery!" The shot switches to Whitman's reaction, his face set solemnly. He seems to be measuring these women. He asks them slowly, emphasizing the importance of their response, "would it be a *permanent* change?" The camera returns to the shot of the women's faces, filmed just behind Whitman's left shoulder.

According to Eyman, this scene features more cuts than many of the others in the film to convey the "back and forth" between each speaker in this conversation (Eyman, 2012). Looking to Mulvey, we might read this interplay of shots as being indicative of the film's preoccupation with equalizing gender figures. This scene features as many cuts of Buck as it does Danon, illustrating that *her* perspective is as valuable as Buck's. She looks at him, just as he looks at her. That the audience is put into the literal back and forth just as they are in a figurative back and forth discussion, a tit for tat, further destabilizes the traditional film genre's concern with privileging of the perspective of the masculine heroic figure¹⁵, arguably Buck in this film, over the perspective of the feminine central figure in the film, Fifi. In *Westward the Women* both outlooks are of importance.

¹⁵ Partially taken from Kathleen Cummins film analysis, "Feminist Symbolic Frontier Landscapes," in the book, *Herstories on Screen: Feminist Subversions of Frontier Myths*, pages 183-240.

According to Mulvey, “in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female” (837). The film by determining the viewer’s gaze determines what gaze is being privileged, the gaze being that which is positioned as object and subject, but also whose perspective is being featured, who is being positioned in the role of the figure the audience is meant to relate to. Here Danon is no longer the object for the audience, or the male characters Roy and Buck can gaze upon actively while she passively receives their gaze. Instead, these shots establish Fifi as a dynamic character actively engaging the audience and the male figures’ gazes but also their attention.

Both Danon and Laurie are serious, active figures, holding Whitman’s stare, with Danon answering, “Ouí, Mr. Whitman.” Here, Eyman notes, that Danon is even lit differently in this shot, creating a softening of her features so that she appears more innocent and feminine (Eyman, 2012), but the lighting also centralizes her as the key figure. This centralizing figuration is typically dedicated only to masculine figures in a Western film, the leading protagonist. Her individualism and her ability to stand up for herself and her beliefs are classically masculine as well.¹⁶ The Western hero is meant to be upright, if not kindly, man, eager for adventure who is often shown the error of his ways or is blinded by the goodness and purity of the heroine. This spotlighting recasts Fifi’s

¹⁶ This is based on the introduction to Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr’s book, *Ride, Boldy Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*, pages 1-8.

femininity as well as her characterization within the stock figure of the Western fallen woman as being non-monolithic. Fifi can be both feminized and masculinized.

The overall message of this scene is that one must be willing to *change* to move from one space to another, and that this change is often determined by one's gender. This is due to this recruitment scene also containing an aspect of masculinized authority being in a position to cast judgment on feminized bodies. The implication that a man is passing judgment on the perceived value and character of these women is such that there is a very clear link being made between the patriarchal Westernized notions of women as passive subservient objects to men, also that there is an implication that women are viewed as having less power and less status compared to men. *Westward the Women* decenters this concept and deconstructs gender binaries by representing empowered women who succeed in traditionally masculine roles and therefore gain greater agency.. This is seen in the recruitment scene in several ways, including the women's ability to choose their husbands and to have control over how they first meet them.

Eyman tellingly refers to the recruitment scene as "an audition scene" (Eyman, 2012), which implies that these women need to perform in some way-- for the consumption of not only Whitman and Wyatt's gaze but the film audience as well. This idea of surveillance is seen in "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs" and its troubling of seeing and being seen. There exists a type of power dynamic

attached to this act, not dissimilar to how Mulvey utilizes psychoanalysis in formulating her theories on film as a medium that reifies pre-existing patterns of what she describes as phallogentric social formations that depict gender and sexual difference as fixed and steeped in spectacle and directly linked to her theories on gazes.

Mulvey puts forth the concept of female representation in film as producing what Freud posited as naturalistic (Mulvey 834), produced symbolically via the women's presence and movements. There is not only a fear of castration by her absence of a penis but also be simultaneously elevated to the status of the symbol by her ability to carry a child. I argue that just as Mulvey views the female form as it is depicted in the film as that which "speaks castration," it is also the presence of female bodies in masculine or traditionally non-female gendered spaces, that present a subconscious feeling of threat according to specific forms of media discourse, including pulp genres such as the Western film or literary horror.

What the women of the film are performing, I would argue, is a display/performance of their gender, expressing it in such a way as to affirm the values of male society and their views of acceptable female embodiment. Both Whitman and Buck go into this scene with expectations, their preconceived notion of femininity, its value, the acceptable way it should be performed, as well as the acceptable spaces for female bodies to move into and function within. The audience is thus given insight into the gender politics of the film and the Western

genre, and insight into what patriarchal discourse deems desirable and undesirable in the female gender, in female performance, all of which the audience can base on the male characters' reactions to the women that are presented onscreen, and how each woman reacts to them. Just as nature appears as a space, setting, obstacle, and metaphor in the Western film, so too does the protagonist. The fact that *Westward the Women* makes not only women, but a group of women, the central protagonists of the film, and the central figures of action, is quite telling and indicative of its status as a revisionist Western. Typically, within the traditional Western, space is synonymous with nature, and nature is manifested as being a threatening, sinister, destructive power meant to test the strength and resolve of the protagonist and their ability to survive. In previous Western films, this landscape is meant to be hostile to female protagonists who are portrayed as virtuous, demure, and dependent on their principal lover to stop their pursuers—both within nature and the wicked men that mean to do them harm.¹⁷ *Westward the Women* serves to destabilize all of these tropes. Not only are women the central protagonists, but it is also them that overcome nature, not the men of the film. They are not the idealized demure helpless women that are typical fare, but dynamic and complex figures.

Several things are significant within the “recruitment/ audition” scene, but what is of most interest to this project is how the film, and arguably the Western

¹⁷ Taken from Chapter Two, “Not at Home on the Range: Women Against the Frontier in ‘The Wind,’” in the book *Ride, Boldy Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*, by Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr, pages 38-58.

genre, portrays the Western space, the frontier, and even California by association, as a type of psychic “horizon” of nature. This “horizon” space is associated with transformation, emptiness, and the tabula rasa because it is perceived as an unknown by some of those that reach this “horizon.” This is not always the case for those that already exist there. For Buck, this space has to be preserved somehow, for it to remain, unchanged. Here, redemption, transformation, and even resurrection, is possible, where rebirth can occur as one moves into this “undiscovered,” and in a specifically post-colonial reading, “unknown” territory because it is viewed as an *uncolonized* territory. In the dominant discourses surrounding myth-making narratives of the American Frontier, the uncharted terrain is free for the taking¹⁸

Not only is this frontier space representative of the unknown, and in this way, a kind of monstrous space, in that it can both attract as well as repel, but it is also representing the inevitable, and therefore naturalized, violence that is expected and regularly occurs at the movement into, the interaction with, and the confrontation of an unknown element according to certain forms of media. This media includes pulp genres such as Western film and the literary horror genre. Often pulp genre audiences carry an expectation of violence when introduced to an unknown element due to their knowledge of the conventions and codes of genre and setting but also because of a belief that to encounter the unknown,

¹⁸ Taken from Kathleen Cummins’ chapter, “Feminist Symbolic Frontier Landscapes,” from the book *Herstories on Screen: Feminist Subversions of Frontier Myths*, pages 183-240.

there must be a confrontation. It is often the other that appears as the monster, a distorted manifestation of society's fears and anxieties.¹⁹ This expectation for violence when individuals move into unknown spaces and their desire to overcome and confront the unknown itself is deeply problematic in formations of space.

The expectation of violence is tied to the concept of conquest, the imperialistic drive towards possibility²⁰. This scene above transitions into a scene in which Buck hopes to deter as many women from this journey as possible. Buck is portrayed as a misogynist at the beginning of the film, dead set against the idea that women should, not only, be brought to the frontier, but would be physically, mentally, or emotionally capable of making the journey. Whitman wants to recruit 130 women because, as with any wagon train, 1/3 of those being transported are expected to die. In this scene, Buck stands before the rows of chairs filled with the new "brides" after they have chosen a new husband amongst the photographs Whitman has brought. Buck tells them--standing on the stage at the front of the town hall, affecting an intimidating air before the women—that not all of them will survive this journey. He is effectively trying to scare them off from traversing the move from the city space to the frontier space. In this intimidation, he is performing his gender in much the same manner as the

¹⁹ Taken from Kathleen Cummins' chapter, "Feminist Symbolic Frontier Landscapes," from the book *Herstories on Screen: Feminist Subversions of Frontier Myths*, pages 183-240, specifically page 210.

²⁰ Taken from Kathleen Cummins' chapter, "Feminist Symbolic Frontier Landscapes," from the book *Herstories on Screen: Feminist Subversions of Frontier Myths*, pages 183-240, specifically page 186.

women have just done for himself and Roy Whitman. Buck tells them, almost threateningly, that a third of them will most certainly die on this trip, hoping to scare them away. When none leave as he expects, he demands to know which of them knows how to handle a horse, “not just ride a horse, but how to lead and tackle.” To his obvious surprise, a few women who stood at his original question remain standing. Buck then asks, “who knows how to handle a gun?” Two women stand, chins raised, eyes locked on Buck. Buck tosses his gun to one of the women, who catches it with ease. Without prompting the woman looks over to the wall to the audience’s left, directly before the camera. She aims up at a poster hung high on the wall depicting a mustachioed man, reading “Honest Otto Schmidt for Sheriff.” She then proceeds to shoot Otto in his right eye. She tosses the gun, just as Buck did, silently to the woman standing behind her, who shoots Otto, through his left eye. “Like that?” she proudly says to Buck, smirking up at him. Buck is visibly impressed, his earlier worries, and indeed, his earlier presumptions, are assuaged. This scene is ripe with meaning. Here, both the audience and the character Buck see the evidence of women, not as objects of violence, as is the typical narrative seen in Western films, but as *agents* of violence. In this context, the violence is not directed at any form of harm, but to illustrate skill, confidence, reliability, and feminine agency. And as another counter-narrative to the Western genre, we see here violence that is a source of empowerment, not subjection. We also see women directing violence against a male figure without the film casting morality into the situation. The low cost of this

violence ensures that the spectacle of the act is not centered, but the dynamic quality these characters possess. There is no vengeance, no crimes committed, just a display of skill. It is also fascinating that in shooting Otto, he is effectively blinded, his view, his masculinized gaze, is blotted out. I read this as “Otto” mirroring Buck in this scene. His view of women is upended and destabilized by an event that disproves his previous way of “seeing” the world.

The significance of this scene is that despite the assumptions of Buck – and by extension, the audience and society as a whole – the *reality* of these women disproves his former misogynistic and homosocial worldview. This is something that occurs again and again in the film. The audience is shown examples of women moving through and occupying, not only spaces that are viewed as the masculinized space of the frontier--something Buck is emphatic about at the beginning of the film--the Western genre’s traditional depictions of gender performance become troubled and binaries become upended. Due to his view of gender performance within this space – the wagon train, the harsh Western frontier, battles, and back-breaking labor – as being specifically masculine Buck feels his worldview is challenged by the women in not only their willingness to fulfill these roles but their success at them, as well. The camera takes on the gaze of the female audience, looking up at the presence of Buck, which is meant to be commanding as he is set at the front of the room on top of a stage. The reason for this shift is telling, in that the viewer’s gaze shifts from the masculine gazes of Roy and Buck as they judge their “recruits,” to the feminized

gaze of the women, *now* judging Buck and Roy and their reactions to being disproven. As Eyman viewed the shifting perspectives as implying a back and forth, as in a conversation, I view this shift as affording the audiences to become both feminized *and* masculinized in their gazes, and their perspectives. This shifting is in and of itself an alternative space for the viewer, that is neither strictly feminized nor strictly masculinized.

CONCLUSION: WHAT DO CONCEPTIONS OF GENDER, SPACE, AND MOVEMENT MEAN FOR SOCIETY AND CULTURE?

Concluding this paper's examination of the topics of gender, space, and movement we might look to the fact that there are often deeply held subconscious preconceptions that inform our views of differing topics; Nevertheless, they are there. In this paper, I am exploring specifically space and gender. In Ellison's text, set in the 1970s during the counter-culture revolution and told within the literary horror genre, gender is understood as being based on narrow Westernized definitions that become troubled when his main character travels from her previous rural surroundings into the urban space. There are dialectical and essentialized notions of femineity as being docile, servile, empathetic, and emotionally fragile that become challenged by the text's depictions of a female-identifying main character who becomes empowered within this urban space, becoming more assertive, emotionally resilient, independent, and enthralled with the spectacle of violence. The narrative of Wellman's film, though set in the nineteenth century and told in the Western film

genre, portrays a conception of gender that is also grounded in narrow Westernized conceptions that become decentered by the film's actions. In the film, women work together to become more efficient in this new space, challenging previous assumptions about women being able to survive on the frontier.

However gender is described or understood, what becomes clear in both my objects of analysis is that in any given space--be it the frontier or the urban space—we are often unaware of the role that our preconceptions have on our views of space and the ways these preconceptions inform our view of those that can and cannot occupy said spaces. Each of us has in mind a kind of mental formation when one is referring to a particular space, and this is further shaped by the context of this imagining. But can we speak to *how* these formulations came to be? And why is there in both objects of analysis a shared notion that change is necessary when individuals move from one space into another based on the idea of gender?

According to Zhu and Shi, “one of the most typical way of cultural representation of urban space is to focus on textual representations rather than other cultural forms, music, art or film because literary texts not only reveal the writer's reflections on urban space but show the character's *experience* in urban space” (Shi & Zhu 228, emphasis my own). Gender is one such concept affected by space and vice versa because those individuals who are thought to traverse or even cross clear gender distinctions and definitions—of gender roles--based

on space can have dire consequences. One such consequence is the reactions of others that view those traversing as not belonging. This sense of unbelonging—of being othered within spatializing contexts—is often negative, aggressive, and even violent. There appears to be a persistent notion of belonging and unbelonging when it comes to space. For those that *do* belong, there is an aspect of fear to this anger—a fear of invasion. But what has created this perception of belonging and unbelonging, of separation and dichotomy in the first place?

It is the notion of essentialism, of neutrality, that is attached to the conception of space that has led to this territorial binary. This territoriality can greatly limit mobility, access, and resources within spaces, with the justification being that not only are these conditions monolithic within spaces but that the people that can and cannot exist in space are monolithic (McKittrick & Woods 2-3). Just as the women of *Westward the Women* were at the mercy of authority to gain access, permission given, to move from one space into another, whole groups of people can often be limited in their mobility based on the essentialized nature of where they are deemed able to exist—where their proper place can be. Gender, race, social status, and more deeply inform the mental formations of this spatialization.

But the concepts of gender, race and ethnicity, culture, etc. are rarely so straightforward as to be made monolithic, in order to consolidate and preserve the status quo and sustain those within a position of power. In other words, there

is a vetted interest for those within authority to perpetuate the belief that gender can only exist in specific limiting structures in order to keep their positions. The depiction of the feminized as weaker and the masculine as stronger only serves to preserve patriarchal power within society and culture. The intersectional quality of identity might best be understood as an ever-evolving construct, one which is based on personal, experiential, as well as social, and cultural definitions, rather than a prescribed set of “natural” differences. The social model of gender is often informed by the production of knowledge and the attitudes present and popular within a specific time in history and culture and is far from being clear-cut. Space operates in much the same manner.

Although media has linked spaces such as the urban city and frontier space to certain conventions based on genre, there are deep-seated issues with these conventional constructions of space and gender, as is often seen in many structuralist theories. There is a Westernized view inherent in these mental formations of master signs, creating connotations of positive versus negative associations between binaries, and narrowly defined prescriptive discourses. These constructions always stand the risk of propagating a mindset of not just tension, but as we have seen in the violence associated with negotiating movement in “unknown” spaces, of conflict as well.

If we read the troubling of gender dynamics and survival in both Ellison’s text as well as in *Westward the Women*, we might conclude that both the film and the short-story are emphasizing a need for non-normative examples of genres

such as horror and Western films, which are often responsible for propagating many traditional views of spaces, to center a non-gender-conforming construction of spaces, to reframe a naturalized view of conquest within spaces, that privileges a view of spaces which are marked as othered as being ripe for subjugation. But I would argue that the conclusion of both texts when read against each other foregrounds not only the need for non-normative narratives regarding space but also the need for collectivism versus individualism in our mental formations of space and how best to adapt to them.

At the conclusion of Ellison's text, when Beth successfully avoids death at the hands of her attacker--unlike the attack of Leona Ciarelli at the beginning of the story-- Beth is described as finally *belonging* in New York--embracing that which she has earlier in the text viewed as monstrous, and being empowered by this monstrosity, the violence, the selfishness, and lack of empathy. Beth embodies an extreme form of individualism, not unlike the mythological American Western frontiersman²¹. Beth ascribes her survival, her success, to her conviction that she has done the one thing one must do to survive in the urban space according to the values of Ray Gleeson, and in her mind, the city itself: to survive in the city, and by extension the world, one must only care for yourself-- nothing else.

²¹ Taken from the introduction to *Ride, Boldly Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*, by authors Mary Lea Bandy and Kevin Stoehr, pages 1-8, specifically page 4.

This stands in direct opposition to the values being privileged by the conclusion of *Westward the Women*. Akkerman views *empathy*, not apathy be needed to survive the urban space. This is an interesting interpretation of the city space, as it is read against the values of *Westward the Women*, which challenges the values of Ellison's text. In the film, it is the community, the combined strength of the women coming together that creates their success and their ability to survive in an "unknown" space that is earlier thought to be only acceptable by men. Indeed, instead of reading the film's moral as being that women need to become men, we can instead read it as being a community is needed for success in any given space.

This interpretation comes into direct opposition to the conclusion of Ellison's text, where characters that are portrayed as "successful"—Ray Gleeson and Beth — are individuals implied as being antithetical to 'whipped dogs,' and are, in fact, by implication, "strong, meat-eating beasts" (Ellison 131). If we are to take this reading further, although Beth is empowered by this newfound individualism, her status as a "meat-eating beast," she becomes empowered and is no longer afraid—but she is also no longer herself. Beth has had to be fully "reborn" into this space to be there—a concept we've seen in some ways in the film as well. But in *Westward the Women* it is collectivism that leads to the women's success in a new space—not the monstrous individualism that is recommended in Ellison's text. If we are to unpack this a bit, we can see that the connotation of "strong, meat-eating beasts" implies that in the urban city space,

one *must* be reduced to the level of a non-human animal to survive – kill or be killed. But the morality of the text implies that this notion of individuality is tied to the destructive forces of conquest, of imperialism. If we are to interpret both texts against each other, then it can be concluded that when moving from one space into another, transformation is necessary for survival. But if so, what *kind* of transformation is required? This is where the issues with the narrow parameters of our mental formations of space become integral.

Acknowledging the arbitrariness of these mental constructions and how they continue to affect not only policy, resources, access, and opportunities for those that traverse geographies of gender, race, culture, etc. is something that we as a society must always be mindful of, and sensitive to, when engaging in any form of consumable media or thought production. This project ultimately seeks to reconcile this fact with how we actively read literary works because the only way to address this reactive response is to represent difference as complex, intersectionally rich, and ultimately dynamic. Ultimately, I feel that there is an absolute need for there to be a recognition of the idea that it is not so much the responsibility of an individual or even a specific group to change in order to gain the ability to move from one space to another, but *society* as a whole must change how we think about ideology, space, and movement.. Thinking that spaces cannot be changed means that society becomes immobile, fixed, and without the ability to develop into something that serves those that occupy spaces. To think that spaces are static and neutral and therefore cannot be

improved, cannot be made more equitable, is an impediment to our development as a people and as a society at large.

REFERENCES

- Akkerman, Abraham. "Femininity and Masculinity in the City Form: Philosophical Urbanism as a History of Consciousness." *Human Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2006, pp. 229-256.
- Bandy, Mary Lea & Stoehr, Kevin. "Introduction," *Ride, Boldly Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*, 1st ed., University of California Press, 2012, pp. 1-8.
- Bandy, Mary Lea & Stoehr, Kevin. "Not at Home on the Range: Women against the Frontier in 'The Wind,'" *Ride, Boldly Ride: The Evolution of the American Western*, 1st ed., University of California Press, 2012, pp.38-58.
- Bondi, Liz. "Gender, Class, and Urban Space: Public and Private Space in Contemporary Urban Landscapes." *Urban Geography*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1998, pp. 160-185.
- Burman, Jenny. "Deportable or Admissible? Black Women and the Space of 'Removal,'" *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, edited by McKittrick, Woods. *Between the Lines*, 2007, pp. 117-192.
- Cummins, Kathleen. "Feminist Symbolic Frontier Landscapes," *Herstories: Feminist Subversions of Frontier Myths*, Columbia University Press, Wallflower Press, 2020, pp.183-240.
- Doan, Petra. "The Tyranny of Gendered Spaces—Reflections From Beyond the Gender Dichotomy," *A Journal of Feminist Geography*, Vol. 17, No. 5, 2010, pp. 635-654.
- Ellison, Harlan. "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs." *The Dark Descent*. Edited by David G. Hartwell, Tor, 1987, pp.118-131.
- Eyman, Scott. Audio Commentary. *Westward the Women*. Dir. Wellman, William A. Perf. Robert Taylor, Denise Darcel, and Hope Emerson. Warner Bros. Archive, 2012. DVD.
- Foucault, Michel and Miskowiec, Jay. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1986, pp. 22-27.
- Kolodny, Annette. "Letting Go our Grand Obsessions: Notes Toward a New Literary History of the American Frontiers," *American Literature*, Vol. 64, No.1, 1992, pp. 1-18.
- Lerner, Gerda. "Review: Single Women in Nineteenth-Century Society: Pioneers or Deviants?" *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1987, pp. 94-100.

Loftus, David. "Harlan Ellison Short Story Collections: Reviews: *DeathBird Stories*." <http://harlanellison.com/review/deathbird.htm> Accessed February 2022.

McKittrick, Katherine & Woods, Clyde. "No One Knows the Mysteries at the Bottom of the Ocean," *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, edited by McKittrick, Woods. Between the Lines, Toronto, Ontario, 2007, pp. 1-13.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford UP, 1999, pp. 833-844.

Peake, Linda J. "Gender and The City." *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by Kobayashi, Audrey. Elsevier, 2020, pp. 281-292.

Sachs, Ben. "Westward the Women: A Neglected Classic About Sexual Politics on the Frontier," *Chicago Reader*, Accessed October 2020, www.chicagoreader.com/Bleader/archives/2014/06/19/westward-the-women-a-neglected-classic-about-sexual-politics-on-the-frontier

Shi, Long & Zhu, Qingwei. "Urban Space and Representation in Literary Study." *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.06, No.09, 2018, pp.223-229.

Waciegga, Lisa Wilson. "A 'Man of Business': The Widow of Means in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1750-1850. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 1987, pp. 40-64.