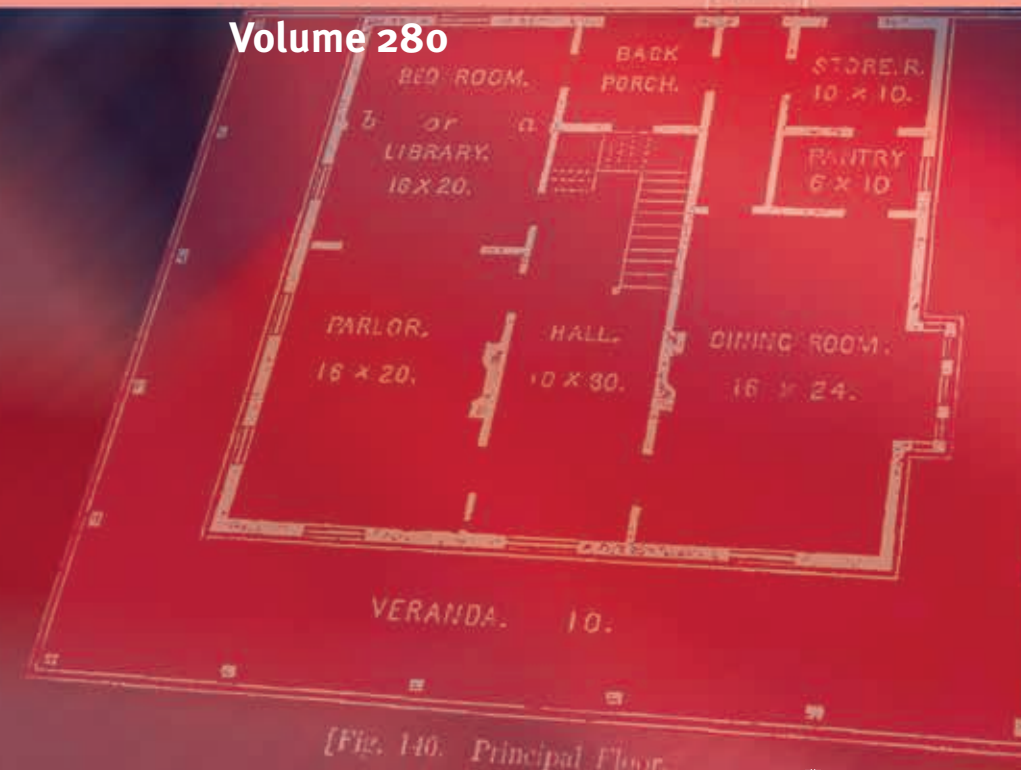
KATJA KANZLER

The Kitchen and the Factory

Spaces of Women's Work and the Negotiation of Social Difference in Antebellum American Literature

American Studies ★ A Monograph Series

Volume 280



[Fig. 140. Principal Floor.

Universitätsverlag
WINTER
Heidelberg

AMERICAN STUDIES – A MONOGRAPH SERIES
Volume 280

Edited on behalf
of the German Association
for American Studies by
ALFRED HORNUNG
ANKE ORTLEPP
HEIKE PAUL

KATJA KANZLER

The Kitchen and the Factory

Spaces of Women's Work and the Negotiation of Social Difference in Antebellum American Literature

Universitätsverlag
WINTER
Heidelberg

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie;
detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet
über *http://dnb.d-nb.de* abrufbar.

COVER ILLUSTRATION

Downing, Andrew Jackson. *The Architecture of Country Houses*. New York: Appleton, 1851. Internet Archive. 30 January 2016. <http://archive.org>. S. 313.

ISBN 978-3-8253-6676-6

Imprimé en Allemagne · Printed in Germany
Druck: Memminger MedienCentrum, 87700 Memmingen

Gedruckt auf umweltfreundlichem, chlorfrei gebleichtem
und alterungsbeständigem Papier.

Den Verlag erreichen Sie im Internet unter:
www.winter-verlag.de

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

For somebody trained in the postmodernist mantra that everything has been said and written before, it's extremely hard not to feel self-conscious when trying to express one's gratitude for the support and encouragement that is essential to scholarly work. I can only emphasize how truly, sincerely grateful I am to the people who made this book possible. This is, first of all, Anne Koenen, my adviser, whom I thank for her unflinching support not only of this project but of my entire academic career. She has shaped this project as much with her poignant advice as with the freedom she granted me to find my own path. I'm realizing more and more how much I have learned from her.

Second, I'm deeply grateful to the community at American Studies Leipzig, whose unique atmosphere of collegial interest in each other's work has provided a perfect intellectual home for my work on this project. Especially the institute's postgraduate colloquium – whose changing participants have read through every chapter of this book, in various stages of development – has been an invaluable wellspring of productive feedback and inspiring ideas. Of its participants, I want to particularly thank Gabriele Pisarz-Ramìrez, Katja Schmieder, and Florian Bast for their generous investments of time and thought into reading and critiquing this evolving book. Sebastian Herrmann and Frank Usbeck have not only offered countless pieces of inestimable advice on this project; working with them in a variety of other projects has been an immensely enriching experience that has profoundly influenced my thinking and shaped who I am as an Americanist.

Third, there are a number of scholars who have contributed to this project with their critical questions and comments. Next to the discussants at the numerous conference where I presented my work in progress, I want to single out Heike Paul and Renate Hof, for whose repeated input and support I'm particularly grateful. In this context, I also want to thank my students at Leipzig and Dresden for joining me in discussions of some of the material covered in this book.

Part of the research for this book has been conducted at the American Antiquarian Society (AAS). I thank the librarians and fellows there for their helpfulness and inspiration. I also gratefully acknowledge the generous fellowship by the AAS and the German Association for American Studies that made this research possible. For the proofreading and formatting of this book, I am greatly indebted to my graduate assistants Michaela Beck and Fabian Gregori.

Last but by far not least, I want to thank my family and my husband, simply for everything. I dedicate this book to my grandmother Elfriede Treuter, who passed away, a few days before her 93rd birthday, as I was finishing off this manuscript. Her openly exhibited pride of my work and career has always humbled and motivated me.

1 Introduction: Kitchen and Factory

In 1828, Lydia Maria Child published the first domestic advice manual in the United States, *The American Frugal Housewife*, in whose wake a steadily increasing trickle of books dedicated to instructions about domestic work appeared on the American market (cf. Leavitt 8-39). This birth of the American domestic advice-manual is closely related to the boom of domestic fiction in the antebellum period, a heterogeneous genre that shares with domestic-advice writing not only many motifs and rhetorical strategies but also a focus on women's work in the domestic sphere. Contemporaneously, a diverse set of publications – novels, sketches, poems, journalistic accounts – talk about women working in a variety of occupations and settings, from domestic servants over cooks to seamstresses or factory girls. These include, for example, many of the popular sensation novels that were published from the 1840s onward, novels in which working women regularly appear as protagonists (cf. Reynolds 169-224); or several travelogues, especially by Europeans, that single out New England's textile mills and their female workforce as one of the American 'sights' to be visited and discussed. Also canonical authors like Herman Melville or Rebecca Harding Davis turn to factories and female workers to draw characters and motifs for their different literary projects.

Women's work and the spaces of their labor form a marked and quite extensive topos in American literature of the antebellum decades, a topos that cuts across several forms and registers of writing. This topicality, which has hitherto received only marginal scholarly attention, is in and of itself remarkable, as physical work and productivity play no role in the period's hegemonic discourse of femininity. To the contrary, the 'Cult of True Womanhood' (Welter) resonates with a binary logic that defines femininity in opposition to a masculinity that very much relies on work and productivity as semantic fields – a binary logic that scholarship has described as the notion of 'separate spheres.'[1] The ideology of separate spheres conceives of women's contribution to society as one of emotional and spiritual care and influence, designating the home – which, in turn, is constructed in opposition to a public sphere of politics and labor – as their

1 As I will outline in greater detail below, the first wave of feminist scholarship that recovered antebellum women's culture used the metaphor of 'separate spheres' both as a term for the period's gender ideology and as its own paradigm for the interrogation of this culture. It is precisely this conflation with which a second wave of scholarship took issue.

sole sphere of action. It might be tempting to account for the many texts that do discuss women's work, inside and outside the domestic sphere, as simply demarcating the boundaries of normative femininity, i.e., as dramatizing areas of 'untrue womanhood.' Considering the extent and diversity of the phenomenon, however, this explanation seems much too reductive.

This study asks for the cultural work that spaces of feminine labor do in antebellum texts from a variety of literary and 'para-literary' contexts. It specifically attends to the kitchen and the factory as the two sites of women's work that early to mid-19th-century American texts most insistently discuss. While the kitchen and the factory are notably different in several aspects – their materialities, economies, histories, as well as their associations with private and public spheres – their *discursive* realizations in antebellum culture most tellingly interact and reflect on each other. The kitchen and the factory, I argue, serve as key textual microcosms in which antebellum culture negotiates the discourses of social difference whose relevance skyrockets in this period, especially the discourses of gender, class, 'race,' and nationhood. Because of their ostensible marginality on the map of the national imaginary, and because they are associated with social subjects multiply marked as marginal – women of the 'working class'[2] and slave women – the kitchen and the factory enable the rehearsal of ideas that are difficult to articulate within the core narratives of nationhood: ideas about the forms and meanings of social inequality, and their relationship to the promises of equality that suffuse the nation's mythology. Textual figurations of the kitchen and the factory thus unfold their cultural work chiefly at the intersections of gender, class, 'race,' and national discourses, where a femininity constructed in opposition to the public and the political serves as a platform for the reflection on notions of racial, class, and national distinctions.

My focus on the spaces of women's work in the period's literature results from the observation that kitchens and factories *as narrative spaces*[3] enable the negotiation of social difference in specific ways. First and most obviously, they demarcate discursive spaces sufficiently removed and

2 The attribute 'working-class' needs to be used cautiously when referring to antebellum working women, especially to those identifying as 'factory' or 'mill girls.' In their self-fashioning as well as in their representation by many other writers, the American 'factory girl' is constructed in opposition to a working-classness associated with Europe's industrial workforce. Cf. my discussion in chapter 4.

3 The term 'narrative space' is a less than ideal fit since not all the texts I will discuss are (only) narrative (e.g., I also read domestic-advice manuals and cookbooks). However, they all feature a narrative logic which, for me, is of primary interest. Narrative theory's reflections on textual space and its constructions have proven most productive for thinking through the textual strategies relevant for my project. See also my discussion in chapter 2.1.

distinct from the spaces designated for political deliberation to allow for different ideas to be articulated. Second, the spatial, material, and praxeological properties that texts attribute to kitchens and factories provide them with a symbolic language to reflect on social distinction and social order: Walls, thresholds, windows, spatial relationships within the family home or within the factory compound, kitchen- and factory-specific material practices and their governance, and the tangible (or eatable) products of kitchen and factory labor are all enlisted to express ideas about gender, class, and 'racial' difference and the role they should play in the nation's social fabric. Third, kitchens and factories function as 'contact zones,' to adapt a term of postcolonial studies, as spaces in which characters marked as different in terms of gender, class, and/or 'race' meet and interact with each other – the white mistress and the black slave, the middle-class lady and the 'servant,' 'help' or 'domestic' (who is frequently an Irish immigrant), the factory girl and the cosmopolitan visitor to the mill town, or the factory girl and the social reformer. The kitchen and the factory also become contact zones when middle-class authors imaginatively enter these spaces by writing about them and thus vicariously encounter their working-class populations. Such encounters, which texts imagine from various perspectives, also centrally revolve around the negotiation of social inequalities.

Finally, the kitchens and factories in these texts are not only interesting because they figure as narrative spaces but also because they are, more or less explicitly, addressed as spaces of writing. Texts frequently correlate the physical, material work and production of kitchens and factories with the work of writing and literary production, sometimes in metatextual gestures that trace their own existence to the material economy of kitchen or factory. In the process, they reflect on the relationship between the material languages of domestic and industrial labor, and the language of literature, conceiving of them in terms of distinction, opposition even, or of continuity. Their attention to women's work and its environments thus also enables the texts to deliberate the possibilities and constraints not only, but especially, of women's self-expression.

In the following, I thus want to look at how antebellum texts construct the kitchen and the factory as textual spaces, and at the dynamics of social meaning-making that these spaces accommodate. While my readings attend to kitchens and factories separately, my approach to them is informed by the shared patterns I observe in their textualizations. Kitchen and factory share in common that they both figure as objects of intense cultural interest and social debate in this period, narrativized either as loci of American exceptionalism or as centers of a national crisis. At the same time, both are marked by a curious mixture of textual attention and disavowal. Kitchen and factory often play only a marginal role as an immediate setting. When they do, narratives frequently depict them as spaces of transit – to be passed through and left behind – as peripheral and subordinate to other

spaces, as Other in a number of ways. In addition, texts device a variety of strategies to circumnavigate the kitchen and the factory, to refigure them in ways that approximate them to other, culturally more 'central' spaces, or to spectacularize their unveiling. This paradoxical pattern characterizes the textuality of both the kitchen and the factory: Texts from this period work at arguing the cultural importance of these spaces while firmly locating them at the margins of the nation's cultural topography. Authorial personae in these texts claim discursive ownership of the kitchen and the factory while refusing to be contained by them, conspicuously displaying their own mobility and transcendence of the boundaries of these spaces.

Next to these similarities, figurations of the kitchen and of the factory feature multiple interrelations and discursive exchanges, relationships that particularly unfold along the binary axis of private and public sphere that governs the period's thinking about gendered spheres of action. Texts that discuss the kitchen and kitchen labor tend to foreground the entire home, using domestic space as a projection screen for varying visions of the public sphere – from ideals or nightmares of slavery in novels, narratives, and advice originating from the slaveholding South, to blueprints for an expansive nation and models of an entrepreneurial society in texts set in the 'free' North. In these cross-mappings of the public and the domestic, the kitchen marks the home's periphery, its boundary to the public sphere which texts – depending on their politics – realize either as vulnerable to intrusion and contamination, or as strategically permeable to expand domestic territory or to assimilate outsiders. In addition, the kitchen's peripheral intra-domestic position – that texts articulate, e.g., by framing and contrasting the kitchen with other domestic spaces – serves as a key language for the articulation and authorization of social hierarchies, in ways that turn the home into a metaphor and microcosm of the nation.

Texts about the factory engage the axis of private versus public by conspicuously using the language of the domestic to signify and make sense of the newly emerging public sphere of industrial work. In a significant body of writing, literary encounters with 'the American factory' approach the industrial setting as feminine and employ the domestic as a touchstone for its representation – from the genteel visitors who admire the factory girls'[4] virginal beauty and virtue, reading their work as a preparation for matrimony, to the sensationalists' graphic narratives of young women left vulnerable outside their parental homes, seduced and ruined in the factory's licentious publicity; from women workers' own literary projects that try to claim the factory as a setting for both feminine

4 'Factory girls' or 'mill girls' was the term used in antebellum texts to refer to female, native-born industrial workers. Of course, the term is problematic for modern scholarly usage, and I find other designations whenever I address female workers as historical figures. However, I am using 'factory girls' as a label for the literary, and more broadly cultural, figure created in the texts I discuss.

virtue and authorship, to cultural elites' appropriation of the factory for contemplations about labor, art, and modulations of authorial voice. Taken together, these narratives engage the 'feminine factory' to conduct a lively debate about the meaning of industrialism for American culture – they expound the factory as supporting or threatening the nation, as preparing or disqualifying young women for lives of domesticity, as outlining the utopian integration of physical and intellectual labor or marking their most final and fatal disjunction.

With its interest in the class, racial, and nationalist politics of antebellum writing about women, this study situates itself within recent scholarship that revisits 19th-century women's culture from intersectional perspectives. Amy Kaplan's essay "Manifest Domesticity" and Lora Romero's book *Home Fronts* stand out among this scholarship for their programmatic critiques of the ways in which scholars have used the metaphor of 'separate spheres' as an explanatory paradigm of 19th-century culture. To do so, as Romero notes, means to perpetuate "the antebellum period's own dubious narrative about itself" (11). She insists that the 19th-century discourse of separate spheres, with its surface attention to gender difference only, actually addresses several other relationships of social inequality:

> the discourse on the domestic structures antebellum representations of a variety of sites of conflict. Antebellum authors use gender difference to stabilize categorical distinctions generated by their texts, including the opposition between power and resistance. (9)

Romero's book traces a range of such "sites of conflict" in which domesticity functions as a language for the negotiation of complex power relations – "the middle-class home, the frontier, African-American activism, social reform movements, and homosocial high culture" (7).

Proceeding from related assumptions, Kaplan's essay takes issue with the way in which 'separate spheres,' as an explanatory paradigm, has framed domesticity and imperialism as separate discourses. Not only do the two discourses simultaneously rise to cultural and political prominence in the antebellum decades as the 'Cult of True Womanhood' and 'Manifest Destiny,' Kaplan contends, they are also closely intertwined. Her readings outline how the antebellum imperial imaginary adopts the language of domesticity to imagine nationhood, to demarcate the boundary between the national and the extra-national, and to control the discursive elasticity and permeability of this boundary. Kaplan emphasizes that the domestic, in 19th-century texts, not only articulates gender difference:

> When we contrast the domestic sphere with the market or the political realm, men and women inhabit a divided social terrain, but when we oppose the domestic to the foreign, men and women become national allies against the alien,

> and the determining division is not gender but racial demarcations of otherness. (582)

Romero's and Kaplan's work has been highly influential in the evolution of a "post separate spheres criticism" (Davidson and Hatcher 12), that has explored how antebellum discourses of femininity, in a variety of settings and contexts, helped articulate, stabilize, or challenge other discourses of distinction, and how femininity thus performed crucial cultural work in the negotiation of manifold power relations. In the last two or three decades, this branch of scholarship has examined the role of gendered discourses in a range of 19th-century power relations and at several discursive intersections.[5] The discussion about intersections between gender and class has been notably less extensive: Amy Schrager Lang's *The Syntax of Class* is one of the few studies that discuss the formation of an American discourse of class from an intersectionalist perspective. Her argument that Americans – confronted with new realities of social inequality in the middle of the 19th century – generated a native discourse of class, to a significant extent, by drawing on a discourse of gender, is deeply relevant to my own project. However, as Lang traces this dynamic only in (more or less canonical) novels, her inquiry bypasses much of the material in which these negotiations take place. Intersections of gender and class are also addressed in the few studies dedicated to literature by and about working women, such as Amal Amireh's *The Factory Girl and the Seamstress* and Sylvia Jenkins Cook's *Working Women and Literary Ladies*. While Amireh compiles and discusses a most valuable genealogy of female working-class characters in mid-19th-century fiction, Cook's emphasis rests on the literary projects of female factory workers in the antebellum period and their challenge to class-distinctions between 'ladies' and 'mill girls.' My study hopes to contribute to this evolving scholarship, on the one hand, a close attention to the intersectional dynamics in figurations of women's work and the role spatial factors play there; and, on the other hand, an archive that reflects the diversity of material relevant to the phenomenon.

While certainly not striving for comprehensiveness, I compiled the archive for this project with an eye on this diversity. I trace the kitchen in domestic novels from the North and from the South, in pro- and anti-slavery fiction, in slave narratives, in cookbooks and domestic advice manuals. The factories I discuss find themselves in travelogues, sensation novels, in essays and short stories written by factory workers and by elite writers. This archive is thus diverse on several counts: in terms of its

5 Especially when considering work on both ante- and postbellum periods, this scholarship has become quite extensive. Monographs include, e.g., Karen Sànchez-Eppler's *Touching Liberty*, Jane Simonsen's *Making Home Work*, and Laura Wexler's *Tender Violence*.

authors' social backgrounds, of genre, of politics, and of cultural register. But there are patterns in this diversity, whose meanings I will explore in the course of my readings. For example, the vast majority of texts in my archive are written by women. In addition, the authorial personae of most texts identify as middle class, and whereas there is a substantial body of texts that speak from the perspective of factory workers, there is no comparable literature by kitchen workers. The diversity in what I called cultural register is also highly imbalanced – although a few texts in my archive are (or have become) canonical, most of them are situated in conventions of popular literature or even at the margins of conceptions of 'literature.'

Organizing this archive in a manner that is productive for my interests has been a challenge – its diversity, and the complexity of its cultural work that I want to explore, call for a complex principle of organization. I decided to combine three principles for the structuring of my material: one principle is genre or text type, the other two concern patterns in what I found to be key techniques by which the texts create the kitchen and the factory as textual spaces and charge them with cultural meanings – perspectives and frames. As I will discuss in greater detail later on, representations of space always proceed from and thus encode a particular perspective; they are always perspectivized. In addition, enclosed spaces like the kitchen and the factory receive their contours and much of their cultural meaning through framing – through the spaces in which they are embedded in one way or another. Perspectivizing and framing not only work on the formal level of language and texts, but also on the level of their socio-cultural semantics: Concrete physical spaces are culturalized through their correlation to more abstract social, political, cultural spaces – a dynamic I will describe through the concept of scales in chapter 2.1. Because socio-cultural framing, perspectivizing, and genre significantly contour the cultural work that antebellum texts on the kitchen and the factory perform, they will serve as the principles by which I structure my readings.

Framing, in this sense, is crucial for texts on the kitchen: They are greatly shaped by the labor system in which they embed their kitchens. Accordingly, my section on the kitchen is organized into two large chapters, one focusing on domestic economies that operate under chattel slavery, the other on family homes in the North's free-market capitalism. In the former chapter, I further cluster texts according to the social perspectives from which they speak – perspectives that chiefly differ along racial lines. In the latter, the social perspectives that texts encode are fairly homogeneous. My first subchapter there incorporates one of the few texts I found that speaks from the perspective of a kitchen worker – a ballad whose obscurity I will highlight – which I juxtapose to one of the period's bestselling domestic novels. Genre will allow me to further structure the material. Accordingly, my discussion of Euro-American perspectives on

"The House of Slavery" encompasses a chapter on domestic novels and one on cookbooks. Similarly, I divide the middle-class texts about "'Free' Homes" into domestic fiction – where, thanks to the large number of texts that this genre has produced, I focus on didactic domestic novels, a subgenre in which the kitchen plays a more prominent role – and, again, cookbooks.

The corpus of texts on the factory allows for a simpler principle of organization: They are most powerfully shaped by the socio-cultural perspectives from which they write the factory. Perspective determines the frames in which texts embed the factory, and perspective also coincides with particular literary forms. The first chapter in this section discusses two genres that situate themselves outside of the factory, "Looking In" with differently colored gazes – "Travelogues" and "Sensation Novels." The second subchapter turns to texts whose authorial personae identify as workers, writing the factory – and their own subject positions – by way of "Looking Out." Finally, I read two short-stories that engage with the factory from a perspective of artistic self-reflection, that ask what it means to turn the sites of industrial modernity into objects of art and what such artistic representation can contribute to social discussions of the nation's modernization.

I will preface these readings with a discussion of scholarship from which they draw conceptual and interpretive impulses. This is, first, work on the poetics and politics of space. I begin there by succinctly outlining narratological concepts that allow me to describe how the texts in my archive create, structure, and correlate spaces. A more extensive section in this chapter is then dedicated to scholarship on the politics of space, where I focus on approaches to built, especially domestic space. Second, I turn to discussions of class in the antebellum United States – historical, cultural, and literary scholarship that examines the complex and contentious processes in which America, in this period, struggled for a language to talk about social inequality. My particular focus there rests, on the one hand, on work that addresses the discursive and symbolic dimension of these processes – work, i.e., that centers on the role of literature – and on the other hand, on research that discusses the intersectional dynamics of class formation in the antebellum decades.

2 Theories, Histories, Contexts

2.1 The Poetics and Politics of (Built) Space

In the course of the 'spatial turn,' spatial structures, practices, representations, and imaginaries have received a new quality of attention in the humanities. The call of human geographers like Edward Soja to more strongly consider the historical, political, and cultural relevance of spatial categories resonated with various existing traditions of thinking about space in the different humanities disciplines. Both literary studies and interdisciplinary American Studies – the two immediate disciplinary contexts of my project – look back on robust traditions of inquiry organized around spatial categories, some of which became re-energized in the wake of the 'spatial turn,' while others continued to thrive independently of it.[6] In the following, I want to sketch the conceptual discussions and lines of inquiry concerning space on which my subsequent readings will draw. There are two conceptual contexts that are of particular interest for me: one, ideas about the construction of space in (literary) texts, about its techniques and poetics; and, two, lines of inquiry regarding the culturalization of space and/in (American) literature, its meaning-making and political valences, with a particular emphasis on scholarship that focuses on built, domestic space.

Asking about academic reflections on the poetics of space, of course, immediately invokes Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. Yet contrary to what its title suggests, this book is not so much concerned with the formal means by which literary texts 'make' spaces, but rather with a phenomenological exploration of how space is experienced. More specifically, the book offers a meditation on the significance of the home's spatiality for the experience and imagination of intimacy. Bachelard's classic work had an impact well beyond the confines of philosophy, also in literary studies where it influenced, for example, Ellen Eve Frank's concept of 'literary architecture.' Frank introduces this term to trace a genealogy of,

6 In American Studies, the reach of 'space' as a conceptual term is too vast to allow even as much as a nod to its scholarship. Two notable recent publications in the field are Shelley Fisher Fishkin's *Writing America*, which discusses a selection of places that have shaped, and been shaped by, American literature; and Martin Brückner and Hsuan Hsu's *American Literary Geographies,* which considers the impulses that the 'spatial turn' offers American Studies scholarship. In literary studies, it has been especially German publications that address the spatial turn's impact on the discipline. See, e.g., Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann's *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur.*

in her words, "the habit of comparison between architecture and literature" (3). The center of her interest firmly rests on modernist literature, where she discerns a new, experimental use of architectural metaphors and patterns that New Critic Joseph Frank had previously theorized as "spatial form," a de-emphasis of the temporal logic that governs narrative and concomitant interest in simultaneity, fragmentation, etc. The literary scholarship inspired by Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* thus primarily uses space in a metaphorical manner to think about literary form.

More pertinent to this project's concerns, the field of narratology has accommodated extensive discussions of how literary texts construct spaces, especially in its branch of cognitive narratology. One of its most prominent representatives is David Herman, whose influential concept of 'storyworld' focuses on the dynamics by which textual elements evoke spatial images in the minds of readers. Herman defines storyworlds as

> mental models of the situations and events being recounted – of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what manner. Reciprocally, narrative artifacts . . . provide blueprints for the creation and modification of such mentally configured storyworlds. ("Narrative Ways" 73; cf. also *Story Logic*)

Although Herman's chief interest in mental processes and the textual signals that trigger them is not mine, his conception of narrative as a practice of "worldmaking" provides a valuable cue for the present project.

While one of the advantages of Herman's 'storyworld' is its comprehensive understanding of space in narrative, this 'global' quality also calls for ways to distinguish between the different levels or layers of the worlds that texts make. Marie-Laure Ryan suggests a five-level model of what she calls "narrative space"; her remarks are worth quoting at length:

> (a) *Spatial frames*: the immediate surroundings of actual events, the various locations shown by the narrative discourse or by the image. . . . They are hierarchically organized by relations of containment (a room is a subspace of a house), and their boundaries may be either clear-cut (the bedroom is separated from the salon by a hallway) or fuzzy (e.g. a landscape may slowly change as a character moves through it). . . .
> (b) *Setting*: the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place. In contrast to spatial frames, this is a relatively stable category that embraces the entire text. . . .
> (c) *Story space*: the space relevant to the plot, as mapped by the actions and thoughts of characters. It consists of all the spatial frames plus all the locations mentioned by the text that are not the scene of actually occurring events. . . .
> (d) *Narrative (or story) world*: the story space completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real world experience. . . .
> (e) *Narrative universe*: the world . . . presented as actual by the text, plus all the counterfactual worlds constructed by characters as beliefs, wishes, fears, speculations, hypothetical thinking, dreams, and fantasies. (par. 6-10)

Ryan here provides a compelling model for thinking through the scope and internal textures of narrative spaces. Of particular relevance for my concerns is, first, the direction she attends to the qualities of spatial frames: Both the boundedness and boundaries of textual spaces she highlights and their hierarchical organization into framing spaces and framed subspaces play significant roles in the textualization of kitchens and factories. They not only demarcate them as 'containers' for narrative events, boundaries and relationships of containment are also central elements that texts use to charge figurations of kitchen and factory with cultural meaning. Second, her definition of story space highlights how the narrative space of a given text can go beyond the spatial structures that are directly represented, including sites invoked yet left invisible by the text's language. Figurations of the kitchen and the factory prominently entail such 'invisibilized' elements of story space, patterns of dis-representation and concealment that are important for the texts' meaning-making. Finally, her description of the different layers or horizons of narrative space enables a discussion of their mutual relationships in a given text – relationships that resonate with Hsuan L. Hsu's notion of "spatial scales" as key elements of literature's spatial imaginary: Hsu, who specifically talks about 19th-century American literature, argues that these texts interlace in their narrative spaces different spatial scales – "domestic, regional, and global" (6) – in ways that advance particular interpretations of abstract, politically potent spatial concepts such as 'nation' or 'home.' Texts about the kitchen and the factory centrally rely on such interlacing, inviting readers to correlate the concretely rendered spatial frames, invisible elements of the story space, hypothetical, often idealized or normative spaces evoked in the texts, and the "socio-historico-geographical" constructs that they are all mobilized to signify.

While the scope of narrative space, its levels and their interrelationships, are one important aspect of the poetics of space in literature, its textual rendition is another. In contrast to visual media of representation, texts unfold spaces in the temporal progression of language use. Narrative scholars often distinguish between static and dynamic uses of language for spatial representation. The key static technique is, of course, description[7] – a mode of language use that is actually antithetical to narrative's event-orientation, yet that still plays a central role in narrative texts. Ryan defines instances of description as working toward the creation of *narrative* space when they are put to some sort of narrative use (par. 11). This delineation of narrative space – vis-a-vis other types of textual space – as solely requiring a degree of narrativity covers all the material in this study's archive, including the advice manuals and cookbooks which, as Susan

7 On a micro-level, the distinction between static and dynamic modes typically translates into the distinction between description and narration. On more macro-levels, it is addressed, e.g., in linguists Charlotte Linde and William Labov's model of map vs. tour. See also Marie-Laure Ryan par. 20.

Leonardi influentially argued, operate as embedded discourse in which instruction is framed by narrative.

The dynamic techniques of space construction are rather tied to narration. Ryan identifies, for example, "object or character movements . . . ; characters' perceptions . . . ; narrativized descriptions . . . ; and implications from reports of events" (par. 19) as formal means by which texts dynamically create spaces. While this is probably no exhaustive list, it alerts to the diversity of strategies by which texts can 'map' locations, to the kinds of spatial practices that contribute to the construction of space in literature. It also highlights how the textual production of space is tied to characters – characters who navigate the space, who traverse or are confined by its boundaries, who materially create or change the space, who inscribe the space with particular actions and modes of conduct. In many texts, spaces and characters signify each other.

The communicative effects of static as well as dynamic techniques crucially depend on the use of perspective – an aspect narratologists typically describe through the terminology of narration, i.e. voice, and focalization. Perspective, which is inevitable in representations and perceptions of space, calibrates the textualized space for the reader in terms of center and margins. It regulates closeness and distance to spatial phenomena. Uses of perspective stitch human actants – characters, narrators, implied readers – into the social fabric of the textualized spaces, by dramatizing who does and who does not get access to certain locations, who may look and who gets looked at, who may traverse the storyworld along what routes and who is confined to immobility.

What brings me to these concepts and considerations, in contrast to many narratologists, is not the goal to systematically describe the formal properties of space in literature, but the assumption that the formal means by which texts create spaces and the textures of their spatial representations structure their meaning-making and cultural work. Next to the scholarship on the poetics of space in literature, there is a vibrant tradition of inquiry into the social and political meanings that spaces in literature have communicated, which offers both valuable conceptual cues and interpretive horizons for my project. Much of this research proceeds from the New-Historicist assumption that the meaning-making of narrative spaces is in close conversation with extra-literary discourses and practices concerning spatial formations, and that uncovering these semantic exchanges throws into relief the politics of spatial imaginaries. This focus on the politics of narrative spaces also brings much of this scholarship to the question how space and character are interrelated in particular literary traditions, and how textualizations of space thus fuel constructions of social subjectivities. As this criticism tends to examine specific spaces and conventions of their textualization, I will focus my survey on discussions of enclosed, built

space – most of which address the space of the family home that also provides the spatial touchstone for most of my material.

A study whose title already announces its relevance for my project is Marilyn Chandler's *Dwelling in the Text.* Chandler there explores literary representations of domestic spaces, asking in particular for the cultural reasons behind the prominent role houses play in American literature. Her explanation points to the nation's mythology: Its foregrounding of homesteading practices – of claiming territory by settling it, of transforming wilderness into national territory by way of domestication – has had a significant impact on the nation's literary imagination, she argues. Chandler is especially interested in the ways in which such cultural master narratives inform uses of domestic structures for the writing of literary characters. Her readings suggest that the houses American literature has created are mobilized to signify several aspects of personhood: identity figured in psychological as well as social ways, bodily appearances, histories, memories, values and virtues. Most significantly for my project, the national master narratives Chandler identifies as the gravitational center of the symbolic exchanges between literary characters and literary houses accommodate masculine as well as feminine subjectivities – 'homesteading' and 'domesticating' represent sufficiently distinct yet complimentary practices that reconcile gender difference with a shared national identity. In fact, gender emerges as a key fault line in the literary constructions of domestic space studied by Chandler: While male characters tend to be associated with literary houses through the trope of home-ownership, the trope of housekeeping mostly serves this function for female characters.

One of the great accomplishments of Chandler's book is the attention it directs to housekeeping as a spatial practice and symbolic link between the narrative space of houses and character-formation. Housekeeping – which, as my readings in chapter 3.2 will outline, emerges as a distinct and powerful discourse in the 19th century[8] – offers potent scripts for feminine subjectivities, staged within and by domestic space. Most significantly for my project – though irrelevant in Chandler's inquiry – the discourse of housekeeping allows for the elaboration of social differences within notions of womanhood: It provides for different scripts of femininity that emerge in the interplay between intra-domestic spaces and the distinct social roles of mistress and servant.

The gender-narratives that houses as narrative spaces potentially emplot are also at the center of Milette Shamir's "Divided Plots."[9] Her essay, focusing on antebellum American literature and culture, is specifically interested in the meanings attached to intra-domestic divisions, both in

8 In her genealogy of representations of domesticity in U.S. culture, Kathleen McHugh locates the beginnings of a distinct discourse of housekeeping in the antebellum period; cf. 15-59.

literature and in discourses about domestic architecture. Shamir diagnoses "a material and metaphorical division of the house's interior between feminine and masculine realms" (434), which, she argues, performs important cultural work in antebellum culture by managing antagonistic narratives of 'home': "visions of a romantic interiority *and* of self-denying morality, visions of the ideal of solitude *and* the ideal of intimacy" (ibid.). These two narratives – respectively sustained by contemporary discourses of (masculine) romantic individualism and domestic femininity (433) – are specifically tied to two rooms within the antebellum home, the study and the parlor. The cultural construction of these rooms, Shamir notes, is suffused with gender discourses: While the study is conceived as a space dedicated to man's withdrawal and privacy, the parlor is defined as a social space where not only the members of the family would gather but where also guests would be received.

While much antebellum literature seems to present the home as a unified space, Shamir alerts to the role that spatial distinctions within the home play in some texts, where they help elaborate, both, different narratives of 'home' and different scripts of selfhood.[10] Shamir's readings imply that antebellum culture not only employs the distinction between public and private to articulate a binary model of gender, but that it uses distinctions within the private sphere to the same end. This usage disturbs the discourse of separate spheres in interesting ways. It suggests that 'home' can mean different things in the contexts of femininity and masculinity: For man, Shamir concludes, the meaning of home is predicated on individual privacy and juxtaposed to the public world of business and politics. For woman, home is not a place of withdrawal and individuation but one where she dispenses affection, maintains family and social ties, and manages intimacy.

Shamir's inquiry into feminine and masculine 'home plots' also raises the question by what cultural logic domestic space is charged with gender and vice versa, how texts encourage a semantic relationship between 'home' and gendered notions of selfhood. The new ideas of selfhood that developed in the early 19th century seem to play a central role in this context, their foundation on notions of interiority whose conceptual debt to emergent ideas of domestic privacy has been studied so cogently by Gillian Brown:[11] Domestic space lends itself to figuring individual identity, she argues, because the very idea of an individual identity has been shaped by

9 The essay eventually became part of her monograph *Inexpressible Privacy*, in which she undertook a more comprehensive interrogation of discursive and material practices involved in 19th-century constructions of privacy.

10 Another study that asks for the meaning-making potential of spatial distinctions within the antebellum home is Ken Egan's *The Riven Hom*e. He argues that the period's literature reiterates narratives of internally divided homes to work through contemporary political tensions.

antebellum concepts of the home as private space. And while Brown highlights only the significance of interiority for definitions of the masculine self, other scholarship suggests that also ideas of feminine selfhood build on an ideal of interiority that resonates with notions of domestic space, albeit in very different ways. As Lora Romero and others observe, the model woman in antebellum America distinguishes herself neither by her skills nor by her actions but by having internalized a set of values that enable her to "feel right," to quote from Stowe's paradigmatic *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cf. Romero 25). This specifically feminine interiority, as internalization of particular values, no less than constitutes the 'home' elaborated by the antebellum discourse of domesticity. In what appears paradoxical given the period's explosion of texts that discuss the home's physical features, the domestic, homely qualities of 'home' do not primarily reside in the properties of a given space – its architecture, the objects with which it is furnished. In the cultural logic of the antebellum period, they are rather produced by the presence of a model woman who transforms spaces into homes by embodying the values of domesticity, investing the spaces around her with the canonical virtues of familial affection and Christian faith.[12] Notions of 'home' and notions of gendered selfhood are thus mutually constitutive in antebellum culture.

Gillian Brown's *Domestic Individualism* provides the most comprehensive account of this interplay between narratives of domestic space and narratives of selfhood that are inflected by gender and other categories of social difference. For example, she interrogates how Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* employs domestic settings and narratives of housekeeping to unfold an argument against slavery – a text and topicality that I will also address in my readings. Brown contends that the novel does not so much criticize slavery for turning human beings into property as it indicts (some) slaveholders with treating their property in the wrong way, as tradable commodities. Instead of the commodification associated with the marketplace, Stowe's text advances an ideal of property-relations situated in the domestic sphere, which Brown terms "sentimental ownership" (40). Sentimental ownership, which redefines property relations as affective investment and maternal care, surfaces throughout *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It figures in the scene set in Rachel Halliday's kitchen where everything – "children, utensils, and food" – are

11 Albeit working with British material and covering a longer time span, Charlotte Grant's inquiry into literary representations of the family home also diagnoses an "association between the representation in fiction of a character's internal mental state, self-awareness or interiority, and a focus on the interior, specifically the domestic interior" (235).

12 Lori Merish, whose work on middle-class formation will be discussed in chapter 2.2, notes that, in antebellum domestic literature, domestic objects require sentimental investment – they need to be charged with affective value, typically by way of domestic woman's sentimental touches (*Sentimental* 135-90).

"inspirited with love and generosity" (Brown 42); in Ophelia's efforts to reform Dinah's kitchen, efforts at orderliness that echo the domestic advice writing by Stowe and Catherine Beecher who insist that furniture and utensils must be cared for; in Mrs. Shelby's relationship to her slaves as "treasured objects" who "[,]through [Mrs. Shelby's] proper valuation of their objecthood [...,] become entitled to the rights of individuals" (ibid.). In Brown's reading of Stowe, then, the ideal woman projects and 'keeps' an ideal home, which, in turn, serves as a model for the nation's public sphere.

This cultural conception of domestic space that Brown describes – as a spatial projection of the ideal woman's virtues and values – requires that certain labors necessary for its physical production and maintenance are concealed. Brown identifies this concealment as a major project in antebellum domestic writing, not only in the fictions but also in the advice writing and guide books that ostensibly focus precisely on the mundane and practical aspects of the home. She primarily traces the cultural mandate for this concealment to the ideology of separate spheres, which defines the home in opposition to the marketplace. However, the kitchen in the antebellum home not only signifies labor relations that need to be rendered invisible, it is also associated with certain types of laborers whose presence disturbs definitions of 'home' as a space of familial affection. As historian Faye Dudden notes, the antebellum period marks a transition in the recruitment of domestic workers in non-slaveholding states from a neighborhood-system of 'help' toward a system of contractual employment dominated by recently immigrated, especially Irish, employees (44-71). Like the slaves of African ancestry who predominantly perform domestic labor in the South, the immigrant domestics of the North represent an element of foreignness within the American home, to which domestic discourse, as Amy Kaplan argues, responds with a good deal of anxiety (589-91). In the context of discourses about, and architectural practices related to, the home's internal organization into distinct spaces, the kitchen thus emerges as a site that uncomfortably reminds of the home's continuity with the public sphere, a place of intrusions and contaminations that need to be concealed for the home to receive its 'homely' qualities.

While the scholarship I surveyed so far addresses how antebellum culture imagines homeliness, and how this imaginary is tied to spatial discourses and practices, another line of inquiry explores moments in which these norms of homeliness get disturbed. Most pertinently for my concerns, Homi Bhabha uses the concept of the 'unhomely' to discuss how (postcolonial) texts use domestic settings and metaphors for the articulation of hopes and anxieties associated with (post-)colonial experiences – experiences of migration, transculturation, enslavement that also mark both the kitchen and the factory in the antebellum United States. Much postcolonial scholarship points to the special significance attributed to 'home' in the context of narratives of displacement – its association with belonging, with roots, "the very antithesis of travel" (George 2). 'Home,' in

the literal but also metaphorical sense as 'home-country' or 'home-culture,' denotes what the migrant leaves behind, a coding captured in the critical metaphor of the 'unhoming' of the postcolonial subject. It is against this background that Bhabha adapts Sigmund Freud's concept of the 'uncanny' (*unheimlich*), highlighting the term's original pun on 'home' (*Heim*) as the quintessential space of the familiar in which the repressed can manifest itself in uncanny ways. For the postcolonial subject[13] – whose travels both mark a loss of home and are motivated by the desire for a new home – the home figures as an overdetermined space in which the unspeakable episodes of her/his colonial experience may erupt into signification. In Bhabha's words:

> "unhomeliness" [is] inherent in that rite of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation. The recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. (9)

Bhabha's readings of literary texts from a variety of cultural contexts outline how domestic space again and again furnishes the stage where the traumas and conflicts of colonial history burst into characters' lives. In the language of 'separate spheres,' the 'unhomely' derives its power as a narrative technique from staging disturbances of the boundary between private and public. These narrative transgressions, and the collapse of the boundary between private and public they dramatize in often spectacular ways, Bhabha's word-choice suggests, work by way of disfiguration – they signify history as "displacement," providing narratives of the (post-)colonial experience that are both "divided" and "disorienting." Bhabha's reflections on literary homes in narratives of unhomeliness thus alert to another layer of cultural work entailed in textual figurations of domestic spaces: These spaces may not only provide an assertive language of self-fashioning but also lend expression to cultural anxieties; they may not only work by mimetic referencing but also by the variable dynamics of displacement.[14]

As noted above, 'home,' in postcolonial studies, refers to a bounded, fixed place and thus marks the negative foil against which the scholarship explores narratives of mobility, in-betweenness, and hybridity. Sara Ahmed notes: "home . . . becomes associated with stasis, boundaries, identity and fixity. Home is implicitly constructed as a purified space of belonging in which the subject is too comfortable to question the limits or borders of her

13 Bhabha's account encourages a very broad understanding of that term, encompassing all kinds of traveling and culture-crossing subjects. He uses Henry James's novel *The Portrait of a Lady* and its protagonist Isabelle Archer to make this point.

or his experience" (339). While this connotation of 'home' results from its conception as a unified space, which is then juxtaposed to the mobility afforded by the world beyond its boundaries, Bhabha argues that intra-domestic spatial formations can also provide a language for figurations of mobility. Symptomatically, it is not the 'major' rooms like parlor and study that arrest his attention in this context but the stairwell:

> The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. . . . (4)

Whereas bounded rooms like study and parlor may map "fixed identifications," Bhabha highlights the spaces that separate, connect, constitute them. He emphasizes both the way in which the major architectural categories of rooms and floors are defined by the spaces outside and in between them, and the processual quality of these definitions, the signifying effort that goes into their elaboration, to which the home's interstitial and peripheral spaces bear physical witness. Domestic architecture accommodates plenty of such spaces – passageways, corners, nooks – and the stairwell is possibly the most dramatic of them in that it accentuates and bridges not only horizontal but also vertical distinctions within the house.

Next to thus de-naturalizing the fixed identities that 'major' rooms seem to map, the 'minor' spaces that Bhabha foregrounds also accommodate other, 'minority,' subjectivities and histories. We can expect to find other experiences and subjectivities than the scripts of bourgeois masculinity and femininity once we look beyond the antebellum study and parlor. Yet while Bhabha emphasizes the subversive potential that rests in the 'presencing' of such experiences, it is important to keep in mind that the language that articulates liminal subjectivities may be historically inscribed by oppression and exploitation. The stairwell is, again, a case in point: As much as it may symbolize subversive identifications in-between the

14 *The Architectural Uncanny*, by architectural historian Anthony Vidler, provides an interesting example how such a concept of the unhomely can be applied to the reading of physical spaces. Vidler historicizes the notion of the family home as the essential locus of middle-classness in the 19th century and argues that its uncanny invasions – proliferating in literary as well as architectural styles – may have lent expression to "a fundamental insecurity: that of a newly established class, not quite at home in its own home. . . . The uncanny, in this sense, might be characterized as the quintessential bourgeois kind of fear" (3-4).

polarities of hegemonic discourse, it also represents historically situated rituals of social distinction and sites of exploitation. When, in the U.S. in the first half of the 19th century, kitchens are relegated to basements, backs of houses, or separate buildings, the crossing of passageways and climbing of stairs becomes a major component of domestic labor, both element of the worker's exploitation and conspicuous performance of her social subjugation. In dwellings created by and maintained on the basis of (colonial) power relations, peripheral and interstitial spaces are doubly coded as sites generated by and enforcing oppressive power relations, and as potential emblems of minority subjectivities.

Bhabha's stairwell in particular encourages an approach to the cultural reading of narrative spaces that focuses on the three-dimensional arrangement of spatial items and the structures that allow for their navigation. In exemplary fashion, the stairwell highlights the way in which the textualization of (domestic) spaces is always bound to the experiences of subjects who navigate the space – by looking at it, moving through it, interacting with it. Feminist and postcolonial scholarship have extensively discussed how the gaze – encoded in perspectivizations of space – operates as a form of power that plays a central role in how patriarchal and colonial cultures produce cultural differences. Mary Louise Pratt, in her study of colonial travel writing, argues that colonial landscapes and subjects are constructed by way of specific looking-relations, at whose center stands the "seeing-man [...,] the European male subject of European landscape discourse – he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (7). The "seeing-man's" visual authority, which the spatial imaginary of travel narratives textualizes, chiefly articulates the colonial asymmetry of 'civilized' self and 'savage' other, but it also resonates with the asymmetry of gender, whose maintenance by way of a 'male gaze' has been discussed by feminist scholars like Laura Mulvey. Pratt's analyses expose an intimate connection between looking, writing, and claims of ownership: The traveler's gaze conditions his writing of colonial territory, and his writing, in turn, manifests his gaze. Both looking and writing work as acts of appropriation; through them, the travel-writer takes possession of the territory.

Such questions of perspective and appropriation by way of looking and/or writing are also relevant in the narrative spaces I will be reading, although their spatial and political dynamics are quite different from Pratt's colonial landscapes. The homes and home-like factories I will discuss are, too, conditioned by the subjectivity that 'sees' and writes them, and vice versa. They are structured, both, by hierarchical spatial relations – rooms within houses, buildings on the factory compound – and in terms of areas that do or do not yield to the gaze of narrators (and characters). The conditions of their narrative accessibility exhibit different – and always 'telling' – modes in which characters and spaces interact with and constitute each other, and these modes strongly resonate with discourses of