The Species Line: A Literary and Environmental History of White Flight

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
(English)

at the
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
2020

Date of final oral examination: 05/07/2019

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION: WRITING WHITE FLIGHT

White flight is a phenomenon that takes place in language as well as American neighborhoods. As a historical and sociological term, white flight usually describes the unprecedented demographic shifts of white Americans in the 1940s and 1950s away from the cities and into often newly-constructed suburban communities. But, beyond the movement of people, white flight invokes the ongoing processes that create and sustain exclusionary spaces. This dissertation examines how ideas about the whiteness of suburban spaces spread and how these racialized spaces were enforced by looking to the pivotal role of nuisances in suburban literature. By bringing together social and environmental hazards, nuisances work to define what and who is proper to suburbia. Reading short stories, plays, poems, novels, and archival materials, I show how these suburban texts reveal and respond to the nuisance politics becoming ever more prominent and powerful in the daily lives of Americans at midcentury. In particular, I focus on how animal nuisances act as a shorthand for racial and economic exclusions and on the force of these nuisances in perpetuating social and environmental injustices.

Policing and racializing animals went hand in hand with suburban development in intimate and material ways. Housing policies with a class and racial bias explicitly restricted the presence of animals in suburban neighborhoods, aiming to discourage what Abraham Levitt (of Levittown) referred to in a newspaper interview as "Goatvilles" and what one California housing official characterized as an "infiltration of goats, rabbits, and dark-skinned babies" (quoted in Sellers 2012; quoted in Nicolaides 193). Building the postwar suburbs and sustaining these deliberately racially and economically homogenous and discriminatory communities meant policing both human and nonhuman animals. Often in the same breath, housing segregation was

justified by appeals to pests and infestations as well as humans perceived as invasive nuisances and dangers to white residents. For instance, a 1933 report by a Baltimore, Maryland housing committee described Black neighborhoods as hazardous in overlapping ways, "warning that infections could spread to white and affluent areas via the bodies of domestic workers, food handlers, laundresses – and rats" (Biehler 116). This project charts the construction and proliferation of a new suburban imaginary, made sensible by a regime of nuisances in which human and nonhuman animals are forcibly bound up in the fortunes of a community.[1] How did ideas about the whiteness of suburban spaces spread? How did some animals come to be understood, both legally and socially, as nuisances? These questions may seem unrelated, but they are not. The twentieth-century process of defining animal nuisances is intimately connected with the national and homegrown project to define the suburbs as an environmentally and racially homogenous space.

In giving this more-than-human account of white flight, this dissertation chronicles both a national and a literary history, showing how these new suburban communities depend on nonhuman animals to shape and police their boundaries and how midcentury American writers respond to this new politics of the animal nuisance. "The Species Line" is a critical examination of the racialized animal rhetoric at the heart of the American suburban project in the literary output produced during the height of white flight by four American writers: Shirley Jackson, Lorraine Hansberry, Ray Bradbury, and Sylvia Plath. I explore how these mid-twentieth-century writers respond to the new geographical and cultural boundaries made visible, and made impossible to ignore, as industrialized agriculture and suburbanization restructure the American

[1] By using the phrase 'made sensible', I mean to build upon Jacques Rancière's idea of a "partition of the sensible" and the conventional political wisdom that polices and silences some forms of discourse (the nonhuman potential of which was explored by Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter*).

landscape. In tracing the importance of species boundaries and animal figures in American narratives of white flight from the long 1950s, I show how redlining and white flight depend on promoting a racialized anxiety about nonhumans.

The Species Line as a Tool Perpetuating the Color Line

Focusing on animal figures does not, in this case, mean primarily focusing on fables, parables, or animals as stand-ins for humans, though these mechanisms can all be fruitful approaches to understanding the role of animals in shaping our human narratives.[2] Rather, this project is concerned primarily with understanding the historically, legally, and culturally situated use of animal figures to perpetuate the color line.

By the color line, I refer to the term made concrete by W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Building on Frederick Douglass's use of the idea of a color line, Du Bois framed the color line as a cause and perpetrator of racial segregation and injustice, rather than an unavoidable consequence. The color line is not a passive, inert, historical phenomena but instead an actively maintained, coercive, and ongoing geographical and cultural segregation— establish by a "veil," at first, and in his later formulations, by a physical barrier that did not permit sound to carry. In the context of the 1950s, the color line's geographical segregation and attendant physical violence, economic dispossession, and cultural devaluation underwrote and propelled the racist project of white suburbia.

In this sense, I understand what I am calling the species line as a mechanism of differentiation along racial lines that is a tool to perpetuate the color line, rooted in racist

[2] A set of distinctions I return to throughout. For more on the implications of animals that are not figures, see Derrida (2008).

assumptions about the proximity between Black people and animals, and the whiteness of American domesticity. This project emphasizes how entangled the color line is in 20th-century modern American suburban neighborhoods (with help from, I argue, the species line): the laws governing them, the social customs driving them, the economic and political ideologies perpetuating them, and the literature relating them.

The suburban biopolitics[3] of the species line govern the daily lives and police the broader horizon of possibilities for movement, both geographically and economically, for Black Americans in the mid-twentieth century and in the decades since. I argue that the literature of the long 1950s signposts the emergence of a new species-line, an apparatus of differentiation that continues to divide American neighborhoods along racial and economic lines today. I examine how the legal and cultural policing of animal bodies in the postwar years set the stage for a new "species-line," a term invoking the entanglement of species, race, class, and housing in modern American literature. Rather than referring to a zoological distinction, the term is meant to foreground how suburban narratives depend on the language of species, as both a temporal and spatial infrastructure and as a shorthand for racial and economic exclusions.

The divisions of the color line and segregated suburban neighborhoods are intimately linked not only in the nature of the violence but in the environmental figures of nonhuman nuisances like blight and urban jungle used to define these spaces. As Charles Mills suggests in *The Racial Contract* and as I will expand on in my chapters that follow, "the jungle, so to speak, is always waiting to reassert itself… the growing postwar popularity of the locution of 'urban

[3] By the term suburban biopolitics, I mean to emphasize how the suburbs are a space sustained by putting life in order – both human and animal life. In "Society Must Be Defended," Foucault makes a distinction between the power of discipline (concerned with bodies) and the regularization of biopolitics, in which "bodies are replaced by general biological processes" (249), and describes a form of biopolitics that is invested in controlling the environment around the human population (e.g. draining swamps in the name of public health).The divisions of the species-line are both environmental and racial, using race as a mechanism of differentiation between populations.

jungle' reflects a subtextual (and not very sub-) reference to the increasing nonwhiteness of the residents of the inner cities, and the corresponding pattern of 'white flight' to suburban vanilla sanctuary" (49).[4] As Kimberly Smith argues in *African-American Environmental Thought*, the more pernicious force than the amorphous 'blight' is racial oppression, which turns what could be flourishing neighborhoods into a "decaying landscape of unsafe buildings, poisoned air, and toxic earth, demanding both political and environmental reform" (186). These animal figures and nonhuman nuisances work to perpetuate the racialized spaces of white flight; suburban literature is thus a literature of environmental injustice.

Literary and Legal Nuisances

Nuisances have a pivotal role in articulating color and class lines in twentieth and twenty-first-century American neighborhoods and perpetuating environmental injustices even as they purport to identify and exclude them. By a nuisance, I refer both to the legal categories of nuisance law—first developed in the late Middle Ages as a way to resolve disputes between neighbors about incompatible or harmful uses of property—and to the colloquial, quotidian understanding of a nuisance, as something wrong or incorrect or improper.

How do things and people become nuisances? Who decides? What broader implications does this classification and category have? These are questions of conventional interest to legal scholars, but more and more important to environmental historians. In an article tracking forty-six nuisance cases in the late 1800s and the ongoing implications of nuisance law for environmental justice today, environmental historian Christine Meisner Rosen argues that

[4] For more on "jungle discourse" and how it has been used by white writers and politicians to justify racism and racist legislation, see Lundblad's *The Birth of the Jungle* which traces this discourse from Darwin to 19th-century literature.

looking to nuisance law can reveal "how people made sense of… environmental problems" (564). And yet, throughout these cases, what becomes clear is how up for debate the idea of a nuisance is. Benjamin Pope's 1919 compilation of legal terms defines a nuisance as "whatever is offensive, physically, to the senses, and by such offensiveness makes life uncomfortable" (1041). John Bouvier's 1934 Law Dictionary addresses this uncertainty openly, broadly defining a nuisance as "anything that unlawfully worketh hurt, inconvenience, or damage" while also acknowledging that "it is difficult to say what degree of annoyance constitutes a nuisance" and that "a thing may be a nuisance in one place which is not so in another" (861).

In other words, almost anything or anyone could become a nuisance in the (in)appropriate context. But the enforcement of nuisance law, as I will describe throughout, has not been class- or race-neutral. To be a nuisance is to become a criminal, and as Michelle Alexander argues in *The New Jim Crow*, the role of criminality in policing African American communities acts as a new version of racial segregation: "the stigma of criminality functions in much the same way that the stigma of race once did. It justifies a legal, social, and economic boundary between "us" and "them"" (18). Alexander traces a history from runaway slave laws to vagrancy laws to the "black codes" of the Jim Crow era to contemporary nuisance laws and racially-discriminatory tactics like 'broken windows' policing. The idea of a nuisance, in this context, is a race-neutral device (on its face) that is applied in racist and racially-biased ways. The nuisance enables legalized discrimination, by turning a wide range of actions, and sometimes mere existence, into potential crimes. The midcentury American suburbs bear this out, as residents and developers depend on a vernacular of criminality and nuisances to enforce boundaries. In this context, nuisances become legible by way of zoning laws and housing restrictions that police who and what are appropriate to American spaces and places, a set of attitudes further cemented by a

series of court decisions in the early twentieth-century that defined a nuisance in the legal sense at both federal and state levels.

The concept of the nuisance is taken up by white residents and neighborhood associations to express racialized and class-based desires about what makes a proper neighborhood in terms of environmental threats. As housing policies and concerns about zoning, property rights, and homeownership became increasingly part and parcel of the fabric of daily life in midcentury America, the influence of a legal discourse about nuisances on public rhetoric is evident in editorials, petitions, protests, local housing rules, and literature.[5] Across the midcentury U.S., suburban communities created and enforced a series of ordinances that borrowed from a legal understanding of nuisances to describe tanneries, slaughterhouses, gunpowder manufacturing facilities and Black neighbors as equivalent nuisances.

In seeking language to distinguish the new suburban developments from the farms they had replaced and the cities they had abandoned, suburban writers developed a discourse about more-than-human nuisances that (implicitly and explicitly) serves to enforce class and color lines. The writers I will discuss in subsequent chapters engage not only with the material experience of the changes in American industry and domesticity at midcentury, but also the ways in which this language and logic circulates.

The project joins in the growing scholarly consensus that academics must respond to contemporary crises by reconsidering our cultural and scholarly attitudes toward the environment and what is natural. What can a literary study reveal about white flight that might be overlooked by traditional historical or sociological research? While the notion of the nuisance is important

[5] For more on the interplay between public rhetoric, public space, and housing development, see Dorst's *The Written Suburbs* and Rice's *Distant Publics*, both enthnographic studies.

for scholars in law, environmental history, sociology, and critical race studies, it is often overlooked in literary studies. This dissertation intervenes in and is indebted to existing scholarship in three primary areas: American literary criticism, environmental history, and animal studies.

American literary criticism

One goal of this research is to unsettle the predominant assumptions readers and critics make when encountering suburban fiction. Narrow views of suburban writing in existing criticism paint the literary output of suburban communities with the same brush as the stereotypical suburbia, as materialistic, apolitical, and insular. I argue instead that these midcentury suburban texts are deeply invested in how politics shapes both human and more-than-human environments, evident in their attention to the transmission and impact of a racialized discourse about species. I aim to rethink the place of suburban writing in American literature and explore questions vital to understanding the role of literature in contemporary American culture: How do our narratives about race, class, and gender shape what is speakable in contemporary environmental discourses? How do rhetorics of race and place reproduce across communities and generations, and how might we tell a new story? Can fiction help us think social justice and environmental justice together, as intersecting and co-constitutive issues?

The suburbs are a surprisingly fertile zone for exploring the silences and resonances between American literature and racial politics. *SuburbiaNation*, Robert Beuka's 2004 study of how the “instantly recognizable” landscape of suburbia contributed to a growing sense of “placelessness” in American society primarily explores this dislocation as it impacts narratives of “imperiled masculinity” or the “stultifying existence” of suburban housewives in middle-class

suburban life, from John Cheever to John Updike to Philip Roth (18). Beuka highlights the psychological dystopia underpinning the suburban ideal, linking these depictions to contemporary "phobias and insecurities" in American culture (19). Similarly, Catherine Jurca's *White Diaspora* (2001) describes the tension between historical accounts of the suburbs that emphasize "the traditional role of the suburb in *placing* its residents, physically and emotionally" and contemporaneous fictional depictions that portray these white, middle-class residents as alienated victims (5). Jurca's title is deliberately ironic, as she is interested in exposing the "cognitive and rhetorical chicanery by which the privileged come to be seen and to see themselves as the disadvantaged and dispossessed" (8). I share Beuka, Jurca, and the recent slate of suburban scholars' dedication to rethinking and revaluing the role of the suburbs and suburban literature in American culture, while I aim to move from a focus on possessions and psychology to other areas of the suburbs underexplored and often unconsidered in literary criticism.

This dissertation analyzes the aesthetic strategies midcentury American writers used to address a demographic shift reframed as a natural racial imperative by white residents, suburban developers, and the U.S. government: white flight. These writers consider how concepts like politeness, cleanliness, and homemaking seem ideologically and racially neutral but are not. These conventions, and the accompanying clichéd rhetoric, do not describe an objective, shared reality but rather a divide deepened by the color line (and, as a mechanism of this, the species line) and its investment in policing domesticity and the private sphere by way of racial signifiers and the explicit and implicit threats of violence for those who transgress them. As the twentieth-century saw the formation and proliferation of the politics of the nuisance, readily marshalled against Black Americans, as well as rural and poorer Americans, as part of a larger political, cultural, and economic dispossession and violent racism, twentieth-century writers address these

nuisance politics in the figures and narratives of their writing. Texts and genres have their own zoning laws which shape how white flight is represented: in historiography, with a passive tense that can occlude responsibility, and in literary criticism, as undervalued or unwanted expressions and rhetorics, like magic, gossip, and cliché.

For instance, in *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, literary critic Eric Avila explicitly links science fiction narratives and zoning policies, as he details how a "discursive emphasis on invasion, infestation, and infiltration encompassed a set of images and words that found more consequential forms of expression in official assessments of urban property values" (97). Indeed, literary studies scholar Cheryl A. Wall argues for a "mode of critique" that examines "the response to segregated communities on both sides of the color line and reads Faulkner alongside Wright and Hurston, Bellow and Mamet alongside Ellison and Hansberry, and Chang-Rae Lee alongside John Cheever" (267). She points out that this approach requires reading for omissions as well as inscriptions, as "we should ask what it means when writers fail to acknowledge that the spaces they imagine are segregated" (267). As Timothy Morton argues in *diacritics* (April 2013), "leafy suburbia" is "an uncanny space, a space produced by industry and urbanization whose predominant objective is to cover up this production." To the industry and urbanization that Morton had in mind, we must add white supremacy and racial segregation supported by the species line. The four writers I primarily focus on in this dissertation, Shirley Jackson, Lorraine Hansberry, Ray Bradbury, and Sylvia Plath, are all, with varying degrees of explicit critique, interested in representing the quotidian mechanisms of segregation: how communities police private spaces and behaviors to enforce a segregated public.

This means the political thrust of these writers has sometimes been overlooked, as the scale and scope of these narratives occurs at the level of the home, not the nation. Likewise,

often laws that disproportionately constrain Black Americans are not explicitly about race but instead have an unwritten or clandestine racial impact. As Ian Haney-Lopez writes in *White by Law*, "like police conduct, the overwhelming bulk of law currently constructs race *informally* not by directly addressing conceptions of race, but by relying on, promulgating, and giving force (often enough literal physical force) to particular ideas about the nature of race, races, and racism" (vxi). Even when these writers avoid explicitly addressing race, their texts I discuss here rely on, promulgate, and give voice to ideas about the nature of race and racism by way of racialized animal figures.

Environmental History

This project is also in conversation with histories of suburban development and environmental histories of domesticity and development in the twentieth-century United States. Initial historical explorations of suburbia tended to focus on demographics and domesticity. Kenneth T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985) is a watershed text, as his book is usually credited with introducing the suburbs as an appropriate field of study. Jackson begins from the premise that "housing is an outward expression of the inner human nature" (3) and proceeds to complicate that premise by suggesting that the physical organization of domestic space also, conversely, influences behavior. Written at a time when suburban development seemed "more representative of [American] culture than big cars, tall buildings, or professional football" (4), Jackson's broad study tracks patterns in public policy, transportation, and construction methods. Clifford Edward Clark's *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (1986), is also widely cited in critical literature on the suburbs. Clark's architectural history puts the new design of the suburban ranch home in stark relief, as he notes how "the

1950s design standards conceived of the natural world in a simplified and controlled way that eliminated anything that was wild or irregular" (213).

In later years, many historians have explicitly sought to demystify the spectacle surrounding the suburbs. Stephanie Coontz, in *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (1992), brings in a cultural and economic context (records of government assistance, interviews with suburban families, etc.) to argue that "not only was the 1950s family a new invention; it was also a historical fluke, based on a unique and temporary conjuncture of economic, social, and political factors" (26). Elaine Tyler May focuses on the staying power of the nuclear family myth despite the wide gulf between popular representations and daily-lived experiences of suburban living, detailing the control and intensity of Americans' retreat into the home, figured as a contained space meant to be a self-sufficient universe (made so by technology). May begins *Homeward Bound (*1988), her exploration of the postwar American family, with the 1959 *Life* magazine story of "Their Sheltered Honeymoon," in which two young newlyweds descend into a hole filled with canned goods for fourteen days ("the crucial period of fallout danger") as their sponsored honeymoon. May describes this as parodying "the nuclear family in the nuclear age: isolated, sexually charged, cushioned by abundance, and protected against impending doom by the wonders of modern technology" (1). Though May does not mention nonhuman animals (other than a mink coat and a horse owned by one of her more affluent survey respondents, drawing from a more aristocratic vision of the role of animals in domesticity), May is at pains to suggest the ways in which these expectations about what was 'natural' to suburbia were often oppressive. Indeed, May's concept of social 'taming' (where, within the walls of the suburban home "potentially dangerous social forces of the new age might be tamed" [16]) adds an ideological and psychological dimension to Clark's observation about

the suburban design, in which "1950s design standards conceived of the natural world in a simplified and controlled way that eliminated anything that was wild or irregular" (Clark 213).

Though many writers have aimed to characterize the daily lived experience of suburban residents as well as the context that gave rise to American suburban communities, the role of animals in the suburbs is often absent from these approaches, whether literary, historical, or geographical. In the omission of animals, researchers of suburban landscapes display how ideas of the home (as isolated unit) and the suburbs (as artificial, static landscape) have come to be naturalized, and often in ways that elide the animals (wild or domesticated) within these landscapes. Laura Vaughan et al. foreground the "epistemological fragility" of the suburbs as such, pointing to the often-vast difference between theoretical conceptions of or generalizations about the suburbs and the daily, lived experience of suburban residents. As they note, "all too often it seems as though the language of the suburban floats free from the suburban built environment" (2009). Indeed, Alison Blunt's survey of recent work done in cultural geography on 'home' traces a concern with the disjuncture between "idealized design" and "embodied domesticity," a theoretical mismatch that is often invoked in writings on the suburbs (Blunt 2005).[6]

In the last decade environmental historians as well as geographers have increasingly begun to include nonhuman animals, both domesticated and 'wild,' within their analyses. In a series of articles published in *Progress in Human Geography* in 2014, Henry Buller charts the rising popularly of animals as subjects of study in both published volumes and conference panels in Geography. Buller moves quickly through the various invocations of the animal within

[6] See also Brickell 2012, Harris 1998.

geographical work, from exploring how animals come to represent ‘Nature’ within certain human spaces (zoos, conservationist efforts, etc.) to the ways in which animals are marked as ‘out of place’ or ‘improper’ in other human spaces.

As Buller’s history of the emergence of animal geography emphatically makes clear, two volumes of collected essays published in the late 1990s following a 1997 conference held at the University of Exeter by the Royal Geographical Society and Institute of British Geographers were influential in shaping debates within this new subfield. The first to be published, *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics, and Identity in the Nature Culture Borderlands* (1998), begins to suggest how Geography and geographers might invite nonhuman animals into the disciplinary conversation. The volume addresses human-animal encounters in primarily economic terms (how humans have used or abused animals in the service of capitalistic gain) rather than affective terms, tending towards Marxist and materialist approaches to the question of the animal. In the introduction, presented as a survey of how the discipline has addressed the roles and places of nonhuman animals thus far, Wolch and Emel propose a variety of reasons for the sudden emergence of animals and ‘the animal question’ in social theory. They explore the ways in which contemporary economic contexts, global ecological crises, and the epistemological debates and revisions encouraged by postmodernism and feminism have combined to make animals an increasingly central and vital topic in social theory. Their attention to how global and local ecological crises often create violent confrontations between animals and humans in a race for space (bears, coyotes, alligators, etc.) brings to the surface similar issues faced by suburban developers and inhabitants, encountering unexpected animals in their newly constructed neighborhoods.

The second volume springing from this 1997 conference, *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*

(2006), aims to distinguish itself from Wolch and Emel's through a focus on animal agency, as signaled by animals "evading, slipping out of or messing up these human placements." In their introduction, Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert ground their inquiry in ontological as well as geographical terms, questioning both the conceptual and physical placement of animals. In particular, essays are concerned to identify and explore moments when certain animals are perceived as "out of place," suggesting a human sense of what animals are 'proper' or naturally belong to which spaces. While none of the essays included address American suburbs in an extended manner, the broader commitment of these writers to historicizing human-animal encounters in urban and suburban environments (particularly in the essays "Feral cats in the city" and "Enclosure," a discussion of the 'lowly' chicken) points the way towards a reconsideration of the 'proper' place of the animal in suburbia.

Several recent environmental histories explore the roles of animals in the city as contrasted with the surrounding suburbs, including Catherine McNeur's *Taming Manhattan*, Mark Kurlansky's *City Beasts*, and Dawn Biehler's *Pests in the City*. These histories emphasize how regulations and prohibitions about animal keeping have historically had race and class biases, falling heaviest on communities of Americans who make living with animals central to their ways of life. In *Taming Manhattan*, McNeur charts how nuisance laws increasingly became a weapon used to police the urban animals of poorer and immigrant communities in New York City. Noting that "one man's nuisance… was another's livelihood or even cherished pet" (7), McNeur tracks how police officers and judges selectively enforced nuisance laws in order to 'tame' the pigs, dogs, and other animals of African American and Irish communities in the name of modernizing the city. For instance, *The People vs. Christian Harriet*, an 1818 nuisance law case deployed as "an early form of zoning" in Manhattan (McNeur 135), sought to police pig-

keeping “in the streets” by pushing pigs out of city neighborhoods and became a model for subsequent cases aiming to relocate other animal nuisances like tanneries, bone boileries, and cows. McNeur documents how these racialized animal attitudes existed in earlier forms of American suburbs, distinguishing those who lived in the city from those who lived around it. An 1846 editorial in the *New York Herald*, for instance, comments on the “shanty suburbs” of New York City: “There are the palaces of Fifth Avenue and Union place, and there are the hovels of the squatters on the ‘meadows,’ where pigs, chickens, and children grow in dirty profusion” (quoted in McNeur 185). These 19th century attitudes about the proper place of animals and immigrants, McNeur writes, continue to shape cities today: “Urban Americans are fighting the boundaries drawn in the nineteenth century when they plead with their municipal governments to permit them to keep chickens, pigs, goats, or bees” (5). Though, of course, who does the pleading and who does the policing is, as ever, determined by race, class, and political power in these communities. The role of animals as a mechanism of defining and determining communities has endured since the 19th century, but the 20th-century politics of the nuisance demand a fresh look at these public debates and often violent forms of policing.

In recent years, two writers have taken up the contested place and role of ‘nature’ and nonhuman animals in the suburbs, coming to two radically different conclusions. Adam Rome’s *The Bulldozer in the Countryside* (2001) traces the environmental awakening spawned by the “environmental disaster” that some Americans came to recognize as sprouting from postwar suburban sprawl. Rome explores the “brutal contradiction” between suburban developments named for natural features (Park Forest, etc.) that, in the process of construction, “routinely destroyed the meadows, woods, and hills they honored in their place names” (13). Rome paints a bleak picture, in which the sewage and water pollution problems of the suburbs brought

environmental impacts close to home for suburban inhabitants, their discomfort working to awaken a nascent environmental consciousness. However, explicitly responding to Rome's book, Christopher C. Sellers' *Crabgrass Crucible* (2012), argues that Rome too easily "rules out the possibility of nature in the suburbs" (4). Sellers aims to complicate the traditional understanding of "suburbanizing… as *nature erasing*" (292), a narrative which, he says, ignores class and racial differences between suburban developments and leans on a "narrow, restricted version of what nature is" (41). Sellers reads the emergence of the environmental movement from the postwar suburbs as a response to an increased attachment to ideas of natural environments, rather than as solely a response to the polluted environments which Rome describes.

However, Sellers notes how suburban inhabitants often focused on preserving a particular form of nature (local parks) while barely recognizing this as natural at all: "in the 1950s, the suburban nature of Levittowners […] had become so normalized that they could only think about it as domesticated, not nature at all" (95). The broader concern of Sellers in *Crabgrass Crucible* is to draw attention to the forms of 'nature' at work in suburban environments. As he notes: "our disregard for suburban nature, the blooming, buzzing, bustling life lying right under most of our noses, stands out with especial poignancy." This echoes the approach of another influential environmental historian, William Cronon. In *Nature's Metropolis*, Cronon's attempt to "tell the city-country story as a unified narrative" (xvi) shows how metropolitan expansion or, in other words, suburban development, depends on a complex network of capitalist exchanges between city and country. As Cronon argues, "If we concentrate our attention solely upon the city, seeing in it the ultimate symbol of 'man's' conquest of 'nature,' we miss the extent to which the city's inhabitants continue to rely as much on the nonhuman world as they do on each other" (18).

Other historians have focused on chronicling suburban histories that do not conform to conventional cultural assumptions about suburbia as a white space. Though these histories are not explicitly presented as environmental histories, they serve to reframe the suburban environment in ways that should be essential for other environmental histories of the suburbs. Correcting the oversights of some suburban histories which present suburban neighborhoods as exclusively white places, scholars such as Andrew Wiese, Beryl Satter, David M.P. Freund, Todd Michney, N.D.B. Connolly, and others have refashioned the suburban imaginary to more accurately reflect the experiences of Black homeowners, tenants, and laborers who lived and worked in the suburbs and have often been erased by histories that focus on the whiteness of the suburbs. This project likewise aims to contribute to recognizing the roles of Black Americans in building and shaping the suburbs and the violent exclusions and politics of the nuisance that made these suburban spaces unsafe and unsustainable. I also build on the work of scholars like Mary Douglas, Karen and Barbara Fields, Kimberly Smith, Carl Zimring, and Jennifer Stoever to investigate how environmental phenomena like dirt, noise, and smells become racialized nuisances.

Histories of the environmental justice movement, produced by both scholars and activists, frequently draw connections between the racist, NIMBY politics of suburban communities and the harmful pollution and poverty that is shunted 'downstream' to poorer communities of color. In understanding the legacy of midcentury suburban nuisances, scholars addressing environmental racism such as Robert Bullard, Andrew Busch, Joni Adamson, Julie Sze, Andrew Hurley, Carl A. Zimring, and others take suburban communities as both symptoms of social and environmental politics in the U.S. as well as perpetrators. Writing in the early 2000s of the need to better incorporate concerns of environmental justice in ecocriticism, T.V.

Reed argues: “Since suburbia, from which a great many wilderness lovers hail, has proven a far more environmentally destructive place than cities, we need also to develop a sense of suburban ecologies and theorize more fully their role in environmental, gender, class, and race politics” (154). These studies have been particularly useful in showing how the ways in which the mainstream environmental movement conceives of ‘nature’ have actively harmed Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. Environmental activism has often been shaped by suburban concerns, to the detriment of other forms of community. In a study of cross-border environmental justice education, Soenke Zehle describes a “suburban chauvinism” that shapes the mainstream environmental movement’s goals (332). Zehle goes on to argue for connecting these environmental politics with a politics of nuisance and crime: “[s]uburban ecopolitics often separates ecological and social justice issues and continues to be compatible with economic and cultural conservatism. This is especially apparent in debates on crime and punishment” (334). The focus of mainstream environmentalism on conservation and preservation of wildness, parks, and other forms of nature that purport to exclude the human has often meant that less attention and resources have been devoted to issues important to the environmental justice movement and closer to home, such as land use. Geographer Rosemary Collard, who researches the intersections between politics and species extinction, quotes one government official, Peter Kareiva, as claiming “no one cares about biodiversity except white suburbanites” (quoted in Collard 3). As activists and community organizers advocate for the health and flourishing of their neighborhoods, they often point to the enduring consequences of white flight as some of the causes of the pollution and poverty. In particular, suburban development, midcentury industrialization, and the racist distribution of resources were supported by redlining and zoning laws that concentrated heavy industry in predominately Black neighborhoods.

My study of suburban nuisances is indebted to the work of these activists and researchers to identify the environmental injustices of the 1980s and onward with the policies and practices of suburban residents and suburban developers in the 1950s, though my approach differs from many of these studies in that I do not focus on a single place but instead on the cultural and literary production that spans the midcentury U.S., from Harlem and San Francisco. While the visceral impact of chemical pollution is most often associated with environmental justice movements, animals play an important role in these stories as well. In William Cronon's foreword to Dawn Biehler's *Pests in the City*, for instance, he argues that "the buzzing of flies, the defecating of roaches, the scurrying of rats, and the bloodsucking of bedbugs also make potent contributions to the environmental costs of social inequality" (xiii).

Animal studies

The kinds of questions central to this study were, in many ways, made speakable by the emergence of "the question of the animal" within the humanities. As Cary Wolfe noted in 2003, even as scientific studies explore and complicate the capacities of animals, "the humanities are … struggling to catch up with the radical revaluation of the status of nonhuman animals that has taken place in society at large" (xi). In the years since Wolfe's claim, animal studies, critical animal studies, environmental humanities, and posthumanist scholars have continued to expand these interdisciplinary fields by putting the humanities in conversation with the natural and social sciences. My project aligns itself with research that does not treat the humanities as an explanatory tool – diagnosing lacunae or symptoms in the natural sciences – but rather as an approach that emphasizes the capacities of each field to contribute to our understanding of

humans, animals, and nonhumans. Though much great work in animal studies has been done, there is much more to be said.

The consequences of suburbanization for animals is a subject that, while not yet explored in depth, is often the underlying context for many writers' discussions of the repression of animal bodies in modernity. John Berger's influential essay, "Why Look at Animals?" (1980), argues that, as one of the central conditions for modern, capitalist development, animals are "physically marginalized" as the countryside becomes the suburbs. This physical marginalization is followed by a cultural one, a process in which, Berger argues, animals "disappear" and return, "co-opted" by the culture of capitalism, as either "kin" (incorporated as domestic animals, cuddly and cute) or "spectacle" (in zoos, circuses, television and photography). Yet, Berger notes, despite this proliferation of animal representation and iconography, the material animal becomes ever more distant and invisible.

Although Colleen Glenney Boggs' *Animalia Americana* (2013) leapfrogs over the suburbs from the 19th to the 21st century, her readings serve as a productive example of how attention to nonhuman animal bodies and representations can offer new ways of thinking about entrenched historical narratives. Boggs reads "animals as integral to liberalism, a structuring force that destabilizes the liberal subject at its core" (9-10). Boggs' work to put writers on animal studies and biopolitics into conversation with one another repeatedly calls attention to the ways in which the 'animal' and the 'human' are contested categories in American literature and culture. Cary Wolfe's *Before the Law* (2013) is similarly invested in bringing together animal studies and biopolitics to argue that the central distinction between human and animal is a biopolitical one, and as such rests on exclusion or inclusion from the community.

Relationships between animal representations and material animal bodies in modernity are central to two influential texts in animal studies: the Derridean text *Electric Animal: A Rhetoric of Wildlife*, in which Akira Lippit follows the traces of animality in 20th-century technology, and the Marxist text, *Animal Capital*, in which Nicole Shukin argues that the ways animals come to circulate in material and discursive economies is historically contingent and often violence disguised as spectacle. Shukin aims to "account for the material labors and lives of other species that have also become coextensive with the reproduction of capital," even in ostensibly immaterial domains like cinema or electricity (79). Throughout, Shukin explicitly positions *Animal Capital* as a foil to Lippit's argument. Her main point of contention with Lippit is the claim that 'the animal' is preserved by these new forms of affective communication like cinema, recycled and reused in perpetuity. Shukin frames this notion as part and parcel of the "liberal fantasy of culturally transcending the materiality of nature" (13). To briefly introduce this debate before returning to it later in my chapter on Ray Bradbury: as Lippit argues, twentieth-century technical innovations "bear the traces of an incorporated animality" (186), such as 'horsepower' in automobiles or 'animation' in cinema, which he reads as evidence of the animal's ability to linger, to last beyond physical death. We might also consider the ironic nickname for Levittown, "The Rabbit Hutch," as a form of "incorporated animality" in that the term invokes a kind of natural, animal fertility in a landscape that strove to eliminate nonhuman neighborhoods as much as possible. Where Lippit reads this "incorporated animality" which suspends animal bodies in perpetual existence as a positive power particular to modern animals, Shukin reads this limbo as a particularly gruesome curse of industrialized modernity (in her words, "a biopolitical violence constituted by the power to keep animal life in a limbo economy of interminable survival" [39]). In one particularly memorable anecdote, deep in the archives of

the Eastman Kodak Company, Shukin discovers the importance of mustard seed in a cow's diet to the clarity and speed of early gelatin film negatives (109). Shukin's attention to the material histories behind apparently immaterial media like photography and cinema demonstrates the importance of thinking through the implied relationship between the symbolic animals invoked by preprocessed foods and robotic animals of postwar literature and material, biological animal bodies.

In "A Left-Handed Blow" (2003), Erica Fudge describes a kind of cultural analysis in which "the representation of the animal is offered as a way of rethinking cultures which have, apparently, been thoroughly ransacked for meaning by historians, and […] what emerges is a very new picture of the past" (9). Looking ahead to future directions of animal studies scholarship, I am particularly excited by scholars working at the intersections of animal studies and Black studies like Colin Dayan, Lori Gruen, Alexander Weheylie, Claire Jean Kim, Zakkiyah Iman Jackson, Benedicte Boisseron, Brigitte Fielder, and others. Animal figures have long been used in American discourse and literature as a means both to dehumanize subjects as outside the bounds of rationality and to romanticize the innocence of the natural world. Yet, as this project emphasizes, the role of animal figures in American literature also reveals the function of species as a cultural boundary, not to distinguish between human and nonhuman, but to separate human communities from one another.

Chapters

In each chapter, I show how literary texts investigate and respond to the politics of the nuisance. Because the nuisance as a concept has a force not only in literature but also law and environmental studies, I draw on a wide range of archival materials to understand the

transmission of these nuisance politics. From cellophane advertisements to leases and deeds, suburban narratives use animal nuisances to express ideas about what and who is appropriate to suburban spaces. As I will show throughout, these literary and cultural narratives have implications for legal approaches to nuisances. Insurance assessors, police officers, lawyers, judges, and other sergeants of the law explicitly acknowledge the fraught and shifting status of nuisances in the early twentieth century. The shifting line of socially acceptable animals depends on racial and economic politics and, explicitly, on a race- and class-based notion of the everyday and the ordinary. The nuisance implies something is out of place, wherever these debates are taking place.

Categories of nuisance are ideologically unstable, needing constant re-making and reinforcing. This process is something literature is well-suited to express. Law proposes a language of hard and fast rules, but literature shows us that these supposedly stable ideas need to be always policed, redone, rewritten to remain written and on the books. Given this, framing the role of literature as a 'response' to white flight is, of course, not the full story.

I show how literary texts promote and maintain this species-line, focusing on two historical phenomena that especially defined the postwar suburban built environment: the expansion of industrialized agriculture and the proliferation of zoning laws and regulations in American neighborhoods. The project thus coordinates a number of problems that are conventionally seen as disconnected: the racial politics of the housing market, the cultural legacy of postwar suburbia, and the theoretical concerns of environmental studies scholars.

The first two chapters show how postwar literary texts take up a discourse about species in restrictive housing covenants and zoning regulations that enforced the species-line in American urban and suburban environments. Chapter 1, "Species and Property Boundaries in

Shirley Jackson," explores the rarely studied domestic fictions of Shirley Jackson. Reading her first novel *The Road Through the Wall* (1948) as well as several short stories, I argue that Jackson's suburban communities are spatially and conceptually delimited by species, serving as sites to negotiate new discursive relationships between human and animal neighbors. For example, I show how in "The Renegade," a short story set in the aftermath of a family's 'city dog' killing a new neighbor's chickens, Jackson's animal figures trace a link between racialized nuisances, suburban housekeeping, and the rural-urban divide.

Chapter 2, "Inhuman Housing in Lorraine Hansberry," reframes the domestic politics of Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) to include the nonhuman. I argue that Hansberry presents white flight as a performative script dependent on environmental rhetoric, showing how rhetorics about nature and natural rights spread from legal to public speech in order to cast what was a government-backed, national movement to restrict and define access to suburban environments as a local, homegrown dispute about the desires of homeowners.

Though corporate histories and environmental activists often describe industrial agriculture and the rise of the suburbs as intimately interconnected processes, spurring one another on, these events remain distinct in current literary scholarship. Addressing this missing link, the structure of my project works to connect suburban narratives and postwar agriculture, by which I mean the massive changes in food production, promotion, and consumption in American at midcentury.

A massive amount of human and animal labor lay behind the seemingly labor-saving products targeted at the suburban kitchen and the fast foods newly available in suburban neighborhoods, but these "egg cities" and "dairy cities" were effectively hidden neighbors of new housing developments. Near Ray Bradbury's neighborhood, as one example, "located in the

L.A. suburbs but zoned for agriculture [in the late 1950s], the 18 square miles of Cypress, Dairy Valley, and Dairyland became home to a herd of 75,000 dairy cows – at that time, the highest-density cow population in the world" (Friedberg 223). These animal cities were expected to operate invisibly, despite their proximity or, in fact, due to their proximity to suburban neighborhoods. As the expanding suburbs and farms jostled for ex-urban space, residents filed complaints about odor and groundwater pollution (Rome 13). As scholars of the changing meat industry and landscape of ex-urban America have noted, suburban consumers "demanded more red meat even as they insisted on less pollution from its production" (Ogle 150). In this sense, suburban communities required the food industry to disguise all aspects of food production and the material reality of animal bodies.

Modern technologies are often thought of as "distance-demolishing," as discussed in James C. Scott's *Seeing Like a State*, where he provides a list of distance-demolishing technologies such as "all-weather roads, bridges, railroads, modern weapons, telegraph, telephone, airpower, helicopters, and modern information technologies, such as global navigation satellite systems" (13). Yet in the area of food production and consumption, railroads, telephones, and modern refrigeration are fundamentally 'distance-enabling' technologies, allowing for what Emerson once called "the graceful distance of miles" between the act of consumption and the slaughterhouse (227).

Traversing these miles, the next two chapters consider how writers respond to industrialized agriculture as an event with both discursive and material effects, showing how the suburban domestic aesthetic, invested in space, isolation, and cleanliness, depends on policing the racialized boundaries between human and nonhuman environments.

Chapter 3, "Decay and the Rhetoric of Convenience in Ray Bradbury," focuses primarily on Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) and considers the affective, historical, and environmental implications of Bradbury's decision to set a suburban home in space. Reframing what most scholars have read as a colonization narrative as, instead, suburban development on a planetary scale, the chapter argues that a postwar rhetoric of technological convenience (eggs, bacon appearing as if from nowhere) works to elide agricultural labor and laborers from suburban neighborhoods. In describing suburban development as a science fictional event, Bradbury highlights both the hyperbolic promises at the heart of suburban rhetoric and the erasure of unwanted bodies, both human and nonhuman, that these racialized promises imply.

Chapter 4, "Hygiene and the Species Line in Sylvia Plath" continues this environmental reading of racialized suburban technoculture and argues that Sylvia Plath's recurring images of hygiene consumer culture in *The Colossus* (1960) and *Ariel* (1961) evoke midcentury anxieties about biological containment and consumer safety. In a reading that draws on material culture as well as the history of science and technology, the chapter argues that Plath's use of cellophane, plastic, and cleaning products highlights how midcentury rhetoric about hygiene and convenience emphasizes the absence of human and animal bodies. Connecting her scenes of hygiene to a global culture of hygiene born out of the American eugenic movement, I show how Plath's purity is embodied, contextual, and deploys animal figures to consider racialized midcentury anxieties about the boundaries of humanity.

Understanding the environmental, economic, and social consequences of postwar suburban development has become increasingly important in recent years, as most Americans now live, work, and die in the suburbs. The physical suburb is an enduring problem for many environmental scholars and activists, who connect the attendant bulldozers, supermarkets, and

systemic racial segregation with many of the most pressing crises faced by contemporary Americans, from pollution in Flint, Michigan to violent discrimination in suburbs like Ferguson, Missouri and Palo Alto, California. Emphasizing the ongoing economic and cultural impact of suburban development, the project's conclusion moves from midcentury literary production to contemporary writers of color reckoning with the legacy of white flight and the species line. Reading Langston Hughes's suburban poetry with Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, Ruth Ozeki's experimental documentary narrative *My Year of Meats*, and Colson Whitehead's zombie thriller *Zone One*, this coda highlights how the rhetoric of nonhuman species continues to shape narratives of white flight and environmental politics in ways that challenge the expectations of genre and literary form.

CHAPTER ONE: PROPERTY AND SPECIES BOUNDARIES IN SHIRLEY JACKSON

One of Shirley Jackson's rarely discussed but remarkable short stories, "The Renegade," ends with a scene of terror in an otherwise peaceful kitchen. The story's protagonist, a beleaguered housewife dealing with the accusation that her family's dog has killed a neighbor's chicken, stands at her kitchen window and suddenly feels "the harsh hands pulling her down, the sharp points closing in on her throat" (83). Like Jackson's other best work, it is never clear if her protagonist is on the edge of madness or sharply aware of her own terrifying predicament. What is clear, in this final moment, is that suburbia is an unsettling space where both human and nonhuman animals are subject to surveillance, regulation, and policing. Jackson's scenes of domesticity, askew, off-kilter and unstable, open the door to seeing species as a discourse. These fictions, often vaguely autobiographical, offer a detailed working out of the affects, undercurrents, and animals of midcentury suburban domestic spaces. In her homes, species serves as the conceptual site for a contract negotiation about who gets to count as human and who is property, scapegoat, and an animal. This chapter traces how Shirley Jackson's suburban fictions employ a lexicon of property and personhood shared with postwar housing policies, enacting the cultural turn to nonhuman nuisances as a means to police the material and rhetorical boundaries of suburbia.

Species is a division and a value, but also an infrastructure. Species differentiations, and a whole host of affiliations and assumptions about species, make possible the racialized and gendered exclusions of postwar suburbia. Domesticated animals are particularly good hosts for these many borders and exclusions, both because of the increasingly spatially divided landscape in the postwar years of farms, corporate office parks, and homes, and because of their conceptual

life in figures and tropes as bridges between nature and culture. As Colleen Boggs argues in *Animalia Americana*, animals "function as a middle ground between sets of binaries that oppose the subject and the object, the human and the nonhuman, the psychological and the physiological, the real and the symbolic" (19). Drawing on Jacques Rancière, Boggs suggests that "animal representations are mediators" (19). In this function as a middle ground, a mediator, a bridge, species acts an infrastructure that, in the postwar context, becomes an infrastructure tasked with maintaining whiteness, privacy, hygiene, and the sanctity of the nuclear family.

By associating with agricultural and productive animals or, more precisely, by becoming affiliated with this class of animals in literary and legal narratives, human subjects lose their grip on modernity and on all the associated privileges, like whiteness, cleanliness, rationality, and, most foundationally, personhood. These exclusions are at once gendered, classed and racial as, of course, a major tenet of midcentury housing policies was that class, race, and lifestyle are inextricably linked. Following language in Jackson about property, personhood, and nuisances reveals how these concepts are important in American literature as a way of working out the legacy of slavery,[7] but what Jackson's narratives add to this literary history is a reckoning with the importance of species to these discourses about property, personhood, and nuisances. As Claire Jean Kim argues in *Dangerous Crossings*, race and species are "two elaborated taxonomies of power whose respective drives to discipline different types of bodies are intertwined in deep and enduring ways" (23). These taxonomies are intertwined at the level of discourse, through a shared vocabulary. Kim writes: "race is part of the lexicon by which species

[7] Karla FC Holloway's *Legal Fictions: Constituting Race, Composing Literature* is a persuasive account of how legal language about personhood has been crucial to African-American literature. Likewise, Toni Morrison's now canonical lecture *Playing in the Dark* points out that much of American literature depends on a code, a series of rhetorical slippages, allowing writers to speak about race, property, and personhood without directly addressing Blackness.

is made just as species is part of the lexicon by which race is made" (8). Though Kim focuses on more recent events,[8] I argue that this shared discourse of race and species is nowhere clearer or more pivotal in twentieth-century American culture than in the shared lexicon of housing policies and suburban literature.

Species and the suburban home are culturally as well as materially constructed within Jackson's fiction, mirroring how suburban narratives helped police the role of nonhuman animals within modern American domestic spaces. The figurative and discursive aspects of housing policies, or the contractual interests of suburban fiction, are not as readily apparent at first glance, but reading housing policies alongside fictional suburban narratives unearths a shared vocabulary invested in protecting and creating the white nuclear family. That zoning and segregation shaped the suburbs is a familiar argument in human terms, but it is incomplete without a perspective that takes animals into account both as subjects and as mediators of these forms of policing and segregation. Indeed, the idea of a proper place for farm animals has been at the heart of zoning in the United States since its emergence as a recognizable national phenomenon in the early twentieth century. The Supreme Court ruling in *Euclid v. Ambler*, a landmark case in 1926 that is widely recognized as singlehandedly determining the direction of subsequent U.S. zoning law, stated that:

> The question of whether a particular thing is a nuisance, is to be determined, not by an abstract consideration of the building or of the thing considered apart, but by considering it in connection with the circumstances and the

[8] Kim traces these violent affiliations through legal disputes and public coverage of controversies centered around animals and race in the public sphere, from Michael Vick's dogfighting convictions to clashes between merchants of live animals in San Francisco's Chinatown and animal rights activists.

> locality […] A nuisance may merely be a right thing in the wrong place, like a pig in the parlor instead of the barnyard (Freund 84).

Most historians have focused on how this exclusionary interpretation of a public nuisance was marshaled to isolate single-family residences from the supposed nuisance of any apartment building. When discussing this decision at length in *Colored Property* (2007), historian and race studies scholar David MP Freund briefly glosses the mention of a pig in the parlor as a probable means of "extending the analogy" (84). As he goes on to argue, "zoning law and zoning science provided a useful language with which a […] white middle class could explain its desire for certain kinds of exclusion without invoking the ideologically loaded language of race" (216). In Freund's reading of this decision, animals act as a palatable substitute, a coded rhetoric able to figuratively express prejudices without naming them. But the choice of language in this decision, "a pig in the parlor," displays how these ever more finely tuned zoning ordinances served to, by way of excluding on a race and class-based basis, create a "species-line" that policed what kinds of animals and animal byproducts could be visible (or even just near) suburban developments. This kind of animal rhetoric is symptomatic of a larger debate about the proper place for animal bodies in midcentury America, linking race, species, and geography.

The racist ideology underlying white homeowner fears of invasions and property destruction has been well documented,[9] but my argument expands beyond this familiar historical narrative to connect the postwar lexicon of invasions, blight, and privacy with figurations of animals and animal bodies in postwar American literature. This public discourse about invasions, homeownership, and property is embedded in and helps to create what I call a "species-line," a

[9] A surely incomplete list: Abrams, 1955; Babcock, 1966; Coates, 2014; Fields, 2014; Freund, 2007; Harris, 1993; Harris, 2013; Jackson, 1985; Jacobs, 1961; Kim, 2015; Rifkin 2014; Sellers 2012; Wiese, 2004.

system of cultural and spatial segregation that polices both human and nonhuman subjects. I track at once a "species red-line," by which particular species are culturally and sometimes legally prohibited from certain neighborhoods, as well as an often corresponding "species color-line," in which interactions with and proximity to particular animals become culturally associated with particular racial and economic groups. The "species-line" determines who and what becomes a nuisance, through systematic exclusions enforced in legal, literary, and material culture.

The link between racist ideology, systematic discrimination, and animals has a long history in American culture,[10] primarily made visible and legible by way of a dehumanizing rhetoric that links Black people with animals. Claire Jean Kim (among others) has explored the violent links between some forms of Black masculinity and dog fighting in the rhetoric around Michael Vick, while Harlan Weaver has looked at the racial and gender politics of pit bull breed restrictions.[11] Yet the "species-line," an intertwining of race, class, geography, and species, is arguably more insidious than openly dehumanizing racist rhetoric, by virtue of its ability to hide in plain sight behind supposedly neutral language about property values and nuisances.

Race, economics, and species are not easily separated, whether in housing policy, literary discourse, or academic inquiry. But I argue that these connections go beyond mere entanglement and that, as Shirley Jackson's fiction reflects, these fraught negotiations between suburban inhabitants about race, gender, and class are expressed within a vocabulary of affiliations with animal bodies. The species-line in Jackson is unstable and subject to shift in the middle of a

[10] A few scholars have explored the history of this racist ideology in ways that directly draw from debates within animal studies (Chen, 2012; Dayan, 2011; Fielder, 2013; Kim, 2015; Lake, 2015; Spiegel, 1989; Weheliye, 2014) or in studies that are sympathetic to interspecies thinking (Outka, 2008; Williams-Forson, 2006).

[11] Kim, 2015; Weaver, 2013, 2015.

story, drawing our attention to the ways that the species-line is unstable and liable to shift in the middle of a neighborhood or a housing policy. Jackson's body of work invites us to consider how expectations about what does and does not belong in a suburban community are historically contingent and highly cultivated, built on evolving ideas about race, class, and species. In trying to map the lasting impact of the categories, relationships, and spaces delimited by postwar zoning regulations, postwar literary texts like Shirley Jackson's serve an important function in making the invisible ubiquity of the species-line visible and legible. As Rita Felski argues, literature pays closer attention to our daily practices than we do, in that "literature's heightened sensitivity to the microscopic detail marks its difference from the casual inattentiveness that defines the everyday experience of everyday life" (90). Shirley Jackson's narratives both participate in and help to shape suburban anxieties about space, race, and species, by using language and spatial logic from housing policies to coordinate fictional neighborhoods, homes, and relationships.

The shifting valences of species in suburbia collide in Shirley Jackson's work from the late 1940s, from her social critique of suburban living in *The Road through the Wall* to her short stories which unspool domestic dramas in humorous and frantic ways. While writers like John Cheever and Norman Mailer are more often cited as the key critics of suburban living, Jackson deserves a more prominent place in the midcentury literary landscape. Jackson's dedication to writing the unwritten rules of suburban domesticity comes through again and again in her writing, as does as a social claustrophobia that reflects her own uneasy relationship with the inhabitants of the small college town in which she lived.[12] She spent most of her formative years

[12] Judy Oppenheimer's *Private Demons* (1988) describes the apparently frequent vandalizing of Jackson's home in North Bennington, Vermont (234).

in the suburbs and is intensely fascinated by forms of suburban discourse, whether verbal, aural, or visual: gossip, party telephone lines, local newspapers, letters, magazines, unwritten social customs, municipal regulations. Her stories contribute to the outpouring of ink and rhetoric at midcentury about the state of suburban life, as her financial success as a writer in her lifetime came primarily by way of her publications in popular magazines like *Ladies' Home Companion*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Playboy*, *Good Housekeeping*, *The New Yorker*, and *Harper's*. Her short story "The Lottery," for which she is most well-known, generated more mail in response to a story than any other item previously published when it was first included in *The New Yorker* in 1948.[13]

Most criticism of Jackson to date has focused on her sense of the horror of living in a small community, the horror of being a housewife, or both.[14] Jackson's mastery of the contemporary Gothic form was, for many early reviewers, hard to square with her other fiction and her personal life. As one recent critic notes, it is difficult to ignore "the extent to which critical engagement with her fiction returns to puerile reflection on her personal eating and cleaning habits" (Shotwell 119). During her lifetime, Jackson's bestselling works were *Life Among the Savages* (1953) and *Raising Demons* (1957), two collections of autobiographical short stories. Historian Laura Shapiro argues that Jackson singlehandedly established a new literary mode, the genre of "domestic chaos" literature, narrated by "beset but witty housewives" who are "barely fending off disaster" (147). In the *Feminine Mystique* Betty Friedan singled out

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[13] Jackson, "Biography of a Story" (789). In "The Lottery," a small town gathers together to draw lots as a kind of harvest ritual and then, based on the results of this lottery, stone a housewife to death who draws the marked piece of paper. The story ends, mid-stoning, having given readers very little detail about the setting, motivations, or justifications of this communal violence, but for clues in community members' dress and gossip that the story is set in the 20th century. Many shocked readers, mistaking Jackson's straightforward writing style for nonfiction, wrote in demanding to know the location of the town in which the story was set.

[14] As *Penguin* has recently republished several editions of her earlier novels, as well as a new collection of short stories, one hopes that resurgence in Jackson critical scholarship is on the horizon.

Shirley Jackson particularly as the prototypical "Housewife Writer" (108). Focusing on Jackson's work for women's magazines, Friedan argued that it was an injustice, or at least unfair, for "Housewife Writers" to sugarcoat the domestic life while, by dint of their very occupation as writers, being able to supposedly escape it. As Lynette Carpenter argues, "critics could not, in the end, reconcile genre with gender in Jackson's case; unable to understand how a serious writer of gothic fiction could also be, to all outward appearances, a typical housewife, much less how she could publish housewife humor in *Good Housekeeping*, they dismissed her" (143). Those critics who do take Jackson seriously have tended to be interested in the Gothic aspects of her work, focusing on how she skillfully collapses distinctions between the interior of a home and the interior of a mind, stretching both to instability and collapse.[15] Recently, however, several writers and critics have worked to show how Jackson exceeds this genre, with a larger fictional universal and concerns other than the interior of a house or a female mind.

What recent scholarship makes clear is that Jackson's body of work not only withstands a fine-grained political, theoretical, and intersectional analysis, but invites it. In a 2005 article, Angela Hague reads Jackson's fantastical depictions of homes and domestic anxieties as work that "ironizes the apparent conventionality of the 1950s" (92), and depicts "her unique version of the subterranean undercurrents of the 1950s" (74). Putting Friedan and Jackson in conversation rather than in opposition, Hague points out that Jackson's protagonists might as well be Friedan's: "women who, lacking any sense of self or ability to function in the world outside the home, begin to fragment and dissociate when forced to act independently" (76). Hague reads Jackson's autobiographical work and fiction as a unified body of work, an unusual move in prior Jackson scholarship, to find a through line that "dramatizes the concerns and fears of that decade

[15] See Egan, Joshi, Murphy, Rubenstein.

in ways that are not always immediately obvious" (74). In a later article that takes up this challenge to delve more deeply into Jackson's dramatization of 1950s fears, Alexis Shotwell traces how Jackson's depictions of housekeeping (which Shotwell focuses around cleaning, maintenance, and socializing) are implicitly "a racial account of how proper gender is housed with all the class-situated imperatives and desires that shape care of the house" (137). Though Jackson rarely mentions race explicitly in her fiction, Shotwell argues that "racialization is entangled with gender and housekeeping even when no racial difference is explicitly marked" (129). Shotwell's attention to how enforcing the unspoken rules of domesticity is, particularly in the postwar suburbs, about enforcing racial boundaries, productively demonstrates how Jackson's "social geographies" (128) and focus on the "the everyday textures of life" (129) highlight how policing takes on many forms.

Jackson considers the infrastructure of domesticity, both legal and extralegal, from the frustrations of lease restrictions to the subtle aggressions used to police inhabitants of suburban neighborhoods. In the story from which Shotwell's article takes its title, "No proper feeling for her house," Jackson depicts an unsympathetic protagonist whose primary complaint about a new neighboring family seems to be a lack of social graces, an unwillingness to join in on the customary suburban *kaffeeklatsch*: "she ought to run over next door sometimes with a home-baked cake to pass the time of day and keep up with the news" (334). Yet, almost immediately in "The Very Strange House Next Door," originally published as "Strangers in Town" in the *Saturday Evening Post* (May 1959), this neighbor straightforwardly announces her xenophobic reaction to the new residents of her suburb: "They're foreigners, that's why […] Foreigners of some kind. They don't rightly seem to understand what a person says – its like they're always answering some other question you didn't ask" (335). In having her characters speak the subtext

of suburban socializing, Jackson makes it impossible to overlook how the internal and external politics of a suburban community depend upon policing race and gender. But what Shotwell's otherwise excellent account of Jackson's social geographies misses, as do other accounts of Jackson, is how, in Jackson's depictions of suburban domesticity, species is central to delimiting race, class, and gender, both as a rhetorical framework and as a physical nuisance. Jackson depicts "racialized difference" as connected with species as well as housework, a connection evident in, for example, the moment Shotwell cites as an example of a character who has "transgressed the sexual boundaries appropriate to her racial classification" (125), and after being romantically and sexually linked to an African American man, gives birth to, in Jackson's words, a "whole litter" of children.

Jackson's concern with the day-to-day logistics of real estate restrictions and negotiations points to an unacknowledged undercurrent of anxiety about the proper place for human and nonhuman animals, a species-line that operates throughout her body of work. Her short story "Indians Live in Tents" (written for publication but published posthumously in the 1996 collection *Just an Ordinary Day*) is structured as a series of letters between landlords and tenants, both current, past, and prospective, and recounts the desperations of urban and suburban dwellers to find suitable housing, thereby putting the emphasis on the 'letter' of subletting. A subletter refuses to vacate the property despite having no legal right to stay, announcing in hyperbolic terms that "Every human being has the right to shelter. Indians live in tents, Eskimos live in igloos, dogs live in kennels, and I am living here" (23). In staking her claim, this subletter seeks to naturalize homeownership, as a right that exists beyond the strictures of her specific grievance. In so doing, however, she also sets up a structure that segregates racial others and nonhuman animals from sharing the same style of modern housing. She does not live in a tent, an

igloo, or a kennel, but "here." Modern housing as a racialized concept, as a white form of housing, has frequently been the subject of scholarship in recent decades,[16] but what these inquiries about the whiteness of property and ownership miss is an analysis of personhood as a category that polices species as well as race, class, gender, and sexuality.

That Jackson found anxieties about property rights a worthwhile subject is less surprising when put in context. Land-use and zoning restrictions were "a prominent fixture of suburban life for millions of Americans […] average residents quickly became familiar with the language of zoning and the most common justifications for restrictions of any kind" (Freund 236). This new vocabulary became a way to refer to racist fears of "block-busting" and "invasions" without using explicitly racist language. Yet this zoning rhetoric also served to foment these anxieties while simultaneously providing a code. Sonia A. Hirt explains this dual purpose of zoning in her transnational look at the history of zoning*, Zoning in the USA* (2014), where she argues that:

> Zoning not only expresses our societal consensus on the "correct" relationships and categories, it also shapes it. Not only does it tell us what we can and cannot do in certain places, it also cements, both metaphorically and literally, our ideas of the *proper* categories and relationships that occur in space. (3)

These ordinances reflected the legal and cultural interest in containment and exclusion, in which the family home had to be protected from invading nuisances, human and nonhuman alike. Suburban land use regulations and expectations cordoned off animal bodies into a separate sphere, geographically and conceptually.

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[16] Particularly helpful texts for my own work include Harris (1993), Harris (2013), Floreani (2013), Freund (2007), Rifkin (2014), Wiese (2004).

This focus has created a narrative, accepted and familiar, that animals are doing particular things in particular ways in the suburbs. The dominant historical narrative of zoning is that it was initially developed as a way to manage the industrial pollution of early 20th century trades that involved animal hides (tanneries, etc.), and then became warped into a key tool for maintaining racial and economic segregation. In this narrative of zoning, nuisances become, instead of the sensory or health damages of earlier zoning infractions, a social code, enforced by upzoning lots (requiring lots to be a certain size), by prohibiting "inharmonious racial groups" or the more coded, and legal, terms of "inharmonious uses" found throughout government regulations and private housing lease restrictions. Freund refers to this understanding of zoning repeatedly, noting that “by the 1960s, a legal doctrine originally established to protect individuals and neighborhoods from fire, disease, unpleasant odors, or exposure to toxins had become the legal standard for protecting homeowners from the threat posed by commercial development, apartment buildings, or even modest detached dwellings” (232) But this is a narrative of zoning that elides the ongoing animal presence in the suburbs, by framing nuisances as originally animal bodies and then later refigured to refer or implicitly allude to humans, racial groups or economic classes incompatible with the new affluent American modernity so central to defining the suburbs in midcentury America. Jackson’s stories trouble this narrative by putting both material animal bodies and the racist dog whistles of postwar housing policy in the same narrative, highlight that the two are not mutually exclusive but rather co-constitutive.

As Jackson repeatedly foregrounds in this epistolary account, the terms and expectations of modern housing are not natural, but an elaborate series of compromises and anxieties made legible by leasing documents. The subletter’s exasperated landlord responds in a letter that

disguises the terms of the lease as a series of reasonable requests and disavows any complicity in the housing market:

> Even though the real estate business is one of dog-eat-dog you must try to understand that is only because the real estate business is like that, that we frequently seem to be unpleasant and hardhearted. […] I assume that you have no intention of opening a sidewalk vegetable stand, keeping dogs or children, hanging pictures on the wall, making unnecessary noise, leaving garbage in the hall, blocking the stairway or the elevator, putting scratches on the floors, renting rooms for money, or opening any business for profit on the premises (26).

The combination of species differentiation (the business is 'dog-eat-dog', but the landlord is not) and species exclusion (no dogs permitted) echoes the doublespeak of zoning regulations, where material animals are present so as to be excluded. The midcentury concern with domestic production is evident here, as the landlord forbids "vegetable stands" and "opening any business for profit on the premises." Gardens and animals are neither functional nor permitted.

These detailed lease regulations and frustrations appear in Jackson's explicitly autobiographical fiction as well, a subgenre that Jackson helped to popularize. Jackson uses housekeeping to talk about species and species to talk about housekeeping. In *Raising Demons*, Jackson describes her thought process when considering putting up an apartment attached to their suburban home for rent:

> I was still rankling over the arrogant terms in our old lease for our apartment in New York, and I thought that we could give the people who compose leases a lesson in generosity and broad-mindedness. […] The only truly unjust clause which

> rankled with me was the one prohibiting tenants from keeping mockingbirds, and it seemed pointless to plan to rent our downstairs back apartment with a lease urging the tenants to keep mockingbirds (55).

In this moment, Jackson's mocking tone echoes the unwanted mockingbirds, enacting a familiar parallel between tamed birds and women confined to the domestic space. Yet what Jackson also evokes here, when arguing that it is "unjust" to prohibit tenants from keeping mockingbirds, is similar to the subletter's sense of a natural right to shelter. Jackson seems to begin to articulate a natural right to keep animals or, at the very least, to possess autonomy within the domestic sphere (a homeowner's right, the logic and rhetoric of which would be so key in suburban racial exclusions). That she does so in the context of mockingbirds, an animal that is both an aural nuisance and a figure of mimesis, again serves to compare the material animal body with the portability of rhetoric. As Jackson borrows the language of leases and contracts to frame domestic rituals and expectations, she presents this argument in a tone that mocks as well as solidifies the centrality of housing policies and the species-line in postwar homes.

Jackson's attention to animals in suburbia extended beyond lease restrictions to the policing of the species line that governs everyday encounters. Jackson's short story "The Renegade," first published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1948, depicts a collision between different ways of having animals in the home, in a suburban setting where farm animals and pet animals have become radically different. The story begins much like Jackson's other domestic, family sketches, with an innocuous phone call and a beleaguered housewife startled to learn that her dog may have killed a neighbor's chickens. Mrs. Walpole, the housewife at the center of this, initially treats this phone call like just another domestic wrinkle, and nothing in the tone suggests that we readers should assume otherwise. The caller, a woman, unnamed, identified usually by the

impersonal phrase "the voice," tells Mrs. Walpole "with relish" that her dog has been killing chickens. And, as the narrator tells us, "Mrs. Walpole had been cornered" (71). Her first thoughts upon the caller's inquiry situate the problem, the solution, and the canine firmly within the domestic space. Mrs. Walpole thinks of:

> the innumerable aspects of owning a dog in the country: six dollars for spaying, the rude barking late at night, the watchful security of the dark shape sleeping on the rug beside the double-decker bed in the twins room, the inevitability of a dog in the house, as important as a stove, or a front porch, or a subscription to the local paper; more, and above any of those things, the dog herself, known among the neighbors as Lady Walpole, on an exact par with Jack Walpole or Judy Walpole; quiet, competent, exceedingly tolerant (71).

Mrs. Walpole considers her dog at once as part of the household's inanimate geography, "as important as a stove, or a front porch, or a subscription to the local paper," and as part of the familial geography, "on exact par" with her children (71). The material animal body, here, a domesticated one, is both spatialized and familiarized. She initially treats the interspecies homicidal encounter like an accident, treating the killed chickens as property damage. She offers to reimburse the caller for her loss ("Of *course* we'll take care of the damage"), but the voice refuses that kind of simple interpretation of events, telling Mrs. Walpole that there was "no damage" and that the killed chickens are already plucked and in the oven. Thinking of the death of these chickens as "no damage" fits with the oddly liminal status of chickens (even more so than other domesticated animals) as existing or 'counting' at all,[17] as well as speaking to the

[17] For example, the Federal Humane Slaughter Act, first passed in 1958, does not extend to chickens, positioning them as less than animals.

unspoken logic of animal utility at work here. Because the chickens are edible (and "in the pot" already), they continue to fulfill a function and preserve domestic distinctions. But what of the disobedient dog?

Throughout, Jackson's lines of dialogue are attuned to the ways in which suburban rhetoric is loaded with dog whistles, in which seemingly innocuous phrases like "nuisance" or "neighborhood character" come to signify. Jackson writes: "now the voice, its tone, its inflection, had managed to frighten Mrs. Walpole with a word like "something" (72). Instead of financial remuneration, the voice demands a kind of biblical compensation, an eye for an eye, telling Mrs. Walpole: "we wouldn't ask you to do anything except take care of the dog" (72).

For all intents and purposes, this story is realistic. It is not Gothic, nor paranoid, nor proto-post-modern (though it has been called all the above by critics). The narrative is, rather, highlighting how the suburban quotidian depends on policing species. This "evil situation" remains firmly within the suburban domestic sphere. As Mrs. Walpole thinks to herself about her and her family, "they had not lived in the country long enough [….] They were still city folk […] In this situation as in all such others – the disposal of rubbish, the weather stripping, the baking of angel food cake – [she had to] look for advice" (72). Here, a "chicken-killing dog" continues to be framed as a kind of housekeeping problem. Mrs. Walpole equates the "disgrace" of it with the disgrace of "washing on Tuesday" – a sign that your skills as a homemaker are not up to snuff.[18]

Yet it seems clear from the voice on the other end of the phone line that to "take care" in this case means more than simply "clean up a mess." It is in this colloquial phrase, "take care,"

[18] In Jackson's fiction, housekeeping is often a fraught encounter between gender, race, community, and sanity. As Alexis Shotwell notes: "a significant number of Jackson's stories focus on (good) housekeeping in more literal modes, and it is in these that […] racialization is entangled with gender and housekeeping even when no racial difference is explicitly marked" (129).

that Jackson hangs all of the darkly humorous and acerbic wit of this story, as the ensuing pieces of advice from her neighbors, grocers, and children about how to "take care" of her dog become increasingly gruesome. The ordinary suburban scene has, without warning and without an obvious shift in tone, moved from the realities of housekeeping to homicide. While this is signaled by the voice's warning that "it's lucky [her husband] didn't think to take his shotgun out with him because you wouldn't have any more dog" (73).[19] It is when Mrs. Walpole leaves her home and enters the suburban public sphere that the narrative moves from a light-hearted domestic kerfuffle to a horror story in which a subterranean creepiness and cruelty suddenly bursts through.

The first hint of strangeness is that every single person that Mrs. Walpole encounters is already aware of the incident. This kind of small-town grapevine is common in Shirley Jackson's domestic nonfiction, but here becomes the medium by which the violence underpinning these social encounters is made explicit. It takes a town to raise and punish a dog, to enforce the species line. The suggestions and solutions become increasingly and excessively violent, and betray conflicted attitudes about animal education and rehabilitation. Her first neighbor suggests "a stout chain," and also implies that the Walpole dog is two steps away from becoming a kind of animal psychopath, as "once they get the taste of blood, they get so's they'd rather kill than eat" (73). Her next neighbor suggests tying a dead chicken around the dog's neck and letting it rot, a kind of chicken aversion therapy. A stranger at the grocer suggests putting the dog in a pen with a "mother hen's got chicks to protect" who would then scratch the dog's eyes out, in a solution that ironically pits the mother hen against the mother human (Mrs. Walpole). Her grocer

[19] A shooting that would be entirely legal in most places in the 20th century. One example cited by Colin Dayan in *The Law is a White Dog* from The General Code of Ohio, 1910: "A dog that chases, worries, injures or kills a sheep, lamb, goat, kid, domestic fowl, domestic animal or person, can be killed any time or place" (238).

suggests the simpler solution of shooting the dog,[20] in one of the few suggestions that does not masquerade as a form of training or punishment. Her children return home from school with their own ideas, gleaned secondhand from another neighbor: a nail-studded collar that, when Lady Walpole is shown another chicken and provoked to chase it, would behead her with one swift pull on the chain.[21]

The shifting status of the family dog in this story, from killable property to familial person, speaks to the ways in which homeownership in the postwar years depended on policing personhood by way of a vocabulary of "nuisances." In this series of encounters, the dog is always already and consistently a nuisance, in the eyes of the law and the public. In the long history of dog law, this designation almost always has been used to justify killing a dog that is not your own (destroying someone else's property). For example, in *Putnam v. Payne* (1816) in the Supreme Court of New York, "the owner's negligence could be punished by destroying the nuisance: "Such negligence was wanton and cruel, and fully justified the defendant in killing the dog as a nuisance," but judges were careful to note that "killing more useful and less dangerous animals" – such as sheep or cattle – was not acceptable" (quoted in Francione 223). To cite another historical precedent, Gary Francione describes a Supreme Court case in *Animals, Property and the Law* that bears a striking similarity to this one:

> "In *Hodge v. State*, the defendant placed a steel-jaw trap in a bucket of slop and placed the bucket in his garden in order to catch a dog who was making 'nightly incursions' on

[20] Bernice Murphy notes how the grocery store is a particularly emblematic setting for this interaction, as "the shopping trip is very often the time when the clash between country and city folk becomes most obvious" (110).
[21] And while many literary critics of this story have tended to treat these suggestions as almost outlandish in its brutality (Egan describes them as "fantastic" and "gruesome" (43) while Reinsch calls these ideas "elaborate, grotesque, vengeful" (26)), this kind of treatment is entirely legal in most American neighborhoods, as most anticruelty statutes exempt methods use to educate or discipline animals and, furthermore, most property owners have broad leeway to safeguard against intrusions of both human and nonhuman animals.

> the defendant's property. A 'valuable' dog came along and attempted to eat the slop, thus triggering the trap. The dog's tongue was entirely ripped out. In reversing the defendant's conviction under the anticruelty statute, the court noted that the injured dog was clearly the animal responsible for trespassing on the defendant's property and that "if a night-prowling dog, in the habit of invading premises and breaking up hen's nests, and sucking the eggs, while so transgressing is caught in a steel-trap, though set by the owner for that purpose, and thus suffers pain or mutilation, we are not prepared to say that it would be needless torture or mutilation within the meaning of the statute" (127).

The court held that the statute "was not intended to deprive a man of the right to protect himself, his premises and property, against the intrusions of worthless, mischievous, or vicious animals" (Francione 127). Similarly, the *Baltimore Sun* reported in February 1908 that after a dog bit a white suburban child, two men from a suburban "Dog Committee" went to the neighboring Black community and "killed every dog in town" in a "fusillade of shots and wild sounds" (quoted in Glotzer 85).

These corporal punishments in Jackson's story, in particular those that bear a resemblance to a public lynching, seem overtly racially coded, but the entire narrative trades in a species-inversion of the racial stereotype of the African American "chicken snatcher." Indeed, these two animals (dog, chicken) carry particular resonances of the legacy of slavery in American culture. Psyche Williams-Forson, in her 2006 book *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs* notes how these accusations of chicken thievery are related to planter ideology and have shaped cultural representations in the decades since. As Williams-Forson argues, "these images and perceptions of chicken, sex, race, and gender speak to how power can be present in even the most mundane objects of our material lives" (49). The increasingly violent suggestions reenact

the brutal punishments of African Americans who were found guilty of stealing chickens in the 19th-century South, whether evidence supported the accusations or not, from hand branding to public whipping (26). Both Williams-Forson and Jackson's story emphasize how accusations of chicken thievery have so often been based in stereotype, wildly inaccurate assumptions, and planter ideology. Williams-Forson writes: "By the 1800s, black men and women had fully come to be associated with chicken stealing. They were convicted often even when the evidence against them was preposterous" (27). Cartoons, advertisements for products like soap and watermelon "depicted African American men as lazy, shiftless chicken-stealers" (47). Chicken historian Annie Potts describes how this cultural representation has become a species color-line, as "racist propaganda in the US has drawn on African Americans' traditional proximity to chickens to portray them in compromising situations, for example, as chicken thieves or victims of chicken attacks" (109).

Slaves and dogs, furthermore, are likewise entangled in American legal and cultural history. As Colin Dayan argues in *The Law is a White Dog*: "dogs help us to understand how old forms of brutality were transfigured. They were recast through judicial fictions that led to arbitrary discrimination. Owners had no recourse to constitutional rights of due process, and dogs were abandoned to the subterfuges of the state. […] The aftereffects of slavery cast a long shadow over dog law" (239) Rather than framing these violent suburban impulses in which race and species become entangled as the past emerging in the present, Jackson's stories serve as evidence of how the suburban space is made possible by this violent policing from its inception. "The Renegade" is not a meditation on anti-modern or retrograde sentiments yet to be overcome, but rather a testament to the continuities between white homeownership, planter ideology, and species exclusions.

Appropriately, the story ends with Mrs. Walpole standing at her kitchen window, suddenly feeling "the harsh hands pulling her down, the sharp points closing in on her throat" (83). The "sharp points" here are steel spikes designed for her disobedient dog's neck, and the "harsh hands" are her neighbors'. Most critics ignore the conflict at the center of the story, or treat the dog as (like many other elements of Jackson stories) a reflection of the fragile mental state of the protagonist or as a lesson about "man's innate cruelty" and the impending collapse of the sanctity of the home. Joan Wylie Hall, in *A Study of the Short Fiction*, interprets this feeling as evidence of insanity, writing: "Mrs. Walpole's final identification with the dog is shockingly explicit, but it helps to explain why she is "indescribably depressed"" (24). S.T. Joshi, while he usefully focuses on how the crime at the heart of the story remains outside of the narration and thus is proven only by the indemnifying reactions of her neighbors, turns our focus from the threat to the dog to the threat to the nuclear family: "The horror of this story lies not merely in the implication that an entire community has, with gleeful vindictiveness, turned against a household because of its supposed chicken-killing dog, but that the family is now being destroyed from within as the children embrace the prospect of killing the dog" (39). Hague similarly focuses on the children, arguing that "Jackson's children are deadly because she wishes to interrogate the conventionally safe portrayals of home and family life she despised" (89). Alan Ryan goes even further away from the animal bodies towards the conceptual life of the family, describing "The Renegade" simply as a story that "portrays a woman trying to keep her sanity amid swirling domestic horrors" (4). Bernice Murphy, an excellent and attentive reader of Jackson, reads this story as an allegory for "the clash between country and city folk" (110), arguing that Jackson's narrative associates these violent impulses with the countryside. Murphy writes: "the news that the family dog has been seen killing chickens provides the catalyst for a

sudden, devastating crisis of confidence in Mrs. Walpole, a naïve newcomer to rural life, […] torn between resentment at "the murderous brutality" the countryside has brought out in the dog she so obviously identifies with, and horrified dismay at the fact that her own children are mouthing the cruel, ruthlessly unsentimental opinions of the locals"(110).

But I argue that "The Renegade" is much more specific than these readings attest, though the story is also attuned to the psychological and regional undercurrents that these critics identify. Jackson's story anticipates how these two kinds of species (farm animals and pets) would increasingly be cast in opposition by the domestic politics of the coming decades. Soon, the chicken coop will lose in that contest (historically) and become much more of a public nuisance than the domestic dog. Rather than opportunities for economic gain, farm animals became one more nuisance to be avoided. As Richard Babcock, one of the most influential early writers on the spread of zoning in the US, wrote in 1966: "Protection from common law nuisance (whether in the form of a backyard hen house or a noisy window air conditioner) is the minimum [that a neighbor] is entitled to expect" (141). In Levittown, a suburban development that served as the model for many subsequent communities, to discourage the animals associated with poorer communities on the edge of cities, what Abraham Levitt called "Goatvilles," "Levitt & Sons wrote sweeping covenants into each lease: 'You may keep a couple of household pets (dogs or cats, etc.),' but there was to be 'no commercial breeding or maintaining'" (Halberstam 141).The massive demographic shifts of the early 20th century, combined with changing foodways and new technologies, meant that domestic production and sustenance farming became less and less the norm and increasingly associated with racial and class signifiers.[22] As Christopher Sellers

[22] Midcentury advancements in refrigeration, transportation, and animal physiology (aiding and abetting this physical marginalization) meant that postwar producers and consumers developed new and complex relationships with animal bodies, seasonality, and geography. Indeed, "Between 1890 and 1990, the percentage of Americans

notes in *Crabgrass Crucible*, his 2012 study of suburban nature, federal housing officials involved in redlining responded most harshly to areas with "the most countrylike uses of land" (35), assigning these neighborhoods the lowest possible rating and inhibiting economic growth. Because sustenance farming on the periphery of urban areas became associated with economic desperation during the Depression, housing officials and suburban developers were determined to avoid this stigma in new suburban communities. As I recounted earlier, one government official, tasked with determining whether a Californian neighborhood was suburban or a slum, made his verdict clear when he noted an "infiltration of goats, rabbits, and dark-skinned babies" (quoted in Nicolaides 193).[23]

When Jackson's stories feature animals, whether mockingbirds, dogs, or chickens, unwelcome and violently regulated within the domestic sphere, these animal figures play on and complicate these ongoing redefinitions of suburban spaces. This encounter between a chicken and a pet dog—a rural animal and a suburban animal—is equally as central to the story as the racial and gender politics, and central to the ways in which Jackson critiques the social and psychological geographies of midcentury communities.

Her most extended look at the shared logic of housing and species comes disguised as a novel of manners; *The Road through the Wall* (1948) narrates the everyday scandals of one summer in a small California suburb, from spiked punch at a block party to the shabbiness of a new neighbor's furniture. While most readers of Jackson's first novel have pointed out her

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working to grow food and fiber dropped from 43 percent to 2.6 percent of the population, even as the population grew by 130 million" (*Sanderson* 121).

[23] This anecdote is cited throughout studies of postwar housing politics, noting the racism rather than the animal rhetoric. In *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles*, Becky M. Nicolaides contextualizes this comment as part of the wider practice of redlining neighborhoods due to perceived "racial hazards" (193).

incisive social commentary,[24] *The Road Through the Wall* is also attuned to the spatial, structural, and species-dependent regulations governing suburban life in the mid-20th century.[25] In this novel, Jackson's subversion of the suburban Eden goes beyond presenting an unlikeable cast of characters to suggest the ways in which policing species is integral to social and physical suburban landscapes.

The Road Through the Wall opens with a prologue that functions as a spatial and cultural establishing shot, depicted from a cartographer's point of view rather than an inhabitant's. Describing the residents and residencies of the suburb in the same breath and in the same bromide-peppered prose, Jackson manages to, in the space of a few pages, depict every family as aspirational and unlikeable. But what will become most significant in the novel is the suburb's internal and external geography. Pepper Street "possessed an enviable privacy" (*Wall* 5), yet it is also on the borderline between two economically distinct neighborhoods (estates, apartments) and thus under threat, as signaled by the fact that "all the houses were marked "No Trespassing"" (7). Pepper Street is a liminal and unstable neighborhood both in space as well as in time, foregrounded by the language Jackson uses to depict anxieties about ongoing development:

> Part of the wall was to come down. A breach was to be made in the northern boundary of the world. Barbarian hordes were to be unleashed on Pepper Street. A change was going to come about without anyone's consent. In ten years the people now living on Pepper Street could come back and not know the old place, it would be so changed (130).

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[24] Angela Hague argues that "Jackson writes a novel without any compelling or sympathetic characters in order to focus on the pathology of the claustrophobic, norm-enforcing community itself" (86).

[25] As Bernice M. Murphy notes in her analysis of the novel in *The Suburban Gothic* (2009), *The Road Through the Wall* is the only Jackson text in which both the spatial and temporal location are explicitly stated: a suburb of San Francisco in the summer of 1936. Yet, as Murphy argues, despite the ostensible prewar setting, the novel takes a postwar attitude towards the suburbs, reflecting the time of its publication (Murphy 26).

Just as much of the action of this novel takes place in interstitial space (sidewalks, gutters between golf courses and backyards, etc.), the novel is set in a transitional time between an imagined idyllic past and a dystopian future, marked by "invasions" (6) of "barbarian hordes" soon to be "unleashed" on the suburb.

That Jackson chose to name her novel *The Road Through the Wall* and thereby emphasize suburban development, construction, and highway infrastructure, suggests a keen awareness of the growing importance of physical barriers in the postwar landscape. In other words, what many critics have read as a cynical twist on the Edenic Myth (in which suburbanites are cast out from the garden because of their many sins) is also threaded through with the logic of midcentury zoning regulations. The wall, following this logic, operates less as a biblical allusion and more as an assumed barrier against "Barbarian hordes," a form of protection that was explicitly encouraged by US governmental policy. A 1938 Federal Housing Underwriting Manual, a guidebook for governmental and private insurance auditors, advises that "naturally or artificially established barriers […] will prove effective in protecting a neighborhood and the locations within it from… the infiltration of business and industrial uses, lower-class occupancy, and inharmonious racial groups" (quoted in Freund 158). Kenneth T. Jackson, in *Crabgrass Frontier* (1985), a foundational text for suburban studies, details how this theory was put into practice in Michigan in the early 1940s where, when a Black community's proximity to a white neighborhood proved prohibitive to obtaining federal housing insurance, "an enterprising white developer built a concrete wall in between the white and Black areas. The FHA appraisers then took another look and approved mortgages on the white properties" (209). This well-known wall was often referred to as "The Wailing Wall" (209). Charles Abrams, an early and influential

historian of zoning, similarly describes in *Forbidden Neighbors* (1955) how physical structures became tools of racial exclusion:

> The cul-de-sac became the device for keeping the dark-skinned neighbors on the outside of the new development; the dead-end street became a method for keeping out the dead-end kids; the greenbelt became the medium for separating the black belt from the white belt; the "neighborhood unit" concept followed the same course; the boulevard was no longer the terraced walk where the shuffling poor could observe the strutting rich, but emerged as a new barricade against minority invaders. Even walls were built ostensibly for beauty and amenity, actually for exclusion and discrimination. (213)

The novel's anxieties about race and property structure other geographies in the text as well, as the only explicitly nonwhite character, a man described only as "that Chinaman" (40), lives in an apartment building that abuts the suburban neighborhood. Furthering emphasizing this separation, travel of the inhabitants of these apartment houses to Pepper Street's suburban homes is described in the opening pages by the racially loaded term, an "invasion."

Fears about home invasion are bound up with race and species in *The Road Through the Wall*. As a contrast to the unmanicured shrubbery of the geography beyond the suburban confines, the residents of Pepper Street take care to maintain gardens and lawns to a certain suburban standard. This interest in tightly controlling nature should sound familiar to anyone who has visited an English garden, the aesthetic model for many of these new suburban developments, but the garden in suburban homes becomes more than simply an aristocratic and anachronistic aesthetic aspiration. In *The Road Through the Wall*, gardens are both a temporal and spatial marker of civilization and suburbanization. As one character argues: "Flowers grow best when they have always been tended by the same hand. My sister and I planted this whole

garden. It was a wilderness. […] It was a real wilderness at first" (43). This obsession with the front yard is familiar to suburban literature and to the historical suburbs. Just as the landlord of "Indians Live in Tents" who prohibited vegetable gardens, the lawn is another area of suburban domesticity where domestic production is discouraged (even a few short years after Victory Gardens). As Kenneth T. Jackson writes: "Most people in the world have no conception of a yard, of a lawn, of a green space that does not nourish animals or grow crops, that in fact, does nothing" (223). Abraham Levitt, of Levittown, was so devoted to gardening standards that he wrote and published a weekly article in the local newspaper explaining to Levittown residents how best to plant, shape, and control the botanical spaces on their properties. His interest in gardening went beyond the idly suggestive; he also took it upon himself to personally police garden upkeep, performing regular inspections and sending bills for landscaping to residents who failed to meet his standards (Sellers 78).

But the suburban green thumb and a corresponding anxiety about policing wilderness went beyond the botanical. Zoning not only regulated the movement of human and nonhuman animals, but was also initially and pervasively based on an ecological and evolutionary understanding of human movements and populations: The infamous "blight" that so concerned white suburban homeowners and real estate agents trades on borrowed logic from the natural sciences. Much of the literature on zoning and housing politics in the early 20th century uses the "human ecology model," which was "heavily influenced by plant biology, particularly studies of how various plants would take over a piece of land previously filled by a different species" (Bradford 36). Not only did this rhetoric disguise racist formulations of 'invasion' as biological theory, but the "human ecology model" also justified segregation and separation as endemic to

urban and suburban living.[26] Thus when Jackson writes that Pepper Street's gardens may be contaminated by the coming construction dust (23) or invaded by Barbarian hordes, she uses logic that would be familiar to not only a suburbanite reading the local newspaper but also an urban planner at the time.

Just as a wall or cul-de-sac offers protection against contamination in the discourse of housing policies, so does the species-line, patrolling the boundaries of who counts as human, modern, and civilized. In *The Road Through the Wall*, the species-line is used to police both the movements and behavior of Pepper Street inhabitants, as humanity, taming, and animal behavior are central to the social norms. One teenager complains of her younger brother, "I *wish* you'd make Toddie eat like a human being" (127; emphasis in original). A housewife gossips to her neighbor in terms reminiscent of a dog show: "Those girls are not of the best breeding" (146). Another housewife speaks of herself in animal terms, figuring her own body as that which must be trained: "I was very heavy at Harriet's age […] I can't say I completely *outgrew* it […] but I guess I *tamed* it" (38; emphasis in original). Jackson even presents an animal bound up in the same domestic policing, subject to table manners: "When the dog put a paw on the table Mrs. Mack slapped the paw and said, "Will you never remember?" and the dog took the paw down again hastily" (87). Though seemingly idle gossip and ordinary complaints from somewhat unpleasant people, what these moments speak to is the way in which a species-line can work within and without suburban communities. Not only do regulations govern the movement and visibility of animal bodies, but anxieties about species (tangled up with anxieties about gender,

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[26] For more on this, see my chapter on Hansberry and the discussion of how *A Raisin in the Sun* could be read as a text about the pseudoscience of zoning.

race, and class) govern daily encounters between the human inhabitants of the suburban landscape as well.

In the most striking example of how the species-line can shape communal norms, the inhabitants of Pepper Street repeatedly cast a new family that moves in and behaves in unorthodox ways as apes, an animal comparison with an obvious and long racist history. The simile is provoked when the family disregards suburban social cues, as when one housewife chastises a young girl in the family by asking: "Don't you know how to apologize? […] Do you just stand there like an ape?" (116) But the comparisons between this family, apes, and other circus animals are pervasive, almost always coming via dialogue and rarely through Jackson's narration. When Jackson does play into this vision of the family, she highlights the restrictive nature of this figuring, comparing a young girl to "an animal that persistently and dumbly walks against the bars of its cage expecting each time that they will have ceased to restrict it" (119). In one of the final scenes of the novel, the logic of the species-line comes into play within a suburban home itself, as a microcosm of Pepper Street and suburban exclusionary logic. A neighbor of this family, when confronted with the silent but seemingly nonthreatening physical presence of the young girl in her living room, reacts with venom:

> "She should be in an institution […] The kindest thing you could do is get her locked up. […] A great big animal like that ought to be in a cage. And you bring her here!" She made a pushing gesture with both hands, her mouth turning in disgust. "You bring her into this house, that great big dirty animal, right in here with me" (154)

As she speaks, the offending girl shifts further and further, moving from patient (belonging in an institution), to animal "like that" which "ought to be in a cage," to a contaminant, "a great big

dirty animal, right in here with me," the living embodiment of the recurring fears of invasion. This closing outcry of *The Road Through the Wall* is a testament to the continuities in the novel between white homeownership, racist ideology, and species exclusions.

That unwelcome neighbors are on par with animals is not a comparison born of Jackson's literary mind, but rather a logic lifted right out of federal housing policy. Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, legal and cultural rhetoric framed farm animals and nonwhite neighbors as similarly detrimental to property values and neighborhood stability. Municipal regulations, real estate handbooks and federal insurance guidelines made this link explicit, by repeatedly referring to the presence of "inharmonious races and class" and the presence of agricultural animals like chickens and pigs as equivalent nuisances. A suburb of Detroit filed a covenant stating:

> At no time shall any part of said land be […] occupied as a bone-boiling establishment, tannery, slaughter house, glue, soap, candle, starch or gunpowder manufacturing unit or for other offensive or dangerous purposes, or for the keeping of pigs […], nor shall any of said lots be occupied by a colored person (Freund 94).

This logic was built into the federal housing policy from its inception. In the 1936 Federal Housing Administration Underwriting Manual (a series of guidelines for insurance and real estate agents and an undeniably influential text in shaping 20th century housing markets), "pigpens and unwelcome races were classed as equally objectionable" (Abrams 162). This racist notion of nuisances continued to influence the housing market for the next several decades. In *Colored Property* (2007), Freund convincingly lays out how Supreme Court verdicts in the 1930s helped to cement this logic through a series of decisions "collapsing the threat posed by

‘members of the Ethiopian race’ and other ‘non-Caucasian’ groups into a generic category of tangible and calculable threats, like congestion or gas stations or barn animals” (Freund 97). These legal battles and local ordinances speak to the many tactics marshaled by white homeowners to exclude nonwhite residents from suburban areas. Yet these increasingly byzantine regulations also suggest the changing signifiers associated with animal bodies in domestic space: a threat to property values and neighborhood harmony, a dispositive correlation to the economic and racial makeup of an area, and a nuisance with consequences that exceeded physical qualities.

As these examples suggest, it was not primarily the olfactory, sonic, or affective impact of farm animals that motivated these zoning restrictions. Jane Jacobs notes in her celebrated text of urban criticism, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), how technological advances in industrial work meant that what might have formerly been a nuisance was now mostly a tool of persuasion:

> Among planners and zoners, the great shibboleth in land use was the glue factory. ‘Would you want a glue factory in your neighborhood?’ was the clincher. Why a glue factory I do not know, except possibly that glue then meant dead horses and old fish, and the reference could be counted upon to make nice people shudder and stop thinking. There used to be a glue factory near us. It was in a small, attractive brick building and was one of the cleanest-looking places on its block. (303)

Rather than a genuine sensory disruption, production intermingling with residential spaces, such as chicken coops in the backyard or hair salons in the home, became primarily a marker of class and racial difference. Jennifer Stoever has convincingly argued that noise regulations and sonic

nuisance complaints reflected racist notions of "suburban peace and quiet" and urban "noise" in the postwar years,[27] showing that a noise is not a noise is not a noise. As Richard Babcock, a historian of zoning regulations, points out, if industrial noise ordinances were applied to residential neighborhoods, "nearly all window air conditioners and power mowers in the residential neighborhoods would not conform. The hitch, of course, is that we have one set of mores for the industrial pigs and another for the residential parlors" (132). Postwar regulations of animal bodies as nuisances betray an analogous bias.[28] As Freund notes of midcentury jurisprudence, "courts were upholding racial covenants by invoking late nineteenth-century precedents pertaining to the restriction of 'unpleasant sights, noxious vapors, or disturbing noises'" (Freund 95). He links these shifting nuisances to the larger midcentury "politics of property, neighborhood, and local autonomy," arguing that this politics worked in part by "assigning specific racial and status signifiers to specific kinds of tenancy and specific metropolitan geographies" (379). What Jackson's apish neighbors point out, highlighting the centrality of species and geography to this politics, a "species-line," is how zoning both reflects and shapes larger concerns about the proper places of human and nonhuman animals.

Throughout her body of work, Jackson presents communities in transition, attempting to define and police race, gender, and species. Her stories are deftly attuned to how notions of property and propriety, of humanity and inhumane behavior, are not fixed but contextual. Here, I want to highlight both that Shirley Jackson should be recognized an incisive cultural critic and,

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[27] As Stoever argues, "sound is not merely a scientific phenomenon – vibrations passing through matter at particular frequencies – it is also a set of social relations" (61).

[28] Maureen Ogle points out that, in 1965, "A reporter who investigated manure odor litigation […] found that nearly all the complaints lodged against farmers came from residents of new housing developments" (150). These complaints took the form of nuisances: ""You've got a stick of dynamite in your hands if enough people living near you decide they don't like your barnlot smells," warned a reporter for one farm magazine. "They can close you up!"" (150).

more broadly, that suburban literature, as a genre, demands further study. The suburbs have become so normalized and naturalized that it is sometimes hard to remember that the rules and regulations that govern suburban communities have a history and bring an invented language and a logic with them. As Sonia Hirt notes, "the ubiquity of zoning makes it so commonplace as to be invisible, but in this invisibility lies power – the power to shape daily practices and the power to shape ideas and ideals" (Hirt 3). Because the structures that shape the suburban home are often so invisible, the kind of close-reading invited by literary analysis becomes all the more crucial in understanding and mapping American domestic life. What Freund calls "the 'long' postwar history of suburban politics – a story that includes federal policy, local political engagement, and popular interpretations of metropolitan change" (395) is crucial to understanding American attitudes toward animal bodies, whether expressed in the NIMBY rhetoric of the early environmental movement, born out of the suburbs, or in the ag-gag legislation currently spreading across the US, supported by a meat industry that aims to control the dissemination of images of animal bodies. Jackson's suburban texts expand not only the typical portrait of suburban literature (as insular and self-involved), but also our understanding of suburban politics. Animals in the suburbs are not primarily a literal sensory nuisance, or a metaphorical racist shorthand, but a culturally and spatially constructed category—as unstable as gender or race and as central to understanding our own history.

CHAPTER TWO: INHUMAN HOUSING IN LORRAINE HANSBERRY

This chapter continues to focus on the language and narrative of white flight, on how writers account for and respond to the demographic shifts in the long 1950s of white Americans from urban to suburban neighborhoods, the accompanying government support, segregation, violence, and race-based oppression that helped to foster and sustain this migration, and the congealing of a white identity that links homeowner to citizen and conceals the levers of racial segregation. White flight has a powerful and defined role in narratives of contemporary American identity and ideologies, and it is crucial to consider how those narratives are transmitted and propagated across texts and contexts. Reading Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, this chapter argues that Hansberry's form enacts the mechanics of the transmission of these white flight narratives, showing how housing discrimination and urban planning are protocols, discourses, and scripts that can be plugged in and performed across American neighborhoods. *Raisin* asks us to notice how these contagious narratives of white flight are deeply invested in ideas of nature and rights, and in casting what was a government-backed, national movement to allow as well as bar access to suburban environments as a local, homegrown, organic dispute about the desires of homeowners.

A Raisin in the Sun takes place over three days in one small apartment, as the Youngers, a Black family living on the South Side of Chicago, make plans for the investment of a life insurance policy that they will receive because of the death of their father (or in Ruth's case, her husband) Walter Lee Younger. This setting has led some critics of the play to focus on the domestic backdrop and view the events that take place as ordinary and apolitical. For some,

portraying an "ordinary" Black family on stage was already radical, as it inserted African Americans into a middle-class domesticity that had been financially barred from them for much of the country's history and made culturally inhospitable by a media landscape that depicted uniformly white families and homeowners. For others, the narrowness of the Youngers' aspirations and opportunities makes the arc of the play unsatisfactory and seemingly concerned primarily with capitalistic accumulation and social status. For these critics, a broad, bourgeois notion of "The American Dream" is the engine behind *Raisin in the Sun* and what makes it legible, where everyone just hopes to make it, up by their bootstraps, and have a little place to call their own, where dreams of the characters are about ownership, and circumscribed by "bourgeois white standards and dreams" (Kate Baldwin 102).

For this reason, Mary Helen Washington in *Left of the Color Line* draws a sharp distinction between Hansberry as dramatist and Hansberry as journalist. She writes, "contrary to the mainstream image of the award-winning Broadway author of *Raisin in the Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry of [the newspaper] *Freedom* was a militantly left-wing, antiracist, anticolonialist, socialist feminist, whose activities in the 1950s earned her a three-binder FBI file" (194). Leaving aside the sensationalist framing of Hansberry's politics – her FBI file contains mostly mundane accounts of her attending communist meetings and the occasional rallies, as well as a firsthand review of *Raisin* from an FBI agent who saw the play and reported back on the tenor of audience reactions[29] – what this separation of drama and journalism ignores is Hansberry's own repeated insistence that the two are connected. As Michelle Y. Gordon argues in *Representing*

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[29] With thanks to the archivists and other staff at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, NY, who facilitated my research in the Hansberry papers.

Segregation, Hansberry's play is far-reaching in its critique, connecting the kitchenette to past oppressions and ongoing exploitations: "she dramatizes Chicago's white supremacist social order, and exposes its connections to the Jim Crow South, capitalist enterprise, and colonialism" (114). Gordon points out that Hansberry's aesthetics as well as her subject matter are important, as "*Raisin*'s aesthetic of genuine realism" should be recognized "as a form of social protest" (117). Gordon's attention to the violence behind these scenes of domesticity means that she understands Hansberry's "forthright engagement with Chicago segregation at the grass roots" as a project that "denaturalizes the workings of midcentury urban segregation" (114). Indeed, Hansberry deliberately adopts the perspective of a city inspector, tourist, or urban theorist – someone outside the city, looking in – to undermine the separation that segregation enforced. As George Lipsitz notes in *How Racism Takes Place*, Hansberry "advised travelers to the city to ride the elevated trains because they afforded choice views of her neighborhood's back porches where "the tempo of my people" could be observed. "Our Southside is a place apart," she proclaimed; "each piece of our living is a protest." (198)

As most readers of the play likely know, the narrative echoes events in Hansberry's own life. In 1936, the Hansberry family moved to a sublet on East 60th Street in Chicago (sublet from a white woman) and subsequently were served with an eviction notice by the realtor, R.M. O'Brien. They were not unable to pay their rent.[30] The reason given for the eviction was that they "occupied the premises in violation of a restrictive covenant" – that covenant prohibited Black people (often described as people "of Ethiopian descent" on leasing documents and real estate handbooks) from living in the building unless employed as domestic laborers. The length

[30] As Hansberry writes of her own economic bringing, "we are all shaped, are we not, by that particular rim of the soup-bowl where we swim, and I have remained throughout my life a creature formed in a community atmosphere where I was known as – a 'rich girl'" (*Young* 63).

of time these restrictive covenants applied to properties often extended beyond one owner; this restrictive covenant was meant to be in effect until 1948. Hansberry wrote to the editor of the *New York Times* of her childhood memories of "fighting… Chicago's restrictive covenants… required that our family occupy the disputed property in a hellishly hostile 'white neighborhood' in which, literally, howling mobs surrounded our house." Hansberry remembers her mother "doggedly guarding her four children" with "a loaded German luger" (*Young* 51) and a brick crashing through the window which almost struck Hansberry herself. The original draft of the play ends with this scene from her childhood, a new house, threatened by a white racist mob (McDonald 81).

In an interview after the first staging of *Raisin*, in response to an interviewer bringing up the apparently common, surprised reaction of white audience members to the play of "This is not really a Negro play; why this could be about anybody! It's a play about people!" Hansberry responds: "I hadn't noticed the contradiction because I'd always been under the impression that Negroes *are* people. … They are trying to say the characters in the play transcend category" (*Young* 113). But Hansberry rejects that deracialized understanding of universality. She writes: "Universality, I think, emerges from truthful identity of what is. In other words, I have told people that not only is this a Negro family, specifically and definitely culturally, but it's not even a New York family or a southern Negro family. It is specifically Southside Chicago… that kind of care, that kind of attention to detail" (*Young* 114).

As James Baldwin writes in his posthumous essay "Sweet Lorraine," one of the most striking elements of *Raisin* is what it demands of its Black audience, often without acknowledgment. Baldwin writes: "black people supplied the play with an interpretative element which could not be present in the minds of white people: a kind of claustrophobic terror, created

not only by their knowledge of the house but by their knowledge of the streets" (xii). This seems directly connected to the perpetual confusion (or disagreement) about whether *Raisin* has a happy ending. This distinction in response to the play is no doubt due in part of the forgetful quality of white supremacy that Charles Mills identifies in the opening paragraphs of *The Racial Contract*: "white supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today" and it is "unnamed" because textbooks, courses, and histories "have for the most part been written and designed by whites who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as political, as a form of domination" (1). This handed-down naivete about the violent, world-restricting quality of whiteness is one of the only explanations, it seems to me, for interpreting the play's arc as a happy, up-from-your-bootstraps, middle-class, All-American success story. It is, however, of course, an American story.

One effect of this attention to how the play questions the mechanisms of transmission of white supremacist ideas about space is to emphasize the radical, subversive quality of the script. At the time of its first staging, not every critic of the play appreciated the domestic, seemingly bourgeois goals of the family and many overlooked Hansberry's own history of radical thought as a writer for *Freedom* and an anti-racist activist. As Kathlene McDonald writes in her discussion of Hansberry's "contradictory left feminism," Hansberry had deep ties to the communist movement and anticolonial movements and her passport was once revoked by the U.S. State Department for this involvement (81). As literary critic Cheryl Higashida puts it in *Black International Feminism*, some critics understood the ending of the narrative as "an assimilation into the spiritual and political wasteland of the white bourgeoise" (61). This is an impression of the play's politics (or lack of politics) that has shifted for some in intervening decades. Amiri Baraka, reconsidering Hansberry from a vantage point of years passed, wrote in

1986 that he and other "young militants… missed the essence of the work – that Hansberry had created a family on the cutting edge of the same class and ideological struggles as existed in the movement itself and among the people" (18-19). Baraka reflects: "the concerns that I once dismissed as middle class – buying a house and moving into white folks' neighborhoods – are actually reflective of the essence of black people's striving and the will to defeat segregation, discrimination, and national oppression. There is no such thing as a 'white folks' neighborhood except for racists and those submitting to racism" (19-20).

The Langston Hughes poem from which the title is taken is, on one level, about a series of nuisances: a sore, rotten meat, a heavy load. "Harlem," written in 1951, is short and full of questions:

> What happens to a dream deferred?
>
> Does it dry up
> like a raisin in the sun?
> Or fester like a sore—
> And then run?
> Does it stink like rotten meat?
> Or crust and sugar over—
> like a syrupy sweet?
>
> Maybe it just sags
> like a heavy load.
>
> *Or does it explode?*

The final line quoted in the epigraph to Hansberry's play – "or does it explode? – asks the audience to consider the moment at which a nuisance becomes dangerous, when the deferral of dreams, aspirations, and opportunities becomes intolerable.[31] From the perspective of this dream,

[31] For more on Hughes, racialized nuisances, and the figures of the suburban species line, see my coda for a discussion of his poems "Little Song on Housing" and "Suburban Evening."

here figured as a nuisance, the dream becomes rotten meat. In a theatrical poster for the Sidney Poitier performance of *Raisin* at the Barrymore Theater, Poitier's face is pictured as a darker, oblong area against a bright, white sun – effectively transforming the raisin in the sun into a new figure. Rather than the dried out, deferred, drained dream of Hughes's poem, the raisin here visually echoes a black spot in an all-white environment, the eventual imagined situation neighbor association representative Linder describes and the future he hopes to prevent by buying off the Youngers' contract before they move into his neighborhood. Speaking of quotidian encounters on the sidewalks, for instance, Mills writes in the *Racial Contract* that "without pushing the metaphor too far, one could say that the nonwhite body is a moving bubble of wilderness in white political space, a node of discontinuity which is necessarily in permanent tension with it" (53). In his 1987 introduction to the Vintage Books edition of *Raisin*, Robert Nemiroff (Hansberry's husband, occasional financial backer, and literary executor) writes that this "little house in a suburban neighborhood" is "hardly suburbia, as some have imagined it" (11). In this sense, Nemiroff is right: *Raisin* is not about the realities of suburbia, but the imagining of it. The Youngers' vision of suburban domestic life comes into contact with Mr. Lindner's vision of suburban domestic life, both shaped by ideas about what is natural and proper to a neighborhood just outside the city.

At one point in *A Raisin in the Sun* one of the characters makes a claim that is all the more chilling for its nonchalance. Describing her own remark as a "cliché of clichés," Ruth attempts to make small talk about the weather with one of her daughter's dates while he is waiting in their living room – "Warm, ain't it? I mean for September." Ruth says. She then goes on: "Everybody says it's got to do with them bombs and things they keep setting off." The bombs here could refer both to the recently denoted nuclear bombs and to those thrown by white

supremacist mobs who routinely attacked Black Chicago residents throughout the 1940s and 50s.[32] This constant barrage perhaps explains why, after a pause, Ruth simply changes the subject and offers the young man a "nice cold beer." These are remarkable lines of dialogue for two reasons. The first is that Ruth's piece of gossip effectively connects racialized violence and the Anthropocene, where white supremacy is a geologic force capable of changing the weather, making the weather a matter of environmental and racial injustice. This figure echoes Christina Sharpe's description of the Weather in *In the Wake*, where she writes that the Weather involves those instances which "register and produce the conventions of antiblackness in the present and into the future" (104). For Sharpe, "quotidian disasters" contribute to the "insistent Black exclusion" from "social, political, and cultural belonging" (14). The weather is what results from these quotidian disasters, it "is the totality of our environments; the weather is the total climate, and that climate is antiblack" (104).

The second reason that Ruth's claim that the white supremacist bombings have altered the weather is worth noticing is that Hansberry calls attention to the persistent connection between 'natural' or ecological figures and housing discrimination, where the racial violence is expressed by way of a natural phenomenon: here, the heat. Hansberry thus makes clear the ways that suburban development and the attendant forces of zoning are dependent on the clichés and conventions of anti-Blackness, a scripted mode of rhetoric that aims to conceal its mechanisms even as it spreads itself across texts and neighborhoods.

By the time Hansberry's play was first performed, the scripts of housing discrimination, where African Americans played the role of invaders, busting up blocks of all-white neighborhoods, were all too familiar. The dog whistles of neighborhood cohesion, property

[32] From January 1945 to July 1946, for example, at least one attack took place every month.

values, blight, and privacy all offered a code for discussing race without speaking about it openly, while in the legal arena, the ostensibly race-neutral language in restrictive covenants was copied-pasted from one lease agreement and neighborhood to the next, spreading like a convenient contagion across white communities, real estate developers, insurance agents, and government officials both federal and municipal.

Hansberry's play calls attention to how white flight is a scripted performance, propped by the narratives of housing policies that reproduced and transmitted the rhetorical lines that accompanied redlining. As performance studies scholar Ju Yon Kim argues in the *Racial Mundane*, "behaviors carried out with nonchalance in the everyday acquire a new context and style when they move into the spotlight of the theater" (3). Performances are "sites where everyday behaviors shed their ordinariness to become subjects of marked interest, consequently revealing their unregistered importance or taking on an altogether new significance" (3) In what follows, I will zero in on another aspect of this scripted narrative that, I argue, is crucial to understanding the full extent of Hansberry's theatrical version of housing discrimination: how the rhetorics of white flight use figures of nature and the natural to at once promote a 'right' to discriminate and to disguise the man-made levers making possible this race-based oppressive form of suburban development.

Suburbia is more natural than it seems, on the one hand, in that plants and animals live alongside human residents in complex ecosystems that often go unacknowledged. Appeals to nature and green space have long been an important part of suburbia's self-fashioning as a landscape distinct from rural and urban spaces, with wide lawns of unproductive green space. This element of suburban life comes through explicitly in *Raisin*, with different forms of gardening and yards associated with different, racialized spaces. The attention to racialized,

exclusionary geographies in the play is often worked out by references to nature and animal figures. This gap is articulated by Mama's desire for a garden like she "used to see sometimes at the back of the houses down home" (26) implicitly as compared to the suburban gardens she sees in the neighborhoods surrounding Chicago.[33]

The emblematic plant, failing to thrive in the urban environment, is the most well-known of these natural figures and the opposition to the future, imagined garden, but the archive of the play's many scripts and revisions contains other animals as well. The stereotypical city animal of the rat, so central to *Native Son* and many other works of urban literature, is hiding in the margins of *Raisin*. Hansberry wrote several drafts of *Raisin*'s scripts for both stage and screen. In a scene from an early draft of the play, present for the first time in a 1989 American Playhouse television show (Carter 48), the youngest Younger encounters a rat in an alley way and narrates the story to his mother, which he views with excitement and she views with horror. Carter describes this in *Hansberry's Drama*: "Travis and his friends and the janitor have cornered a rat in the alley. … Travis tells his mother: 'there is rat blood all over the street'" (48). In the complete screenplay, which was much reduced and cut in the process of filming the movie, Walter takes a tour of the city and drives to the stockyards. There, "he leans on a lamp and watches the animals," and "simply stands staring at the industrial landscape, his jaw working in anguish" (quoted in Carter 74). In these drafts, the role of animal figures as boundary lines between one kind of life and another and between one kind of physical space and another, is evident and distressing to the Youngers.

[33] For more on the connections between postwar gardening and racial inequality, see Emmett, *Cultivating Environmental Justice*.

On the other hand, suburbia is much more unnatural than it seems, as the social and spatial geography of suburbia – the cul-de-sacs, the neighbors – are all highly regulated and intentional products of federal intervention into the housing market and social exclusions. Zoning regulations proliferated alongside Americans' unprecedented movements into suburban developments, and the familiar spatial narrative of suburbia, as an enclave apart from the city, is inextricably tied to zoning laws. In 1931, only 800 cities used zoning ordinances, but by 1968, almost 7,000 municipalities and another 2,000 townships were policing local land use (Freund 220). Even at its origin, the narrative of racial zoning is a re-iteration, re-formulation, and re-circulation of the narrative of 'natural' nuisances like fire and disease that becomes reconfigured and tied to a racial nuisance, with the two logics reinforcing one another.

Tracing how zoning as a logic and a language spreads, the mechanisms of its reiteration and recirculation, is important to understanding where and when zoning acts to compel and constrain. As Michelle Alexander reminds us in *The New Jim Crow*, "racism is highly adaptable" (21). Tracing a continuity of racist oppression from slave laws, to Jim Crow era legislation, to the Drug War in the 1990s, Alexander shows how, through the years, "new rules have been justified by new rhetoric, new language, and a new social consensus, while producing many of the same results…. [W]hite privilege is maintained, though the rules and rhetoric change" (21). There are two ways in which the rhetorics of zoning have the capacity and the tendency to reproduce, and Hansberry invokes both of them in *Raisin*.[34] The first is legally. The language of contracts and covenants spreads across location and across time, as covenants, leases, deeds, and municipal regulations are "sticky." As Carol Rose and others have noted, racial covenants

[34] Kate Baldwin explores a third possibility in her chapter on Hansberry in the Racial Imaginary: affect. Baldwin considers the "racialized shorthands" (128) of Hansberry's "emotional template" (104).

"continued to appear in deeds and title documents even after they were made unenforceable [by a Supreme Court decision] in 1948, and even after they were flatly outlawed by the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Rose suggests that realtors and homeowners continued include this language in deeds and other documents as "a useful signal" (169). And some of this stickiness, importantly, has to do with the kind of reading that deeds require. When we are thinking about narratives of white flight, considering the kind of reading that housing policies, deeds, and other documents require as well as considering the kind of reading encouraged by fiction, is crucial to understanding the full range of narratives about white flight and how these narratives can induce and impel one another. The stickiness of these race-based clauses, as Rose writes, means that "even if these covenants are not simply copied from old deed to new deed, they still crop up in the chain of title. This 'sticky' quality is an artifact of the Anglo-American conveyancing system, which looks to the history of past transactions to ascertain the claims against any given title" (169). This means that, in many states, it would invalidate the deed to remove this language even though it is no longer enforceable or applicable. As recently as 2009, California passed Bill AB-985, to specifically allow homeowners and realtors to modify restrictive covenants that are void on discriminatory grounds. That this language continues to stick around in these legal documents can have consequences. In 2002, a homeowner in Virginia was sued because he repeatedly informed an African American woman who applied to buy his property that he was barred from selling it to her by a racially restrictive covenant. A news story explained his actions by describing him as elderly, poorly educated, and not familiar with legal documents, reporting that he took the restriction as not only a legally binding clause of his deed but also as a signal of what his neighbors expected of him (Rich).

A related form of sticky legal reading, of the transmission of this language and logic about housing policies, is evident in a system of references employed by those at the 1931 "President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership," under President Hoover. As Richard Rothstein describes in *The Color of Law*, a report recommended that "all neighborhoods should have appropriate restrictions" but did not specify those restrictions, referring readers to an earlier 1928 report where, among others, racial restrictions were encouraged. As Rothstein infers, there was "evidently some defensiveness about the recent Supreme Court decision that [only] "private" racial deed language was constitutional. This may explain why the 1931 report recommended racial exclusion only obliquely, by referring conference participants to the 1928 report without itself repeating the recommendation verbatim" (83). This form of doublespeak persists throughout federal insurance manuals from the early 20th century, as officials code their investments in racial exclusions in supposedly race-neutral terms like "blighted," "inharmonious," "invading," and "infiltrating."

The second means by which the language and logic of zoning is transmitted, reiterated, and reproduced is through the cultural narratives that frame the phenomena of white flight and housing discrimination. In *Raisin*, this is demonstrated in one instance by their neighbor's, Mrs. Johnson, reaction when she heard the news that the Youngers planned to move out of their kitchenette and into a white neighborhood. As Soyica Colbert has argued about *Raisin*, Hansberry presents the choice to buy a home as an interval rather than an endpoint. A nosy, unlikable neighbor, Mrs. Johnson stops by the apartment for coffee and tells the Youngers when learning of their interest in moving to an all-white neighborhood, "I bet this time next month y'all's names will have been in the papers plenty – (holding up her hands to mark off each word of the head line we can see in front of her) "NEGROES INVADE CLYBOURNE PARK –

BOMBED."Consider these stage directions. Her rhetoric and her body perform the conventions of white flight, showing how the newspaper headline is a repeated script, an expected twist of the plot, and one that, because Hansberry ends the play in the middle of the Youngers' move, we can only wonder if it reproduces itself again in this case. As Brian Norman notes in *Neo-Segregation Narratives*, her point that it is "getting so you think you right down in Mississippi" means that Mrs. Johnson "maps how Jim Crow migrates and adapts" (38).A St. Louis case in 1959 provides one possible answer, where a "citizens committee" offered to purchase a property, in much the same scenario as this one, and when the family refused to sell "the city then condemned the property" and thus prevented the family from moving (Rothstein 125).

Hansberry is interested in the doublespeak, dog whistles, and pseudoscientific airs of zoning rhetoric. That she would be familiar with this rhetoric is no surprise, not only because of her personal history with covenants and zoning, when Hansberry's family was served with an eviction notice for occupying an apartment in Chicago in violation of a racially restrictive covenant, barring them from residing in the building "in any capacity other than that of a servant" (141-142), and Hansberry's father sued and took the case all the way to the Supreme Court. But Hansberry would also be familiar with this rhetoric because, in midcentury America, concerns about zoning, property rights, and homeownership became increasingly part and parcel of the fabric of daily life, whether in overt or covert events. The influence of the racially motivated housing market in the modern United States on postwar public rhetoric is evident in newspaper editorials, municipal publications, classroom activities, and even street fairs. As Freund shows, again in *Colored Property*, land-use and zoning restrictions were "a prominent fixture of suburban life for millions of Americans […] average residents quickly became familiar with the language of zoning and the most common justifications for restrictions of any kind"

(Freund 236). Hansberry's dialogue explicitly draws on this new form of rhetoric – in the pivotal confrontation of the play, between Walter and the Younger family and Mr. Lindner. For instance, Soyica Colbert focuses on Lindner's use of "occupy" to describe the Younger's decision to refuse his offer to repurchase their home and to move to Clybourne Park, linking 'occupy' to invasions.

But what often goes unaddressed in readings of *Raisin* is Lindner's blander, conventional, clichéd language that draws on the doublespeak of legalese. Throughout, Hansberry repeatedly shows how racial exclusions and racism violences operate by way of cliché and language that deliberately lacks an author and does not refer to actors. Scene III of Act 2, set one week after the previous scene, opens onto an apartment filled with moving boxes. Throughout the play, Hansberry employs conventional, cliched, bureaucratic language to powerful effect. At one point, Walter says of Beneatha that she will be "the Chairman of the Committee on Unending Agitation" (113), a good-natured joke about their differing approaches to "civil rights" and "race, race, race!" (113) After laughing, Beneatha's response to his teasing remark is a childhood cliché, one that takes on new resonances because it comes just as the bell sounds to announce Mr. Lindner, who will make his racist assault on the family in language. Beneatha tells Walter: "Stick and stones may break my bones but… words will never hurt me" (113).

The conversation between Mr. Lindner and Walter is a masterfully understated game of rhetorical chicken, where Lindner begins by being "upset for some reason" and the source of his discomfort is clear only to Beneatha, who has – as the stage directions note, without further explanation – "appreciation of the two meanings, which escape Ruth and Walter" (115). From its inception, the encounter between Lindner and the Younger family is marked by coded, exaggerated cliched playacting. Walter, introducing himself not by his name but by his role, tells

Lindner: “Have a seat. I’m Mrs. Younger’s son. I look after most of her business matters” (114). That this is something of a charade is emphasized both by Beneatha’s and Ruth’s reaction to this remark, as they “exchange amused glances” (114), and especially by the stage directions, which refer to Walter’s demeanor as “(Freely, the Man of the House,)” the capitalizations adding humor and putting a fine point on his playacting. Walter is at ease, “looking expectantly” and “amiably” at Lindner who, by contrast, is “struck dumb” when the door opens upon Walter and Ruth dancing and “clowning” in their apartment (113). Lindner awkwardly moves his hat and briefcase around and speaks in dialogue marked by fits and starts, with hesitations and clarifications:

> Beneatha: […] Is it business?
>
> Lindner: Yes… well, of a sort.
>
> …
>
> Walter (pointing): Why don’t you set your things on the floor?
>
> Lindner: Oh—yes. Thank you. (He slides the briefcase and hat under the chair) And as I was saying – I am from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association and we had had it brought to our attention at the last meeting that you people – or at least your mother – has bought a piece of residential property at – (he digs for the slip of paper again)” (114).

In describing the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, Mr. Lindner says: “one of these community organizations set up to look after – oh, you know, things like block upkeep and special projects and we also have what we call our New Neighbors Orientation Committee” …. “and we also have the category of what the association calls – (he looks elsewhere) – uh – special community problems” (75). That the stage directions ask him to look elsewhere even as

he ascribes the cliché of "special community programs" to someone else and, indeed, to a group rather than an individual, suggests the level of appeal to convention here. As Gordon describes Lindner, though he is "seemingly benign," he "draws on a paternalistic language of rights" and read in the context of white flight and white homeowners, "their paternalism was accompanied by two other rhetorical strategies: a battle language of victimization and terrorism … and a language of miscegenation and degeneration on the other" (124). Consider the similarity between Lindner's evasion of responsibility and Bill Levitt's, in his now infamous assertion that even as the forerunner of midcentury suburban development, he is not responsible for the shape of that development.[35]

Lindner also notes, by way of explaining why he is in the Youngers apartment, appealing explicitly to the inalienable right to identify and expurgate nuisances: "our community is made up of people who've worked hard as the dickens for years to build up that little community […] I don't say we are perfect and there is a lot wrong with some of the things they want. But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way" (77). Here, using clichés, bureaucratic, vaguely professionalized language that invokes community, civic responsibility, and *rights* as a way of discussing racial segregation, Lindner effectively demonstrates how housing discrimination depends on rhetorical conventions to re-generate and transmit across communities. Lindner, in speaking of impersonal organizations (Improvement Association, New Neighbors Orientation Committee) and natural, organically held rights (a right to want to have) embodies the tactics and mundane, rhetorical strategies of white supremacy to reproduce racial segregation.

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[35] Bill Levitt was quoted as saying: "As a Jew I have no room in my mind or heart for racial prejudice. But... I have come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then 90 or 95 percent of our white customers will not buy into the community. That is their attitude, not ours... As a company our position is simply this: We can solve a housing problem, or we can try to solve a racial problem but we cannot combine the two" (Halberstam 141).

The entanglement of law and fiction has a long history in African American literature and literary criticism. This history is marked both by the legalized violence perpetrated against African American writers and, concomitantly, the intimate understanding in literary texts that laws are fictions, often pernicious ones structured to dispossess the subjects caught within the narrative. Karla FC Holloway argues in *Legal Fictions* that "nearly all African American fiction inevitably engages some dimension of the legal" (17). Holloway is especially astute at describing the different capacities of law and literature. She writes of their similarities: "Law and literature both depend on a critical intimacy with the ways and means of language. Like legal precedents, literature retains its connections to some notion of a scripted past through allusions" (17). And she writes of their differences: "This is a messy legal landscape, and we see its effects in the contradictory, repetitive, inconsistent laws regarding race in the United States. While law just kept trying to sort it out, literature – especially that written by black authors – would out the inconsistencies, explore the lacunae, and weigh the unanticipated accompaniments embedded in racialized narratives" (22). Though she does not spend much time with Hansberry, Holloway briefly mentions that Hansberry is concerned with "the ways in which the racialized versions of contractual promises become the stuff of fiction" (90).

Speaking of the social power that adheres in language, Judith Butler describes a "historicity" which she characterizes as a "sedimentation, a repetition that congeals" (36). These appeals to precedent and consensus, both social and legal, have the effect of creating distance between agent and action, between author and expression, between speaker and what is spoken. As Judith Butler wonders in her discussion of "citational" hate speech in *Excitable Speech*: "Can one say that someone else made up this speech that one simply finds oneself using and thereby absolve oneself of all responsibility?" (27). For Butler, the answer is no: "I would argue that the

citationality of discourse can work to enhance and intensify our sense of responsibility for it. The one who utters hate speech is responsible for the manner in which such speech is repeated, for reinvigorating such speech, for establishing contexts of hate and injury. The responsibility of the speaker does not consist of remaking language ex nihilo, but rather of negotiating the legacies of usage that constrain and enable the speaker's speech" (27). Yet, as Freund and Lopez detail in *Colored Property* and *White by Law*, respectively, and as I argue here, the coded rhetoric of white flight and government-assisted segregation works to naturalize the racial prejudices enshrined in laws and language so as to deny and refuse responsibility.

Like hate speech, the clichés of white supremacy invoked here operate without an author. Mr. Lindner did not invent these ways of speaking – and his passive voice, his collectively phrased dialogue foregrounds this. The "iterability or citationality" (Butler 49) of these notions of rights and what's natural to neighborhoods does not absolve white residents of culpability in residential segregation. Despite the legal problem of what Butler – considering hate speech and the difficulty of holding individual speakers "accountable" (50) for enunciations – calls "a fundamentally unprosecutable history" (50), Hansberry's turn to the affordances of literary character here allow the collections of cliché, presumption, prejudice, and pre-existing social frameworks to be given form in the subject of Mr. Lindner. He's only a type, "flat" in E. M. Forster's 1927 formulation, but it is precisely his flatness, his (deus) ex machina appearance in the narrative, his limited range of rhetoric constrained by appeals to an absent white community, that enables his character to enact and embody the otherwise amorphous nature of white flight. As Steven Carter writes *Hansberry's Drama* about Lindner: "Lindner's speech is as gray and unimaginative as the homogenous, single-hued world he and his neighbors are trying to shape, and it implies just how dull and monotonous such a community must be" (31).

This is not to say that Mr. Lindner is merely rehearsing these clichés, so to speak. His lines take on a supplemented meaning with each new performer and performance, and the context in which this performance occurs causes the audience to resee and reconsider the sentiments he expresses. So much of Mr. Lindner's discourse has – even as he appeals to the idea of the natural – come to seem naturalized, both at the time Hansberry composed her play and in the intervening years and performances since. This reflects how the language around white flight has shaped perceptions of the phenomenon itself, as the stock phrases "accumulate over time … taking on the semblance of the natural, configuring and restricting the *doxa* that counts as reality" (Butler 159). Ian Haney-Lopez describes the force of this repetition as how, "[t]hrough law, race becomes real becomes law becomes race in a self-perpetuating pattern altered in myriad ways but never broken" (93). As George Lipsitz describes it in *How Racism Takes Place*, *Raisin* works "as an invisible archive of struggle against racialized space" (208). This is not a stagnant archive but rather a living, ongoing, expanding record of how the past impels and infects the present.

For Lipsitz, "the stubborn persistence of white supremacist practices insures its [the play's] relevance to succeeding generations" (197). For example, in 1975, "the cast of a musical based on the play found itself called upon to support a Black family in Queens, NY" (197) whose new home, in a mostly white neighborhood, had been firebombed. Historically, these racial injustices and violences are "the cumulative consequences of racism and slavery" (199). Rhetorically, they are the legacies of the ongoing imbrication between white supremacy and American real estate markets. As Lipsitz writes, the play's "enduring appeal and relevance offer[s] powerful evidence of the shameful duration, depth, and dimension of the racialization of space and the spatialization of race" (208). Robert Nemiroff likewise cites "the persistence of

white opposition to unrestricted housing and the ugly manifestations of racism in its myriad forms" (13) as one of the reasons *Raisin* remains "contemporary," "alive," and topical (13). But it is not only the continued performances and cultural place of *Raisin* that invite consideration of the "shameful duration" of these white supremacist practices and policies. Hansberry's play reveals how these practices have endured, charting the mundane mechanisms by which white supremacy and systematic racialized dispossession perpetuate intergenerational harm in ways that often go unreported, even as the full extent of the spectacular violence of suburban race riots and firebombing is also omitted from U.S. history textbooks and official accounts of white flight.

In this sense, Hansberry's play enacts the circulation of a racial discourse or, more precisely, competing discourses about a racialized humanity and personhood as spoken and embodied by the characters. Performance and visual theorist Nicole Fleetwood argues that "blackness circulates" (6). By this she means that "blackness attaches to bodies and narratives coded as such, but it always exceeds these attachments" (7). Her readings of documentary photographer Charles "Teenie" Harris are relevant here, as Hansberry and Harris share a focus on the way that "the camera loves," or, in Hansberry's case, the stage loves "the black subject whose struggles for equality represent the possibilities of American democracy" (33). In Fleetwood's reading, Harris's photographs play with these racialized 'types' by both invoking and complicating them, much like the characters in *Raisin*. Fleetwood juxtaposes "iconic" images of the Civil Rights era – the untitled United Press photograph of Rose Parks on a city bus, for instance – with the "localized, everyday scenes and moments of the mundane and ephemeral" (34) that also make up Harris's archive. The "idea of normalcy" in Harris's work, then, Fleetwood argues, does not "reproduce dominant codes of gender, family, and progress" (84) or at least does not only do that. It is also an intervention, "producing visual subjects who

have been excluded from dominant society and public memory, especially during segregation" (48). His photography is "an indexical practice of documenting the non-iconic" (64). In Fleetwood's interest in "what seems never to stop repeating itself, yet what startles, causes an uproar, produces visceral feelings" (7) she implicitly rejects the association of the mundane and routine with the boring and complacent. Though Fleetwood focuses primarily on the visual register of these performances, her attention to racialized circulations and the "affective power" of "the residue that hovers, lingers, emanates, and circulates long after the moment" (24) is relevant to Hansberry's drama.

This condition of iterability, of depending on repetition to make meaning, is of course not unique to laws and plays. As Butler and others have pointed out, language itself depends on precedent and "only persists" through repetition and "utterances that reinvoke and restructure the conditions of its own possibility" (140). That repetition is foundational and unavoidable does not mean the form of repetition cannot be otherwise, and that writers and speakers who take up the rhetorics of white flight should not be held to account for the ways in which they put those narratives to use. As Butler puts it, the "question that remains is: How will that repetition occur, at what site, juridical or nonjuridical, and with what pain and promise?" (102).

Another question that considering these literary moments raises is, what to do with the natural? Picking up on Paul Gilroy, Butler suggests that "terms of modernity" like equality, justice, and freedom can potentially "come to embrace precisely what could not be contained" in these terms as they were originally constituted (161). Butler writes: "The task, it seems, is to compel the terms of modernity to embrace those they have traditionally excluded, and to know that such an embrace cannot be easy: it would wrack and unsettle the polity that makes such an embrace" (161). But what good can "the natural" do suburbia? As legal scholar Virginia

Dominguez has argued, "disputes over race are nearly always *naturalized*.… [T] here is a willingness to recognize nature as the architect of racial distinctions, and man simply as the foreman who interprets nature's design" (quoted in *White by Law* 18). Indeed, the idea of the naturalness of racial division was and continues to be important in American cultural production and neighborhoods. As Lipsitz points out in *How Racism Takes Place*, part of the financing for the original production came from Hansberry's husband's royalty payments from a West-Indian inspired song, "Cindy, Oh Cindy." As Lipsitz puts it, "the song "succeeded in the market by pandering to the seeming naturalness of racial and spatial inequality" while *Raisin*, on the contrary, worked against "the fatal coupling of race and place" (194).

Zoning rhetoric and the narratives of housing policies are sticky, contagious, and propulsive in terms of the propagation of white flight. They do not just accompany the phenomenon. These narratives make it possible. As Adrienne Brown points out in her discussion of *Invisible Man*, the very term white flight serves to "obfuscate the constructed nature of whiteness that was itself a work-in-progress during the midcentury and the role the suburbs themselves played in building this construction" (18). What narratives like *Invisible Man* do, then, she argues, is "complicate the traditional boundaries of urban planning as a discourse and a profession" by unearthing "buried structures of inquiry and critique" (191).

As I suggest above, this moment in *Raisin* critiques the ways in which narratives of white flight – the stories that we tell ourselves about white flight – are deeply invested in ideas of nature, right, and casting what was a government-backed, national movement to bar access to suburban environments as a local, homegrown, organic dispute about the desires of homeowners. Zoning was also a nascent science, a practice that needed to borrow from the sciences to justify and explain, using scientific language, the rationale behind these racialized policies. Increasingly

in tension with this reiteration of zoning as a means to address racial exclusions rather than material toxins was the interest of practitioners and officials in presenting zoning as an emerging science. In the early twentieth century, land economics or, as it was sometimes called, realology, was led by Richard Ely at University of Wisconsin. A group of economists claimed to "deal with land use, land valuation, and land ownership from an impartial and scientific perspective" (85). One prominent realtor, Jesse Clyde Nichols, argued that realology should strive to become "just as much an established science as geology and zoology" (Hornstein 110). But, as Jeffrey Hornstein documents in his history of the Realtor profession, *A Nation of Realtors*, these appeals to scientific objectivity in the appraisal process did not mean it would be "fair" but instead simultaneously "scientific *and* racist" (107).

But, as evident from the history of segregation, redlining, and block busting, property values and homeownership have never been scientific or politically neutral. As Freund argues, "zoning law and zoning science provided a useful language with which a […] white middle class could explain its desire for certain kinds of exclusion without invoking the ideologically loaded language of race" (216). *A Raisin in the Sun*, then, is participating in the African-American literary tradition of the science novel, like Ellison's *Invisible Man* or more recently Whitehead's *Underground Railroad*, where the intimate and domestic violences of the American scientific legacy of experimenting on Black bodies is represented to stunning, damning effect.

The branch of science that zoning drew on for both its logics and its rhetorics was that of natural sciences. As a 1976 report prepared by members of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Philadelphia notes, many zoning practitioners in the early 20th century used the "human ecology model," "which was heavily influenced by plant biology, particularly studies of how various plants would take over a piece of land previously filled by a different

species. […] When applied to human society and the neighborhood patterns of urban areas in particular, this model held that different groups of people 'infiltrated' and 'invaded' territory held by others" (Bradford 36). This vocabulary, borrowed from biology and other natural sciences, is especially relevant because of the way in which this rhetoric serves to naturalize the population shifts occurring at that time, under the guise of explaining why some neighborhoods experienced "blight" and others did not. As Karen and Barbara Fields argue in their discussion of racial ideology in *Racecraft*, "All human societies, whether tacitly or overtly, assume that nature has ordained their social arrangements. Or, to put it another way, part of what human beings understand by the word "nature" is the sense of inevitability that gradually becomes attached to a predictable, repetitive social routine" (128).

Not only did this ecological rhetoric disguise racist formulations of 'invasion' as scientific theory, but the "human ecology model" also justified segregation and separation as endemic to urban and suburban living. Consider, for example, this 1926 Supreme Court opinion drafted by Justice George Sutherland: "The blighting of property values and the congesting of the population, whenever the colored or certain foreign races invade a residential section, are so well known as to be within the judicial cognizance" (quoted in Rothstein 53). He invokes a script that reproduces and relies on rhetoric about invasions, blight, and an ecological model, racially casts the roles of invasive species and native species and naturalizes a process which, as I've argued, spreads by way of the transmission of scripts, of scripted assumptions and codewords that travel and jump from one context to another.

This same line of legal reasoning would continue to be used in the coming decades in jurisprudence and federal and state handbooks defining the justifications for racial segregation and racialized enforcement of the law. Though in recent Supreme Court nomination hearings, the

nominal respect for precedent (or settled law or *stare decises*) has been supposedly a shorthand for support for *Roe v. Wade* (*NYT* "Settled Law"), the actual force of precedent is conservative in both the political and social sense of the ideology. One example Lopez cites in *White by Law* of this force of precedent and self-perpetuating pattern is *Takao Ozawa v. United States* (1922). Deciding against Mr. Ozawa who petitioned the court about his designation as non-white, Mr. Justice Sutherland read the opinion of the court which appealed to precedent in determining what "white" meant:

> … the federal and state courts, in an almost unbroken line, have held that the words "white person" were meant to indicate only a person of what is properly known as the Caucasian race. With the conclusion reached in these several decisions we see no reason to differ. Moreover, that conclusion has become so well established by judicial and executive concurrence and legislative acquiescence that we should not at this late day feel at liberty to disturb it, in the absence of reasons far more cogent than any that have been suggested" (178).

This chain of court cases invites comparisons to the recent claim made by Justice John Roberts in a majority opinion upholding the so-called "Travel Ban" in 2018, that Korematsu, the case justifying the internment of American citizens of Japanese descent in the 1940s, has been "overruled in the court of history" – a form of extralegal disavowal that acknowledges the stickiness of precedent. Though Roberts may claim the precedent has been "overruled in the court of history," it was cited by some as a reason the travel ban would be legal and then-candidate Donald J. Trump said in an interview to *Good Morning America* on December 8, 2015: "What I'm doing is no different than FDR."

The afterlife of *Raisin* goes beyond the stage, of course. A theatrical film brought *Raisin* to new audiences. In *Neo-Segregation Narratives*, Brian Norman argues that Hansberry more fully portrays "the mundane and therefore devastating nature of race segregation" in her full screenplay by moving the Youngers "out of their apartment and onto the streets of segregated Chicago" (23). Norman argues that the film script "brings the Youngers into direct contact with cultures of urban segregation" and as a result depicts "the menacingly benign surfaces of racial exclusion" (28). The screenplay, like earlier drafts of the play, follows the Youngers to their new home in the suburbs, where "shadowy figures" stare at them from behind window curtains, "with a curiosity that, for the most part, is clearly hostile" (quoted in Norman 28). The indictment of suburban white supremacy extends beyond Lindner to include these anonymous "women and children" who enforce the color line in their quotidian behaviors just as Lindner does with his polite white supremacy. But significantly, as Lipari notes in "Fearful of the Written Word," the filmed version of the screenplay removes these anonymous suburban residents and hews to the later version of the play's script by including only "the sole unambiguously racist character Karl Lindner" (83). As Lipari argues, this cut – along with others that removed scenes of Walter working as chauffeur for a white employer and exterior shots of the South Side that provided more context for the domestic scenes – has the effect of avoiding a broader condemnation of whiteness and white people who would otherwise be implicated in these scenes. These edits reflect "the maintenance, containment, and repair of rhetorical constructions of whiteness" (Lipari 83). Just as neighborhood associations and real estate developers employed ostensibly race-neutral language about property values, rights, and blight to paper over racist tactics of exclusion, so these edits confine the responsibility for the broader practice of redlining and

housing segregation to one character, the 'one bad apple.' By finding a scapegoat, this deflection shifts agency, decision-making, and blame elsewhere.

Appropriately, Karl Lindner has also had a longer afterlife than just his appearance in *Raisin*. Bruce Norris's play *Clybourne Park*, produced in 2010, expands Lindner's role. The action of the play begins immediately after Lindner returns home from his second exchange with the Youngers, where Walter has so emphatically rejected his offer to buy their house in order to prevent them from moving into his neighborhood. Karl tells his neighbor, who is selling the house to the Youngers, "you know as well as I do that this is a progressive community" (33) and that while "in principle" the family could move into the neighborhood and possibly "fit in" – "and fitting into the neighborhood is really what it all comes down to" – "you can't live on principle can you? Gotta live in a house." (35). Norris's addendum to this scene has the effect of giving Lindner the active voice he is so lacking in his conversation with the Youngers. These ideas are his, not some intellectual abstraction arising from the impersonal neighborhood association. In *Clybourne Park*, the person reduced to clichés and pat rhetoric is Francine, the Black maid, who Linder interrogates about whether she would want to move into an all-white neighborhood like the one where she works. Francine, described as "unsure," responds to his repeated inquires with platitudes: the neighborhood is "very lovely," a nearby shop and shopowner are both "nice" (39).

As the playwright Norris frankly puts it, *Clybourne Par*k is "a play for white people. It's a play about white people." (100). He goes to say, "The play is written specifically to address the whiteness of the people who are there" in the audience (101). Norris explicitly connects contemporary whiteness with "a certain kind of conversational etiquette" (103) that has the purpose of concealing "historical discomfort" (102) with racism and with even acknowledging

race openly as a motivating factor for personal and political decision-making. Lindner, trying to convince the sellers of the home to back out of the deal, appeals first to imagined cultural differences: The Youngers may not be able to find the foods they like at the local grocers and the Youngers may not enjoy downhill skiing, an apparently popular neighborhood hobby (40). When this fails to persuade, Lindner then appeals to the implacable, impersonal force of the market, disavowing his own agency in this process as his passive syntax does so effectively for him in Hansberry's *Raisin*:

> "I'm not here to solve society's problems. I'm simply telling you what will happen, and it will happen as follows: first one family will leave, then another, and another, and each time they do, the values of these properties will decline, and once that process begins, once you break that egg… all the king's horses, etcetera—" (41-42).

As Freund, Coates, Rothstein, and many others have documented, these appeals to neutral, impersonal market forces and the supposed inevitability of a decline in property values as a neighborhood becomes less racially homogenous are specious. In many cases, developers and landlords charged new Black tenants more than the previous white tenants. And, to begin with, the real estate market was never a neutral arbiter of housing costs, as federal and local officials approved loans and leases using racist guidelines that disproportionately benefited white male straight homeowners. That Lindner turns to a nursery rhyme ("once you break that egg… all the king's horses, etcetera") suggests not only his self-assured world view – so obvious even a child would understand – but also the power of clichés and animal figures to help speakers avoid responsibility. He is "simply telling you what will happen" (41). In *Raisin*, Ruth's claim about the weather, Mrs. Johnson embodying the headline about "invasion," and Mr. Lindner's

invocation of how a man's got a right all work to point out that this white flight narrative that draws on natural sciences and natural rights remains contagious.

Indeed, it is often implicit in many of the ways we still describe suburban development. As suburban historian Paige Glotzer writes, "the narratives developers worked to establish over the decades get reinscribed and naturalized by the stories scholars tell" (6). As one example of how this continues to structure the way some think and write about suburban development, one historian of the GI Bill, even while discussing the very act of legislation that distributed postwar benefits so broadly yet so unequally, describes the spread of the suburbs in 'natural' terms that disguise the who and the how of federal intervention in the housing market. In *When Dreams Come True, the GI Bill and the Making of Modern America* (1996) Michael Bennet writes: "The GI Bill changed where and how Americans lived. Suburbs sprang up like mushrooms around every sizable city. As surely as the Homestead act of 1862 filled the prairies of the Far West, the GI Bill created and filled the suburbs." Notice his warring rhetorical impulses, invoking the natural spread of mushrooms even as he is outlining structural causes. A similar rhetorical contradiction comes in Christopher Wells's introduction to the 2018 reader, *Environmental Justice in Postwar America*. Wells writes: "Just as minorities were pouring into cities all over the country, white residents were flooding out into the green fields of burgeoning new suburbs" (12). These aquatic, naturalized metaphors for white flight, residential segregation, and racist housing policies find their ways into introductions even for collections explicitly invested in highlighting "the role that white supremacy played in crafting the public policies that created and maintained segregation" (Wells 17).

Recall too the 2012 debate between President Obama and his political opponents about a phrase he used in one of his campaign speeches: "you didn't build that." In the full context of his

speech, President Obama aimed to point out that, like homeownership, so many aspects of any business and any citizen's life are made possible by government assistance. This statement provoked outrage from some white Americans who maintain a self-made image, like Mr. Lindner, of "working like the dickens" to build communities. Rhetorical impulses like these reflect how the structures that shape the suburban home are so often invisible and are invested in maintaining and defending the seemingly natural transmission of privileges, ideas, and exclusionary scripts. Hansberry's play particularly demands and calls attention to staging and restaging a script of domesticity, investment, and racialized migrations, as these boundary-making codes and vernaculars are taken up, re-iterated, reproduced, recirculated, and transplanted to new locations. This is language that travels, and yet these self-authorizing fantasies of exceptionalism, autonomy, and self-reliance are questioned by a form that never lets us forget that this has happened before and will happen again.

CHAPTER THREE: DECAY AND CONVENIENCE IN RAY BRADBURY

As the previous chapters have explored, animal bodies and racialized cultural assumptions about animals are crucially implicated in the ways in which we distinguish between urban, suburban, and rural spaces. In this chapter, I trace animals and animal byproducts in Ray Bradbury's suburban science fiction, where the food products that appear are divorced from natural cycles of seasonality and decay, appearing fresh from the freezer even decades later. Reading primarily Bradbury's short story collection *The Martian Chronicles* (1950), this chapter argues that the suburban rhetoric of convenience, emphasizing food as miracle (over food as material), elides both the human labor and the material animal body that makes such food production possible. What to make of a chicken plucked from a deep freezer after twenty years with a cry of "Lazarus come forth!" from the consumer? I argue that rhetoric that position animals as a renewable resource, able to persist and emerge 'good as new' from technological storage, is part and parcel of a broader discursive politics of repressed and racialized animal bodies within suburban culture.

I begin by discussing the historical and critical context of *The Martian Chronicles*, making the case that the *Chronicles* should be read a response to postwar suburban development (rather than, as most scholars suggest, primarily as a critical reframing of the narrative of Western expansion). I then move to exploring how the rhetoric of convenience and preservation in *The Martian Chronicles* delimits biological animal bodies, positioning animal bodies as at once constitutive of and excluded from the suburban home.

In the postwar years, advertisements for new convenience foods and kitchenware promised the ability to conquer nature and the biology of animal bodies. As one historian of the postwar era writes: “frozen foods figured as the primary agent through which humankind could begin to conquer the limits of the natural environment. Indeed, the upheaval of the normal progression of the calendar loomed as frozen foods’ primary gift to society” (Smith 184). As Susanne Friedberg argues in *Fresh* (2010), rhetoric that emphasizes freshness (whether on labels, advertisements, or in literature) reflects the midcentury conceptual shift towards “the idea that freshness depends less on time or distance than on the technology that protects it” (5). Friedberg calls this both a “linguistic shift” and a “radical change” in how modern Americans treated perishable food products and decay.

Frozen foods and effortless cooking emphasized the control of producers and consumers over decay, biology, time, and nature. The limitations of the material, fleshy body are left behind, disavowing what novelist J.M Coetzee might call “the shared substrate of life,” even as the whole chicken is placed at the dinner table. Animals are “always already meat.”[36] In some ways, this distinction between biology and commodity echoes the familiar distinctions of Claude Levi-Strauss in *The Raw and The Cooked*, where he argues that "the cooking of a society is a language in which it unconsciously translates its structure - or else resigns itself, still unconsciously, to revealing its contradictions" (43).

Examining these opposing notions in suburban consumption and food production (biology and commodity, decay and preservation) leads to larger questions about the place of the

[36] An evocative phrase from Sherryl Vint’s *Animal Alterity: Science Fiction and the Question of the Animal* in which she discusses science fiction stories that require “that we do not question the premise that animals are always-already meat – that certain others can fall outside the bounds of our ethical duty for self-evident reasons and hence reasons that we do not need to interrogate” (28). For more from Vint, see her guest edited 2008 special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* on the connections between science fiction literature and Animal Studies.

organic and inorganic, nature and culture, animal and human in the suburbs and in the American postwar landscape. In the service of preserving the human/animal dichotomy, many writers and philosophers set up the material in opposition with the immaterial, even within the figure of the human itself, by associating humanity with the mind and animality with the body. Much of the work of scholars in Animal Studies and related fields has been to trouble these associations and cultural practices. In *The Open*, Giorgio Agamben persuasively outlined this "mobile border within living man" which creates the human subject by way of "ceaseless divisions and caesurae" between what is proper to humanity and what is proper to animality (16). Approaching this question by way of posthumanism, Cary Wolfe frames this Cartesian way of thinking as the idea "that "the human" is achieved by escaping or repressing not just its animal origins in nature, the biological, and the evolutionary, but more generally by transcending the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether" (xv). Taking this way of thinking to its logical conclusion, in the postwar years the process of transcending embodiment began to work within the animal body itself, refining the biological animal out of organic flesh and into products. If the imperative of this Cartesian dualism is a kind of refinement of the human out of the animal, then suburban food production (freezing, preservatives, gadgetry) refines the animal product out of the animal body, transforming the biological into a commodity that can never decay. Just as "the human" may be invented through a series of separations distinguishing human mind from animal body, the repressive logic of suburban food culture enforced a discursive separation between animal products and animal bodies.

While not the first nation to use mechanized refrigeration, the United States was an enthusiastic adopter and, by most accounts, the first truly "refrigerated society." By the mid-twentieth century, the US had a nationwide cold chain stretching from farm to factory to

supermarket to suburban freezer. As historian Roger Horowitz notes in his history of food practices *Putting Meat on the American Table* (2005), "the postwar boom not only meant more cars and homes; it could also be measured by bacon in the morning, processed meats for lunch, and steaks, pork chops, and roast chicken for dinner. […] Ample meat supplies were simply part of what it meant to have a prosperous America" (17). Horowitz goes on to describe the massive shifts in human and animal labor and biology that these "ample meat supplies" required, arguing that "implicit in the very notion of convenience is using technology to help mankind claim victory over the organic, subduing animals and their parts to the imperatives of the human race" (152). Though many scholars have traced how descriptions and experiences of postwar technological advancements were influenced by ideas about gender, race, domesticity, and citizenship, the place of animals within this history has largely been obscured.[37] The rhetorical emphasis on convenience and abundance in suburban food production is more than simply a means of marketing gadgets, but delineates a particular set of assumptions about the place of animal bodies within the suburban home.

Convenience foods and kitchen gadgets are often central to historians' and Americans' stories of the American suburbs, as the new products available on supermarket shelves and, indeed, the existence of supermarkets themselves marked a visible shift in everyday life for postwar consumers.[38] As historian Harvey Levenstein notes in his social history of American

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[37] The literature on modern American advertisements and consumerism is extensive. A few particularly helpful sources for this project were Lizbeth Cohen's *A Consumers' Republic* (2003), Susanne Freidberg's *Fresh* (2009), Cynthia Lee Henthorn's *From Submarines to Suburbs* (2006), Joy Parr's *Domestic Goods* (1999), Laura Shapiro's *Something from the Oven* (2004), and Richard Tedlow's *New and Improved* (1990).

[38] Though refrigeration as a means of food storage dates back many centuries, the "two-temperature" refrigerator was not invented until 1939 and only began to make major inroads into American homes in the postwar period (198). The percentage of "American families owning a mechanical refrigerator jumped from 44 to 80 percent between 1940 and 1950" (Cohen 123). Similarly, while many products (such as meats, poultry, and fruits) had been previously frozen as a means of arresting decay, it was not until the mid-1920s that customers could buy these products in an already-frozen state from supermarket freezers and not until the postwar period that these frozen products began to make any significant gains in the market share of purchases (273).

eating (*Paradox of Plenty*, 2003), the postwar years were a "Golden Age for American food chemistry," as chemists invented "over four hundred new additives to aid in processing and preserving food" from 1949 to 1959. These chemicals aimed to separate food products from the perceived limitations of geography, time (both decay and seasonality), and even the original products themselves. As one researcher for General Foods, manufacturers of Jell-O, claimed, "There are not sufficient strawberries grown in the world to supply the demand for strawberry flavor" (Levenstein 109). Levenstein cites a few examples of this "Golden Age" of chemistry, noting how chemicals like calcium propionate, sulfur dioxide gas, hydrolyzed starch, food coloring, and flavoring agents all served to preserve final products from material vulnerability and decay and "liberated manufacturers from dependence on natural fruits and flavors" (109).

But all these advancements in chemistry did not directly translate into customer satisfaction. In 1952, *Fortune* magazine reported that "in the opinion of many, the flavor of American food and drink – in jars, cartons, cans, fifths, and pints – leaves something to be desired" (quoted in Levenstein 110). A 1955 survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that households spent only 7 cents of every food dollar on so-called convenience foods, primarily canned and frozen fruits and vegetables (Shapiro 21). As journalist Annie M.G. Schmidt noted in 1955, "American food always seems to stay in the fridge but never come out of it" (cited in Hamilton 329). Historian David A. Hounshell explains in his exhaustive history of the rise of mass production in American industries that "developments in mass production had not been matched by the development of mass consumption" (322). American industries, streamlined by wartime production and newly capable of freezing, canning, packaging, and shipping massive amounts of food, now had to convince Americans to at least purchase, if not enjoy, preprocessed products.

The rhetoric of convenience came to dominate discourses of food preparation long before Americans embraced these new preservatives. As Levenstein notes in *Revolution at the Table*, improved technology "produced foods that were absolutely uniform in appearance, quality, and taste," a uniformity that put a premium on advertising, promotion, and the brand names they created and touted" (Revolution 35)[39]. Advertisements and popular rhetoric accompanying these newly available freezers and frozen foods emphasized the year-round freshness of these products, as well as the labor and time saved. Historian Laura Shapiro has exhaustively demonstrated the disjuncture between food industry rhetoric and everyday practices, displaying how "stories rejoicing over the way packaged foods had transformed cooking began showing up in the press long before most women had so much as opened a box of Bisquick" (43). Buoyed by ballooning advertising budgets and subsequent nationwide campaigns, advertisers (so-called "consumption engineers") aimed to manufacture customers and to cement particular brands in every consumer's consciousness. Shapiro documents how the postwar food industry "pummeled the media with tales of magical entrees and desserts that needed only a few finishing touches to become flawless representations of real food" (49). This advertising encouraged consumers' ignorance about production processes and emphasized visual surfaces. The kitchen was a site of miracles rather than domestic labor. Commercials, too, employed a no-muss, no-fuss rhetoric.[40]

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[39] Yet, ironically, this same move towards branding and promotion only served to enforce this sense of homogeneity, as "the promise of branded goods was […] that all customers would get the same product, in the same amount, with little room for individual treatment or discrimination. Even the standardized, colorful packages themselves – designed to entice customers visually and to stack neatly – dovetailed with a move to self-service, standard-sized store shelving, and aesthetic interiors" (Deutch 69).

[40] On Kraft's Television Theater, a 1950's live drama, "disembodied hands effortlessly mixed Miracle Whip, Kraft marshmallows, Kraft caramels, and Velveeta" while "an off-camera male announcer assured housewives that these "easy to make" recipes were "bound to please" everyone in the family" (Levenstein 116). In *As Seen on TV*, cultural historian Karal Ann Marling notes that this aspirational and instantaneous style of food preparation was doubly reinforced by the television shows of the era, notably the "family comedies that featured fully equipped kitchens in which the stars often appeared to make and serve meals during the course of the half-hour time slot, without so much as mussing their aprons" (217). Appliances aimed to obviate much of the human labor of cooking, with "specialized machines to make chip dip and ice cream drinks at the flip of a switch" (267).

Even Betty Crocker's cookbook, supposedly a process-oriented instruction manual, "reassured the suburban housewife that it was possible to perform kitchen miracles" (202). In a 1954 television commercial for an angel food cake mix, Betty Crocker assured viewers that "Kitchen time is cut way down, by the ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook foods, by the magical appliances that practically think for you" (quoted in Shapiro 195). This rhetoric of automatic, magical, effortless food preparation came to symbolize American cooking in the postwar years, evident in Khrushchev's dismissive question to Nixon during the 1959 Kitchen Debate in Russia: "Don't you have a machine that puts food in the mouth and pushes it down?" (quoted in Marling 276). Khrushchev's question suggests both the ubiquity and farcicality of this rhetoric of automated, machine-assisted American cooking.

This miraculous depiction of suburban food, particularly in the early 50s, was almost entirely rhetorical rather than realistic. These advertisements, commercials, television programs, and magazine articles reflect a discursive politics that perpetuated a particular set of ideas about animal bodies in the suburban home: how animal bodies got there (supermarket), what they should look like (preserved, fresh) and what housewives should do with them (as little as possible). Read alongside these cultural shifts, Ray Bradbury's depictions of futuristic domestic technologies reflect a suburban technoculture that "miraculously" produces food without apparent process, in which food is always fresh regardless of the year or season. At first glance, Bradbury's stories are concerned with technological anxiety, or inadequacy in the face of hyperefficient machinery, in which appliances replace familial duties and relationships. As one character in a 1950 short story remarks, "Why, you'd starve tomorrow if something went wrong in your kitchen. You wouldn't know how to tap an egg" ("The Veldt," 249). The tensions Bradbury invokes between humans and hyper-efficient machinery, the real and the artificial, and

small-town America and modernization are often captivating, and explain why his fiction has had such a long-standing place on American curriculums and bookshelves. Yet Bradbury's stories must be also read within and in terms of the deep-seated industrial, technical, and agricultural context that shapes the representation and repression of animal byproducts in the postwar years. The fully cooked meat and eggs effortlessly produced from within Bradbury's kitchen tables are more than a fantastical embellishment.

Bradbury's descriptions of prepared food emerging automatically from within the walls of a nuclear family's home becoming historically intelligible only in the context of a suburban discourse that disavows the material body of the animal while at the same time becoming ever more dependent on its products. In the later 1940s when Bradbury composed the stories that became *The Martian Chronicles*, frozen food and automated kitchenware were only first transitioning from flights of fancy to material reality. It was not until 1952, a few years after the first publication of *The Martian Chronicles*, when the first successful frozen TV dinners arrived in supermarkets (Shapiro 17). *The Martian Chronicles* anticipates many of the consumerist shifts that would take place in a few years' time, where automated gadgets used primarily by restaurants and meatpackers would become marketed towards suburban kitchens as laborsaving devices that liberated housewives from the bounds of season, time, and geography. Bradbury's supposedly fantastical machines take literally the promises made by contemporary advertisements, and, indeed, bear a striking resemblance to those on display in postwar fast food restaurants, a new form of self-serve dining that was particularly popular in the Los Angeles, California area where he spent his adult life. In *Fahrenheit 451*, "Toast popped out of the silver toaster, was seized by a spidery metal hand that drenched it with melted butter" (16). Early outposts of the Burger King chain featured a complex automated system of food production,

aptly named “The Miracle Insta Machine,” in which “twelve hamburger patties entered it in individual wire baskets, circled two electric heating elements, got cooked on both sides, and then slid down a chute into a pan of sauce, while hamburger buns toasted in a nearby slot” (Schlosser 24). Bradbury’s food without preparation and Burger King’s early machines traffic in the same apparent displacement of labor, presenting a supposedly automated and miraculous process that elides the massive expenditures in human and animal labor behind these new technologies and divorces the consumer from the material, biological animal body.

Raised in a midwestern town surrounded by farmland in the 1920s and subsequently in the expanding suburbs of Los Angeles, Ray Bradbury was uniquely positioned to observe the shifts in agriculture emerging alongside and within American suburban developments. As many scholars have noted, the Southern Californian suburbs have often come to stand in for suburban development more broadly, primarily due to the incredible breakneck speed with which these communities were constructed as “the massive demand for housing land swallowed up the seemingly limitless open space of Los Angeles County and led to the loss of that balance between agriculture and housing which had been a characteristic feature of the city before 1940” (Fishman 157). From the 1940s to the 1980s, Southern Californians like Bradbury witnessed “the transformation of over 900 square miles of agricultural land into suburban tract development, and the construction of almost 500 miles of freeways” (178). Bradbury was more than simply an observer of these massive changes: he also participated in urban planning during the early postwar years, helping to design several California shopping malls (his main point of advice: build more restaurants, fewer retail stores). Bradbury’s own unusual relationship with food is legendary among his friends and colleagues. Bottle-fed until six and spoon-fed into his teen years, Bradbury’s diet even as an adult consisted of “almost exclusively, hamburgers, egg

sandwiches, Campbell's tomato soup, his mother's Swedish meatballs, and her strawberry shortcake" (Chronicles 125). His dedication to 'convenience' foods was so fervent that he once planned to have his "ashes put into a Campbell's tomato soup can and then have it planted on Mars" (Conversations 168). Indeed, while Bradbury may have reviled the speed and atomization of automotive culture (he famously hated cars and never learned to drive, despite living in a heavily auto-dependent Los Angeles), his essays and interviews reveal an abiding love for the aesthetic abundance of suburban communities. When the film director Francois Truffaut visited Bradbury in the late 1950s to discuss adapting *Fahrenheit 451*, Bradbury showed him two extraordinary vistas: a hilltop view of the suburban housing developments of Los Angeles and the modern supermarket built to supply them. In Bradbury's words:

> I took Truffaut high up on the Hollywood Hills where you could see *our* City of Light. Almost five hundred square miles of metropolitan illumination, a vast seascape of electricity. Then, before he could regain his breath, we raced him downhill to the confectionary confines of the Piggly Wiggly Continental, the most sublime outcrop of the American genus Supermarket (Speaks 103)[41].

Bradbury's choice to pair these two marvels is significant, for the supermarket as we know it today emerged in tandem with suburban housing developments as the Levitts and other developers arranged for the construction of chain grocery stores alongside every new community built (Sellers 59).

Bradbury's social critique of postwar culture then, is nuanced by this enthusiasm for much of the spectacle of technology, never more evident than in his abiding admiration for the

[41] This anecdote is quoted in various forms throughout Bradbury's many essays and interviews, notably in Sam Weller's biography *The Bradbury Chronicles* (2005) and in the collection of interviews *Bradbury Speaks* (2006).

1933 "Century of Progress" World's Fair in Chicago, an encounter that he repeatedly cites as transformative for his boyhood imagination[42]. Yet in Christopher Isherwood's review of *The Martian Chronicle*s, credited for singlehandedly jumpstarting sales of the book outside of exclusively science fiction audiences, Isherwood emphasizes the social critique apparent in *The Martian Chronicles*, while deemphasizing any technological accuracy: "His interest in machines seems to be limited to their symbolic and aesthetic aspects. […] The immigration fails because, with its hot-dog stands and neon lights and gin and hymn singing and automobiles, it remains too obstinately American" (Eller 222). But, as this chapter argues, the aesthetics of hot dog stands and American food culture are precisely at the heart of the promise of suburbia and are crucial not only to placing Bradbury's Martian settlements in a historical context, but also to unpacking how animal bodies helped shape the suburban community.

Though Bradbury began his writing career in pulps like *Amazing Stories*, his writing has always defied categorization and rested uneasily in the science fiction genre. When Doubleday published *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Illustrated Man* (his subsequent collection of stories) with stickers proclaiming the books science fiction, Bradbury repeatedly requested the removal of these logos (Becoming 214). Bradbury is not alone in attempting to distance his work from the science fiction genre, as critics and readers of his work often struggle to place him in generic categories, labeling him "a strange bedfellow to other science fiction writers of his generation" (Song 37). Because of what some see as an anti-science attitude evident in *The Martian Chronicles* in passages like "science ran too far ahead of us too quickly and people got lost in a mechanical wilderness, […] emphasizing machines instead of how to run the machines" (180),

[42] Similarly, this anecdote is also quoted in various forms throughout Bradbury's essays and interviews and is described most fully in Jonathan Eller's biography *Becoming Ray Bradbury* (2011).

many reviewers and critics argue that Ray Bradbury is more properly understood as an author of fantasy, not science fiction. Frederic Jameson refers to Bradbury as a "crossover writer in whose works the boundaries between fantasy and SF often seem blurred" (77), a sentiment more forcefully echoed, to name just one of many examples, in Eric S. Rabkin's essay "To Fairyland by Rocket" where he argues that Bradbury's lack of detail makes his fictional worlds "not scientific, but magical" (113). Yet, what this generic uncertainty points to is not only Bradbury's conflicted attitude towards technological advances, but also the kind of science that shows up in these stories: a science without explanation, without history. Scientific gadgets appear as fetishized commodities, like magic without a reveal. It is this very lack of detail that reflects the ethos of suburban consumption, as these supposedly unscientific or implausible aspects of the new Martian settlement in *The Martian Chronicles* - the speedy transportation, the fully stocked deep-freezers - point to particular technologies endemic to the suburbs.

What is left out of these scenes of "self-explanatory" foods and technologies is crucial, as their apparent lack of preparation speaks to the immensity of the labor, infrastructure, and biopower behind them.[43] Yet it is the interpretive act of questioning this magic or uncanniness, of inquiring at the science behind it, that ironically affirms Bradbury's place in the canon of

[43] By the term biopower here I mean to emphasize the control and regulation over the nonhuman world that this kind of industrialized, Fordist food production requires. In the context of industrialized agriculture and food production, animal bodies must be homogenized as much as possible in order to streamline production. This power of bodily regulation, in which the corporeal animal is materially and conceptually broken down into products and byproducts, is charted in gruesome detail in (among other places) Timothy Pachirat's description of his time spent as a worker in a Nebraskan slaughterhouse, *Every Twelve Seconds* as well as James C. Scott's *Seeing Like A State* where he details how "modern agricultural research" only works with and wants "generic, homologous, uniform commodities" (294). Scott's diagnostic case is, of course, from the postwar years and illustrates what happens to the nonhuman world when subjected to biopower: the "supermarket tomato" invented in the 1940s and 50s enabled year-round production of "small, uniform winter tomatoes, sold four to a package, which dominated supermarket shelves for several decades" (267). For more on biopower and animals in science fiction, see Sherryl Vint's 2010 article in *Science Fiction Studies*, "Animal Studies in the Era of Biopower" in which she reads Derrida's work as "situated in […] a science-fictional terrain of the technoscientific animal/object" (446).

scientific fiction, for, as Samuel Delaney has noted, the "reading protocol" of science fiction encourages a granular and contextual look at the environment and logic behind what is presented, as "the world of the story is not given, but rather a construct that changes from story to story" (178)[44]. As Frederic Jameson notes in his discussion of utopian science fiction in *Archaeologies of the Future*, the sudden appearance of these highly processed foods or highly advanced transportation without explanation serves as a kind of *deus ex machina*, because of "the separation of the theme of technology and invention from the 'ugliness' or factory and industrial work." Jameson links this elision of the 'ugliness' of industry with a utopian urge in particular strains of sci-fi, but in Bradbury's work this hidden labor is tied to the historical moment in which he is envisioning these futures. That readers and critics are left to wonder at the implicit food technologies and hidden labor behind the flashy culinary preparations described in Bradbury's fiction speaks to the agricultural uncanniness encouraged by postwar suburbia, in which process and labor must be disguised as effortless production.

In the critical literature on *The Martian Chronicles* and his other early works, Bradbury's engagement with postwar food culture and suburban community has been largely ignored. Postwar bestsellers in the science fiction genre tended towards Cold War 'space operas' and invasion narratives concerned with masculine explorations of 'new frontiers.' David A. Hounshell ends his exhaustive industrial history, *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800-1932*, by suggesting that, with the coming of the Cold War, American attention previously paid to the novelty and consequences of mass production shifted to focus on a potential nuclear

[44] Delaney describes how reading science fiction necessarily involves a speculative and contextual kind of interpretation, in which sentences like "then her world exploded" or "he turned on his left side" must be read both in the 'mundane' sense as metaphor or motion, but also to include the fantastic yet potentially plausible sense that "a planet, belonging to some woman, blew up" or "some man reached down and threw a switch activating the circuitry of his sinistral flank" (177).

conflict. As Hounshell puts it, "the specter of the atomic bomb removed mass production from its central place in American consciousness" (330).[45] It is not surprising, given this context, that most critics read *The Martian Chronicles* as simultaneously a dystopian vision of inevitable nuclear war and as a re-working of westward expansion in space (following Frederick Jackson's Turner's 'frontier thesis,' a popular theory at the time of the *Chronicles* publication). The literary antecedents for the *Chronicles* invoke narratives of the American West as well, as Bradbury credits his idea to narrate *The Martian Chronicles* in a series of intertwined vignettes to Sherwood Anderson and John Steinbeck.[46] David Mogen argues that "Bradbury incorporates the dominant science-fiction theme of wilderness conquest into a central mythopoeic tradition of American frontier literature" (cited in Mitchell 78). Similarly, David Ketterer begins his reading of *The Martian Chronicles* by linking "the area beyond the frontier and the Indian" with the "unknown and alien exotic so beloved of science fiction" (23), leading to his claim that Bradbury "talks about the colonization of Mars in terms of the colonization of America" (31). Walter J. Mocher's 2002 article in *Extrapolation* proposes that *The Martian Chronicles* "parallels the colonizing and expansionism of the Americas, and the socio-ethnic problems" (176). Longtime Bradbury scholar Gary K. Wolfe's essay "The Frontier Myth" is typical in his reading of *The*

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[45] Recently, many historians have argued that mass production should resume this centrality in historical narratives attempting to unpack the postwar years. Lizbeth Cohen, as one prominent example, argues in *The Consumers' Republic* "much of importance in America's postwar history happened outside the Cold War frame, and applying it too exclusively can obscure other developments" (8). Bradbury's own comments on *The Martian Chronicles* emphasize the importance of considering cultural and domestic products alongside the threat of nuclear war. In "How I Wrote My Book," an unpublished essay on the *Chronicles*, Bradbury writes of "Earth Man" in space: "He would have to take with him his hot-dog stands, his television, and his atom-bomb, and this very insistence upon "business-as-usual" would, in the end, trip him up and bring his excursion to nothing" (Eller 210).

[46] As Eller notes in *Becoming Ray Bradbury*, Bradbury drew on both Anderson and Steinbeck when initially envisioning the structure of *The Martian Chronicles*: "Suddenly, Bradbury saw the simple bricolage concept of a Martian story collection, where the whole simply equaled the sum of the parts, transforming into a unified work more in line with Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio" (204), and "modeling his bridges on the interchapters Steinbeck had fashioned for the Grapes of Wrath to bring his immigrants to a new and dangerous land" (205).

Martian Chronicles as a collection of stories allegorizing the consequences of colonization and the settlement of the American West. Wolfe argues that *The Martian Chronicles* is "not about the future" but rather "uses an imaginary Mars as a convenient landscape" in which to explore historical narratives (38). Wolfe reads the text as a "thought experiment," in answer to the question: "what would happen if the American middle class of the first half of this century were suddenly given, through some mechanical means, access to an entirely new frontier for settlement?" (38). In response to the few stories that seem too obviously about suburbia to ignore (such as "There Will Come Soft Rains," discussed later in this chapter), rather than reading suburbia as this "new frontier for settlement" suddenly made available to the American middle class, Wolfe juxtaposes suburbia and the frontier. He contrasts the "mechanical parody of the suburban life style" on Earth with "a freedom that can be reborn only on the frontier" (52), suggesting that Bradbury intends the settings of Earth and Mars to be read as sharp contrasts. Wolfe further enforces this separation between the two locations by arguing that, "in Bradbury, there is no real commerce between Earth and Mars […] (if one were to examine this critically, he might conclude that the economics of *The Martian Chronicles* is as fatuous as its science)" (51). Yet, the overlapping characters, themes, concerns, and, indeed, economies (transportation systems, food and clothing supply chains, cultural exchanges) make this conceptual separation between Earth and Mars difficult to maintain.

Rather than depicting a contrast between suburb and frontier, Bradbury's stories suggest the ways in which postwar suburban communities *are* the new frontier. When Glenn Frank, president of UW-Madison, spoke to the National Association of Real Estate Board (NAREB) in 1928, he emphasized the pivotal role of suburban development in American expansion. Just as pioneers "cleared the forest to create farms [so the] realtor is clearing the farms to make cities"

(Hornstein 114). Suburban dwellers are pioneers settling on a dry, treeless landscape of dirt in isolated, quickly constructed towns.[47] Indeed, because the majority of critics read the different waves of explorers as various groups of frontiersmen, what most overlook is that, when the first group of explorers arrives, the astronauts stumble upon a pre-existing suburban environment. The first Martian the initial explorers meet is a preoccupied housewife, more concerned about the mud they track onto her carpets than with their status as invaders or colonizers. The initial explorers are understandably chagrined when greeted by domestic "trivialities," as her response when they ring her doorbell is "I haven't time […] I've a lot of cooking today and there's cleaning and sewing and all" (17). As edits to an earlier version of "The Earth Men" (published in *Harpers* Magazine) suggest, Bradbury's initial vision of the pre-colonization Martian town began as a recognizably suburban environment and was slightly embellished in subsequent drafts[48].

Carl Abbott's article, "Homesteading on the Extraterrestrial Frontier" (2005), takes a familiar stance, in that he describes the *Chronicles* as presenting a series of "thought experiments about the ways that middle-class Americans of the 1930s and 1940s might respond to an actual frontier" (241). But Abbot goes on to offer more complex reading of the frontier in Ray Bradbury and postwar science fiction, noting that recent scholarship has expanded the frontier to frontiers, plural, wherein "each of these frontiers has its own internal logic that has traced a distinct narrative" (274). Suburban development, then, works as another frontier, with its own

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[47] Newly constructed suburban communities were usually treeless, as the speed of construction required their removal. For more on suburban landscaping and construction, see Adam Rome's *Bulldozers in the Countryside* (2001) and Christopher Sellers' *Crabgrass Crucible* (2012).

[48] The line "The little town was full of people going in and out doors and saying hello to one another. Through windows you could see people eating food and washing dishes" (Eller, "Sources") becomes, in the version published in *The Martian Chronicles*, "The little town was full of people drifting in and out of doors saying hello to one another, wearing golden masks and blue masks and crimson masks for pleasant variety" (36).

logic and narrative. William Cronon's study of Chicago and surrounding areas, *Nature's Metropolis*, makes the case for reading the "frontier experience" as defined by an "expansion of a metropolitan economy […], absorptions of new peripheral areas into a capitalist orbit" (xviii). In this sense, suburban communities are the "frontier experience" incarnate, as the accompanying road and sewage construction, taxation increases, education expenditures, and supermarkets form new "capitalist orbits" between urban, suburban, and rural producers and consumers.

Indeed, throughout postwar literature, writers consistently use frontier mythology to describe suburban development. One historian of consumerism writes, "The 'happy-go-spending' world of mass suburbia was a new frontier beckoning them, promising the same opportunity and prosperity that earlier American frontiers had offered their settlers, this time through the miracle of mass consumption" (Cohen 251). William Whyte's study of suburban psychology, *The Organization Man*, refashions the frontier to describe suburban communities, rather than individual grit: "When the suburbanites speak of re-establishing the spirit of the frontier communities, there is truth in their analogy. Our country was born as a series of highly communal enterprises, and though the individualist may have opened the frontier, it was the co-operative who settled it" (Whyte 438). As Scott Donaldson writes in his 1969 sociological treatise *The Suburban Myth*, implicitly echoing Turner's thesis, "The United States ran out of geographical frontier seventy-five years ago. But there is still an internal political frontier, located in the suburbs" (163). In Kenneth T. Jackson's landmark *Crabgrass Frontier* (1986), the text often credited for singlehandedly promoting the suburbs as a productive subject for academic inquiry, Jackson notes that: "By 1961, when President JFK proclaimed his New Frontier and challenged Americans to send a man to the moon within the decade, his countrymen had already remade the nation's metropolitan areas in the short space of sixteen years. From

Boston to Los Angeles, vast new subdivisions and virtually new towns sprawled where a generation earlier nature had held sway" (Jackson 243). In sociological and geographical terms, suburban sprawl both echoed the homesteaders of frontier times and refashioned the mythology of westward expansion to cast suburbanites as intrepid, isolated explorers. Reading *The Martian Chronicles* as primarily a historical frontier narrative, replaying the tragedy of Western expansion, misses the implications and nuances involved in transposing this frontier mythology onto suburban development.

Several scholars have explored the connection between Bradbury's Mars and suburbia, primarily focusing on architecture and Cold War anxieties. In "Cul-de-Sac Nightmares: Representations of California Suburbia in Science Fiction during the 1950s and '60s," James B. Mitchell argues that "suburbia and science fiction have become inseparable—for the former is the lived experience of an imagined place brought to fruition in the dawn of the atomic age, while the latter is an aesthetic response to the uncanny conditions of living in a post-urban space" (115). Elsewhere in his lengthier consideration of Bradbury's relationship to idealized California suburbs, Mitchell notes that Bradbury "skillfully manipulates the familiar mythology of the midwestern turn-of-the-century small town to expose the futility of ever recreating such communities in the uncanny space that is California" (77). Yet Mitchell is most interested in reading Bradbury alongside Walt Disney, not as a science fiction writer but as a "theorist with a well-articulated aesthetic of urban design who imagines ways of revitalizing the public spaces of post-war California cities" (79). Indeed, Bradbury's interests in planned suburban spaces like shopping malls and supermarkets speak to his observant and complex relationship with postwar culture.

Other critics focus on the limitations of the world imagined in Bradbury's fiction, arguing

that Bradbury's imaginary small towns draw from a midwestern iconography and mythology that traffics in a racial elision that goes beyond atomic-age uncanniness. One cultural critic of postwar science fiction argues that the portrayal of space travel served as a kind of panacea for middle-class anxiety, "as if they could be transported elsewhere and yet not have their assumptions questioned, that even out there in that new and infinite universe, they would not have to change and all their presumptions would still ring true" (Wendland 239). He connects this interest in maintaining the status quo even in space with the familiarity of Ray Bradbury's Mars, in that colonists discover Midwestern architecture and social mores upon arrival. In his study of Los Angeles fictions, *Strange Future*, Min Hyoung Song makes the convincing argument that Bradbury's vision of space travel and nuclear apocalypse are fundamentally racialized. Song describes *The Martian Chronicles* as "an intriguing allegory of postwar suburbanization (and especially the mass suburbanization of Southern California that took place during this period)" (36), but points out the "cryptoracial" (67) logic at the heart of his vision of post-apocalyptic society. Referring to the last story in The Martian Chronicles, "Million Year Picnic," Song writes: "it should be chilling for us to consider how easily Bradbury writes off the death of an entire planet, and vests his hopes for the future on a group of castaways who are upper middle-class, heterosexual, and white" (36). Song persuasively shows how this exclusionary vision of post-apocalypse dominated science fiction and fantasy in the postwar years, linking the imagined Cold War dangers and shifting social landscapes on the domestic front. Seen in this light, the forward-looking gaze of Bradbury's narratives serves to rewrite societal progress only in terms of the white nuclear family.

Song's most compelling "cryptoracial" reading of *The Martian Chronicles* comes in his discussion of The Third Expedition, in which he links fears of Martian invasion with the racial

exclusions in suburban neighborhoods. The pre-existing suburbia that initial explorers encountered has, by the third expedition to Mars, become weaponized, as would-be colonizers are seduced and destroyed by the illusion of a typical American neighborhood. Earth explorers are startled to see such a familiar site upon leaving their spacecraft, walking through entire neighborhoods complete with recognizable family members. In a description often quoted as proof that Bradbury simply transplanted his relatives into a space opera, he describes the appearance of this Martian town as though "a great earthquake had shaken loose the roots and cellars of an Iowa town, and, then, in an instant, a whirlwind twister of Oz-like proportions had carried the entire town off to Mars to set it down without a bump" (88).[49] On the one hand, this startling encounter reflects the nationalized nature of postwar construction, in that houses across the country began to resemble one another to an unforeseen degree. As Clifford Edward Clark Jr. notes in his extensive survey of American vernacular architecture, *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*, the popularity of the suburban bungalow was so widespread that "a family who moved across the country in that period would be certain to find a new neighborhood with houses that were very similar to the ones they had just left" (240). As Kenneth T. Jackson notes in *Crabgrass Frontier*, this architectural familiarity helped to promulgate the underlying nostalgia of suburban migration, for an imagined way of life that had vanished: "the suburb

[49] Iowans accounted for a disproportionate number of new California residents in the early twentieth century, making this allusion to an "Iowa town" particularly apt. Carey McWilliams notes in *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (1946), that the "Iowa influx" or migration was so extensive that "by 1930 one third of the persons born in Iowa were living in some other state" (163). Song agrees that "Where Bradbury's future explorers come from is important because so many white migrants from the Midwest peopled Southern California during its periods of intense suburban growth before and after the Second World War, re-creating in the semidesert climate of the region, so similar to the semidesert climate of Bradbury's Mars, a simulacrum of the idealized hometowns from which they fled" (39). Bradbury describes his settlers as "from cabbage tenements and subways," "from the tumbleweed states," and from "tubes, tins, and boxes in New York" (87), evoking both the movement of Midwesterners to Southern Californian suburbs as well as the flight of East Coast city dwellers to the suburbs surrounding New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.

served as an asylum for the preservation of illusion. Here domesticity could flourish, forgetful of the exploitation on which so much of it was based" (156). Indeed, the breakneck pace of construction and migration only contributed to this sense of illusion and nostalgia. As Carey McWilliams notes in his celebrated account of California history, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (1946), this migration lead to a particular form of midcentury nostalgia in new suburban residents, a "nostalgia for an America that no longer exists, for an America that former Kansans, Missourians, and Iowans literally gaze back upon, looking backward over their shoulders" (179). Yet, simultaneously, "the impermanence of much of the construction in itself conveys an impression of unreality" (233), as "the houses have no earthly relation to the environment" (360). McWilliams quotes one midcentury journalist who describes these new suburban communities in terms reminiscent of Bradbury's Martian illusion: "Towns do not develop here […] they are instantly created, synthetic communities of a strangely artificial world" (233).

Yet this story dramatizes more than the artificial nostalgia of postwar suburban construction, as this suburban community turns out to contain subversives. After expedition members have settled comfortably into this suburban life, the explorers are killed by Martians who have taken on the appearance of family members, in a twist reminiscent of classic Cold War narratives about neighborly deception and malice like *They Came from Outer Space* or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Song, surveying across postwar popular culture and literary genres, links these recurring anxieties about alien invaders inside the home to Cold War anxieties about internal subversion and to racial passing narratives, finding echoes of "internal racial purges, such as the Zoot Suit Riots of 1942 and the evacuation of Japanese Americans to concentration camps after the issuance of Executive Order 9066 in the same year. The question arises, were our

settlers in Southern California re-creating what they had left behind, or were they being infiltrated by aliens secretly plotting something else that we could not penetrate because of their guise of familiarity?" (44). Indeed, the larger stakes of this hostile encounter also point to how the new style of suburban development and emerging demographic changes throughout postwar America threatened pre-existing towns and communities[50], an encounter that often resulted in zoning laws used as a means to suppress construction or discourage unwanted residents, as well as frequent clashes in local government. As these varying readings of "The Third Expedition" suggest, while the racial politics of *The Martian Chronicles* are often invested in replaying the tragedy of Western expansion, the familiar neighborhoods and domestic scenes present an equally crucial exploration of suburban anxieties and exclusions.

Yet moving the suburbs to Mars is more than a fictional exploration of a new frontier or, in the more dystopian moments of the Martian Chronicles, a reflection on the undercurrents of the myth of the nuclear family. The transposition also implies a distinct vision of suburbia, one in which technology makes it possible to transplant entire communities into what is conceived as formerly uninhabitable space (a "lonely wasteland," as it is described in the *Chronicles*). This deceptively empty landscape plays off of both colonizers' blindness to existing civilizations as well as the idea of suburban communities as "new" rather than as displacing pre-existing rural communities. From its inception, the Martian settlement resembles a hastily constructed earthly suburbia, both in speed of construction and in the prevailing ideology about the emptiness of the space before construction begins. Bradbury portrays Mars as a "naked planet" waiting to be "filled": "In six months a dozen small towns had been laid down upon the naked planet, filled

[50] A tension Bradbury returns to often in his nostalgic fiction like *Dandelion Wine*, where he chronicles the changes taking place in a small Illinois town on the cusp of modernization (to be briefly discussed later in this chapter).

with neon tubes and yellow electric bulbs" (78). But this naked planet was not without prior inhabitants. As one construction contractor proudly tells a prospective homeowner, his crew used "ten thousand tons of DDT. Not a snake, frog, or Martian fly left!" (88), an antagonistic approach towards 'pests' that is historically as well as theoretically critical to understanding the disavowed role of nonhuman animals in the suburbs. In suburban kitchens and suburban literature, preservation serves to divorce food from its natural origin and disguise the process by which it is made ready into, as Erica Fudge so memorably puts it, "a cellophane-wrapped lump of unidentifiable pink flesh" (27). Appropriately, while there are no agricultural animals in *The Martian Chronicles*, and the vacuum of space separates the sites of food production and consumption, food products are infinitely (and mysteriously) available. The larder is never empty, even in such a remote location.

In setting the suburbs on Mars, Bradbury imposes a significant distance between producer and consumer, implying a supply route of many thousands of miles from the farm fields and slaughterhouses of Earth to the suburban neighborhoods on Mars. Postwar rhetoric and suburban literature inscribed an insurmountable distance between production and consumer (from farm to factory to suburb) and between the animal product and the animal body. Bradbury himself notes how this geographical separation is at once spatial, affective, and historical, as laid out in this description from the *Chronicles*: "space was an anesthetic; seventy million miles of space numbed you, put memory to sleep, depopulated Earth, erased the past, and allowed these people here to go on with their work" (144). This discursive and geographical distance between production and consumption is endemic to the suburbs and made possible by a newfound technological control in the postwar United States over decay, geography, and animal bodies.

Advancements in refrigeration, transportation, and animal physiology meant that postwar

producers and consumers were no longer dependent on proximity, season, or demand. In *Nature's Metropolis*, his discussion of the rise of Chicago's industries and the exchange between city and country, William Cronon notes how industrialization and expanding metropolitan areas served to increase "corporate control over landscape, space, and the natural world, so much so that by the end of the century the new meat-packing companies had nearly freed themselves from dependence on any single location" (212). Modern industrialization and technologies are distance enabling, allowing a "growing distance between the meat market and the animals in whose flesh it dealt" (212), and "vastly extending the distance between points of ecological production and points of economic consumption" (266). The title of Cronon's chapter, "Annihilating Space," ultimately refers not to the elimination of distance, but to its irrelevance. In other words, "Geography no longer mattered very much except as a problem in management: time had conspired with capital to annihilate space" (259). Bradbury's Martian settlers clearly depend on and benefit from agricultural industrialization. Though this supply chain between agricultural Earth ("ecological production") and suburban Mars ("economic consumption") goes entirely unacknowledged, it is made apparent by the ready availability of preprocessed and fresh foods throughout: material evidence of exchange.

Throughout the *Chronicles*, space and time are ignored in a particularly suburban fashion: a rejection of the limits of geography and time expressed via and in domestic routines. The *Chronicles* opens with the seasons shifted by technology, as the exhausts from a rocket bring false summer warmth to the porches of an Ohio town and housewives in "Rocket Summer." The opening image of these "made climates" (1) suggests immediately the three interlocking themes that will return throughout the chronicles: technology, natural cycles, and suburban domesticity. The construction of the Martian settlement echoes the construction of postwar suburban

developments, both in the radical reforming of rural, agricultural land into housing blocks and in the emphasis on quick construction and domestic embellishment:

> And from the rockets ran men with hammers in their hand to beat the strange world into a shape that was familiar to the eye […] and when the carpenters had hurried on, the women came in with flower pots and chintz and pans and set up a kitchen clamor […] In six months a dozen small towns had been laid down upon the naked planet, filled with sizzling neon tubes and yellow electric bulbs. In all, some ninety thousand people came to Mars. (78)

While trading off of familiar visions of the 'red planet' from his sci-fi antecedents like Edgar Rice Burroughs, Bradbury's depictions of Martian landscapes also echo the red dirt of newly bulldozed suburban developments[51]. In the *Chronicles*, the abundance of nature becomes a magic trick made possible by human will, as when one settler (a sort of astronaut Appleseed) plants hundreds of trees in the unfamiliar landscape only to watch amazed as the trees sprout overnight, "and, even as he watched, throwing out new branches, popping open new buds" (77). At every turn, the space-time limits are disregarded in this environment and nonhuman biology, physiology, morphology, and seasonality bend to human intention and technology.

One challenge for newly constructed suburb communities that *The Martian Chronicles* makes abundantly clear is that of natural resources: how to get raw materials and food to the new neighborhoods? The Levitts and other developers habitually built roads and supermarkets with each new development, but the problem of supplying these new neighborhoods remained.

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[51] As just one example of the ways in which Bradbury's depiction of Mars and suburban developments overlap: John Keats' best-selling suburban expose, *The Crack in the Picture Window* (1956), follows a couple (the subtly named "Drones") as they observe "bulldozers squirming over the landscape, churning the area into a level red-clay sea, out of which skeletal houses were rising" (7). Keats' prototypical suburban landscape even includes "red-clay canals," an iconic feature of Bradbury's landscapes mentioned throughout *The Martian Chronicles*.

Though suburban developments often replaced cornfields or other farmland, the inhabitants were not prepared to and did not intend to live off the land in any traditional or agrarian sense. Robert Wood's 1958 sociological study of postwar suburbs, *Suburbia: Its People and Its Politics*, highlights the potential seriousness of this dependency. Though "the technological revolutions in transportation, industry, construction and home finance [and, we might add, agriculture] free the inhabitants of a small community from the necessity of providing all the resources for livelihood within the borders of their home town" (104), Wood warns that newly built suburban communities, "hewed out of potato fields" (133), remain fragile and vulnerable because of this very dependency on outside resources, beyond the boundaries of their small community. Envisioning a "crisis in the suburban circulatory system, the breakdowns in its channels with the outside world," Wood emphasizes how "serious disruption for more than a few days" in the supply chain "would mean the loss of the essentials of human existence" (245). In their isolation and dependency on shipping and transportation for even "basic physical resources" (243), the new suburbs might as well be on Mars. Conversely, the suburban communities in the *Chronicles* can only exist because of this "circulatory system," a kind of food production and cold chain that is dependent on the postwar incarnation of industrial agriculture and implicit in Bradbury's mentions of "ham and mayonnaised pickles," "liverwurst and red catsup and white bread" (88), a "triple-decker beef sandwich," or a "filet carpeted with delicate mushrooms" (147). Gary K. Wolfe's claim in his article on the frontier myth in Bradbury that "there is no real commerce between Earth and Mars" (51) seems patently false in light of this implicit supply chain. There's no such thing as a free lunch![52]

[52] A phrase often credited to science-fiction writer Robert Heinlein, from his 1966 novel *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*.

Though the practicalities of transportation implied by the familiar fare[53] that settlers enjoy are hinted at only once in the *Chronicles*, in a typically oblique phrase ("frosted food was brought from earth in flying icicles" (76)), the practicalities of preservation are mentioned frequently. Settlers are habitually dependent on their freezers, evident from anecdotes like "no morning passed that he didn't freeze a ton of meats, vegetables, and lemon cream pies, enough to last ten years" (147) and depictions of one optimistic settler who has "two deep freezes packed with food to last him one hundred years" (155). As the years pass since the initial waves of settlers, the continuing freshness of these frozen meals becomes all the more implausible. One story claims: "from the deep freeze he fetched rimed cartons of beans and strawberries, twenty years old. Lazarus come forth, he thought, and pulled out a cool chicken" (158). Chicken, once seasonal meat, is a particularly resonant comestible in this context, as it was only in the mid-twentieth century that chicken became a year-round meal. Because of refrigeration, packaging, and biological interventions like antibiotics, "the spring chicken was now an archaic phrase, as it was always springtime" (Horowitz 132) for suburban consumers.

The suburban homemaker's successful attempts to overcome "the space-time limits of perishable-food distribution" are presented in *The Martian Chronicles* as that ability which makes independence possible, as the settler with "two deep freezes packed with food to last him one hundred years" (155) proceeds to isolate himself from the rest of the suburban community (refusing to answer the ringing telephones) and the chicken-as-Lazarus event takes place at least twenty years after the destruction of Earth in a nuclear bombardment. Yet, the very abundance

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[53] Indeed, Bradbury's food stands out from the other science fiction of his time by its very everydayness and appetizing, familiar qualities. *In Foods of the Gods: Eating and the Eaten in Fantasy and Science Fiction*, several writers note how the food of the future is often unappetizing, from "food pills," processed human flesh, or "soy raspberry paste" for dessert.

described here is made possible only by off-site suppliers and a complex network of infrastructure, transportation, electricity, gas and water systems.

This kind of everlasting freshness is precisely what freezing and refrigeration technology promised in the postwar years, in a flurry of rhetoric emphasizing a mastery over decay and seasonality. As a 1939 issue of *Fortune* excitedly proclaimed to its readers:

> Quick freezing at once does away with the space-time limits of perishable-food distribution. With frozen foods, neither season nor geography has any meaning, for strawberries in December are exactly the same as strawberries in June, and it's just as easy to serve the rich fruits of the tropics field-fresh on a breakfast table in Maine as it is to serve blueberries. (cited in Smith, 184)

This new transcendence over biology and seasonality was trumpeted in both industry and domestic operations. As Cronon notes in *Nature's Metropolis*, "farmers and ranchers thus truncated the cyclical time of agricultural reproduction to make agricultural production as rapid and linear as possible" (224). Industrialized agriculture allowed farmers to produce crops year-round, and thereby feed the meat-animals year-round, obviating "fat summers and lean winters" that had limited their production in prior generations: "Summer must be made to seem like winter so that the great factories could continue their work all year. Death's hand must be stayed to extend by hundreds and thousands of miles the distance between where an animal died and the place where people finally ate it" (255). On the domestic front, the freezer offered a similar transcendence of time and space to the consumer, disregarding the old limitations of season and geography in favor of endless abundance. Reflecting the increasing interest in this method of food storage, when refrigerators were redesigned in the postwar years, the primary change was to significantly increase the freezer space allotted in domestic models (Anderson 284).

As one story in *The Martian Chronicles* makes clear, suburban food culture is premised on animal bodies that are transformed into always available food, suspended in a state beyond biology and material decay. In "The Off-Season," an implausible hot dog stand located at "a crossroads where two dead highways came and went in darkness" is billed as the "best hot dogs on two worlds! First man on Mars with a hot-dog stand! The best onions and chili and mustard!" (142). The title, "The Off-Season," combines a biting retort about the lack of customers (as most of Earth is destroyed in the course of this story) with an implicit nod towards the ability of this hot-dog stand to reject "the space-time limits of perishable-food distribution" and serve onions and meat year-round. While the construction material of the stand itself is made clear (salvaged aluminum from a rocket), the provenance of the deceptively simple menu of hot dogs, French fries, buns, chili, onions, relish, and butter remains a mystery. Just as a well-performed magic trick might elicit questions from an audience, Bradbury's seamless food production should inspire curiosity about the practicalities of resupplying a hot dog stand on Mars.

Bradbury's futuristic foods function as spontaneous presence, or *immanence*, rather than as time-intensive products of social labor or time-dependent products vulnerable to decay. His meals are "born rather than made" (3), filling his fiction with food that is "manifested" or "ejected," in which "the dinner dishes manipulated like magic tricks." This story concerns not a meatpacking facility existing implausibly on Mars, but rather a purveyor of finished products. The process of transformation of animal bodies into fungible and far-flung commodities is precisely what is disavowed by this hot-dog stand. To cite again Cronon's evocative way of rethinking the linkages between between city and country, "the geography of capital produced a landscape of obscured connections" (340). The hot-dog stand, like the package of meat available in the refrigerator or freezer, conceals its biological origin and history of production in favor of

presenting an always available commodity. While in some ways this concealment is endemic to all capitalist encounters.[54] the hot-dog is particularly invested in this sleight-of-hand as a "meat cocktail defined not by its contents but instead by its size, shape, and curative qualities" (76). Bradbury uses hot dogs elsewhere in *The Martian Chronicles* as an emblem of crass commercialism, with one skeptical astronaut, expounding on the "commercial interests" of space travel, noting that "the only reason we didn't set up hot-dog stands in the midst of the Egyptian temple of Karnak is because it was out of the way and served no large commercial purpose" (54). Hot dogs owe their postwar boom to a series of technological breakthroughs in artificial casings and plastic packaging that, like cellophane (a clear plastic barrier promising that it "Shows what it Protects! Protects what it shows!")[55] radically altered the process of producing hot dogs, as well as the chemical composition of the final product, without appearing to outwardly change the meat[56] (Horowitz 139). But in "The Off-Season" as in the hot dog itself, "a recreated package that concealed the origins of its contents" (101), these complexities are elided in favor of emphasizing the simplicity and availability of this meat, rather than the hidden labor and animal bodies that made it possible. In the midst of this technological wizardry of space travel and alien civilizations, meat apparently remains straightforward.

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[54] In his discussion of labor and commodities in science fiction, Frederic Jameson notes that common to every "commodity" is that is functions as a "disguise of labor:". The fetishized commodity indeed interrupts the transparency of the process of production and exchange: it introduces a sham materiality into something which is originally (and remains beneath the surface) a social relation, a relationship between people" (Jameson 158) and, we might add, a social relationship between nonhuman animals as well. As Cronon puts it in *Nature's Metropolis*, "the market fosters exchange relationships of almost unimaginable complexity, and then hides them from us at the very instant they are created, in that last moment when cash and commodity exchange hands and we finally consume the thing we have purchased" (384).

[55] For more on cellophane, see my chapter on Sylvia Plath.

[56] For more on the ramifications of the postwar revolution in hot dog processing, see Horowitz's *Putting Meat on the American Table* for his chapter on the subject.

The fundamental question posed by this story, as by the anecdotes of the deep freezer hermits existing indefinitely, could be framed as: is this hot-dog stand alone or connected, independent or dependent, subject to time and geography or not? As a matter of capitalism and raw materials, it seems obvious that a stand without customers or hot-dogs would not last long. Yet Bradbury's phrasing leaves this open, vacillating between rhetoric that emphasizes interconnectivity and the hot-dog stand's dependence on a great biological system and rhetoric that envisions these animal byproducts in the midst of a "wasteland." Bradbury at once describes this hot dog stand as "a heart beating alone in a great dark body" and, in contrast, as "a fresh-laid egg on the dead sea bottom" (143). Ultimately, the isolationist reading seems to overcome the biological metaphor of the stand as one node in a circulatory system, as Bradbury then goes on to describe the hot-dog stand as "the only nucleus of light and warmth in hundreds of miles of lonely wasteland" (143). This framing doubles down on the sense of distance already implicit in the Martian setting by isolating the hot-dog stand from any agricultural connections, as the hot dogs have emerged mysteriously from a "wasteland" or a "dead sea bottom." In the story immediately following "The Off-Season," Bradbury makes the clearest statement in the *Chronicles* about the consequences of what we might call "wasteland rhetoric" in which he describes how "space was an anesthetic; seventy million miles of space numbed you, put memory to sleep, depopulated Earth, erased the past, and allowed these people here to go on with their work" (144). The appearance of independence from the supply chain behind the abundance is not merely a rhetorical device in Bradbury, but evidence of a larger suburban discourse that enforces a spatial, affective, and historical separation between biology and byproduct.

Implied by descriptions of this hot-dog stand as surrounded by "lonely wasteland" is, like setting the suburbs on Mars, a discursive politics that disavows the material, biological animal

body while depending on the byproducts derived from it. The inexplicable appearance of this hot-dog stand evokes Jameson's concept of a science-fictional *deus ex machina*, where "the separation of the theme of technology and invention from the "ugliness" of factory and industrial work as such can thus sometimes offer the relief of a *deus ex machina*" (153). Writing of science fiction utopias, Jameson argues that "such unconscious concealment of the underlying socioeconomic or material bases of life […] amounts to a refusal to connect existential or personal experience, the experience of our individual private life, with the system and suprapersonal organization of monopoly capitalism as an all-pervasive whole" (265). As William Cronon reframes this idea, "we benefit from the intricate and invisible networks […], all the while pretending these things are not an essential part of who we are" (81). As many scholars have noted, the separation between consumers and producers, between animal bodies and byproducts, is geographical, conceptual, and sensory: "retreating out of the urban field of vision was just one step in the reorganization of slaughter and rendering; doing everything possible to prevent the sensory revolt triggered by smell has arguably been even more critical to the affective management of animal capital" (Shukin 63). This concealment of material bases is not merely a psychological or cultural tendency; it is encouraged by suburban land use regulations and expectations that cordoned off animal bodies into a separate sphere.[57]

In addition to the broader agricultural context, Bradbury's stories ask us to consider the place of animals within postwar suburban homes, most sharply brought out by his post-apocalyptic staging in "There Will Come Soft Rains." A short story in *The Martian Chronicles*

[57]For more on how the meat industry has become further removed from most Americans' daily lives, as well as the broader industrial and animal context, see *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Michael Pollan, 2007), *Eating Animals* (Jonathan Safran Foer, 2009), *Animal to Edible* (Noelle Vialles, 1987), and *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight* (Timothy Pachirat, 2011), which emphasizes the twin mechanisms of "distance and concealment" in a Nebraska slaughterhouse.

that Bradbury claimed was his favorite, "There Will Come Soft Rains" narrates a day in the life of an automated but empty suburban house. Bradbury envisions an automated kitchen continuing without consumers, portraying a post-apocalyptic scene that might be termed 'the last kitchen on earth' and presenting a form of food production even more implausible than an everlasting deep freezer on Mars. Like the hot-dog stand, this house "stood alone […] this was the one house left standing" (167), a monument to postwar suburbia. But as the animality behind the gadgetry in "There Will Come Soft Rains" implies, this suburban domestic technology is premised upon an abundance of animal products yet made possible by an elision of animal bodies. Animatronic mice clean and dispose of the corpse of a dead dog, who, attracted by the scent of bacon and eggs cooking in the automated kitchen, starves to death in front of the closed kitchen door in the immaculately preserved suburban living room of a family long since perished in a nuclear explosion. As Kevin Hoskinson writes in his 1995 article exploring the Cold War themes in both *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451*, "it is perhaps the most vivid image Bradbury's Cold War novels offer of the synthetic hell man makes for himself from the raw materials of science, technology, and irrationality" (351). Indeed, Bradbury is fond of automated houses and they appear often in his stories, reflecting his interest in exploring the postwar domestic technologies[58]. As one critic notes in his discussion of Bradbury's attitudes towards technology: "Robot houses, then, are symbolic props which enable Bradbury to warn us about technological gluttony" (Mengeling 107).

As the phrase "technological gluttony" implies, the deep intimacy between Bradbury's robot houses and industrial food production is no accident. The story begins with a scene of

[58] Robot houses and the suburban ethos go hand in hand. Speaking of suburban developers, Scott Donaldson writes in *The Suburban Myth*: "A home is a machine to live in," [Frank Lloyd] Wright had told them. From here it was but an easy step in logic to "a home is a machine," and the homes of the new suburbia demonstrate that the step was taken" (69).

comforting domesticity, in a "warm interior" that ejects familiar food into a mysteriously empty house: "In the kitchen the breakfast stove gave a hissing sigh and ejected from its warm interior eight pieces of perfectly browned toast, eight eggs sunnyside up,[59] sixteen slices of bacon, two coffees, and two cool glasses of milk" (166). This abundance quickly becomes an uncanny one, as the lack of inhabitants is explained by a brief description of their imprinted shadows on the walls of the house and the surrounding desolation from a series of nuclear denotations. Yet despite the surrounding destruction, "radioactive glow" and "rubble and ashes" (167), domestic abundance continues unabated, from electricity to running water to fresh bacon and milk. In fact, the kitchen seems to be a site of decadent excess, an explosion of food production without purpose: "In the kitchen, an instant before the rain of fire and timber, the stove could be seen making breakfasts at a psychopathic rate, ten dozen eggs, six loaves of toast, twenty dozen bacon strips, which, eaten by fire, started the stove working again, hysterically hissing!" (101). At the same moment of this hyper-abundance of animal products and byproducts explodes in the suburban kitchen, material animal bodies become increasingly unwelcome. The domestic technologies seem to be at war with the neighboring "lonely foxes" and "whining cats" and birds: "If a sparrow brushed a window, the shade snapped up. The bird, startled, flew off! No, not even a bird must touch the house!" (168). Even the expected, permitted presence of domesticated animals becomes suspect and untenable. The family dog, "gone to bone" and drawn to the scent of pancakes and maple syrup behind the closed door of the automated kitchen, "frothed at the mouth, lying at the door, sniffing, its eyes turned to fire. It ran wildly in circles,

[59] Eggs are a particularly resonant unending resource in the postwar context. "Chicken and eggs […] were the only products of animal agriculture not subject to wartime rationing" (Squier 128), and, as a result of wartime shortages, "egg drying became a dire necessity during World War II and made it possible to ship dried whole eggs all over the world" (43). Because of increased demand during wartime, "the American chicken became an assembly line product, made bigger, better, and faster – and with greater efficiency – for a public whose appetite was ever increasing, coaxed along by advertising and public relations" (Striffler 46).

biting at its tail, spun in a frenzy, died" (168). In some ways, this event reflects the imagined dependence of some forms of animal beings – dogs – on human companions for survival. Yet, the hostile reaction of the suburban house to the very presence of the dog (tracking in "offending dust, hair") speaks to the uneasy place of even domesticated animals in suburbia. The third form of animality, (food, pet, and now) robot mice, is marshaled against the biological mess of the animal corpse, as "sensing decay at last, the regiments of mice hummed out" and "the dog was gone" (169). In the suburban home of "Soft Rains" each of the three means of animal being are made unsustainable by the others, a triple bind. The robot mice are "angry at having to pick up mud, angry at inconvenience" when the dog, starving, crawls into the parlor. The dog scratches at the kitchen door, attracted by the smell of food cooking, but is denied entry by the regulations guiding the mechanical house. These breakfast preparations ultimately burn the house down.

The triad of animal presence (animal as machine, animal as food, animal as corpse) that Bradbury presents here becomes the animating force of this house, suggesting a hidden animality behind suburban domestic technologies. These robot mice, mechanical but premised on the power of animality, most straightforwardly evoke the "incorporated animality" that Akira Lippit sees behind modern technology, in which animals become ghosts, preserved in a technological crypt. In *Electric Animal* (2000), Lippit argues that the technological devices of the early 20th century engendered a distinct form of animal being, a "technical echo" (21) that draws from the "actual and fantastic resources of dead animals" (187). In what is a startling re-reading of Martin Heidegger's claim in *Being and Time* that animals do not die (they "merely perish"), Lippit considers how an inability to die as such may allow animals to last, or to return "like a meal that cannot be digested, a dream that cannot be forgotten, an other that cannot be sublated" (170).

The suburban house, in other words, is a "mausoleum for animal being" (178)[60] in an otherwise unwelcoming environment for animal bodies. Indeed, the cares with which the robot mice take to clean the house and the strict limitations on what kinds of creatures are welcome (a bird inspecting a window is deliberately scared off by an mechanically raised shutter) invoke the sterile space of a museum. This rhetorical tribute is further emphasized by Bradbury's edits from the magazine version of this story to the published one, as his additions highlight the motility and tactility of these mice as well as their cyborg nature, half tech, half biology[61]. Lippit's vision of twentieth century technology as a "vast mausoleum for animal being" is particularly resonant when put in conversation with Bradbury's automated house, only inhabited now by robot mice, a soon-to-be-dead dog, and the bacon and eggs produced like clockwork every morning by the kitchen.

What Lippit might point out here is that while Bradbury's story seems to be an act of mourning for the human inhabitants, only present as shadows burned into the outer walls of the house by an implied nuclear explosion, the story equally enacts a kind of cryptic dance with three fundamental forms of animal being: animal-as-machine, animal-as-corpse, and animal-as-food. For many, the modern animal body is defined by its transformation from machine to

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[60] Interestingly, William Cronon uses similar language to describe the now-obsolete buildings and spaces testifying to the industrial commerce that once took place within Chicago's city limits, referring to these grain elevators and stockyards as "temples of commerce that were also, less obviously, mausoleums of landscapes vanishing from the city's hinterland" (263). Where Cronon argues that "behind each urban structure were the ghost landscapes that had given it birth," the depiction of the abandoned house in "There Will Come Soft Rains" invites us to imagine the ghost landscapes that gave birth to this particular form of suburban domesticity.

[61] What was, in the magazine text, "Out of warrens in the wall, tiny mechanical mice darted. The rooms were acrawl with the small cleaning animals, all rubber and metal. They sucked up the hidden dust, and popped back into their burrows" becomes, in the *Chronicles*: "Out of the warrens in the wall, tiny robot mice darted. The rooms were acrawl with the small cleaning animals, all rubber and metal. They thudded against chairs whirling their mustached runners, kneading the rug nap, sucking gently at hidden dust. Then, like mysterious invaded, they popped into their burrows. Their pink, electric eyes faded. The house was clean" (Eller, "Sources")

serving as raw materials, or food[62]. Writing in 1637, Descartes argued: "if any such machines, had the organs and outward shape of a monkey or some other animal that lacks reason, we should have no means of knowing that they did not possess entirely the same nature as these animals" (from *Discourse on Method*, quoted in Fudge 97). This Cartesian notion, figuring animals as and as not machines, has historically led to brutal treatment of animals (vivisection, industrialized agriculture, scientific test subjects), justifying the numerous ways in which humans "consume" animals: "eating, experimenting upon, caging, hunting, representing, wearing them (this list could go on)" (Fudge 11). Yet this mechanization at the heart of animality took on a new tenor in the 20th and 21st centuries, when agricultural production moved out of the city and became increasingly automated. Animals became raw materials, the fuel for machines, rather than serving as machines themselves. As Erica Fudge notes in *Animal*, "the individual animal disappears and what appears in its place is a cellophane-wrapped lump of unidentifiable pink flesh or a coat" (27). The shift, from machine to material, counter-intuitively moves from the organic to the seemingly inorganic, as the cellophane-wrapped meat in the suburban refrigerator no longer resembles anything but fuel. Though animals as corpses may seem the most straightforward kind of animal being explored in "There Will Come Soft Rains," it is deceptively so. Oddly, the ability of animals to die has long been a contested subject in Western philosophy, encapsulated by Martin Heidegger's claim in *Being and Time* (part 2, chapter 1) that animals do not die (they "perish") and taken up by Jacques Derrida in *The Animal that Therefore I Am*[63].

It is this constellation of assumptions about animals in Western philosophy that Lippit attempts to rethink in *Electric Animal*. Building off of Heidegger's claim and subsequent

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[62] For more on this transformation of the animal in modernity, see John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?" from *About Seeing*.

[63] For more on this philosophical conversation, see Matthew Calarco's *Zoographies*.

philosophy, Lippit wonders if inability to die as such may allow animals to linger, "like a meal that cannot be digested, a dream that cannot be forgotten, an other that cannot be sublated" (170). It is often hard to tell how literally we, as readers, are supposed to take Lippit when he makes outlandish claims like these about the nature of animal existence. But that has often been the drawback of thinking about animals in terms of metaphor, symbolism, or metaphysics: any connection to the limitations, vulnerabilities, and realities of animal bodies is lost. As Shukin points out in her response to Lippit's ideas in *Animal Capital*, by dint of exploring the radical potential of these philosophical conceptions of the animal, Lippit often seems to buy into the very ways of thinking about animal being that he wishes to stretch beyond. In his insistence on the animal's ability to "persist," Lippit disregards the many corpses behind modern technology. Like Bradbury's deep freezers that seem to reanimate chickens ("Lazarus!") and ignore biological constraints, Lippit operates by the logic of "good as new," in which animal bodies have transcended the biological, and are fungible and endlessly available.

"There Will Come Soft Rains" briefly alludes to a fourth kind of animal being: virtual. On the nursery walls, "animals took shape: yellow giraffes, blue lions, pink antelopes, lilac panthers cavorting in crystal substance" (169). This immersive and hyperrealistic nursery (incorporating visuals, sounds, aromas, textures) simultaneously straddles television and cinema as well as wildness and domesticity. Often prone to reworking and rewriting the same notion, Bradbury returned to this scene again and made it the focal point of a story published as part of *The Illustrated Man* (1951). In "The Veldt," the "creature comforts" of an automated robot house turn against the family, in a kind of technological Gothic horror show. Predictably, this suburban home is dependent on automated food production, introduced in the first scene where the father "sat watching the dining-room table produce warm dishes of food from its mechanical interior.

"We forgot the ketchup," he said. "Sorry," said a small voice from within the table, and ketchup appeared." (243). The story's conceit revolves around a nursery that is equipped to produce scenes of virtual reality, wherein blank walls respond to "telepathic emanations" (11) to produce an immersive experience. The lions on the screen become increasingly uncanny, with the father wondering, "I don't suppose there's any way that they could become real?" (19), an impossible scenario made suddenly plausible by the discovery of his bloody, "lion-scented" wallet (in a symbolic nod to the underlying violent capitalism). In an Oedipal twist, the simulated lions in the African veldt of the nursery somehow devour the hapless parents, a murder incited by the (implied) bloodthirsty fantasies of their two young children. The absorption of the children's desires into the lions of the African veldt (or is it the other way around? Who eats whom?) is crystallized in the final scene by their shared consumption: for the lions, their parents, for the children, their picnic. Given the centrality of eating to determining human-animal status (as Cora Diamond notes, "WE eat THEM"), this drama seems directly engaged in questioning that human-animal boundary.

"The Veldt" dramatizes pet-keeping or zoo-keeping 'gone wrong,' in which the tamed animals escape their cage, in this case a virtual one. In some ways, this gruesome ending seems to open up radical potentials for animals in the suburbs as the lions disrupt the nuclear family and patterns of suburban consumption (by devouring the parents). Indeed, this virtual form of incorporated animality plays a crucial role in Lippit's ideas about animal persistence. Playfully working of the term "animation," he argues that "the cinema developed, indeed embodied, animal traits as a gesture of mourning for the disappearing wildlife" (196). Like a ghost from the machine, animal being erupts from this form of incorporated animality. As Erica Fudge argues in *Animal*, immersive cinematic spectacles may have disruptive implications when they involve

animals, as "when these worlds depict animals it is often difficult to see how a boundary between human and animal can be maintained" (78). In her discussion of the "extraordinary realism" of *Babe*, Fudge details how childhood expectations of happy animals are foiled by the film's opening scene of industrial farming. Unpacking the horror of a scene in which Christmas is presented as "carnage," Fudge argues that in this confrontation of realism and magical realism, "the fantasy of the speaking animal begins with a recognition of the horrors of the place of the animal in a human world" (89). The "realism" of this cinematic animal encounters serves to "undercut the coziness" and the "dream-fulfillment" of talking animals becomes a "nightmare" (88). Yet Bradbury's story is not *Babe*, and the African lions are not farm animals, but exotic predators.

This intimate, virtual relationship between suburban family and African animals presented in Bradbury's story at once invokes fears about the invading or seductive other (the African inside the home) while also maintaining a distance between suburban neighborhoods and animals. Wildness and wilderness have been outsourced to Africa and other exotic locations, but do not exist in suburbia. The colonial inflections of the nursery in "The Veldt" implicitly invoke the national conquest propelling the initial incarnation of zoos, which featured "animals displayed as evidence of the West's 'conquest' of the 'barbaric' world" (Fudge 15). John Berger notes that the market for animal verisimilitude, of which these virtual lions are the hyperreal conclusion, emerged in tandem, as "the manufacture of realistic animal toys coincides, more or less, with the establishment of public zoos" (21). Yet there is an even more contemporaneous point of comparison, as television shows and motion pictures devoted to 'exotic' wild animals abounded in the postwar years. In *Reel Nature*, Gregg Mitman argues that on popular postwar programs like Zoo Parade, "the thematic focus on animal personalities, the petkeeping practices

of zoo caretakers, and the promotional advertisements for pet products all helped create a more intimate relationship between the audience and animals" (140). Trading on the "inherent tension between authenticity and artifice within early twentieth-century American culture" (13), these wildlife programs offered a carefully crafted portrait of wildness and wild animals that affirmed rather than challenged suburban ideology. As Mitman notes in terms that could apply to Bradbury's story, Zoo Parade "succeeded in gathering a large television audience by turning wildlife into domestic pets" (134). In this way, the virtual animals of suburbia present a crafted, domesticated, and ultimately outsourced vision of wilderness and wild animals. As with the always-prepared food and the always-attentive robot mice, animal bodies are only legitimized by suburban rhetoric and permitted in suburban space if already transformed beyond the biological.

After *The Martian Chronicles*, Ray Bradbury continued to invoke the frontier mythology as well as the rhetoric of convenient food production to discuss suburban communities. The frantic kitchen in "There Will Come Soft Rains" is not Bradbury's only scene of post-apocalyptic bacon. In one of the final scenes of *Fahrenheit 451*, a group of male outcasts (and survivors of a nearby nuclear explosion) cook bacon around a campfire. This scene seems meant to invoke a kind of communal rebirth or renewal, signaled by Guy Montag's reframing of this fire as "warming" and not "burning" (139). In contrast to his earlier technological kitchen wizardry, here Bradbury presents what appears like straightforward, rustic meal preparation: "Someone produced a small frying pan and then bacon went into it and the frying pan was set on the fire." (156) However, from a perspective that considers the labor that produced the bacon, the act of cooking bacon around a campfire becomes not a scene of post-apocalyptic rebirth but simply more of the same, a continuation of modern agricultural habits marked by postwar assumptions about food production and meat consumption. While pork was "America's

preeminent meat before urban growth and home refrigeration" (43), as Horowitz notes, technology and chemical additives transformed pork in postwar America. Postwar pork was now "a far different kind of meat than their grandparents had eaten" and "bacon's place in the symbolic universe of American food was entirely new" (44). In this sense, while this scene seems to signal a pre-suburban kind of food consumption, the appearance of bacon is scripted by postwar discourses. In the yearly Census of Manufacturers, "sliced bacon" was not even a category before WWII (69). Nicole Shukin points out the prominence of this kind of "primal scene," in which forms of meat-processing are made to seem timeless and universal, writing: "all of the signs that have come to appear universal in the euphemistic discourse of rendering […] ("cooking meat over a campfire and saving the drippings") are in fact historically, culturally, and politically contingent" (60). Indeed, the supposedly rustic, isolated location of this campfire is suspect in and of itself. As one scholar notes in his discussion of the role of nature in *Fahrenheit 451*, the conclusion of the novel presents Montag escaping "into the wilderness which – rather improbably, considering that "there are billions of us and that's too many" (16) – exists just on the edge of the city" (105). Furthermore, Montag encounters this wilderness as always-already food, describing the forest as smelling like "a cut potato," "pickles from a bottle," "parsley on the table at home" and "mustard from a jar." As with "Million Year Picnic" in *The Martian Chronicles*, this post-apocalyptic ending serves to reaffirm many expectations and anxieties of postwar suburban communities about who and what belong where.

Bradbury is not only interested in portraying futuristic suburbs, overcome by technoculture and social atomization. This kind of improbable food production also pervades Bradbury's 'realistic' fiction, in stories that ostensibly portray the 1920s midwestern town of his early childhood. Even apparently mundane descriptions serve to depict animal byproducts as an

endless resource, such as this description of a customer watching a waiter pour a glass of milk from Bradbury's short story "At Midnight In the Month of June": "He watched with steady interest, with the purest and most alert concentration in all of his life, as the white carton tilted and gleamed, and the snowy milk poured out, cool and quiet, like the sound of a running spring at night, and filled the glass up all the way, to the very brim, and over" (Stories 352). Just as fully formed suburban housing developments seemed to spring up overnight in the postwar era, the food in Bradbury's stories often magically appears, forestalling questions and eliding process. Yet the hot dog on Mars and the instant eggs in the kitchen are both made possible by the same long-distance "cold chain" of improved refrigeration and transportation that brings Florida oranges to Bradbury's semi-fictionalized towns in *Dandelion Wine*, *Farewell Summer*, and other short story collections. His fiction is also marked by nostalgia for a particular vision of small-town America, one explicitly modeled on his own childhood in Illinois. Because of his retrospective stance, Bradbury is often particularly careful to note evidence of social and technological changes in this community, such as the obsolescence of the trolley car in the face of the popularity of the automobile.

One short story, "The Inspired Chicken Motel" explicitly addresses the impact of industrialization on agriculture and animal bodies in the early twentieth century. Supposedly autobiographical and based on one night during a family trip across the American southwest in his childhood, "The Inspired Chicken Motel" depicts a nuclear family mired in the Depression driving from state to state in search of gainful employment. The owner of the motel and neighboring chicken ranch presents an inexplicable chicken egg with an inscription, supposedly placed there by "the nervous system of the chicken" in some kind of animal prestidigitation. The inscription reads: "Rest in Peace. Prosperity is Near" (898). As self-proclaimed chicken

obsessive Susan Merrill Squier writes in *Poultry Science, Chicken Culture* (2011), "Bradbury's story demonstrates the distinctions through which Depression-era agriculture reinvented itself, […] between the increasingly prevalent notion of farm animals as unthinking machines and the older sense of their mystery and wisdom" (29). Indeed, the chicken industry was particularly transformed by wartime advancements and industrialization, as "the American chicken became an assembly line product, made bigger, better, and faster – and with greater efficiency – for a public whose appetite was ever increasing, coaxed along by advertising and public relations" (Striffler 46). Bradbury's seemingly mystical story of a fortune-telling chicken contains the seeds of the industrial revolution in agriculture, material prosperity bound up in the animal bodies of "ten thousand chickens veering this way and that" (899).

While iconic postwar convenience foods often appear, even Bradbury's more quotidian culinary mentions reflect the changing face of farming and shopping in the American suburbs. Though these nostalgic stories are often juxtaposed against his dystopian domestic scenes in his more traditionally 'sci-fi' stories, the same suburban logic of food production that conceals its biological origins is at work. One vignette in *Dandelion Wine*, a semi-autobiographical account of a young boy's growing pains in Green Town, Illinois, explicitly addresses this biological concealment, in which cooking processes and animal bodies are at once central and necessarily invisible. The narrative spans three dinners and opens by announcing with quasi-religious overtones that "the kitchen, without a doubt, was the center of creation, all things revolved around it" (253). Yet the actual events that take place in the kitchen are under erasure, as "No one knows what Grandma cooks, said Grandfather […] "until we sit at table. There's always mystery, always suspense" (255). Even as the food is consumed, the labor and material remains elusive. Mouths are "crammed full of miracles," the chemical makeup of which "no one knew.

No one asked. No one cared" (257). In this kitchen, acknowledging a culinary history is unnecessary:

> The food was self-explanatory, wasn't it? It was its own philosophy, it asked and answered its own questions. […] Was it a swimming food or a flying food, had it pumped blood or chlorophyll, had it walked or leaned after the sun? No one knew. No one asked. No one cared (250).

When a visiting aunt does wonder what is "in" the food, she is castigated for being "an upstart, a questioner, a laboratory scientist almost, speaking out where silence could have been a virtue" (257) and thrown out of the house. Investigating the origins of these dishes, even as casually as this aunt does, results in expulsion from the community. On the one hand, this story seems like an explicit reaction to the professionalization of the kitchen and cooking, with the explosion of home economics and corporate recipe books in the postwar years. As many cultural historians have noted, the twentieth century witnessed an enormous expansions of professional fields concerned with domestic spaces and practices, from medical professionals, social reformers, home economics professionals, modern architects, food marketers, to corporate advertisers: "some mobilized that room as a locus for reform by stressing hygiene; others claimed it as a space for professional identity formation by calling attention to science; others mobilized it for governmental goals by emphasizing governance intervention and education; and still others exploited it for marketing purposes by accentuating comfort." (*Hamilton* 319). Yet even the supposedly 'simpler' version of food production in Bradbury's story depends on a distance (here, doubly enforced by domestic gender roles) between consumer and producer, one that demands ignorance of even the kind of meat being eaten.

Because these mentions of domestic spaces and practices are often a kind of "window-dressing" in Bradbury's stories rather than central to the plot or characters, they are easily overlooked. Yet, material culture and literary critic Bill Brown argues, "literature has the capacity to preserve (however marginally) residues of phenomena that remain in some sense unrecognizable (if not unrepresentable) in our existing historiographic genres. Within literature the detritus of history lingers, lying in wait" (Brown 4). In some ways, these short stories act as a kind of freezer or storage unit themselves, allowing us to reconstruct the suburban rhetoric of convenience and miraculous, no-fuss food preparation. The invisibility of animals and agricultural production is made evident by descriptions in Bradbury like a hot-dog stand surrounded by "lonely wasteland" or the last kitchen on earth preparing fresh eggs, milk and bacon. The marginality of animal bodies is in fact central to policing the racialized landscape of postwar suburbia.

CHAPTER FOUR: HYGIENE AND THE SPECIES LINE IN SYLVIA PLATH

"Pureness was the great issue," recalls Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* (91). Throughout her writings – both creative and personal – Sylvia Plath returns to moments of transgressive and transspecies boundary crossings to describe the limits of poetry and, in particular, a tenuous poetic personhood informed by the racial and gender politics of suburban domesticity. She is interested in the boundary line as the site that generates or inhibits poetic practice and as the site that grants or denies personhood. I argue Plath shows how cleanliness – like invisibility in Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* or the structures, silences, and clichés of social convention in Jackson and Hansberry – polices and defines the limits of what is proper to humans and what is proper to animals in the home. Plath's poetry puts animals and animal detritus in tension with the technologies of exclusion and corresponding cultural resonances of midcentury hygiene. In this way, her writing marshals cleanliness as a metonymy for suburban whiteness, racializing and spatializing that purity by way of animal figures.

In 1958, Plath composed "The Times are Tidy" and "The Death of Myth-Making" which both address a perceived collision between the boundaries of human and animal bodies. Her poem, "The Times are Tidy" laments the loss of dragons, crones, and talking vats and, in a nod towards the provincializing of national and poetic aims, claims that there is no need for a hero "in this province." "The Times are Tidy" echoes an earlier poem, composed in the same year, "The Death of Myth-Making" where Plath argues that reason and common sense have conspired "to grind our knives and scissors / […] The trees are lopped, the poodles trim" (CP 104). Humans and poets alike seem unnecessary under these regimes, emphasized by the scene of

automation with which "The Times are Tidy" begins, where "the mayor's rotisserie turns / Round of its own accord" (107) and where humans and nonhuman animals are portrayed as edible and defunct. These poems where the poodles are trim and the "the mayor's rotisserie turns / Round of its own accord" invoke a technological modernity that connects human and nonhuman subjects by attempting to contain and regulate the boundaries of geography and body, where the "province of the stuck record" is also a "rotisserie." Plath connects this death of myth-making to a broader cultural problem than, as many might read this passage, the consumerism and inward turning of stereotypical midcentury nuclear families. Plath repeatedly foregrounds how a hygienic cultural turn acts as anathema to poetic practice, detailing her resistance to a moment in which "history's beaten the hazard" (CP 107).

Where some literary critics read Plath as, on the one hand, materially enmeshed in her own circumstances and, on the other, poetically interested in transcendence and stripping away the linguistic and cultural "petticoats" of her bounded self, I take Plath's interest in the contradictions and anxieties of the physical body and put it in context with the larger hygienic concerns of the long 1950s. Drawing from analyses of the racial dimension of American hygiene, as well as historical and archival research into the rhetoric of midcentury advertisements, this chapter reframes Plath's search for purity as a complex, racially coded engagement with the nature of American hygiene. What Plath's poetry helps to highlight, and what readings of Plath that neglect her sustained interest in material culture and the nonhuman environment overlook, is the way that the midcentury culture of hygiene depend on policing both the spatial and cultural boundaries between human and nonhuman bodies. The line between clean and dirty is marked by animal figures of nonhuman nuisances and pests, a nonhuman boundary that Plath takes up to explore the limits of humanity and poetry under the species line.

Hygiene is not a common concern for those writing about Plath, as her interest in cleanliness is less studied than her uses of electricity, eating, sexuality, and the twin poles of self-obsession and self-transcendence. Yet hygiene is a way of refreshing two central streams of Plath studies: one reading her in the domestic context as responding to 1950s housewife culture, and the other attempting to rehabilitate and reframe Plath's global politics, reading past the assumed garishness or naivety of her references to Holocaust victims and the Rosenbergs. In recent years, scholarly interest in Plath has been revitalized by focusing on her environmentalism and her critique of white domesticity. Increasingly, critics have taken up the themes and figures of Plath's poetry as not complaints about her own life, not focusing on her interiority, but rather looking outward to global and political problems.[64] The release of the two-volume *Letters Home* has also sparked renewed interest in her life—including *Sylvia Plath in Context*, where portions of this chapter appear—but what has sustained questions in this expansion of the questions raised about her work and writing is the critical acknowledgement that there is more to these poems than biography and, indeed, that there is always more to biography than simply the story of a single life.

In her journal, describing an unsuccessful batch of poems, Plath writes: "none of the deep emotional undercurrents gone into or developed. As if little hygienic transparent lids shut out the seeth and deep-grounded swell of my experience" (J 501). While Plath claims that hygiene, sanitation, sterility, and cliché are opposed to successful poetic practice, she paradoxically returns again and again to these subjects within her poems and writing. Anthropologist Mary Douglas reads tidying as creative in *Purity and Danger*, her landmark discussion of the centrality of dirt to cultural practices, using language that echoes poetic practice:

[64] A surely incomplete list: Knickerbocker, Brain, Bryant, Brown, Peel, Brunner, and Nelson.

> In chasing dirt, in papering, decorating, tidying, we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea. There is nothing fearful or unreasoning in our dirt-avoidance: it is a creative moment, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience (2).

Douglas's unifying rituals square with many of Plath's dreamy descriptions of her own housekeeping and cleansing. In the early 1950s, Plath writes in her journal, "Upstairs, in the bright, white, sterile cubicle of the bathroom, smelling of warm flesh and toothpaste, I bent over the washbowl in unthinking ritual, washing the proscribed areas, worshipping the glittering chromium, the light that clattered back and forth, brittle, blinding, from the faucets" (17). But the ritual, worship, and blinding sterility are tempered by Plath's attention to the ways that the physical body resists this purity, trading glittering surface for a body closer to an animal figure than a human, unknowable and unspeakable (she knows not, her voice is halted):

> My face I know not. One day ugly as a frog the mirror blurts it back: thick-pored skin, coarse as a sieve, exuding soft spots of pus, points of dirt, hard kernels of impurity – a coarse grating. […] The surface texture of life can be dead, was dead for me. My voice halted, my skin felt the pounds & pounds pressure of other I's on every inch, wrinkled, puckered, sank in on itself. Now to grow out. To suck up & master the surface & heart of worlds & wrestle with making my own (306).

The influence of cultural, political, and racial ideologies on notions of purity and hygiene extends to spaces beyond the home, of course.

One of Plath's first acts after stepping foot on her college campus was to take the required "hygiene exam," an institutional articulation of purity that she described in a September

1950 letter to her mother as "peculiar" and surprisingly unscientific: "Technical questions were few and far between" (LV1 175).

In *The Bell Jar*, Plath's oft-quoted line with which this chapter begins explicitly connects the language of purity with female sexuality, but what often goes unnoticed about the passage in which it occurs is the way that Plath spatializes purity:

> When I was about nineteen, pureness was the great issue. Instead of the world being divided up into Catholics and Protestants or republicans and democrats or white men and black men or even men and women, I saw the world divided up into people who had slept with somebody and people who hadn't, and this seemed the only really significant difference between one person and another. I thought a spectacular change would come over me the day I crossed the boundary line (91)

This sexual purity is how most critics understanding purity in Plath, focusing on her expansive and rigorous critique of midcentury gender norms and expectations when not reading her purity as, like in "Ariel," transcendent and bodiless. But Plath is equally as interested in germs, garbage, and decay in ways that emphasize not primarily the gendered aspects of these cultural constructions, but rather the spatial, suburban, and environmental logic undergirding these conceptual divisions. *The Bell Jar* also includes meditations on "the celestially white kitchens of Ladies' Day" magazine (53), a "liver-colored corridor smelling of floor wax and Lysol" (100) and a visual connection between the protagonist's reasons for not showering and suburban landscaping. Edith is struck, when first arriving back in the suburbs, by "the white, shining, identical clapboard houses with their interstices of well-groomed green proceeded past, one bar after another in a large but escape-proof cage" (128), an impression that emphasizes both the technology of mass production and the racialization of cleanliness within the "white, shining,

identical" and "well-groomed" space but also, in language that emphasizes a shared substrate of corporeality and entrapment between human and nonhuman subjects in the suburbs, a "cage." Forty pages later, Plath's speaker confesses "The reason I hadn't washed my clothes or my hair was because it seemed so silly. I saw the days of the year stretching ahead like a series of bright, white boxes…" (143).

In "Johnny Panic," Plath's narrator views consciousness as unclean, framing the physical body using rhetoric from suburban environmental problems:

> It's into this lake people's minds run at night, brooks and gutter trickles to one borderless common reservoir. It bears no resemblance to those pure sparkling-blue sources of drinking water the suburbs guard more jealously than the Hope diamond in the middle of pine woods and barbed fences. It's the sewage farm of the ages, transparence aside. (159)

Here, Plath's narrator reifies suburban logic that insists on policing boundaries, as the "borderless common reservoir" becomes the "sewage farm of the ages," yet, what this description also points out, is how suburban borders are more rhetorical than physical, as suburbanites with "barbed fences" remain implicated and contaminated by this "common reservoir" in which we all swim. In this and elsewhere, Plath's purity is geographical, national, spatial, suburban, and therefore comes with caveats. This purity would have had an apparent racial cast to it in a national culture where, for example, the *Christian Observer* referred to immigrants moving into American neighborhoods as "like sediment in the water" (quoted in Schulze, *The Degenerate Muse*, 16). The cleanliness of the suburban landscape was and remains a racialized project supported by government action and funding. As Carl Zimring notes in *Clean and White*:

> American sanitation systems; zoning boards; real estate practices; federal, state, and municipal governments; and makers and marketers of cleaning products have all worked with an understanding of hygiene that assumes that 'white people' are clean, and 'non-white people' are less than clean (217).

Zimring discusses the impact of zoning laws and historical discrimination in areas surrounding suburbia primarily in terms of sanitation labor and garbage collection, focusing his argument on how unequal sanitation services worked to shape contemporary assumptions about hygiene, on the accumulating piles of garbage left by municipal disinvestment. What I suggest, and what Plath's poetry serves to highlight, is another kind of accumulation, marking spatial and cultural boundaries: the animal figures and nonhuman environments at the heart of articulating the difference between hygienic and unclean, pure and contaminated. American purity in the long 1950s operates via a logic that distinguishes between kinds of humans, blue collar and white collar, white and Black, urban and rural, and between kinds of nonhumans, pets and farm animals. This understanding of hygiene, when represented, reaches for animal figures and rhetoric about nonhuman environments and nuisances to articulate these distinctions and racist assumptions. These hygienic assumptions are rhetorical, happening and taking root in language and propagating through literary, legal and popular texts.

Plath's invocations of purity connect body with culture, inviting us to consider how ideas of what makes a clean body are gendered and policed by institutions and norms. Hygiene helps to define gender roles and family structures, as in "The Colossus," where purity becomes a patriarchal project, as the speaker describes carefully cleaning a large paternal statue, "scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails of Lysol" (*CP* 129). Lysol is a particularly resonant agent of "biological housekeeping," not only because it was initially marketed as a douche, but also

because, as Lysol advertisements reminded consumers, hygiene and national defense are united: "like a good housekeeper, Uncle Sam disinfects and deodorizes as he cleans" (Lysol advertisement, *American Home*, May 1942, 35). The relatively recent critical movement to replenish Plath scholarship by connecting her intense interiority to nascent or implicit political thought depends on reading her use of clichéd and commercial language as deliberate.

That Plath takes up these trite symbols, these critics argue, is a political argument in and of itself, making a poetry of a product advertisement. As Lisa Narbeshuber writes in *Confessing Cultures*, Plath has:

> a brilliance for isolating the machinery of clichés, images, and techniques of everyday discourse of the 50s and early 60s, the post-war mythologies and material practices that shattered and reorganized communal life.… Plath sees the seductive aspects of living the interior of this self-proclaimed American dream world, the relief in taking the package as natural. But instead of starting from an individual view, she starts from an alien, aerial perspective of the new suburban geography (viii).

This is a collision of anxieties that Plath returns to time and again, tracing a through-line from personal hygiene to Cold War containment and geopolitics. In 1956's "Tale of a Tub," Plath's speaker begins by seemingly buying into the promise of modern sanitation and order. Her speaker compares the dangers "bred" by the "familiar tub" in decades past with how modern "water faucets spawn no danger" (*CP* 25). Another version of her claim that "history's beaten the hazard," these lines ostensibly refer to water purification. Yet this is not about whether water is potable, but about breeding, spawning, dangers to come, and the 1930s (a time frame made explicit by the speaker's mention of "Twenty years ago"). Again, Plath makes historical links by

way of sanitation and purity. She goes on to depict what could be a restful scene of bathing (limbs, under water) and fiction ("dreams") interrupted by "absolute fact:"

> absolute fact
>
> intrudes even when the revolted eye
>
> is closed; the tub exists behind our back:
>
> its glittering surfaces are blank and true. (*CP* 25)

The site of sanitation becomes one of confinement ("the shape that shuts us in") and purity that, even at this site of intimate, immediate, embodied cleansing, "exists behind our back" and exceeds the bodily context. The close of the poem rejects both nostalgia and optimism, ending instead in an apocalyptic image that foregrounds how purity is contextual and historical, formed by "the navel of this present waste" (*CP* 25).

In the 1960's "Magi," Plath presents this hygiene as racialized and gendered, seeming to conjure up the long history of religious and philosophical policing of the physical body in her lines that yoke purity with dullness, and oppose it to flourishing:

> The abstracts hove like dull angels:
>
> […] Their whiteness bears no relation to laundry,
>
> Snow, chalk or suchlike. They're
>
> The real thing, all right: the Good, the True –
>
> Salutary and pure as boiled water.
>
> […] What girl ever flourished in such company? (CP 148)

These hygienic abstractions return in Plath's play *Three Women*, where Plath connects conceptual purity with construction and bureaucracy, providing a spatial infrastructure for these abstract purities. In other words, Plath doesn't present these abstractions as decontextualized, but

rather points out how abstract concepts like "purity" or "whiteness" are, necessarily, utilitarian and material. Secy, one of the three women, locates the source of these abstractions:

> I watched the men walk about me in the office.
>
> They were so flat!
> There was something about them like cardboard, and now I had caught it,
> That flat, flat, flatness from which ideas, destructions,
> Bulldozers, guillotines, white chambers of shrieks proceed,
> Endlessly proceed – and the cold angels, the abstractions. (9)

Here, Plath begins to describe a patriarchal project that, in its abstraction, links mass production (cardboard, bulldozers), bureaucracy (the office), and the atrocities of war (guillotines, white chambers of shrieks). Her use of Holocaust imagery has sparked criticism, but this reference seems markedly different than Plath's more self-referential turns to the events of WWII in "Lady Lazarus" and "Daddy." Rather, her expansive analogy between "the office" and "chambers of shrieks" connects these spaces in order to suggest an ideological link by way of flatness, akin to Hannah Arendt's "The Banality of Evil" in its focus on narrative and tone. Secy connects abstractions with both mass production (cardboard, endlessly proceeding) and with the violent apparatuses of local and national constructions and police, "guillotines" and "bulldozers." Bulldozers, of course, a particularly apt and often used metonymy for suburban housing construction, as in Adam Rome's monograph on suburban environments *The Bulldozer in the Countryside* or in countless eco-poets and activists describing the sound of bulldozers in contrast with birdsong. Secy then goes on to connect this scene with a larger social and governmental regime:

Governments, parliaments, societies,

The faceless faces of important men.

It is these men I mind:

[…] "Let us make a heaven," they say.

"Let us flatten and launder the grossness from these souls." (12)

Plath's gendered purity is thus productively complicated in these lines, framed at it is here as not an inherent quality that one can lose or sully, but rather a culturally and governmentally imposed quality and, as Secy notes when she says that she "caught it," a contaminant. Looking at the important role of delineating "the spaces that need taming" (43) in nation-building, Charles Mills charts in *The Racial Contract* the connection between bodily boundaries, contamination, and the government that Plath evokes here. As Mills writes, the racial contract "norms (and races) space, demarcating civil and wild spaces" (41). He goes on: "space must be normed and raced at the macrolevel (entire countries and continents), the local level (city neighborhoods) and ultimately even the macrolevel of the body itself (the contaminated and contaminating carnal halo of the non-white body)" (43-44). Priscilla Wald, likewise, has charted the link between a popular understanding of viruses and viral contagion and the macrolevel of midcentury geopolitics, tracing "a conceptual exchange between virology and Cold War politics" (34). In Plath's writing, purity is the contagion, rather than a refuge from contagion.

Her "Hospital Poems," as many critics refer to Plath's non-sequential but recurrent poems set in wards, rooms and operating theaters, are one recognizable constellation where she works out these ideas. In many poems, Plath could be a contributor to the "Third Book of Fear," as she describes in "Johnny Panic's Bible of Dreams," her short hospital story where a

germophobe's dreams form the basis for "Chapter Nine of Dirt, Disease, and General Decay" (159). The hospital, of course, is a site where both the sanctity of the body and the mind is violated and established, under the auspices of "health" and scientific inquiry. Plath is not the first poet to be drawn to hygiene and its attendant cultural signifiers and tropes. As Robin G. Schulze argues in *The Degenerate Muse*, Plath's poetic forbearers Marianne Moore and Ezra Pound found the relationship between fears of racial and cultural decline and poetic practice an important and driving concern. Because artists are so often charged with degeneracy, poets have an intimate connection to the concept. As Schulze describes, Moore and Pound "struggled to write in ways that would not be perceived as unhealthy by their countrymen," which meant, particularly in Pound's case, "posing as a patient rather than a doctor" (35). Where Pound's interests in degeneration and hygiene were, Schulze argues, "part of what led him to appreciate Mussolini's fascist program in the 1920s and 30s" (234), for Plath, years later, a focus on hygiene would be part of connecting a series of cultural fixations and historical atrocities. In Plath's repeated invocations of cleanliness across domestic and statist projects, she underscores the persistence of an ideology of purity and the cultural power of hygiene.

Plath's concern with purity and cleanliness is a complex, racially coded engagement with a global culture of hygiene. Hygiene, like suburban domesticity, was a global project at midcentury, that promised to ensure a prosperous and racially homogenous future for the U.S. Her poetics of hygiene engages in conversation with a transatlantic discourse about hygiene evident in postwar advertisements and US and UK government publications that trafficked in midcentury anxieties about biological containment, sexual purity, and interracial contact. Plath links hygiene to gender, geopolitics, and poetic form throughout her writings, and, thus, this

attention to hygiene in Plath serves to reframe her search for transcendental purity ("my selves dissolving") (*CP* 232) by showing how this purity is embodied and historically located.

Concepts of hygiene and purity are rhetorically essential to policing racial lines and national boundaries. When Plath put pen to paper, she did so after several decades of eugenic propagandizing that led to biological violence against millions worldwide and after a subsequent collective forgetting of the American origins of the eugenic ideals also at the heart of the Nazi project.[65] Xenophobic, dehumanizing language stoked anxieties about infection, contagion, and contact that needed to be addressed on both the national and individual level. Edwin Black details in his history of American eugenics and its supporters how "American eugenicists saw mankind as a biological cesspool. … America's elite were describing the socially worthless and ancestrally unfit as 'bacteria,' 'vermin,' 'mongrels' and 'subhuman'" (*War against the Weak*, 235, 258).

The concerns of eugenicists were deeply connected to theories about biology and zoology with the veneer of scientific objectivity and, in many cases, the financial and institutional backing of respected universities and foundations including several Ivy League schools and the Ford Foundation. Some advocates of eugenic ideals connected their approach to another amalgamation of race, science, and population: urban planning. Margaret Sanger, a prominent advocate for birth control, at times aligned her advocacy efforts with the legislation and social interventions proposed by proponents of eugenic ideologies, an uneasy marriage that historian Nancy Ordover terms "eugenically informed birth control" (Ordover 158) and that historians McCann and Chesler cover in detail in their biographies of Sanger. She gave speeches and

[65] For more on eugenics in America, see Black, *War against the Weak*. As Black details, eugenics and sanitation were deeply intertwined. Many leading eugenicists were students of earlier sanitation movements concerned with germs and disease, one reason why the terms "eugenics" and "race hygiene" were often used interchangeably (*War against the Weak* 262). See also Bruinius, *Better for All*.

distributed pamphlets that warned about the "problem of biological traffic and racial roads" (*American Eugenics* 125). Eugenics – in advocating for the improvement of the human race, drew on husbandry to prove the point – and many, if not most, of the most prominent American eugenicists were animal breeders, refining their ideas about the manipulation of populations on the cows, pigs, horses, and dogs they administered and making the dehumanizing rhetoric they employed in the service of supposedly improving humanity seem a natural leap. Rose Trumball's poem, "To the Men of America," makes this connection between animal expertise and eugenics explicit:

> You draw on the wits of the nation
>
> To better the barn and the pen
>
> But what are you doing, my brother
>
> To better the breed of men? (quoted in *American Eugenics* xi)

For instance, the *Journal of American Heredity*, one of the most prominent eugenicist publications (xvi), was originally titled the *American Breeders Journal* and consistently published articles that served to erase the distinction between humans and animals in the midst of arguments for improving the human species, "the breed of men" (xi).

Thinking and writing about cleanliness is, thus, necessarily also to think and write about attempts to define and police national boundaries as well as the vulnerable bodies within them. As Mary Douglas writes in *Purity and Danger*, "the mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins" (122). As Anne McClintock writes in *Imperial Leather*, connecting colonial cultural products with imperial projects: "The poetics of cleanliness is a poetics of social discipline. Purification rituals prepare the body as a terrain of meaning, organizing flows of value across the self and the community and demarcating boundaries

between one community and another" (226). In other words, what takes place in the kitchen and the bathroom is shaped by cultural and political forces. Notions of domesticity are intimately entangled with notions of racial and sexual purity, an influence evident in the phrase chosen by Harvard anthropologist E.A. Hooton to describe what he saw as the crucial eugenic project ahead of the United States in the twentieth-century: "biological housekeeping."

Eugenic ideology may have reached its peak in the United States in the early twentieth century, but the racist fears fomented by eugenic thought persisted long after the government and private institutions that once supported eugenic projects had publicly disavowed them. As one example, many eugenic concerns about racial purity were translated into a sanitized, supposedly neutral concern about the harmful impact of nuclear radiation on the human genome (Kühl, *For the Betterment*, 147). Advertisements touting the sparkling clean of postwar kitchens used racialized language to portray the new modern domesticity as a crucial bulwark against supposed encroachments on white families, white neighborhoods, and white wealth.[66]

Plath's poetry is full of recurring images of hygiene consumer culture, from a "clear / Cellophane I cannot crack" to the "gluepots and pails of Lysol" and these hygienic scenes are tied to sexual, racial, and national containment during the Cold War years. Plath often links hygiene to gender, geopolitics and poetic form throughout her writings, shifting from fears of contaminated milk, to a claim of writer's block because "History's beaten the hazard," to seven poems written in the winter of 1961 that, though seemingly concerned with other subjects, chart the cultural power of hygiene in garbage, face lifts, and warfare. The recurring figures and uncanny, more-than-human suburban paraphernalia of poems like "Waking in Winter,"

[66] See, among others, Baldwin, *The Racial Imaginary*, and Harris, *Little White Houses*.

"Parliament Hill Fields," and "Zoo Keeper's Wife" demonstrate Plath's sustained poetic interest in these seemingly mundane materials and her use of household objects and the conventions of domesticity to explore ideas that range far beyond the kitchen and the bathroom. Plath's interest in purity includes her expansive and rigorous critique of midcentury gender norms and expectations, as in Esther's explanation of sexual purity in the *Bell Jar*. Feminine purity was increasingly understood as biological as well as behavioral, evident in what U.S. historian Elaine Tyler May calls in *Homeward Bound* "wartime purity crusades … a revision of the germ theory: germs were not responsible for spreading disease, 'promiscuous' women were" (*Homeward Bound* 69). Wartime posters warned soldiers "she may look clean – but…."" (70).

What Plath's poetry reveals so usefully is the social and spatial organization in the midcentury injunction to "master the surface" (as she puts it in a journal entry). When Plath writes about dirt, dust, stickiness, pus, sewage, garbage, and the inextricable accompanying host of "celestially white kitchens" and "bright, white, sterile cubicle[s]" and "white, shining, identical clapboard houses with their interstices of well-groomed green," the language she uses depends on the logic of the species line. Her hygiene is expressed and structured via animal figures, pests, and nonhuman nuisances. As Nicole Shukin writes in *Animal Capital*, zoonotic diseases and the concern about germs and dirtiness that can cross the species barrier, are not only a marker of "cultural difference (unhygienic intimacy with animals, exotic taste for animals)" (187) but also, relatedly, a marker of modernity and personhood. Shukin writes of "zoonotic diseases:" "human-animal intimacy is one of the most ideologically and materially contested sites… as formerly distinct barriers separation humans and other species begin to imaginatively, and physically, disintegrate" (205). In Plath, the species line not only divides up a geographical landscape but also policies the human body – a clean human vs. a dirty animal.

Another way of drawing this out is to look to the role of cellophane in Sylvia Plath's poetry, and how her use of cellophane speaks to the collision of containment narratives, biological purity, and poetic form in the new technological modernity of postwar suburban domesticity. Cellophane at midcentury was emblematic of modernity, consumerism, and a certain feminine sparkle that turned oranges, candy, cigarettes, and other common grocery items into a glamorous commodity. Cellophane is also indicative of what Emerson called "the graceful distance" between slaughterhouse and consumer, where animal products come bloodless and prewrapped to the suburban refrigerator. As Carmen Elaine Lowe writes in her dissertation about the "inhuman imagination" in Plath and Hughes, "Plath is a suburban girl from well-fed America where meat comes from the grocery store antiseptically wrapped in cellophane, while Hughes is a country boy who understands the hunger of the rural poor who have long trapped rabbits to feed their families" (220). Even for contemporaneous poets sharing a home, cellophane marks a cultural distance.

Cellophane promised to define the murky line between clean and dirty. Consider the rhetoric in DuPont cellophane ads from the 1940s and 50s, which frequently appeared in magazines like the *Ladies Home Journal* that Plath read.[67] These ads further connect cellophane, racialized anxieties about contamination, and suburban gendered domesticity, and make the species line of suburban domesticity visible. In one advertisement, a house cat leans on a clear barrier, close to but prevented from touching a piece of raw beef. The ad's caption, printed

[67] Plath wrote a letter to her mother, October 1961, which asked: "could you pack me off a Ladies' Home Journal or two? I get homesick for it; it has an Americanness which I feel a need to dip into, now I'm in exile" (LH 433).

immediately below the Cellophane brand name, promises "No Admittance to Dirtiness."[68] But which who or which what in this striking image is unclean, the cat or the cut of butchered meat?

As warnings in DuPont advertising copy about "the drab veil that smothers clear, lovely color" that cellophane can alleviate remind us, hygiene is as much about appearance as cleanliness. Cellophane advertisements promised:

> Let the shopping crowds scuffle up dust, let the strange hands grab and paw – Cellophane film is *on the job*, protecting *your* health and *your* pocketbook. Dust, dirt and the germs on inquistitive hands are *kept out* by… Cellophane. It keeps out *foreign odors* too.
>
> […] Dust is the drab veil that smothers clear, lovely color. The dirtiest dirt, ground so fine that you can't even see its true ugliness. In smoky cities it's a powdered mass of acids that eat fabrics. It's a magic carpet for *billions* of germs…
>
> […] Strange hands. Inquisitive hands. Dirty hands. Touching, feeling, examining the things *you* buy in stores. Your sure protection against *hands-across-the-counter* is tough, clear, germproof Cellophane.

As this anxiety about "strange hands, foreign odors, smoky cities," and the invasion of "hands-across-the-counter" suggest, the cultural force of cellophane was rhetorically connected to midcentury worries about containment and contamination.[69] Yet, as the visual parallel between the pig going to market dressed in cellophane, and these human infants and children packaged in cellophane suggests, we are all wrapped in plastic whether we know it or not.

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[68] The Hagley Library and Museum has digitized the E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company Advertising Department records, available here: https://digital.hagley.org/dpads_1803_00224

[69] McClintock also points out how soap advertisements eschewed fingerprints and emphasized mirrors, surfaces, and reflections – a visual elision of biology and labor that cellophane traffics in as well (*Imperial Leather* 219).

We are always already plastic at this point –and what I mean by this is that we've lost some of the ability to see plastics as glamorous – rather than as an emblem of the pizzazz of modernity, they are emblematic of the anthropogenic problems of modernity, hyperobjects, waste, ocean garbage patches composed entirely of microplastics, a plastic ooze or soup where there was once ocean.[70] Yet where plastics has become a recognizable shorthand, or at least a familiar waste product, that is often associated with industry, business, modernity, cellophane seems to retain a more feminine visage. In one particularly strange crossover between Plath's poetic project and its critical afterlife, one biographer of Plath's makes an unattributed and, as far as I've been able to find, unique claim that Plath's skin "has been described as waxen or looking like wet cellophane" (47), possibly a case of contamination between biography and a line in Plath's "Den of Lions" published in Seventeen in 1951, about a protagonist who is seen as a piece of meat: "there she was, wrapped in transparent, crinkled cellophane of mirth … her voice as astringent as vinegar" (Kathleen Connor, *Representing Sylvia Plath*).

One scholar writing about cellophane and modernism, Judith Brown, takes us back to this glamorous beginning of cellophane in the history of American literature by looking at Gertrude Stein's sets for *Four Saints in Three Acts* lined with cellophane. Reading "cellophane as pure surface, as the plastic without depth that provides the transparent gloss and promises to perfect one's leisure, at least aesthetically," she links this to Stein's interest in flatness, her "project to drain the signifier of its signification." Brown writes:

> Empty of anything but the barest form, the draped cellulose film is irrelevant to life or logic and offers nothing in the way of meaning. […] As pure form or form without

[70] For more on poets confronting the anthropogenic problems of modernity by way of plastic, see Lynn Keller's chapter on Reilly's *Styrofoam* and the "ecopoetics of plastic" in *Recomposing Ecopoetics*.

content, cellophane stands in, at least superficially, for some modernist formal ideals.

Crisp, smooth, clear, hygienic, even icy in appearance, cellophane was a wonder wrapping and metaphor for language remade, removed of all its “words worn thin” (151).

But, of course, Plath and Stein are quite different poets, writing at different moments in cellophane’s cultural history, where icy hygiene invokes entirely different biopolitical and geopolitical anxieties. In a draft of "The Babysitters" still titled, at tha point, "Madonna (of the Refrigerator)", “gilded cellophane” promises some of the glamour of Stein’s sets, yoked to a national regime of appearances --- where a “tan” echoes the packaging of cellophane: “Tan and American, seen through the gilded cellophane / that takes the place of Dutch veneer.” “Memoirs of a Spinach-Picker” begins in nostalgia, with the line “Back then, the sun / Didn’t go down in such a hurry,” but that nostalgia is expressed in pre-packaged terms, as the postwar experience of plastic wrapped vegetables seemingly invades this memory, but also seems to add aesthetically to it, making the spinach more, not less, pleasing: “Wet yet / Lay over the leaves like a clear cellophane” (89). “Parliament Hill Fields” places cellophane inside of a fairy tale or a nursery rhyme, lending aesthetic glamour to the scene:

Now, on the nursery wall,
The blue night plants, the little pale blue hill
In your sister's birthday picture start to glow.
The orange pompons, the Egyptian papyrus
Light up. Each rabbit-eared
Blue shrub behind the glass
Exhales an indigo nimbus,
A sort of cellophane balloon.

Rather than reading cellophane as empty, "pure surface" or "pure form" or "form without content" I read it as a surface that is about purity; it is both is the frame and also that which fills the frame, as Plath's comparisons of cellophane to vision, dew, illumination, and gilt draw out. A cellophane wrapping is like the form of a poem, particularly, in this case, like the form of a Sylvia Plath poem, where is there is no fixed line (a sonnet might be more like Tupperware). I read cellophane, and Plath's use of cellophane particularly encourages this reading, as simultaneously surveillance, glamour, and hygiene – establishing an intimate distance that emphasizes both visuality and materiality, a form that is meant to disappear but, particularly in its initial emergence, became the focus. This understanding of cellophane unifies containment narratives, surveillance, and hygiene – a trinity that reveals the importance of biological containment (purity) to containment narratives and the nuclear family. Postwar literary scholar Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture* as well as literary and legal scholar Deborah Nelson's *Pursuing Privacy in Cold War America* trace many of these connections, with Nadel focusing on how containment narratives are bound to fail and necessarily require rewriting, as "the container and the contained, each in themselves fluid and not discrete entities, were regularly recounted in varying relation to the other Otherness and Sameness" (297). Nelson, likewise, argues that these metaphors of containment depended on a contamination, making purity and privacy central to a sense of self in the postwar years. She writes:

> The power and mobility of this metaphor of containment were equal only to the power and elasticity of the metaphor of intrusion – the enemy within – which conveyed the uncanny experience of finding one's borders already violated. The impossible purity of the internal space meant the perpetual breakdown and failure of the containment project (xviii).

But, as I argue, Plath's poetry not only investigates privacy, purity, and containment as they foster gender identity and national identity, but also suggests how these concepts are foundational to articulating a racialized personhood and the boundaries of who is human and what is not – the boundaries that her radical poetic empathy allows her to play with and sometimes to cross.[71]

Plath's purity is national, spatial, and suburban. It is everyday (she writes her brother, "How I miss our American hygiene, preventative and wise" (57)), and also apocalyptic, with "selves dissolving" in her many poems which equate transcendence and purity with the extreme material dissolution of a nuclear bombing. As one critic of Plath notes, "Plath pushes the logic of domesticity to its extreme and finds death. Absolute cleanliness and sterility can be achieved only through the eradication of all living things" (113). It is escapist, as in *The Bell Jar*, in a bathtub, dissolving the grime and grim personal encounters of Manhattan in a personal rather than poetic transcendence, and deeply invested, as in "The Colossus," where purity becomes a patriarchal project, as the speaker describes carefully cleaning a large paternal statue, "Scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails of Lysol."

I'll close by turning to the poem "Paralytic," Plath's most extended look at cellophane and a poem in which Plath complicates cellophane's role as aesthetically appealing packaging, inverting interiors and exteriors in her attention to various containers (lungs, dust bags, breasts, eggs, worlds, photographs, water, flowers, and, of course, cellophane). In "Paralytic," the male speaker, the rare male speaker in Plath, which arguably happens only one other time in her

[71] For more on Plath and race see, for instance, Tracy Brain, *The Other Sylvia Plath*, and Renée R. Curry, *White Women Writing White*. Tracking her use of black and white imagery, Curry writes that Plath "enacts a white woman's perception of racial furies, personal and cultural, relevant to the 1950s and 1960s" (154).

poetry, is simultaneously domesticated and medicalized – he is a vacuum cleaner under cellophane ("his dust bags" for lungs) as well as a patient with an iron lung and an oxygen tent. Tracy Brain, reading "Paralytic," reads cellophane as a gendered, medicalized object that promises protection from pollution. She writes: "Syntactically, we can attach this impenetrable cellophane barrier to the speaker's wife, daughters, waters and/or his own body parts. The very femininity and primary physical senses the speaker yearns for, yet is divorced from, themselves gag him" (121). On the one hand, this is a scene of claustrophobia, and the failure of hermitically sealed isolation to support poetic production, where "selves dissolving" dissolve into dust bags rather than a transcendent purity, and, Brown briefly argues, where, in Plath's formulation, Stein's icy, crisp modernist flatness falls from grace and becomes, in both the flatness of the familial photographs, and the clear, uncrackable cellophane, a stifling project (168).

Yet, what I also find compelling about this poem, and what this analysis of the poem's flatness, nostalgia, and claustrophobic narcissism potentially leaves out, is the dead egg. The lines "dead egg, I lie / whole / on a whole world I cannot touch," particularly in the context of cellophane, can't help but invite comparisons between the medicalized, domesticated patient under cellophane and the biological products of industrial agriculture, under cellophane. Cellophane implies consumer product, surveillance of outsider (the audience for that cellophane), but here the speaker is inside the cellophane, and inside the egg shell. This connection between medicalized human bodies and sterilized, sanitized animal byproducts is a parallel that Plath repeats again.

While Plath's interest in animated dolls can often seem reminiscent of androids, I argue that the threat is not from a robot but from the other side of the spectrum, the fleshy animal body.

Plath constantly juxtaposes plastic bodies with human bodies figured as meat byproducts, and it is often those plasticized forms that are implicitly framed as preferable. As one instance, in the "Zoo Keeper's Wife" (Feb 14, 1961) Plath offers a vision of a marriage of opposites:

> Should I stir, I think this pink and purple plastic
> Guts bag would clack like a child's rattle
> Old grievances jostling each other, so many loose teeth.
> But what do you know about that
> My fat pork, my marrowy sweetheart, face-to-the-wall?
> Some things of this world are indigestible. (CP 155).

In both partners, the fleshy body has been skewed, one towards a disposable, fragmented bag of plastics, and the other towards the prepared viscera and negligible parts of a pig: the fat, the marrow. Both options, the final line suggests, are incompatible with human biology and the usual methods of assimilation: "some things… are indigestible." Yet the poem is written from the perspective of the "plastic / Guts bag," and these lines draw attention to the limitations of the fleshly animal body, ignorant and "face-to-the-wall." In this sense, the plasticized speaker is more observant and cognizant than the animal who is primarily defined in relationship to the speaker. "My fat pork" describes a relationship of ownership, where the pig is always already pork and, therefore, for consumption.

This hierarchy of plastic and meat byproduct returns again in "The Surgeon at 2 am" which compares an amputated limb to a "pathological salami" and describes a prothesis as a "clean, pink plastic limb." Here, by way of pathologizing the human body, Plath plays off the connection between animal bodies and contamination that is so central to the species line,

policing the boundaries of the human/animal distinction. And what seems most interesting about these eggs and salamis is that eggs and sausage are technologies of food that extend backwards well beyond industrial agriculture and yet with the advent of modernized processing, packaging, and preservation, particularly in the postwar era, poultry, pork, and byproducts production – the business of making eggs and sausages – transformed more radically than perhaps any other sector of food production. Hygiene (in the form of antibiotics and power-washing) and packaging (in new artificial casings, from cellophane and other materials) worked to substantially alter the materiality and biology of pigs and chickens – in ways that eugenics interested in "biological housekeeping" made foundational to the promise of a better, purer future. In invoking a "pathological salami" and a "dead egg, whole" "unable to touch the whole world," Plath invites us to consider what happens both to human and nonhuman biology in the face of technological modernity. Rather than using cellophane to emphasize primarily a concern for hygiene, here, or to borrow from the visual glamour that cellophane can impart, Plath traps the speaker underneath the cellophane and within an egg shell as well. These containers, like the visual parallel between cellophane poster children and pigs in cellophane headed to market, make cellophane one of the conditions of being in the world. And in these containers, which bring together human and nonhuman subjects under a shared regime of hygiene and surveillance, we can see how Plath's poetry is a response to the changing geographical boundaries and spatial imagination of industrialized agriculture and white flight – where space, race, gender, and species collide.

CODA: REWRITING THE LEGACIES OF WHITE FLIGHT

In this coda I consider both the legacies of midcentury suburban nuisances and the implications of these suburban afterlives for academic research and writing. I look forward from the 1950s, touching on texts not conventionally read as suburban: a novel about the meat industry from Ruth Ozeki, a zombie thriller from Colson Whitehead, and an experimental lyric from Claudia Rankine. These texts grapple with the legacies of midcentury suburbia, presenting landscapes haunted by nuisances. I begin by charting the evolution of nuisance politics and the species-line in recent decades. I then read across Langston Hughes, Ozeki, Whitehead, and Rankine to, firstly, make the argument that these are suburban texts and, secondly, to show how each of these texts takes the transmission and proliferation of nuisances as a central problem of the suburban legacy. To conclude, I suggest how literary texts can offer an alternative archive to traditional understandings of suburban histories. Reading Langston Hughes alongside redlining maps, I show how literature can offer another narrative of how these suburban injustices, both social and environmental, inflect and infect the present.

The Afterlives of Suburban Nuisances, The Evolution of the Species-Line

Are the suburbs still suburbia? How are we to understand the legacies of suburban development, in the seventy years since the postwar era? Right now the majority of Americans live, work, and die in the suburbs. The species line continues to cement the color line, even as some upper-middle-class white Americans advocate for urban agriculture, city chickens, and ostensibly inclusive back-to-the-land farm-to-table practices that try to bring a wider range of animals and animal-keeping practices back into domestic spaces (Waters, Hurley). Movements

in favor of the 'greening' of cities must remember redlining and the race and class bias behind these restrictions. As I describe in my chapter on Lorraine Hansberry, the contemporary afterlife of racial covenants endures beyond their force as legal documents. I see echoes of my research in the lives around me on a daily basis. One example of the modern-day species line that many Americans encounter is dog breed restrictions in apartment leases, insurance policies, and municipal regulations. These restricted breeds are primarily ones associated with Black Americans and poorer Americans like pit bulls, Rottweilers, and Dobermans.[72] Just as leases restricting pit bulls do, building the postwar suburbs and sustaining these deliberately racially and economically homogenous and discriminatory communities means policing both human and nonhuman animals.

It is difficult to underestimate the ongoing economic, environmental, and cultural impact of the suburban development that fundamentally reshaped the American landscape in the mid twentieth century. Consider, for instance, the lasting cultural and political relevance of the phrase "suburban voters," a shorthand that continues to connote white, upper-middle-class homeowners even as the demographic makeup of American suburbs continues to move further from this 1950s *Leave it to Beaver* style familial stereotype – or consider the lasting environmental impact of the unequally-distributed and often ecologically-unsound sprawl of suburban development. Who lives in the suburbs has changed since the 1960s but the politics of suburban nuisances remains forceful. The demographic makeup of the suburbs may be changing, but 'reverse white flight' and increasing residential segregation ensure the continued existence of racially homogenous neighborhoods enforced by suburban nuisances. While some may cite the Fair

[72] For more on the pitbull as a contemporary marker of the species line's work to enforce the color line, the particular racial politics of the pit bull in the U.S. and apartment leases, see Bronwen Dickey, *Pitbull*, and Harlan Weaver, 2013, 2015.

Housing Act and other governmental intervention to prevent *de jure* segregation, historians of housing policy like Richard Rothstein and David Freund make clear that the government has done much more to enforce segregated neighborhoods and schools, both through discriminatory programs and through discriminatory forms of policing like civil forfeiture, broken windows tactics, and public nuisance policy enforcement.

Suburban Legacies in Contemporary Literature

How are writers to tell the stories of these neighborhoods without reproducing their racist conventions and giving these rhetorics another life? What genres can contain these suburban legacies? The suburban politics of nuisances continues to shape narratives of white flight and environmental politics in ways that have implications for our understandings of genre and literary form. Reading three contemporary texts implicitly shaped by the legacies of suburban nuisances – *Zone One*, *My Year of Meats*, and *Citizen* – I argue that each of these texts takes transmission as the problem, investigating how ideas about nuisances proliferate and have material and cultural impact. Responding to the politics of the nuisance and the quotidian and historical violences of suburban development, texts like *Zone One*, *My Year of Meats*, and *Citizen* make real the effects of casting particular groups of people as social threats and environmental hazards through zombies, ghosts, corpses, and other hauntings that question the limits of reason and orderly historical narratives. With hauntings, the past erupts into the present.

On its face, Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* may not seem explicitly concerned with the midcentury American suburbs. Yet so much of the novel reckons with the legacy of 1950s culture and technology and what's been left in their wake: the stereotypical suburban housewife, the Manhattan project, the rise of feedlots and superstores. Most often read as a feminist critique

of the meat industry, Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* follows a film crew tasked with producing a weekly TV show sponsored by an international corporation, BEEF-X. Produced by Jane Takagi Little, the show features a different American family each week who are meant to teach Japanese audiences how to enthusiastically enjoy meat (specifically, beef) like Americans. As the show progresses, the episodes land in contemporary suburbia. Lara and Dyann, the lesbian suburban couple who prove most influential – inspiring another woman to live her abusive husband and travel to America – live in a "split-level ranch house in Northampton, Massachusetts" (173). "Pillars of their community," with "a gilded turkey baster" (173, 174), Lara and Dyann prompt a reflection on the nature of Jane's production and editing process from her, casting these women as "ghosts" who "worked like ammonia, delivering a jolt of clearheaded dread" (176). Increasingly, Little has trouble understanding and conveying the chronology of these encounters and her own physical reactions. These ghastly figures return later in the novel, as Little describes her cravings while pregnant in terms that echo horror films: "the creature inside craves meat" (206) even as Little learns more that horrifies her about the meat industry. She shares: "I read, I shudder, I gnaw a spare rib." (207). These narratives collide in a bloody, toxic encounter as Little is literally struck by "a thousand pounds of oncoming carcass" during an illicit filming session designed to expose the meat industry's illegal and harmful chemical use.

In *Global Appetites*, food studies scholar Allison Carruth connects Ozeki's use of multiple literary forms to her global approach to industrial agriculture. Carruth writes that Ozeki's "formal hybridity functions, often comedically, to connect food with just about everything under the sun…. *My Year of Meats* thus maps the transpacific routes that American meat travels – a story that involves a massive network of ranchers, feedlots, grain companies, pharmaceutical conglomerates, slaughterhouses, meat packers, lobbyists, and media outlets"

(118). To this network, I would add supermarkets and suburban homes. In addition to the cultural and environmental legacies of the postwar era, another important midcentury connection and contagion that *My Year of Meats* draws out is hormonal – through the legacies of DES experienced in human and animal bodies.[73]

My Year of Meats is structured around transmissions, exposures, and contagions – the flow of meat, of chemicals, and the flow of ideas about the American small-town and suburban home, the "mall-culture mentality" and "well-conditioned air" of Middle America (162). The feedlot feeds the suburbs, and the suburban imaginary populates and makes legible Jane Takagi Little's TV shows. Ozeki is interested in the modern suburbs and their connection to agricultural spaces.[74] Throughout, my project aims to connect two proliferations that are both environmentally and culturally intertwined: the spread of the suburbs and the spread of factory farms. These midcentury expansions impacted American environments and industries in ways that have been thoroughly charted.[75] They are legally connected, too – by nuisances. An important tool before the development of zoning, nuisance laws were used by the officers of the law, homeowners, and others in position of power to police the locations and practices of slaughterhouses, bone boileries, and tanneries. These court cases thereby established the concept

[73] See Nancy Langston's history of DES, *Toxic Bodies*.

[74] She returns to these suburban legacies in *All Over Creation* (2003), set in the "shithole suburb of Ashtabula" (47) and a neighboring potato farm in Idaho. Like *My Year of Meats*, *All Over Creation* is concerned with contamination, reproduction, and transmission—paralleling the cultural narratives preserved in a seed saver's newsletter with genetically-modified potatoes called NuLife. Activists who are "politically opposed to lawns" (256) as well as biotech and GMOs attempt to combat these forms of agriculture by preserving a seed library. Explicitly comparing these seeds to literature, one activist explains: "These seeds embody the fruitful collaboration between nature and humankind, the history of our race and our migrations. Talk about narrative!" (162).

[75] An incomplete list of recent books 'uncovering' the American postwar agricultural industry: *Every Farm a Factory* (Deborah Fitzgerald, 2003), *Chicken* (Steve Striffler, 2005), *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Michael Pollan, 2007), *Raising Steaks* (Betty Fussell, 2008), *Eating Animals* (Jonathan Safran Foer, 2009), *Animal Capital* (Nicole Shukin, 2009), *Toxic Bodies* (Nancy Langston, 2011), *Every Twelve Seconds* (Timothy Pachirat, 2011), *In Meat We Trust* (Maureen Ogle, 2013), *Gulp* (Mary Roach, 2013), *The Meat Racket* (Christopher Leonard, 2014).

of the nuisance as a legal force in the US, even as it remained definitionally vague (and all the more useful and flexible because it was so). White suburban homeowners and real estate developers would marshal these same laws to police the suburbs of perceived nuisances, both social and environmental.

Making the unlikely but convincing parallel between urban renewal and post-apocalyptic zombie cleanup, Colson Whitehead's *Zone One* turns to the genre of the zombie thriller to consider these ongoing nuisances and how they continue to shape the relationships between Black and white Americans in suburbs, country, and city communities. A classic zombie thriller in many ways, *Zone One* is indebted to the *Night*, *Dawn*, and *Day of the Living Dead* movie trilogy directed by George Romero. Romero's influence can be felt in the spaces (rural farmhouse, shopping mall), in particular scenes (barricaded communities that fail when someone deliberately opens the gates to the waiting hoard) and in a fascination with "the allure of zombiehood" (Shaviro 16). But *Zone One* goes beyond the expectations of the zombie genre by presenting these zombies not primarily as existential threats, walking nightmares, or creatures of comedy.[76] Instead, these zombies are nuisances. Speaking of efforts to clear Lower Manhattan of zombies, to make the city "tamed and compliant" (42) the main character Mark Spitz thinks: "and already gentrification had resumed." (35).

Throughout, Spitz's ability to assess the zombie nuisance is aided by his familiarity with zoning laws and a managerial approach to the city's living and undead. In the opening pages, Spitz thinks of trying to "teach himself the language" of "the zoning commission" (7). Later, he describes the sensation of how "an invisible barrier surrounded his zipcode" in the Long Island

[76] For more on the cultural implications of the zombie genre, see the comprehensive collection *Zombie Theory* (2017).

suburbs (22) of "half-finished mini mansions" (23). Of these, "his parents complained about the eyesore as if under contractual obligation" and the suburban environment becomes not only a breeding ground for eyesores and architectural nuisances, but for animal nuisances too: "It was a breeding ground for mosquitos, his parents fussed. They spread sickness" (23). These suburban animal nuisances prefigure the zombies, who must be managed with state-sanctioned narratives of "incident reports" and racially-inflected jargon like "settlers" (89). Speculating about the first days after the zombie threat is discovered, Spitz thinks, fully inhabiting "his shabby suburban self" (256): "He imagined the block association of a tight-knit suburb, some planned community off the interstate – on the border of the country club's golf course, a quick drive to the outlet mall – corralling all their infected kin" (180). *Zone One* presents a post-apocalypse that is met with management, biopolitical governance, and a campaign of urban renewal premised on the familiar politics of the nuisance. Like *Raisin in the Sun*, *Zone One* is interested in the banal clichés that disguise and enable the displacement of gentrification and the violence of racial segregation. As Whitehead writes, "the future was what had formerly been called a transition neighborhood" (207). Disguised as a zombie thriller, *Zone One* is a meditation on the dehumanizing violence of nuisance politics. Explicitly calling out this aspect of the horror genre*, Zone One* reminds us: "the townspeople, of course, were the real monsters. It was the business of the plague to reveal our family members, friends, and neighbors as the creatures they had always been" (245). In this case, the dividing line is between those creating "incident reports" of hazards and nuisances, and those who have become the nuisance. The waves of human bodies, now undead, are described as pollutants which must be addressed by "sweepers" (89). Becoming environmental hazards, these human crowds are described as "a kind of weather," (221) "vermin" (281), and "just another species of weed carried by the wind" (222). In the final scenes of the novel, Spitz describes how

"the ocean had overtaken the streets…. Except it was not water that flooded the grid but the dead" (303).

In connecting these suburban nuisances haunting contemporary texts, I aim both to trace how these figures work in literary texts and to acknowledge the very real costs that these rhetorics and inequities have had on generations of Americans across innumerable neighborhoods. In Claudia Rankine's longform lyric *Citizen*, anecdotes of a neighbor reporting a Black babysitter to the police (15) and a real estate agent made "uncomfortable" by a prospective Black homeowner (51) appear alongside accounts of Black men and women murdered by law enforcement officers, in an ever-growing list that expands with each published edition (134). Rankine writes of how "[t]hose years of and before me and my brothers, the years of passage, plantation, migration, of Jim Crow segregation, of poverty, inner cities, profiling, of one in three, two jobs, boy, hey boy, each a felony, accumulate into the hours inside our lives where are all caught hanging" (89-90). Rankine's vignettes, piled on one after the other, parallel how these encounters "accumulate" (89) over one day and over decades.

The Literary Archive of Redlining and White Flight

How does it change our understanding of the past to study suburban development through poetry like *Citizen* or fiction like *My Year of Meats* and *Zone One*, rather than conventional archives of white flight like redlining maps, insurance assessments, and court cases? As I discuss throughout this dissertation, rhetoric and methods that occlude responsibility in suburban development – like the passive voice and naturalizing metaphors – are all too common even in research that aims to consider the complexities and oppressions of suburbia. Addressing these suburban histories also raises another methodological question, that of the archive. A rarely

studied 1967 poem from Langston Hughes, "Suburban Evening," shows how these haunted texts offer an alternative literary archive to the official state archive of the redlining map.

Understanding the environmental and racial injustices of the suburbs – and working to address them – requires an understanding of how white flight and the whiteness of the suburbs is sustained by language about racialized animal nuisances as well as by legal and economic means. One way of getting at this is to look at the surveyors' reports that accompanied the insurance underwriting maps. In the Home Owners Loan Corporation records, block-by-block annotated maps and accompanying evaluations by insurance agents provide a fine-grained snapshot of redlining and housing discrimination in midcentury American neighborhoods. These maps are the mechanism behind redlining, enabling the systemic economic disinvestment and environmental pollution of Black neighborhoods. These insurance assessments codified a system of nuisances, ranking them by importance and assuming a relationship between these nuisances, property values, neighborhood stability, and long-term prospects. These assessments also looked ahead, anticipating future nuisances, particularly if the lots in that area were not under zoning laws or lacked restrictive covenants.

In other words, these maps make sense of the American landscape by way of nuisances — by way of a racialized system of nuisances that depends on environmental change to naturalize racial change, the segregation that was assumed and promoted by these maps. This logic was built into the federal housing policy from its inception and this racist notion of nuisances continued to influence the housing market for the next several decades. These color-coded city and suburban maps from the early and mid-twentieth century serve to visualize the invented connection between Black neighbors and a decline in property values – an economic presumption that, of course, ignores how rents and housing prices were higher for African

American buyers who had fewer choices and less leverage. Like the federal census, these redlining maps quantify and catalogue racial difference in forms that make demographics legible and ostensibly seek to include the full range of Americans in the historical and institutional records, but in practice permit and encourage racialized violence and racist hierarchies.

Langston Hughes often explicitly responds to the midcentury housing market and suburban white flight. For example, in "Little Song on Housing," a poem first published in 1955, Hughes describes an unwavering persistence in the face of racial and economic discrimination ("Prices are doubled / When I get sold: / Still I buy.") that plays off of the many entangled readings of an African-American man who "gets sold." But Hughes explicitly takes up the category of the nuisance in another, later poem: "Suburban Evening." This poem is not one of Hughes's more well-known or discussed poems, whether because of its later date of publication, it's enigmatic conclusion, or because Hughes is not typically thought of as a poet of the suburbs.

First published in *The Crisis* in 1967, "Suburban Evening" strikes a melancholy and haunting tone.

"Suburban Evening"

A dog howled.

Weird became the night.

No good reason

For my fright –

But reason often

May play host

To quiet

Unreasonable

Ghosts.

Given the poem's placement in *The Crisis*, and its placement in the issue itself, appearing immediately before an article describing two funerals for African American men killed in white suburban neighborhoods by white suburban residents, the title "suburban evening," the fright of the speaker, and the play on ghost and guest, all contribute to a sense of repressed, impending racial violence. The time of day – evening – recalls sundown towns, a spatial segregation often marked by sound, as many sundown towns used a loud whistle or horn to mark the moment when African Americans became explicitly barred from the town limits, a restriction enforced by both legal and extralegal violence and murder.

This howling dog signifies a cultural space as well as a physical one, marking interlopers who might trespass racial and property boundaries. Yet the dog and the speaker are not overtly in opposition. Indeed, here the structure of the poem's lines presents an unlikely pair – a howling dog and a quiet, unreasonable ghost – who both interrupt the suburban evening and, more fundamentally, interrupt the supposed 'reason' of the suburbs by presenting a nuisance. A howling dog is not a static signifier but a contextual one, and can invoke a protective warning of a domestic household animal or the howl of the state: announcing the presence of police or guard dogs, long used to intimidate and attack African Americans, giving voice to the howling inhumanity of the law.

Hughes's use of sound to circumscribe space acts as a poetic challenge to racist housing policies that frame nonwhite neighbors as a nuisance (sonic or otherwise). That the poem begins with this animal howl and closes with "Unreasonable / Ghosts" speaks to how suburban housing enforces a strict notion of person and property. Dogs and ghosts invoke a liminal kind of personhood, transgressing temporal and spatial boundaries, making "weird" the night. Indeed,

the same laws that make dogs vulnerable to police were adapted to permit state-sanctioned violence against outsiders of human communities, under the auspices of policing nuisances.

What this constellation of concerns about race, place, sound, personhood and reason in "Suburban Evening" produces is, then, a countermap of the suburbs – one that takes a decidedly different point of view than a map produced by a government-backed insurance assessor, surveying a neighborhood to produce a record of racist housing policies. Hughes offers another way of reading the suburban evening – a geography that does not purport to be rational, and so calls attention to the racism and violence that the supposed rationality of urban planning and suburban development plays host to, in the mid-60s and today. For this reason, it is productive to read Hughes alongside redlining maps of the Home Owners Loan Corporation.

These maps are not a neutral record of segregation, but are the tools that helped to make decades of federal and local disinvestment in African American communities possible and legally permissible – in other words, the 'reason' underwriting these suburban evenings of Hughes's poem. These maps not only reflect the racial segregation of these cities but actively fomented and propagated these racist presumptions and anxieties while simultaneously providing a code for discussing them without overtly mentioning race. What Hughes's countermap offers is an archive of redlining that does not center the voices and assessments of the mapmakers.

"Suburban Evening," like *Citizen*, *Zone One*, and *My Year of Meats*, provides a historical record of the process of navigating these terrains of "reason" that do not allow these landscapes to continue to seem orderly, logical, reasonable by reproducing the lingering, ongoing state-sanctioned violence of redlining and economic disinvestment as coordinates fixed in time and space. The language of white flight and racialized nuisances spreads across location and across

time, transmitted in both legal documents like covenants, leases, deeds, and municipal regulations as well as literary and cultural texts.

Alice Walker once wrote, “racism is like that local creeping kudzu vine that swallows whole forests and abandoned houses; if you don’t keep pulling up the roots it will grow back faster than you can destroy it.” Like the ghosts in Hughes, the zombies in Whitehead, the corpses in Ozeki, the injustices in Rankine, what is supposedly history does not remain so. The legacy of the suburban species-line and color-line remains in every American neighborhood. Consider the slow violence of water contamination in the predominantly Black suburb of Flint, Michigan, avoided by nearby white suburbs. Consider the spectacular violence of Michael Brown’s murder and the 2015 protests in the suburb of Ferguson, Missouri. Consider the daily injustices of the politics of the nuisance, as Black neighbors are perceived as ‘public nuisances’ and daily, mundane behaviors are subject to police action or violent responses. For those made particularly vulnerable by the suburban politics of the nuisance, the daily policing of boundaries with the ever-present promise of violence is part and parcel of daily life. Literature can help draw connections between these quotidian moments of racism and the legacies of segregation, anti-Blackness, and slavery. Literature can help make apparent the links between social and environmental justice, and offer ways to rethink the role of nuisances in shaping communities.

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