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Geographies of power in Willa Cather, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Dorothy AlliSon

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GEOGRAPHIES OF POWER IN WILLA CATHER,
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ, AND
DOROTHY ALLISON

by

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Bachelor of Arts
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English
Department of English
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Doctor of Philosophy in English

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Dean of the Graduate College
ABSTRACT

Geographies of Power in Willa Cather,
Gabriel García Márquez,
and Dorothy Allison

by

Suzanne Angela Bergfalk

Dr. P. Jane Hafen, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of English
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By redefining social or economic “classes” as cultures, or as Raymond Williams explains, groups that share a “structure of feeling,” the dissertation defines power in accordance with the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices defined by the culture of persistence and the culture of wealth. With culturally determined definitions of power in place, the dissertation argues for a broader understanding of female power as that power is accessed and wielded by female characters in the writings of Willa Cather, Gabriel García Márquez, and Dorothy Allison. Engaging the strategies of feminist geographies employed by critics including Doreen Massey, Gillian Rose, and the Women and Geography Study Group, the dissertation analyzes the methods by which female characters negotiate the spaces/places where they live, work, and travel, evaluating their relative successes or failures in accessing and wielding power.

The three analytic chapters examine works by Cather—the novel The Song of the Lark, and the short story “A Gold Slipper,” García Márquez—the novel The Autumn of the Patriarch, and the short story, “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow” from the
collection of stories titled Strange Pilgrims, and Allison—the novel Bastard Out of Carolina, and the short story “I’m Working on My Charm” from the collection titled Trash respectively. In order to magnify the power of the female characters, the discussion evaluates the female characters in relation to the definition of power specifically determined by the character’s culture, whether the culture of persistence or the culture of wealth. At the same time, the spaces/places/locations where the characters live, work, and move through are analyzed to produce an understanding of how the characters access and wield power.

Finally, a stark contrast is established between the female characters created by Cather and Allison and those created by García Márquez, since Cather and Allison fully imagine female characters who are successful at accessing and wielding power in the spaces/places they live in, work in, and move through. In contrast, García Márquez creates powerful women whose power functions only fully in microgeographies, and García Márquez ultimately destroys those characters, despite their access to power.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Space and class—as social constructions both offer avenues for the claiming of and demonstration of power. At the same time, as social constructions, space and class intersect in complex formations that may interfere with power. Space intersects with social interactions in a manner that affects all aspects of human life. Most significantly, "spatial organization reproduces hierarchy over time. The relationship between spatial organization and social hierarchy is reflexive" (Roy 71). Social hierarchy—one or more groups of people maintaining dominance over one or more groups of others—creates class boundaries that are more than social and more than spatial. Some groups of people are assumed to have more value than others, and the system of valuing some and devaluing others reinforces distinctions. Hierarchy creates inequalities that keep groups of people separate; conversely, inequalities keep groups of people separate by reinforcing hierarchy. Acknowledging intersections between space and class, as in this study, creates an opportunity for reevaluating literary characters in works by Willa Cather, Gabriel García Márquez, and Dorothy Allison. More significantly, examining these literary characters through the lenses of the spatially oriented and classed context shaping each individual character provides a magnified understanding of female power.
As places are shaped, so are we.

Boundaries, borders, margins, limits, thresholds, lines of demarcation: all are arbitrary, all are created, invented, drawn, erased, crossed, penetrated, obliterated, and destroyed. To make sense out of place, some distinctions must be made, and since this discussion intends to focus on the relationships between class and place, defining places and spaces permits a more thorough examination of the characters. Though literary critics are taught to analyze setting, my analysis requires an organized and controlled reading of places that goes beyond the generalized idea of setting. In order to organize the analysis more effectively, the discussion will need to look at geography, and specifically, the qualitative strategies used in feminist geographies.

In *Imagining the Modern City*, James Donald writes that “[t]he space we experience is the material embodiment of a history of social relations” (13). In a similar manner, Edward W. Soja points toward the reciprocity between the social and the spatial in *Postmodern Geographies*, explaining that “the spatial order of human existence arises from the (social) production of space, the construction of human geographies that both reflect and configure being in the world” (25). Gender and class play important roles in the construction and negotiation of the “social relations” Donald refers to, and feminist geographies acknowledge the gender distinctions that have been overlooked in earlier geographical studies. Feminist geographers like Linda McDowell and Gillian Rose, among others, support the view that women see and experience the spaces in which they live and work in ways that are substantially different from the ways in which men see and experience those same spaces. McDowell emphasizes “that women and men are positioned differently in the world and that their relationship to the places in which they...
live is different too” (Gender, Identity, and Place 228). As Janet G. Townsend argues, a regional geography of gender includes a wide range of issues such as the gendering of work, biological reproduction, and change (26-27). As a starting point, the gendering of space can address

- personal space, activity space (daily and lifetime), use of transport (public and private), and migration by gender and age;
- urban and rural sex ratios by gender and age;
- marital residence and marriage distance;
- the incidence of purdah, seclusion and the veil;
- non-marital sexual harassment, rape assault, homicide;
- incidence in the home, workplace and public space by gender of perpetrator and victim. (Townsend 26)

As one of the core questions in feminist geography, Townsend, Gillian Rose, Doreen Massey and others ask: How do women negotiate spaces/places/locations?

To make sense of gender differences as demonstrated in spaces, feminist geographers must go beyond mapping. In the introduction to Thresholds in Feminist Geography, editors John Paul Jones III, Heidi J. Nast, and Susan M. Roberts describe a feminist contextual approach that begins

with “location,” an apparently innocent concept at face value. Location specifies the place of a thing (a factory or home, a book or a film, a piece of clothing or machinery), practice (whether working or relaxing, reading or writing, or listening or speaking), or person (or group of persons). In the language of methodology, these are objects of analysis, all of which have locations.

[emphasis in original] (xxvi)

In other words, things, practices, and people operate in particular places that are endowed with meaning or meanings. In literature, characters are situated in settings, and those

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locations influence the behaviors, choices, and possibilities that such characters can access. The feminist contextual approach, for geography and literature, "permits feminist researchers to specify the place-based character of objects and to examine the spatial relationships (distance, connectivity, presence/absence) between them" (Jones III, Nast, and Roberts xxvi). Feminist geographies have the opportunity for qualitative analysis that looks at where interactions between things, practices, and people take place, while also excavating and critiquing the meanings of those places. The Women and Geography Study Group, a group of British women geographers seeking to redesign the research practices and discourse of geography, describes one strategy using "Qualitative" techniques [that] aim to explore the processes producing a particular event and to promote detailed understanding of socio-spatial experiences. They are intensive research methods, for example, in-depth interviews and participant observation, often based on detailed case studies rather than large-scale data sets. They aim to understand the causes and the particular characteristics of the case study that is being researched. Qualitative methods offer interpretations of causal processes that have wide conceptual relevance. (92)

To summarize, feminist geographies function "by interrogating the spatial relationships among these objects of analysis; and by investigating how the different mappings of and relations among these objects affect the places within which they are located" (Jones, Nast, and Roberts xxvi). By examining "spatial relationships," this dissertation explores the spaces and places negotiated by female characters in a set of literary texts. In this analysis, the dissertation demonstrates the processes by which female characters access power or are prevented from accessing power in specific spaces and places, as well as how these characters use power to alter the meanings of spaces/places. By using the
strategies of feminist geographies, my analysis goes beyond a discussion of setting and builds a perspective of spaces/places/locations that provides a better understanding of the female characters living in, working in, and moving through spaces/places/locations described in the literature.

Examining spaces or places in broad terms can be confusing—taking a historical, philosophical, or aesthetic approach moves away from geography, and also detracts from the social relations that influence the organization and negotiation of spaces. The most effective way to organize a study of spaces and characters in those spaces is through the rubric used by geographers: scale. Scale refers “to the representation of area. At its most basic, scale is used to interpret cartographic representations of any area” (McDowell and Sharp A Feminist Glossary of Human Geography 242). In other words, scale describes the patterns used for dividing spaces for analysis. Since space is a social phenomenon, the creation of scale is also understood as a social phenomenon. In “Homeless/global: Scaling Places,” Neil Smith explains that

[t]he construction of scale is not simply a spatial solidification or materialization of contested social forces and processes; the corollary also holds. Scale is an active progenitor of specific social processes. In a literal as much as metaphorical way, scale both contains social activity and at the same time provides an already partitioned geography within which the social activity takes place. Scale demarcates the sites of social contest, the object as well as the resolution of contest. [emphasis in original] (101)

Thus, as places are shaped, so are we, along with our minds, perceptions, habits, and cultural practices; we are constantly engaged in the reflexive and reciprocal processes that reproduce our selves and our spaces. As David Harvey indicates, “[s]ymbolic
orderings of space and time provide a framework for experience through which we learn who or what we are in society” (214). The scaling of places permits a literary analysis organized by and concentrated on the places female characters move through and where they encounter others; where they live, work, play, and travel; where they make choices, behave in particular ways, and exert agency. The location(s) and movements of the female characters demonstrated in the texts determine which scales are analyzed.

In addition to scaling, mobility is another aspect of feminist geographies that directly relates to power and provides a clear distinction between those with power and those without. Space itself can be an obstacle that needs to be overcome. As Mona Domosh and Joni Seager explain:

It’s not easy to move through space. The ability of people to move around—to overcome ‘the friction of distance,’ as geographers say—varies wildly. The ability to ‘get around’ is shaped by physical capability, but it is also deeply intertwined with social status. Getting from one place to another takes time, money, confidence, and often machinery of some kind—and it can also take sheer endurance and will. (110)

Thus, the friction of distance refers to the idea that space itself can be an obstacle that interferes with mobility and must be overcome. In other words, overcoming the friction of distance requires access to resources, as well as physical and mental or emotional power. To overcome the friction of distance is an act of power, especially since mobility requires access to substantial resources. Some of the resources that foster mobility include physical ability (as opposed to disability), economic resources, knowledge about how to be mobile, and basic literacy. Not everyone has equal access to these resources; therefore, the ability to overcome the friction of distance varies among individuals and
groups. Overcoming the friction of distance expresses power because mobility reflects access to and employment of significant resources.¹

Choices and agency depend on resources and knowledges. Rose explains that "through their everyday interactions with people and objects, individuals develop certain kinds of knowledge—conscious, subconscious and ideological—and their subsequent actions based on these kinds of knowledge reproduce a social structure" (20). For the purposes of this discussion, the "kinds of knowledge" that "reproduce a social structure" are to be understood as class-based cultural knowledges and resources, which will be explained in the next section. Furthermore, Rose explains that this perspective [toward knowledge and social structure] would resolve a central problematic of modern social theory. The grand debate in social theory between those stressing the causal power of human subjectivity and meaning—represented in geography by humanists—and those who emphasized structure—marxists in geography—would be ended by the recognition that individual human agents knowledgeably undertaking everyday routine tasks through time and across space produced and reproduced the structures of society, the economy, the polity and culture. (20)

The resolution highlighted by Rose creates a structure for analyzing literary texts that accepts the reflexivity between individuals creating spaces and spaces creating individuals.

Employing scales to divide spaces as represented in literary texts recognizes that "[t]he making of place implies the production of scale in so far as places are made different from each other; scale is the criterion of difference not so much between places as between different kinds of places" [emphasis in the original] (Smith 99). One simple
and traditional example of "different kinds of places" occurs in the United States: North and South. Another logical example on a physically larger scale: the United States and Europe. Smith sets up a spectrum for the division and arrangement of places "by examining a sequence of specific scales: body, home, community, urban, region, nation, global" (101). In looking at the rubric Smith constructs, the reasons why many feminists have made much of the body become apparent—choices about one's body have the potential to become powerful political tactics that can translate to and influence the shaping of any other scale or scales. In addition, the issue of the body as text allows a perspective of the body within the texts represented by other scales—the sense of overlapping, penetration, and intermingling among scales can be articulated more specifically through geographical scaling. Brian Massumi points out that

[f]luidity and boundary setting are not in contradiction, for two reasons. First, the boundaries themselves are as easily displaceable as the perception of risk. "The family" is a code word for an immensely complex set of laws, regulations, charity campaigns, social work, medical practices, and social custom that varies locally and is under constant revision. The boundaries of "the family" fluctuate as welfare, abortion, and tax laws change, as church influence and temperance movements rise and recede. "The family"—any bounded social space—simply does not exist as an effectively self-enclosed, self-identical entity. "Bounded" social spaces are fields of variation. (26-27)

The political aspects of scaling become clearer through Smith's analysis, which separates out four areas for each scale, starting with "identity, or the characteristics that render each scale coherent; internal differences; borders with other scales; and political possibilities for resistance inherent in the production of specific scales, the abrogation of boundaries;
the 'jumping of scales'" (101). Using Smith's scales and feminist qualitative analysis, this study explores the crucial spatial relationships negotiated by female characters in accessing and wielding power. Attending to the access and demonstration of power creates an argument for a broader definition and understanding of female power, which shows how female power functions within scales beyond the body and the home. In order to examine a full range of geographical scales, from the body to the global, the discussion will focus on the scales as depicted in the literature by specific texts. In other words, the text determines the appropriate scales for analysis. The next section of the introduction discusses class, in order to establish the intersections occurring between spaces/places/locations and class.

Class

"Class" is a loaded term, one that can be conceived morally, economically, politically, historically or socially. Class conjures up ideas about relationship to capital or the means for production, hierarchy, domination and oppression, conflict, and distinctions between the "haves" and the "have-nots." In order to move away from the negative and threatening connotations of the term, this study focuses on the distinct boundaries that separate groups of people from each other—boundaries demonstrated by physical separations as well as by world views, behaviors, choices, and actions. Though my analysis strives to define class, my caveat is that the following definitions are provisional and inextricably linked to my own position as a member of the middle class and the late twentieth, early twenty-first century thinking that inevitably shapes my analysis. Jillian Sandell, in her analysis of Bastard Out of Carolina, suggests that the novel's main character
articulates the shifting and multiple understandings of "class" that circulate within the United States. Class can mean, in other words, the relationship to the means of production (either working for wage labor or for a salary); it can refer to the crude income levels (the rich or the poor); or it can mean a set of values either held by a class of people or assigned to them. (217)

However, understanding class requires more than a look at social status as well as more than a look at the "crude income levels" Sandell refers to; the full complexity of class means can be better understood by examining the human activities that shape and create class. By examining the human activities that shape class, the term can undergo a transformation that results in a definition of class as an ongoing, dynamic process.

For the purposes of this analysis, class is to be understood as a form of culture. Therefore, the term “class” will refer to shared worldviews, beliefs, attitudes, values, practices, and behaviors that function as markers distinguishing groups of people from each other. For the most part, constructing class as a kind of culture posits class as an active process that shapes and influences identity, self-awareness, and human relationships. Understanding class as culture also includes a perspective on the processes and activities that protect and perpetuate the culture and its ideologies. As Yi-Fu Tuan suggests, “[c]ulture is a physical process that changes nature [...] pioneer settlers clear forests to create farms [...] [And] [c]ulture is performance—facial expression, gesture, and social ballet” (6-7). The “social ballet” Tuan refers to highlights the cultural processes of building patterns of thinking and behaving. In the process of creating culture, boundaries between “us” and “them” are created and reproduced, suggesting a direct connection to geography. Humanistic geographer Douglas C. D. Pocock agrees with Tuan, indicating that “[l]andscape depiction has a further, inherent, creative quality:
it provides an important secondary source of knowledge, including environmental knowledge, and thus contributes to the general learning process whereby values, attitudes, and aspirations are acquired, the end-product of which is our cultural refraction of reality” (13). Shared values, attitudes, and aspirations reflect a large part of the process by which members of a particular class expend time, energy, and resources to construct and reinforce the boundaries between themselves and the members of other groups. Classes are located within and by certain cultural boundaries. Cultural boundaries are reinforced by the physical boundaries, created to maintain distance and separation, which also foster identity development and symbolic separation to effectively reproduce the idea and practice of “us” as distinct from “them.” Michael Savage argues that

particular places can become habitats for certain social groups so that these places become integrally liked into their “habitus”, their lifestyles, and so can be a base on which their collective identity is formed. Secondly, class formation can take place as social classes stretch across space by building networks which link members of that class together even though they are spatially dispersed. (39)

The concepts of “collective identity” and “networks” make clear the complexity of class and its composition, including the interactions between people and spaces/places/locations.

Adopting a definition of class that allows class to be understood as a form of culture requires two steps: the first being an acknowledgment that America is not a classless society and the second requiring an agreement that class cannot be exclusively defined by a single perspective focused on history, economics, politics, social status, or values. Mary Elizabeth Hobgood addresses the first step, arguing that
While class is invisible as a meaningful social category in the United States, it conditions our lives in most fundamental ways. Class has life-shaping consequences in terms of our personal sense of entitlement (or lack thereof), our degree of access to the social, political, and economic benefits of the society, and our likelihood of having to do the worst and most dangerous jobs in the society. Class is essential to the construction of our identities as capitalist people, the interpretation of our experiences, and the things we learn to desire. Class is encoded into our speech, dress, and assumptions about ourselves and others.

As Hobgood suggests, socialization into the class system also occurs in spaces and places that shape and influence our ability to read and interpret the spaces and places we live in, work in, and move through. As we mature, we learn to know where we can and cannot go, where we are included and excluded, and where we can be powerless and powerful. Class may seem “invisible,” but Hobgood shows the extent of its impact on human experience.

Looking exclusively at the economic realm, no one can deny that “the traditional upper, middle and lower adjectives or labels [have] become[i] less appropriate for the description of reality of class in America. The middle class has shrunk significantly in percentage terms. Wealth distribution has become increasingly skewed” (Strobel and Peterson 436). Terms used to refer to classes, like the underclass, the working poor, the professional class, celebrity, the privileged and underprivileged, working mothers, and welfare mothers reflect the increasing fragmentation of the discourse used to discuss and describe social groups. The discourse also indicates the variety of experiences, life-chances, and boundaries that members of a particular group may confront. The simple
truth is that hierarchy persists. The persistence of hierarchy is expressed through
culture—socio-culturally and spatially—and the female characters in the literature take different
positions within the hierarchy of class. Furthermore, class ideologies differ significantly,
reinforcing separations between members of one class and members of another.

The ideology of class translates into sets of behaviors, practices, habits, and values,
which are largely unwritten and unspoken, yet function as a remarkably effective method
for distinguishing members of one class from another. In other words, any given class
(upper or wealthy, middle, lower or working) should be understood as a culture, complete
with all of the attributes that contribute to a group as a definable culture—shared
behaviors, attitudes, values, beliefs, and world views. Cultures also share “[h]idden rules
[which] are the unspoken cues and habits of a group. Distinct cueing systems exist
between and among groups and economic classes” (Payne 52). The acquisition and
practice of such rules begins early, as explained by Tuan:

Children are taught how to behave. Adults present them with a standard of
manners and courtesy—a theater of gestures and movements—for emulation.
Impulses of natural kindness and generosity are encouraged; anger and violence
are discouraged. Manners, backed by moral beliefs, issue in imperatives of dos
and don’ts. Transgressions against them produce, in acculturated members,
shock—a deep sense of impropriety, and the fear of relapse into chaos and the
subhuman. (228)

Tuan describes an ideal situation for childhood development; as Allison’s *Bastard Out of
Carolina* shows, some children are taught with “anger and violence” in place of
“kindness and generosity.” In a similar manner, García Márquez’s *Autumn of the
Patriarch* depicts violence as the norm, leaving Leticia Nazareno without a role model
for how to behave amidst the perpetual and unavoidable violence of her kidnapper-become-husband. In Cather’s *The Song of The Lark*, Thea Kronborg learns from her teachers and her other benefactors the behavior that will best move her toward being an artist. Hidden rules take many shapes and forms which can be unrecognizable without a structure for identifying cultural behaviors, attitudes, and world views that shape the relationships within a particular group. Moreover, acknowledging these hidden rules offers a method for making sense out of actions, behaviors, and choices that may appear to be incomprehensible. Understanding the cultural expectations of each class allows better understanding of literary characters and their actions, choices, behaviors, and motivations. In conjunction, a detailed understanding of class culture offers a method of explaining why characters do what they do, while also providing a means for demonstrating how actions and choices represent expressions of power within a particular culture. The concept of class requires an understanding of a social group that functions as a complex culture, not merely as political, social, moral, or economic groups.

To understand class as culture, the “hidden rules and cues” must be uncovered, explored, and explained—revealing what Raymond Williams terms “structure of feeling” belonging to and shared by various social groups. Outlining the cultural rules that distinguish members of the cultures of persistence, the middle class, and wealth provides a perspective on the complexity and intricacy of the knowledge a person needs to acquire to function in any given class culture. Outlining cultural rules also calls attention to the fundamental values that create differentiation between members of different class cultures. Finally, outlining specific cultural features that function in each class group begins the process of identifying boundaries relating to places/spaces where the women in the literature live, work, and travel. Once these cultural features are defined, however
provisionally, the basic values that function in the cultures of persistence, middle class, and wealth provide a specific, focused definition of power working in each of these groups.

The Culture of Persistence

In order to move away from the negative connotations associated with the phrase "culture of poverty," the dissertation will use the phrase "culture of persistence," since the word "persistence" better reflects the central, social value of survival that functions among the members of the group. Regarding time orientation in the culture of persistence, "the present is most important [and] [d]ecisions are made for the moment based on feelings or survival" (Payne 59). Understanding the culture of persistence also means recognizing that family structure "[t]ends to be matriarchal," endowing women with the power to make decisions, influence the behavior of others, foster relationships, and reinforce the cultural values of survival (Payne 59). The driving force for members of the culture of persistence rests in "survival, relationships, [and] entertainment" (Payne 59). The key term for understanding the culture of persistence is survival.

Understanding the significance of survival in the culture of persistence provides a means for making sense out of choices, actions, and behaviors that, initially, may not seem to make sense. All decisions and actions are tested against the need for survival. In the culture of persistence, as Payne points out, the present is most important, so in the present, decisions are made and actions are taken to ensure that the present moment is as enjoyable as possible, even if the present includes extreme suffering. In addition, survival depends on relationships that must be cultivated and sustained at all costs.
Understanding the concept of survival as central to the culture of persistence allows power to be defined by an individual’s ability to survive.

Dorothy Allison, for the most part, confirms Payne’s outline for understanding the culture of persistence. Allison explains her own theory behind the culture of persistence based on her lived experience in her essay "A Question of Class." She begins by discussing the sense of entitlement which is unfamiliar to members of the culture of poverty:

Entitlement, [...] is a matter of feeling like we rather than they. You [those who are not members of the culture of persistence] think you have a right to things, a place in the world, and it is so intrinsically a part of you that you cannot imagine people like me, people who seem to live in your world, who don't have it. (14)

Allison's perspective is that members of the culture of persistence do not view themselves as having the right to anything--choices, opportunities, a career as opposed to a job, better living conditions, better education, healthy lives and relationships--or in other words, they do not see themselves as entitled to social justice. Allison points out her inability to explain "the extent to which I feel myself denied: not only am I queer in a world that hates queers, but [also] that I was born poor in a world that despises the poor" ("A Question of Class" 14). The lives and experiences of members of the culture of persistence have been romanticized and mythologized, which also denies them the opportunity for self-definition. The "myths of the noble poor generated by the middle class....[function as] a platform for assailing the upper and middle classes, and from their perspective, the working class hero was invariable male, righteously indignant, and inhumanly noble" [emphasis in original] ("A Question of Class" 15). The denial of social justice is compounded by the injustice of being othered by members of the middle class.
The middle class—through a variety of media—invents a myth of the poor that allows them to be hazy, fuzzy, just out of focus, allowing the poor to be transformed into a vague category of people who are not fully real. Allison, however, knows that poverty is real, and "dreary, deadening, shameful," but the myth of the poor "did not include us" ("A Question of Class" 17-18). She contrasts her family with the "idea of the good poor-hard-working, ragged but clean, and intrinsically honorable" ("A Question of Class" 18). Instead, Allison describes her family as representative of experiences of poverty virtually absent from the myth of the noble poor. Allison's family represents

the bad poor: men who drank and couldn't keep a job; women, invariably pregnant before marriage, who quickly became worn, fat, and old from working too many hours and bearing too many children; and children with runny noses, watery eyes, and the wrong attitudes. My cousins quit school, stole cars, used drugs, and took dead-end jobs pumping gas or waiting tables. We were not noble, not grateful, not even hopeful. We knew ourselves despised. My family was ashamed of being poor, of feeling hopeless. What was there to work for, to save money for, to fight for or struggle against? ("A Question of Class" 18).

Allison includes women, men, and children among the members of the culture of persistence; her fiction emphasizes the female experience of poverty. Allison's description of her family underscores the issue of survival, and that survival also means surviving the hate expressed by others, as well as the perpetual self-hatred cultivated within her own family. Allison refers to generational poverty—the experience of poverty sustained over generations. Payne defines generational poverty "as having been in poverty for at least two generations" (64). In contrast, situational poverty is "due to a particular event," like death or divorce, that results in diminished resources (Payne 64).
Generational poverty tends to cement or crystallize aspects of the culture, making an escape from poverty extremely difficult. As Allison points out, "[w]e had generations before us to teach us that nothing ever changed, and that those who did try to escape failed" ("A Question of Class" 18). The misery of poverty cannot be left behind, and in Allison's short story "River of Names," the narrator catalogues the failures and suicides within her poor family in order to highlight the perpetuation of the culture and the deep despair that contrasts with the gentle, happy, carefree middle class upbringing of the narrator's lover.

According to Allison, the members of the culture of persistence exhibit extreme skepticism and mistrust of ideologies different from their own, defending their own culturally defined worldview in a form of ethnocentrism. (Similar strategies also defend the boundaries of the cultures of the middle class and of wealth.) "Serious belief in anything--any political ideology, any religious system, or any theory of life's meaning and purpose--was seen as unrealistic" according to Allison, reflecting a high degree of nihilism ("A Question of Class" 25). Allison confirms the culture's belief that an individual does not have control over her/his life, expressing shame over her family's belief in "luck and the waywardness of fate" ("A Question of Class" 25). Changing the conditions and consequences of one's life is nearly impossible--since one's life is ruled by fate--and Allison describes the attitude her family uses to sustain themselves, explaining that "[t]hey held the dogged conviction that the admirable and wise thing to do was keep a sense of humor, never whine or cower, and trust that luck might someday turn as good as it had been bad" ("A Question of Class" 25).

In examining the fiction of Dorothy Allison, the female characters, positioned in the culture of persistence, match the experiences of women in lower income households
described by Payne and Allison. Anney Boatwright, her daughter Ruth Anne “Bone” Boatwright, and the narrator of “I’m Working on My Charm” demonstrate their ability to survive, even if they lack a sense of entitlement, and instead display stubbornness and sheer will in the face of the difficulties in their lives. Allison’s fiction uses the matriarchy of the culture of persistence to make her female characters central and highlight how these characters exploit the hidden rules of the culture to their advantage. Anney, Bone, and the narrator of “I’m Working on My Charm” also share the mistrust of ideologies other than their own, though in the short story, Allison’s character appears to have entered the culture of the middle class. Allison depicts “women [who are] powerful in ways not generally seen as heroic by the world outside the family” (“A Question of Class” 17). Genuinely heroic, the female characters in these works demonstrate power through their ability to survive and persist.

The Culture of the Middle Class

In contrast to the culture of persistence, the culture of the middle class uses a time orientation that places most value on the future, which means that “[d]ecisions are made against future ramifications” (Payne 59). Orientation toward the future allows the culture of the middle class to place value on education and “self-sufficiency” (Payne 59). While Payne suggests that the driving force for members of the middle class is achievement, in addition, I would argue that the culture of the middle class is more clearly defined by consumerism, as evidenced by the ongoing practice of conspicuous consumption, the professionalization of education, and the use of education to obtain an income that fosters the consumption of material and cultural goods and services that identify one as a
member of the middle class. As a result, in the culture of the middle class, power is defined by the ability to be the most effective consumer.

The middle class, in its struggle to define itself against the culture of persistence, forces itself into the troublesome binary of not poor/poor. Again, defining the culture of the middle class must go beyond economics and demonstrate the middle class ideology created to distinguish itself from the culture of persistence. In Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class, Barbara Ehrenreich corroborates the importance of achievement for the middle class, while also calling attention to the practice of consumerism, which is directly connected to achievement. To define the middle class, Ehrenreich points out that “the difference [between the middle class and the poor] is not only a matter of money, but of authority, influence, and power” (15). To insure a higher position in the hierarchy of classes, the middle class needs to access “authority, influence, and power” by defending class hegemony. For Ehrenreich, the culture of the middle class can be defined through occupation, defining experiences, income, lifestyle, and tastes (13). Instead of suggesting that members of the middle class occupy specific occupations, Ehrenreich calls attention to the shared activities that make up a majority of middle class occupations, specifically the participation in what might loosely be called “mental work.” The difference is that the professional or manager is granted far more autonomy in his or her work and is expected to be fairly self-directing much of the time. In fact, his or her job is often to define the work of others: to conceptualize—and command. (13)

Political philosopher Iris Marion Young further explains the value of participating in mental work:
Though based on a division of labor between “mental” and “manual” work, the distinction between “middle class” and “working class” [or the working poor] designates a division not only in working life, but also in nearly all aspects of social life. Professionals [members of the middle class] and nonprofessionals [the working poor] belong to different cultures in the United States. (57)

The middle class distinguishes itself from the culture of persistence not only through work activities, but also through their lifestyles which establish and maintain boundaries between “us” and “them.” In addition, the middle class also shares the common experience of “hav[ing] completed a lengthy education and attained certain credentials” which Ehrenreich calls "essential to the cohesion of the middle class" (13). Completing the education and apprenticeship requirements or the “long training period requires the discipline and self-direction that are essential to the adult occupational life of the class” (Ehrenreich 14). The members of the middle class are required to develop and privilege the attributes of self-control and self-management; these attributes allow members of the middle class to contrast themselves with members of the culture of persistence who are believed to be incapable of self-management. Taking responsibility for oneself can be attained through self-control, and the "ideal of personal responsibility is very deeply ingrained in the middle class mind" (Wolfe 204).

The middle class value of education, training, and credentialing also affirms the time orientation that serves to distinguish members of the middle class from the members of other classes—by investing time in the acquisition of education and skills, the middle class shows its orientation toward the future. The choices and actions occurring in the present function as stepping stones for creating a more secure, stable, organized, and managed future. Since the culture of persistence is oriented toward the present, the
culture of the middle class, in opposition, is required to orient toward the future and achievements that will be reached in the future.

Understanding the culture of the middle class also requires reference to income. Ehrenreich's suggested range of "$30,000 to six figure salaries" is probably out of date, since her research was completed prior to 1989 (14). However, the ideology of the middle class requires adequate income for the practice of consumerism, demonstrated by "home ownership in a neighborhood inhabited by other members of their class; college educations for the children; and such enriching experiences as vacation trips, psychotherapy, fitness training, summer camp, and the consumption of 'culture' in various forms" (Ehrenreich 14). Perhaps updating Ehrenreich's description of consumerism would include the consumption of goods and services like the SUV (sport utility vehicle), yoga or Pilates classes, DVD player, home computer (probably more than one), cellular phone (again, probably more than one), and the 401K. The culture of the middle class also consumes emotional goods by engaging in philanthropy, demonstrated by the donation of small amounts of money, used clothes, used furniture, used toys and other such replaceable items. For the most part, the question of what income level makes one middle class is not as important as the ways in which income is managed to balance consumerism and an orientation toward the future. In many ways, the middle class invests or saves as part of the practice of consumerism; investment dividends or savings create the means for participating in consumerism in the future.

In *The Song of the Lark*, Cather's main character, Thea Kronborg is born into a middle class family—the Kronborgs are not upper middle class, probably since Mr. Kronborg is a minister, and dependent on the community for income. However, the Kronborgs are clearly oriented toward the future, and demonstrate planning for the future.
of their children. In addition, the Kronborgs engage in consumerism by adding on to their house; Thea herself engages in consumerism when she begins to earn an income as a piano teacher, purchasing items for herself and her brother. Though Thea comes from a middle class family, she clearly gives up these practices to enter the culture of wealth once she begins her path toward artisthood.

The Culture of Wealth

The culture of wealth employs cultural ideologies that distinctly separate its members from the cultures of the middle class and of persistence. The culture of wealth expresses a time orientation that emphasizes “[t]raditions and history” (Payne 59). With a focus on history, the culture of wealth places the most value on “[f]inancial, political, [and] social connections” along with the maintenance of such connections (Payne 59). Connections are made and reinforced through a variety of institutions pervasive in the culture of wealth, including private schools, exclusive clubs, living areas, international and national travel, and access to employment opportunities offering both high income and high levels of prestige. With connections at the center of the culture of wealth, power is defined by an individual’s ability to take advantage of and consistently reinforce financial, political, and social connections.

The building and reinforcing of financial, political, and social connections occurs in several ways. On a social level, physical separations between members of the culture of wealth and the cultures of the middle class and persistence keep these groups apart. Economic resources allow the members of the culture of wealth to live most of their lives physically separated from members of the other groups. Gated communities with dividing walls not only keep outsiders out, but also prevent outsiders from being seen. In
the culture of wealth, personal assistants, aides, or maids/valets also function as convenient distancers who maintain physical and social space between members of the culture of wealth and others. In some cases, attorneys or business representatives appear in public spaces as agents of members of the culture of wealth. The physical separation in space between members of the culture of wealth fosters and perpetuates thinking and behavior patterns that are sharply distinguished from the thinking and behavior patterns employed in the cultures of the middle class and persistence.

To some degree, social connections, so vital in the culture of wealth, rely on a choice that is not available to members of the middle class or poverty. In the culture of wealth, one can choose whether or not to work. Freedom from work gives individuals in the culture of wealth the time, space, and energy to devote themselves to other activities focused on the establishment and maintenance of social connections. Members of the culture of wealth possess capital, making them “capital-enhanced in that if they stopped working, their capital holdings would still render them solvent” (Strobel and Peterson 437). Those with capital also have the ability to exert power by choosing how economic and other resources are employed, since “[m]ost of this group’s income is made not from wages and salaries, but from income producing properties. This group makes the major decisions that drive the economy, the political process, and major cultural institutions” (Hobgood 4). Tom Bottomore emphasizes the distinctions between middle class culture and the culture of wealth, pointing out that top executives and the owners of property are so intimately connected as to form a single social group, while the position of those in the middle and lower levels of management (the “service” class) differs fundamentally in that although they play an important part in the organization, technical operation, and administration of
many vital economic enterprises and services (also in the public sector) they have, 
nevertheless, a subaltern role and do not make the crucial strategic decisions 
about the use of capital. (63)

Members of the culture of wealth make those “crucial strategic decisions,” and with the 
act of choosing, can effectively demonstrate power not only over people, but also over 
economic and other resources. Furthermore, capital-enhanced individuals have the 
ability to pass on their capital to other persons, organizations, or companies, which tends 
to keep capital concentrated among a relatively small group of people.

The practice of high-end philanthropy in the culture of wealth provides economic 
benefits (in the form of tax relief) and significantly contributes to fostering political 
connections and achieving social distinction. By making a major donation or by 
providing capital funds over time to educational institutions, social organizations, or their 
own foundations, members of the culture of wealth gain positive association for their 
contributions, while also distinguishing themselves from others by directing the power of 
their capital toward a specially chosen group. Simply by making a choice, members of 
the culture of wealth can enhance their social distinction. Contributing money (or other 
capital, including stocks or property) allows members of the culture of wealth to exert 
influence over cultural, educational, and other institutions. Debra E. Blum explains that 
“the trend toward more donor control” highlights legal contracts and “specific language 
about exactly how the gift will be spent” (n. pag.). Members of the culture of wealth 
have the ability to dictate how their money gets used even in the process of giving for 
social improvement. Admittedly, “more donor control raises tricky questions about 
money and influence,” yet few charities or foundations would risk “offending benefactors 
they rely on” (Blum n. pag.). While members of the culture of wealth are empowered by
philanthropy, members of the cultures of the middle class and persistence are effectively excluded from influencing or shaping the development and progress of cultural, educational, and other institutions. The practice of high-end philanthropy allows members of the culture of wealth to increase their social distinction and exert economic, social, and cultural power over others.

Economic power also connects members of the culture of wealth to political power. The members of the culture of wealth build, shape, and reinforce the spaces/places where politics happen, making access to and familiarity with political parties, activities, and persons assumed within the culture of wealth.

A rich man [...] will find it relatively easy to get into the higher councils of a political party, or into some branch of government. He can also exert an influence on political life in other ways: by controlling media of communication, by making acquaintances in the higher circles of politics, by taking a prominent part in the activities of pressure groups and advisory bodies of one kind or another. A poor man has none of these advantages: he has no relationships with influential people.

(Bottomore 96)

Political activities, in general, are much more common among members of the culture of wealth. While members of the cultures of the middle class and persistence may vote, they tend not to play roles that influence the choices of political candidates, platforms, and legislative actions.

Certainly, members of the culture of wealth depend on the cooperation of the members of the cultures of the middle class and persistence to maintain and stabilize their position. Physical, geographical separation from other class-based cultures, as well as "money[,] draw[] a veil over the social relationships that provide the context for"
privilege (Hobgood 96). The culture of wealth can be summarized as “a clearly demarcated social group which has in its possession a large part of the property of society and receives a disproportionately large share of the national income, and which has created on the basis of these economic advantages a distinctive culture and way of life” (Bottomore 27). Beyond sheer economic advantages, members of the culture of wealth have power: “the economic, political, and cultural power enjoyed by elites enables them to exercise disproportionate influence in such sectors as business, government, academia, media, and religion” (Hobgood 138-139).

In considering the fiction of Cather, the female characters, positioned in the culture of wealth, match up to the markers of the elite—though Thea Kronborg is born into a middle class family, her path to artishtood takes her into the culture of wealth. Her relationships with Doctor Archie and Fred Ottenburg provide social and economic connections, and toward the end of the novel, Thea demonstrates her capital-enhanced status which allows her to choose whether or not to work. Like Thea, Kitty Ayrshire is firmly located in the culture of wealth; she is highly mobile, able to dominate space, and exploits her social connections to ensure that she will not miss the train.

In examining the cultures of persistence, the middle class, and wealth, keep in mind that my discussion refers to groups in the United States, and this discussion is intended to refer to the values expressed in these cultural groups in order to produce definitions of power that are culturally shaped by specific groups.

The Culture of Wealth in Latin America

Since the previous explanations regarding the cultures of persistence, the middle class, and of wealth refer directly to the United States, let me make a transition here to
discuss briefly the culture of wealth in Latin America, and as specifically as possible, the culture of wealth in Colombia.

"Latin America is the region with the greatest income inequality in the world. It is the region where the richest 5 percent of the population concentrate the highest proportion of resources (more than 26% of total income on average), and where the poorest 30 percent receive the lowest proportion (less than 8% on average)” (Hausman and Székely 261). The gap between the haves and the have-nots in Latin America is much greater than in the United States, and understanding the values of these groups is a complex matter. However, Ricardo Hausman and Miguel Székely argue that “when one looks at the personal characteristics of the rich and poor, there are three key variables that make the difference: fertility, female participation [in the labor market], and education” (260). These variables roughly reflect sets of values corresponding to the cultures of persistence and wealth.

In the Latin American culture of persistence, married couples make an investment in the future with higher fertility (more children), since the children could eventually work and provide income for the household (Hausman and Székely 266). In low income households, children are valued as future resources. The variable of female participation in the labor market highlights the radical differences between the experiences of women and men in Latin America. Hausman and Székely suggest that women are excluded from the labor market by cultural and familial pressures, but are often required to enter the labor market, for substantially lower income, as a way of supporting an unemployed, ill or injured spouse, or simply as a way to make ends meet. Women’s labor is far more valuable in the home in low income households, and the extremely low wages available to women in both the informal and formal labor markets keep many women from
pursuing waged work. Finally, education (measured in years) was viewed as a luxury. Since children are expected to make an economic contribution to the household as soon as possible, school attendance remains limited, especially for girls. The values expressed in the culture of persistence, as indicated through Hausman and Székely's variables, include the valuing of children as economic resources, the exclusion of women from the labor market through cultural pressures and low wages, and the view of education as a luxury.

In contrast, lower fertility (fewer children) was the norm in the culture of wealth; "the rich live in much smaller families" (Hausman and Székely 262). In upper income households, women were viewed more as social or political assets than merely as assets for reproduction and housekeeping. In addition, women were much more likely to participate in the labor market; in fact, the information for Colombia indicates that in the top ten percent of income levels, over 52 percent of the women in these upper income households participated in the labor market (Hausman and Székely 270). In contrast, for the bottom thirty percent of income levels, only 27 percent of women in these lower income level households participated in the labor force (Hausman and Székely 270). Participation in the labor market by upper income women, according to Hausman and Székely, suggests that these women have choices about how and where to spend their time, especially since they have fewer children and are more likely to have other resources—"a network of support"—allowing them better access to the formal labor market (273). In the upper income households, education for both boys and girls is higher, though Hausman and Székely point out that access to education depends on the country and age (276). Logically, "there is a circular relation between fertility and education attainment of the new generation," meaning that the more education a woman
has, the fewer children she is likely to have, and the more education her children are likely to have (Hausman and Székely 276). The values expressed in the culture of wealth, then, include the valuing of women as social and political resources, choices available to women of upper income households regarding working or staying at home, and somewhat better access to education for girls and young women.

Rosemary Thorp offers an understanding of the political environment in Colombia that also provides insight into the values of the culture of wealth. Thorp’s study of Latin America’s economic history explains some of the forces that create and recreate the inequality in Latin America. While “the strong elements of institutional development and political coherence” give Colombia some economic stability, these elements are not brought about through a fair and accessible political structure (Thorp 257). During the twentieth century and into the 1980s,

Colombia had developed its own distinctive and unusual set of rules. It was a tacit system, which in dualistic fashion allowed for coexistence of competent and honest professional macro management at the top, with corruption and violence lower down, especially in regions where old-style party barons often ruled. The coexistence was helped by the political pact known as the National Front, which from 1958 on guaranteed the alternation of the two principal parties in power for 16 years. The second element of Colombia’s duality was the way an elite-dominated system allowed enough social control for moderate growth, and for unequal income distribution to be compatible with formal democracy. (Thorp 257)

The appearance of political freedom or “formal democracy” provides a useful cover for the political and social reality of ongoing violence, social control, and institutionalized
inequality. Thorp suggests that the “elite-dominated system” reinforces itself through active defense of its boundaries (257). Considering Thorp’s analysis, in conjunction with the socio-political reality described in García Márquez’s writing, it seems relatively safe to say that the culture of wealth in Colombia places a high value on financial, political, and social connections which must be maintained.

In examining the writing of García Márquez, the female characters, positioned in the culture of wealth, match the experiences of the women in upper income households described by Hausman and Székely’s analysis. Both Leticia Nazareno and Nena Daconte have access to education—Nazareno in the convent, and Nena in Switzerland. Both women have only one child, though Nena does not live long enough to bring her child to term. Both women have access to more than adequate resources, so neither of them faces pressure to participate in the labor market; however, both women have the education to be able to do so. In addition, both Nazareno and Daconte actively exploit the political and social connections available to them, as explained the analysis of Chapter Three.

Power in Context

Though a literary text does not provide a complete view of a culture, a literary text can offer a “still” rather than moving picture. In other words, literary texts fix or “freeze” characters and cultures for a view of a particular culture at a particular time, while operating in a particular space. This “stillness” does not mean that characters or places are static, but instead that texts create boundaries that make manageable an analysis of characters, places, and the cultures in which they operate. That said, using the differences between class-constructed cultural values and attitudes becomes an analytic strategy for identifying member of a specific culture and evaluating whether or not they
access and wield power. In her argument against the distributive paradigm of justice, Iris Marion Young explains that “[d]isplacing the distributive paradigm [of social justice] in favor of a wider, process oriented understanding of society, which focuses on power, decisionmaking structures, and so on, likewise shifts the imagination to different assumptions about human beings” (37). Examining demonstrations of power in literary works provides the opportunity for better understanding of the experiences of members of other cultures. In addition, expressions of power can be understood as cultural expressions, functioning as messages about shared values, attitudes, and behaviors. The meaning of “power” in a particular class-based culture has greater implications when understood in the context of social justice. Behaviors which may be culturally sanctioned expressions of power in one class-based culture may be misunderstood, devalued or criminalized by the members of another class-based culture. Recognizing that an expression of power relies on a cultural context creates a broader definition of power. As Young suggests, developing “[d]ifferent assumptions about human beings” and their expressions of power opens a path for the re-evaluation of those who have been devalued, and a better understanding of human beings and their capabilities (37). The process of re-valuing human beings also potentially leads toward a wider acceptance of human lives and choices, and of experiences as represented in literary works. Finding a way to “assume the equal moral worth of all persons” becomes possible after studying characters in the context of the values, beliefs, and behaviors most valued within their culture (Young 37). Discovering “moral worth” in literary characters also becomes a moment where readers can rediscover moral worth in other human beings, regardless of differences.
Along with the opportunity for re-evaluating characters, the differences between class-constructed values provide criteria for judging expressions of power, and how that power is accessed and demonstrated in particular spaces/places/locations. A character functioning within the class-constructed cultural values will have better opportunities for accessing all or most of the other resources available within that culture's knowledge base. However, a character without knowledge of the class-constructed cultural values will have great difficulty accessing the other resources within that culture, and may be at risk for becoming an outcast, even if she does not have the ability or means to leave. Payne stresses that "[k]nowledge of hidden rules is crucial to whatever class the individual wishes to live" (18). Recognizing the unspoken rules that function within a group represents the most valuable resources because knowledge of such rules allows an individual to establish relationships and participate fully in all aspects of the culture. The shared cultural values that define the members of the group, providing identity, also create boundaries for understanding the difference between who belongs (insiders) and who does not (outsiders). Without a working understanding of the hidden rules or cues that organize a particular culture, a character will have great difficulty fitting in, building relationships, and finding stability. Without an understanding of cultural expectations, an individual may be subject to cultural failure with little or no recognition or understanding of her cultural ignorance.

To create a class-constructed definition of power, I will turn to the concept of resources. Recognizing various kinds of resources creates a sense of who has access to resources and who is denied access to resources. The various kinds of resources and their use allows an assessment of how female characters access, establish, and demonstrate power. Payne groups resources into eight areas: financial, emotional, mental, spiritual,
physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of hidden rules (16). The quantity and quality of resources differs between classes, yet examining the eight areas of resources creates a more detailed picture of the culturally constructed attitudes and values that serve to distinguish the members of one class from another.⁸ Resources connect directly to the question of geographical access to certain kinds of spaces and places. Access to some spaces and places allows some of the female characters analyzed in this analysis to demonstrate power, while in other cases, spaces and places prevent characters from demonstrating power. As explained earlier, knowledge of hidden rules represents a valuable resource that an individual needs in order to successfully employ all of the other resources in a particular class. Unspoken, unwritten “rules exist in poverty, in [the] middle class, and in wealth, as well as in ethnic groups and other units of people. Hidden rules are about the salient, unspoken understandings that cue the members of the group that this individual does or does not fit,” providing a statement about who belongs to the group and who does not (Payne 18). Ignorance of or refusal to acknowledge the hidden rules puts an individual at risk for being misunderstood, subject to punishment or violence, or absolute exclusion.

Creating a culturally-based definition of power depends on recognizing which resources an individual has access to and the ways in which that individual uses her resources in conjunction. The most powerful individuals in any particular class culture are those who have the most complete knowledge of the hidden rules and the best abilities for using those rules, along with other resources, to succeed in accordance with the values of a particular culture. Each class culture defines success in its own unique way. Recall, then, that the key term for understanding the culture of poverty is survival, while the middle class most values consumption, and the culture of wealth requires social
distinction. Therefore, the most powerful members of the culture of persistence are the most efficient, resourceful survivors. In the culture of the middle class, power belongs to those who are most effective at consumption. In the culture of wealth, the most powerful individuals are those who are most effective at fostering and maintaining their financial, political, and social connections.

With these definitions of power in place, the dissertation explicates the demonstrations of power as expressed by female characters in the texts, as those demonstrations of power happen in specific spaces/places defined by scale and cultural values. Recognizing power does not depend solely on physical, emotional, or economic factors, because power is defined by the successful employment of the resources available to an individual, especially her knowledge of the hidden rules and cues of the class culture. The overall goal of the analysis is to show the female characters accessing and wielding power in specific spaces/places, along with the significance of such power in the texts. The female characters to be discussed demonstrate agency, state expressions of power, and use their knowledges of their respective cultures to their advantage. By basing a definition of power in class culture, the power used by female characters becomes more apparent. Moreover, characters can be evaluated based on the standards, values, and expectations of their own class culture(s).

In Chapter Two, I will examine two works by Willa Cather—the novel *The Song of the Lark*, and the short story “A Gold Slipper.” Discussion of *Song* will focus on Thea Kronborg’s ability to access power in her progressive movement from small town girl to adult artist. Though endowed with a strong powerful body, Thea also accesses and wields power in Moonstone, Chicago, and in her urban apartment/enclave. In moving within and through these spaces, Thea accesses power by moving from a space of
possibility (created in Moonstone), to a space of action (the city of Chicago), and finding respite from the demands of her life as artist in the urban apartment/enclave that functions to make room for her social life. The analysis of “A Gold Slipper” demonstrates how Kitty Ayrshire accesses and wields power by entering and exiting spaces at will, dominating her audience and Marshall McKann in the space of the stage, a taxi cab, and a train berth. These works by Cather were chosen since both feature powerful women who engage in Cather’s ideal occupation—that of artist.

In Chapter Three, I will analyze two works by Gabriel García Márquez—the novel *Autumn of the Patriarch*, and the short story, “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow” from the collection of stories titled *Strange Pilgrims*. Discussion of *Autumn* will focus on the General’s (the Patriarch of the title) kidnapped, concubine-become-wife, Leticia Nazareno, who, while moving through geographical scales from kidnapping victim to concubine to wife to public figure, is subject to various forms of imprisonment, replicated on several scales. Despite her imprisonment, Nazareno does demonstrate power in her isolation from the community at large. In the end, she is destroyed, and I will argue that she is destroyed because she lacks a role model for showing her how to use her power. An examination of “Trail” will explain the seemingly inexplicable death of Nena Daconte, who bleeds to death while on her honeymoon with her new husband, Billy de Ávila Sánchez. Daconte’s destruction highlights her symbolic role as representative of Latin American identity, suggesting García Márquez’s larger purpose in the story: the preservation of Latin American identity. *Autumn* was chosen for analysis, since there is very little critical discussion on Leticia Nazareno.

In Chapter Four, I will discuss two works by Dorothy Allison—the novel *Bastard Out of Carolina*, and the short story “I’m Working on My Charm” from the collection titled
Trash. Focusing on Anney Boatwright and her daughter, Ruth Anne “Bone” Boatwright, the analysis explains how both characters represent powerful women who use their knowledge of the hidden rules of the culture of poverty to access and wield their own power. Anney and Bone, despite emotional, mental, physical, and sexual abuse, are both successful survivors, exerting power in the scales of the body, the home, the community, and the region. The analysis of “Charm” looks at the narrator’s acting and performance skills and how she uses those skills for economic and social benefit in the work community of a lunch counter and the social community of a party. The novel was chosen for analysis to contribute a geographically oriented discussion about space/place rather than relying on the simplistic idea of the novel as a Southern text. “Charm” was chosen for analysis since only one or two critics have written about Allison’s short fiction.

Endnotes

1 Not all of the characters examined in the dissertation have mobility; Willa Cather’s characters in particular, have the ability to overcome the friction of distance with ease. In contrast, Gabriel García Márquez designs characters who have power in some spaces, but in overcoming the friction of distance through travel or entering other spaces become vulnerable and less able to wield power. Dorothy Allison’s characters access and wield power through their knowledge of the culture of persistence, even though they have limited access to the resources that foster mobility.

2 Smith offers one of many potential scales that might be employed in literary analysis; geographers can choose to define scales to suit their own purposes. In a similar manner, various microgeographies or macrogeographies can be defined. Since several of the
feminist geographers employ Smith's scales (or a similar structure), my discussion will follow this critical lead.

3 While Marxist critics conceive of "class as a political or historical entity, my discussion intends to posit class as a socio-geographical phenomenon.

4 In addition, Hobgood acknowledges that "[s]ocialization into the class system is done through multiple institutions, including the family, the state, education, and the media" (81).

5 As Joseph Nocera suggests in A Piece of the Action: How the Middle Class Joined the Money Class, financial and cultural changes in the twentieth century lead members of the middle class to become investors and consumers of financial products and services. "Shopping for investments has become our habit and our responsibility, our burden and our thrill. It is an activity that has insinuated itself into the rhythms of middle-class life" (Nocera 9). Nocera details the rise of the credit card, the rise of the informed consumer, the rise of financial literacy, and the increasing sense of responsibility that members of the middle class take over their financial lives. Nocera's discussion outlines "a history of one such enormous change in American life: the astonishing transformation of the financial habits of the middle class" (10). Though the title of the book suggests that rising financial independence allows the middle class to "join" the money class or the culture of wealth (to be described in the next section), his assertion is only partially correct. Even though members of the middle class move away from compulsive saving and toward the use of credit and investments, they do not gain access to the culture of wealth through the changes in the way money is manages or used. Furthermore, members of the culture of the middle class do not have access to financial resources.
which will allow them to stop working entirely. As has been explained, the culture of the middle class is more complex than economic status.

6 Middle class philanthropy also functions as a form of consumerism, as these donations are made primarily for emotional reasons. Unlike the wealthy, the middle class cannot expect significant tax relief for their donations. In the culture of the middle class, philanthropy functions as an alternate form of consumerism in that the act of giving provides emotional goods, rather than financial rewards. The practice of middle class philanthropy provides two emotional benefits. First, the financial ability to give to others confirms the ideology held by members of the middle class: they remain different from those who are “less fortunate.” Giving functions as a way to reaffirm separation between the middle class and the culture of persistence. As a demonstration of economic power, middle class philanthropy also bolsters self-esteem by allowing members of the middle class to discard used or useless items in order to purchase new ones, continuing the cycle of consumption.

7 As a complement to the consumerism practiced in the culture of the middle class, economist John Kenneth Galbraith describes “the ethos of contentment and [...] highly motivated resistance to change and reform” that marks the members of the culture (12). Galbraith’s book, The Culture of Contentment, like Ehrenreich’s Fear of Falling, connects the value of achievement to the sense of contentment expressed by the majority in the culture of the middle class. The desire for achievement is demonstrated by an attitude of “continuing personal aspiration[...] Doing well, many wish to do better” with “self-regard...[as] the dominant, indeed the controlling, mood of the contented majority” (Galbraith 16, 17). The culture of the middle class deeply desires the continuing status
quo, rejecting change as threatening to the “deserved” practice of consumerism and the ability to maintain that practice in the future.

Financial resources have significant value; however, Payne indicates that financial resources “do not explain the differences in the success with which individuals leave poverty nor the reasons that many stay in poverty. The ability to leave poverty is more dependent upon other resources than it is upon financial resources” [emphasis added] (16-17). Emotional resources are represented by the ways in which an individual responds to her/his environment “without engaging in self-destructive behavior” (Payne 16). Emotional resources are internal and extremely valuable, since “they allow the individual not to return to old habit patterns” and more easily adapt to new ways of thinking and being (Payne 17). Mental resources include “the ability to process information and use it in daily living. If an individual can read, write, and compute, he/she has a decided advantage” (Payne 17). Spiritual resources are closely related to mental resources, with similar value, since spiritual beliefs become “a powerful resource because the individual does not see him/herself as hopeless and useless, but rather as capable and having worth and value” (Payne 17). Having physical resources offers a distinct advantage, since independence and self-sufficiency are difficult to attain otherwise. Access to a support system of others “available and who will help are [valuable] resources” (Payne 17). Being able to seek help from others represents an especially important area of resources, since solving problems, handling challenges, and surviving crises, may depend on access to the knowledge and expertise of others. Relationships and role models as resources may be the most significant kind of resource for succeeding within a particular class—“[t]he question is the extent to which the role
model is nurturing or appropriate [...] It is largely from role models that the person learns how to live life emotionally” (Payne 18).
CHAPTER TWO

THEA KRONBORG AND KITTY AYRSHIRE

Born 7 December 1873, in Back Creek Valley, Virginia, Willa Siebert Cather is among the most important writers of the early twentieth century. From Virginia, she moved with her family to Red Cloud, Nebraska in 1882. Nebraska proves to be important in shaping Cather as a writer and person, though after her graduation from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in 1895, she moved to Pittsburgh, and later to New York City, returning to Nebraska for visits to her friends and family only occasionally. Her friend Isabelle McClung introduced her to the artistic and cultural world of Pittsburgh, and the two women traveled and lived together. Cather later lived and worked with journalist Edith Lewis. Cather’s work includes reviews of operas, books, and plays, as well as poetry, essays, short stories, and twelve novels. Her first novel, Alexander’s Bridge is published in 1912; The Song of the Lark is published in 1915. Youth and the Bright Medusa, including “A Gold Slipper” and the well-known story “Paul’s Case,” is published in 1920. Cather received the Pulitzer Prize for One of Our Own in 1922. Cather died 24 April 1947, at the age of 73.

In The Song of the Lark (1915) and “A Gold Slipper,” (1920) Cather creates characters who are powerful women, capable of overcoming the friction of distance (the interference of space itself) between themselves and their goals. These characters are powerful because of their mobility, but also because of their ability to master spaces. The
two parts of this chapter analyze the main characters of the novel and the story, Thea Kronborg and Kitty Ayrshire, who gain access to the career path that Cather considers ideal, regardless of obstacles: the activity of producing art. Thea Kronborg overcomes the friction of distance between her hometown, Moonstone, Colorado, to enter the larger spaces of the world as an artist. Though critics have focused on her attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon, my discussion will examine the spaces of Thea’s body, Moonstone, Chicago, and Thea’s apartment/enclave in order to demonstrate how Thea accesses and wields power in these other spaces. Kitty Ayrshire accesses and wields power by entering and exiting at will. She dominates spaces by claiming the position of superior in the three main spaces of the story: the stage, a taxicab, and a train berth. All of her interactions with the other character in the story, Marshall McKann, are demonstrations of her power. Unlike McKann, Ayrshire enters and exits at will, dominating the spaces she enters. Using the strategies of feminist geography intersected with class-based definitions of power brings into focus the detail and scope of the power accessed and wielded by these characters.

In *The Song of the Lark*, Willa Cather designs a character, Thea Kronborg, who, despite being born and raised in the small town of Moonstone, Colorado succeeds at becoming an internationally known vocal artist. Thea overcomes the friction of distance, or the interference of space itself, between Moonstone and the world, mostly because Cather has designed her as a character endowed with physical, emotional, social, and economic resources, and Thea uses her resources to take full advantage of the relationships that aid in propelling her toward artisthood. Thea’s development as an artist does not follow a linear path, and the novel depicts her growth in detailed stages (especially while she is a young person), while completely omitting any description of
her training outside of the United States in Europe. By omitting discussion of Thea’s vocal training in Europe, Cather to establishes the character and the novel as thoroughly American. Because the novel centers on Thea’s development as an artist, critics have focused almost exclusively on her attic room in the Kronborg house and/or the time she spends in an upper room/cave at Panther Canyon.¹ Admittedly, these spaces are important to Thea’s growth as a person and artist. However, emphasis on the attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon places undue weight on the biographical similarities between Cather and her character, even to the point of ignoring other significant spaces in the novel. Working exclusively with the biographical similarities also obscures the importance of mobility in the novel. Thea’s mobility, her ability to overcome the friction of distance, is a significant marker of her power both as a person and as an artist. Additionally, analyzing the novel exclusively through the attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon relies on a bounded definition of space, meaning that “space” has physically identifiable boundaries around it. Using an alternate definition of space, as set forth by feminist geographer Doreen Massey, provides a means for attending to the other spaces/places that are significant in Thea’s development as an artist and offer other views of her access and wielding of power. My discussion will focus on these other spaces worthy of critical analysis. These other spaces in the novel include Thea’s body, Moonstone, Chicago, and Thea’s urban apartment/enclave. Examining these other spaces not only identifies in detail Thea’s relentless movement toward becoming and being an artist, but also distinguishes Thea as a girl/adolescent/woman who effectively accesses and wields power within those spaces.

Cather’s own critical writing, specifically the essay “The Novel Démeublé,” originally published in the collection Not Under Forty, provides insight into the author’s
perspective on the way writing should shape the spaces in which characters interact. In
the essay, Cather criticizes Balzac, specifically the detailed construction of Paris in his
writing, arguing that "[t]he city he built on paper is already crumbling" ("The Novel
Démeublé" 39). In contrast, Cather offers high praise for Mérimée, Tolstoy, and
Hawthorne, calling special attention to The Scarlet Letter, and Hawthorne's success with
the "twilight melancholy" and "consistent mood" that produce "the material investiture of
the story" ("The Novel Démeublé" 41). Her critical assessment suggests a strong
reaction to the realism prevalent in the literature of the time, or what might be more
accurately categorized by Cather as the hyperrealism of excessive description narrating
information about objects, people, or emotions that are unrelated to the larger meaning of
the novel or story. Cather praises the "reserved, fastidious hand of an artist" ("The Novel
Démeublé" 41). Cather views the production of art as a process of revealing the greater,
more deeply human, and more lasting beauty of an essential idea that is already present.

Cather provides explicit instructions for what a writer should do to avoid the mistake
of realism. First, she calls for the removal of unnecessary details lodged in setting, or to
"throw all the furniture out of the window" (and thus the title of the essay, in English—
The Unfurnished Novel) ("The Novel Démeublé" 42). Second, Cather demands that
writers "leave the scene bare for the play of emotions great and little" ("The Novel
Démeublé" 43). She privileges the human interactions that make up a novel or story over
the description of objects, people, or details that do not foster deeper understanding of the
characters and their conflicts. Cather's urgent rejection of excessive description,
especially in relation to the spaces that characters occupy, seems almost contradictory,
since so many of her novels provide highly detailed descriptions of the places her
characters live in, work in, and move through. The key to understanding Cather's idea of
the unfurnished novel rests in her beliefs regarding the need to pursue art for art’s sake over the production of the lesser novel or story “manufactured to entertain great multitudes of people [and] must be considered exactly like a cheap soap or a cheap perfume” which does not last (“The Novel Démeublé” 36). Cather privileges the lasting, immortal, essential art that can withstand the test of time because the art she views as valuable has the ability to access “the inexplicable presence of the thing not named” (“The Novel Démeublé” 41). For Cather, the spaces characters inhabit are relevant only for their association with the “play of emotions great and little” that are the real matter of art (“The Novel Démeublé” 43).

Patrick J. Sullivan, in “Willa Cather’s Southwest,” argues that “Cather spent a good part of her lifetime loving the character of the Southwest, a land which haunted her imagination” (25). Sullivan analyzes the story “The Enchanted Bluff,” and the novels *The Song of the Lark*, *The Professor’s House*, and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* to describe the progressive employment of the Southwest as a symbolic place that ultimately serves to provide unity, transcendence, and liberation for Cather’s characters. Sullivan indicates that despite Thea’s “personally enriching” experience in the Southwest, “the presence of the Southwest as symbolic landscape is only partially significant” (29). Sullivan fails to acknowledge the articulation of the female in Cather’s description of Panther Canyon, nor does the analysis refer to the spaces within the Canyon that suggest the womb or the similarities between the cave in the Canyon and Thea’s attic room.

Focused on reading the novel through the heterosexual romance between Thea and Fred, Sullivan dismisses the time in the Canyon as only “a fragmentary experience” (30). As mentioned earlier, Sullivan relies on a definition of space/place that relies on physical boundaries.
Leon Edel, in “A Cave of One’s Own,” uses a psychoanalytical and biographical approach to discuss *The Professor’s House*, indicating that the professor’s attic room acts as a protective, isolating room. Cynthia K. Briggs and Susan J. Rosowski acknowledge the similarities between the professor’s home “office” and Thea’s attic room, however both critics reject Edel’s idea that the “cave” functions exclusively as a space of isolation and alienation. Like most critics, Edel uses a definition of space that depends on the physical boundaries of the attic rooms and the biographical similarities between Cather and her character.

Susan J. Rosowski has written extensively about the landscape in Cather’s writing. In “Willa Cather’s Female Landscapes: *The Song of the Lark* and *Lucy Gayheart,*” Rosowski explains that *Song* employs a “metaphoric pattern of developing artistic thought” that indicates artistic growth through “a landscape that mirrors Thea’s developing consciousness” (234). The discussion analyzes Panther Canyon as the space where Thea’s artistic life is imagined, conceived, and brought to life. “From Panther Cañon, Thea carried within herself the seed of artistic life until [...] her role as Sieglinde” that culminates Thea’s struggle to become and be an artist (Rosowski “Female Landscapes” 237). Panther Canyon is an important space in the novel, but the Canyon is also defined as a bounded space. In addition, by looking more closely at Thea’s body, we can see that her artistic ability and artistic life originates much earlier in the novel than Rosowski suggests. From the first descriptions of Thea, Cather seeds her with artistic talent, power, and other positive qualities, giving her the mental, emotional, and physical resources or access to the resources she needs to become an artist—including the ability to overcome the friction of distance.
In “Willa Cather and the Fatality of Place: O Pioneers!, My Ántonia, and A Lost Lady,” Rosowski analyzes how Cather “could make the land her hero” (81). To negotiate a relationship between geography and literature, Rosowski illustrates the “trilogy of place” functioning in the three novels. O Pioneers! tells “a fairy tale,” while the other novels correspond to “incarnation” and “tragic fall” (Rosowski “Fatality of Place” 81). In relation to The Song of the Lark, the article explains that Cather’s early work (specifically her early stories) suggest that “Cather began by thinking of geography as an implacable and malevolent fate” (Rosowski “Fatality of Place” 82). Location interferes with attaining access to the cultural activities associated with art and its production. For Cather, “Nebraska was an inescapable fact of her creative experience, yet it was alien to the ‘kingdom of art’ she desperately wanted to enter (Rosowski “Fatality of Place” 82). Thea Kronborg, born and raised in Moonstone, Colorado, faces a similar alienation. The problem faced by Cather and her characters in the early stories is the friction of distance—the unavoidable and always gendered challenge of getting from one place to another, of having mobility, and having access to the resources (physical, economic, social, or other) that can help one to enter other spaces. For Thea, the economic resources provided by Ray Kennedy’s will, and the unyielding social support of Doctor Archie, both function to initiate Thea’s move to Chicago—away from Moonstone. Again, this argument depends on a bounded definition of space, and a reliance on the biographical similarities between Cather and Thea. Though Rosowski mentions “the kingdom of art,” she does not explore that kingdom as a space, nor the significance of accessing and wielding power in that space.

Cynthia K. Briggs, in “Insulated Isolation: Willa Cather’s Room With a View,” argues that Cather “creates for them [her characters] personal sanctuaries that strengthen
their spirits and enable them to better cope with their world" (159). By emphasizing Thea's attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon, Briggs explains that the spaces serve a specific purpose, functioning as “sacred space, with its insulated view of the world, nourishes the characters, as a parish should, strengthening them for their sojourn in the world” (160). Briggs argues for attention to the nuances of space in Cather's work, but focuses attention exclusively on Thea's attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon and does not analyze other spaces in the novel. Like Sullivan, Edel, and Rosowski, Briggs depends on a view of space that depends on physical boundaries, ignoring other crucial spaces in *Song*.

Instead of relying on bounded space, Judith Fryer, in *Felicitous Space: The Imaginative Structures of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather*, analyzes Cather's writing using the concept of “felicitous space,” described by Gaston Bachelard. Working through Bachelard's concept, Fryer can define “felicitous space” in direct relation to Cather: “'felicitous space' is not only the space that concentrates being within limits that protect; felicitous also is the space that is vast,” (emphasis in original) (301). Fryer analyzes Thea's physical, bodily interactions with(in) the attic room, the cave at Panther Canyon, and the Southwest as a general, imaginative setting. In these spaces, Fryer explains, Thea's artistic desire is nurtured and the “time in the cave is a period of incubation” (297). While Fryer discusses Thea's body in relation to spaces, her analysis does not consider Thea's body a space in itself. Much like the other critics discussed, Fryer emphasizes the attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon, without discussing the other spaces in *Song*. In addition, Fryer's use of Bachelard makes the argument vulnerable to the critiques of feminist geographers like Gillian Rose who reject Bachelard's sexist notions that connect “felicitous” human spaces to his highly gendered
ideas of home and the meaning of home as an inevitably nurturing space. Fryer’s book expands on her analysis published as “Desert, Rock, Shelter, Legend: Willa Cather’s Novels of the Southwest” published in *The Desert is No Lady: Southwestern Landscapes in Women’s Writing and Art*. Aiming for an alternative definition of space allows Fryer to more effectively analyze Cather’s work using geographical strategies; however, Fryer remains attached to the spaces of the attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon without considering the import of any other spaces in the novel.

In order to move away from the biographical similarities between Cather and Thea, and to explore other important spaces in the novel, the following analysis employs a definition of space that refuses a reliance on physical boundaries and focuses purposefully on female power. According to Doreen Massey, spaces can be analyzed without focusing on boundaries or locations defined by ideas like the West, a closed door, or lines drawn on a map. Instead, Massey suggests that “what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history, but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus” (“Power-geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place” 66). In other words, place can be defined through the social relations that take place in a locality. To reinforce her idea, Massey de-emphasizes the concept of boundaries for defining places: “Instead then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (“Power-geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place” 66). In looking at the other spaces of the novel defined by the occurrences of these “constellations of relations” and “articulated moments” provides further illumination of the power Thea accesses and wields in her process of becoming an artist. Massey’s definition of place will apply in understanding the other spaces in the novel; as

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listed earlier, these spaces will include Thea's body, Moonstone, Chicago, and Thea's urban apartment/enclave. The scales working in the following analysis are the body, the community, and the urban—but keep in mind that scaling is only a small part of understanding the spaces of the novel which are first and foremost to be defined through articulated moments that reveal Thea's access to and wielding of power.

To accomplish the task of becoming an artist, Thea will need to have significant resources. First, she needs to have physical resources—a strong body, mobility, and the physical ability to develop and use her talent. Thea also needs to have emotional or inner resources to succeed at her tasks; she must make active choices and steps that move her toward her goal. She must also put herself and her goals before others. Most significantly, in order to take risks, Thea needs to have sustainable inner, emotional resources. Along with her inner resources, Thea must have social resources; she needs to have other people who will assist and support her to overcome the friction of distance between where she is (Moonstone) and where she desires to be (in the spaces where the production of art is valued). Finally, Thea needs to have economic resources to support both mobility and her artistic improvement. Cather provides her character with all of these resources and gives Thea the ability to use her resources in conjunction with each other. Thea's concurrence of resources contributes to her personal and artistic power in the spaces she lives in, works in, and moves through. At the same time, Thea's initial resources as a member of the middle class family will foster her movement toward artisthood and the culture of wealth by establishing in her the will to pursue her own independence and self-fulfillment.

As a space, Thea's body allows her to consistently demonstrate and access power in and with her body with her strength, vitality, and energy. The novel opens with Thea's
illness, and the details of Doctor Archie’s careful ministrations allows Cather to show Thea’s body to the reader, and call immediate attention to her physical qualities, despite her illness, as well as to note her difference. Doctor Archie “thought to himself what a beautiful think a little girl’s body was—like a flower. It was so neatly and delicately fashioned, so soft, and so milky white” (Song 9). Observing Thea through Doctor Archie’s eyes suggests that she is a beautiful child. The doctor goes on to note Thea’s “hands, so litGe and hot, so clever, too” (Song 9). Cather provides a close view of Thea, at age eleven, in order to endow her with a set of physical characteristics that establish her body as a locus for power. Through Doctor Archie’s eyes, Cather presents Thea as beautiful, but beauty is only one of Thea’s distinguishing physical characteristics. She has qualities that make her different from other children, though Doctor Archie only hints at these, ruminating over his young patient: “No, he couldn’t say that it [Thea’s head] was different from any other child’s head, though he believed that there was something very different about her” (Song 9). Doctor Archie’s close examination of Thea, and his recognition of her difference, provides an introduction to the main character of the novel, while also emphasizing Thea’s qualities as expressed through her body. Though the nature of her difference remains to be seen, Thea, presented as a unique child, has already been distinguished from the rest of her family. As a beginning, Cather sets Thea’s power (as an artist-to-be) in the character’s physical body.

Thea does recover from her illness, and when Doctor Archie stops by to check on her, he refers to their shared “code of winks and grimaces” as well as Thea’s gratitude for the grapes he brings, expressed in how she “snapped her eyes at him in a special way which he understood” (Song 12). Thea’s body, and specifically her face and back, function as communicative tools, which foreshadow some of her potential artistic ability she will
develop as a pianist and singer. Her facial communications with Doctor Archie match the similar manner in which she will way use her back in learning to sing and singing. Her back proves to be the most expressive part of Thea’s body. Both her music teacher Madison Bowers and Fred Ottenburg notice the communicative abilities of Thea’s back, and her spine literally and figuratively allows her to overcome obstacles and people interfering with her journey toward artisthood. Her back also propels her forward toward the people who can and will support her. Though “unwillingly,” Bowers is forced to acknowledge that Thea’s “whole back seemed plastic, seemed to be moulding itself to the galloping rhythm of the song” (Song 243). Bowers is forced to recognize that Thea’s body expresses her complete commitment to artisthood. Fred is keenly aware of Thea’s physical strength and ability to communicate with her body; when they leave the Nathanmeyer’s to get something to eat, “Fred noticed for the hundredth time how vehemently her body proclaimed her state of feeling” (Song 260). Thea’s “extraordinarily vocal” back even intimidates the waiters in the restaurant (Song 261). Expressing herself through her back, Thea possesses and demonstrates physical resources that give her power in the process of becoming an artist.

Aside from communicating, Thea’s body expresses physical vitality and robustness—she walks about town, spends hours at the piano, and grows rapidly. Rosowski comments that “Thea Kronborg was remarkably active—climbing, waking stretching, bathing. She felt comfortable with her body, and she affirmed her developing womanliness as specifically and positively physical” (“Writing Against Silence” 70). In addition to her vigor, Thea, as a future artist, has a sensitivity about her that separates her from the other children. Cather demonstrates this physical sensitivity through Thea’s body: “Their winter underwear [harsh flannel] was a trial to all the children, but it was

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bitterest to Thea because she happened to have the most sensitive skin” (Song 16). Even as a young child, Thea is capable of strong feelings, in contact with experiences through her body; her physical sensitivity reflects her power to feel and to experience sensations deeply.

While Thea is physically strong and robust as a child, her body continues to be a source of power as she develops and becomes an artist. Once she has made the transition from pianist to singer, Thea becomes aware of her body as a valuable tool for producing song and attaining artisthood. When Fred Ottenburg suggests that Thea sing for the Nathanmeyers, she can clearly make use of the money, but Thea does not own “the right clothes for that sort of thing” (Song 245). The opportunity to sing for the Nathanmeyers indicates the transition Thea is making from the culture of the middle class to the culture of wealth. Her performance will offer income, but more significantly offers the establishment of social connections. The social connections of the Nathanmeyers create a wealthy audience for Thea, giving her the position of new talent in a social circle that has the money and power to seek out the best of everything. Eventually, the social connections will benefit both parties, enhancing the social worth of the couple and Thea. At this point, Thea is still in transition, and she expresses awareness of the cultural expectations that will require her to dress a certain way to fit into another group. She needs some help to access the appropriate garments that will give her access to the cultural group who can appreciate her talents without viewing Thea as an outsider to the group. Thea wants to be viewed as an artist, not as a novel peasant girl. Fred has already planned how to help her, explaining that Mrs. Nathanmeyer, with her “troop of daughters” can willingly offer a dress that will allow Thea to enter, on nearly equal terms, Chicago’s upper class culture. Thea can enter the culture of wealth with a dress that is
"something nice, blue or yellow, and properly cut" (Song 245). Even while wearing the gown, Thea maintains the physical power already described in her body. In observing Thea, Mrs. Nathanmeyer “caught the characteristic things at once: the free, strong walk, the calm carriage of the head, the milky whiteness of the girl’s arms and shoulders” (Song 250). Thea remains physically strong, solid, and refuses to succumb to shyness with the Nathanmeyers, and her connection with Mr. Nathanmeyer leads Mrs. Nathanmeyer to comment that Thea “will always get on better with men” (Song 250). This observation indicates Thea’s ability to build with relationships with men who support her process of becoming an artist. Thea’s body is destined for the artistic, intellectual, emotional, and physical challenges of producing art. As Thea sings for the Nathanmeyers, in her informal audition, she expresses herself well and charms the wealthy couple. To prepare for singing, Thea “laughed and drew herself out of her corsets, threw her shoulders high and let them drop again. She had never sung in a low dress before, and she found it comfortable” (Song 251-252). Once she obtains the proper clothing, Thea’s artistic ability is enhanced through the physical strength of her body. In this sense, Thea is like an athlete who needs appropriate clothing to foster improved performance. The gown makes all the difference in Thea’s transition from singing student to public performer, enhancing Thea’s physical attributes and giving her the “right clothes” for meeting the social expectations of those who are members of the culture of wealth. Proper dress facilitates Thea’s entrance into the culture of wealth. Thea also astutely accepts Mrs. Nathanmeyer’s advice to wear “light slippers” and to forgo gloves (Song 252). The choices about clothing, footwear, and gloves reveal Thea’s attention to both the power of her body and the best way to present her body in the spaces she needs to enter.
While spending time at Panther Canyon, Thea enjoys her leisure, and she comes to express her body's power in other ways. She and Fred engage in physical activities together—hiking, riding, throwing rocks, fencing, and having sex. Thea's strong body allows her to enjoy these activities, while also developing her relationship with Fred. However, Cather does not allow the reader to forget that Thea is following the path toward artisthood. In the canyon, Fred "heard a call from the cliff far above him. Looking up, he saw Thea standing on the edge of a projecting crag" (Song 287). This image depicts Thea as she is and as she will become, physically raised up and in the position of superior as producer of art. Fred also expresses awareness of Thea's physical strength and the mastery of space she will need to conquer the friction of distance as well as audiences. He reflects on Thea's performance at the Nathanmeyers: "Fred recalled the brilliant figure at Mrs. Nathanmeyer's. Thea was one of those people who emerge, unexpectedly, larger than we are accustomed to see them. Even at this distance one got the impression of muscular energy and audacity—a kind of brilliancy of motion—of a personality that carried across big spaces and expanded among big things" (Song 287). He acknowledges the power of Thea's body and her burgeoning personality. In addition, her physical strength also allows Thea to exit the canyon during the violent rainstorm, despite the slippery and dangerous path (Song 292-294). In juxtaposing Thea and Fred, Cather highlights the physical strength, agility, flexibility, and power of Thea's body. Beyond the physical activities, the comparisons between Thea and Fred show their similarities, even to the point of implying that Thea is physically equal to, or nearly equal to, Fred. On the scale of the body, Thea claims and expresses power, and her bodily power imparts the ability to overcome the friction of distance (or the obstacle of space
between where she is and where she wants to be) and resist all interference with her journey toward artisthood.

As Thea attains success as an artist, Cather depicts achievement expressed through Thea’s body. The magnificent performance of Sieglinde reflects the power of Thea’s artistic abilities located in and channeled through her body. Talent, years of long practice and training, patience and effort all work in conjunction to produce art, and the experience of producing art is expressed in physical sensations and physical connections: “What she had so often tried to reach lay under her hand. She had only to touch an idea to make it live” (Song 410). Thea reaches for what she wants, touches the ideas she wants to express; producing art is a bodily, physical experience that requires, as her piano teacher Harsanyi explains, “[e]nough voice and talent and beauty, enough physical power” (Song 408). Thea, as the developed artist, wields physical power. Cather describes Thea’s success and ability as reaching full expression through Thea’s body, a space of power:

While she was on the stage she was conscious that every movement was the right movement, that her body was absolutely the instrument of her idea. Not for nothing had she kept it so severely, kept it filled with such energy and fire. All that deep-rooted vitality flowered in her voice, her face, in her very finger-tips. She felt like a tree bursting into bloom. And her voice was as flexible as her body; equal to any demand, capable of every nuance. (emphasis in original) (Song 410)

In full possession of her talent, training, and abilities, Thea wields the power of her voice through her body. In the process of producing art, Thea demonstrates both physical strength and artistic power; her physical vitality, as described in the earliest sections of
the novel, remains one of Thea’s most significant resources throughout her process of becoming an artist. She tells Fred that her knowledge of “the inevitable hardness of human life” is not knowledge of the mind, but “[y]ou have to realize it in your body; deep” (Song 397, 398). Thea wields the power of physical strength that allows her to produce art.

Throughout the novel, Cather depicts Thea as a woman who is in full possession of a powerful, strong, and capable body. As a space, Thea’s body allows her to access and wield power consistently throughout the novel, even as she moves toward, through, into, and out of other spaces. Thea’s body remains a locus of power for her as a woman and as an artist. Though she does face illness from time to time, Thea accesses and wields the power of her body to overcome the friction of distance (or the interference of space itself), to learn to be an artist, and to perform as a successful, consummate artist.

Claiming physical power also gives Thea the ability to exert power in other spaces, including Moonstone, Chicago, and her apartment/enclave.

Thea’s movement in the novel is always toward art and the production of art. To succeed at her process, Thea must negotiate for solitude and for spaces within her community where she can test out or try out her ideas about art and becoming an artist. As part of her process of learning to be an artist and wield her power, Thea moves between solitude and community. From the beginning of the novel, Thea lives by her own set of standards which frequently put her in conflict others around her, including family members and others in the community. Despite such conflicts, Thea’s ability to successfully negotiate her family and community life demonstrates another aspect of her power that reveals the high quality of her emotional and inner resources. In “Writing Against Silences: Female Adolescent Development in the Novels of Willa Cather,”
Susan J. Rosowski points out that Thea possesses “qualities ordinarily reserved for men—fierce independence, ambition, discipline, and hard headedness,” but Thea also sustains relationships, refusing to sacrifice the valuable relationships with others who support her and provide advantages and resources during her journey toward artisthood (63). In “Willa Cather’s Homecomings: A Meeting of Selves,” Cheryl Burgess provides another list of adjectives describing Thea, including “ruddy, strong, independent, ambitious, determined, defiant, inviolable, [and] specially gifted” (52). These many inner resources give Thea the power to protect and foster herself as artist-to-be. In addition, Thea’s inner resources allow her to ignore, and in some cases, resist the communally-defined social boundaries that make up the social groups living in the town of Moonstone. By refusing to acknowledge the boundaries drawn by the human community that intentionally separate and divide groups of people within the town’s boundaries, Thea accesses the relationships that will foster and support her early growth as an artist. She demonstrates power by carefully choosing her relationships and disregarding the messages she is given about the social relationships she is expected to have.

To protect and foster herself as artist-to-be, Thea seeks and exploits solitude. She carts her little brother all over Moonstone; since she is away from the hectic Kronborg household for long periods of time, Thea can engage her own inner thoughts and ideas. Thea also retreats to her attic room and spends whole days alone in the cave at Panther Canyon. Even when she achieves her goal of artisthood, Thea retreats into her bath, locking the door to shut out the world. Thea negotiates her own movement between social experiences and solitude. Initially, moving between community and solitude fosters the process of forming her identity and figuring out who she wants to be; later, Thea engages solitude as part of her self-renewal and self-care. In these myriad spaces of
solitude, Thea reflects, thinks, explores, and renews her understanding of her self. As a young person, Thea fully realizes her artistic power in fleeting moments and only in solitude; much later in the novel, Cather will display Thea at her very best performing in *Sieglinde*. Solitude fosters Thea's inner resources and gives her access to the power of her own mind. As part of her power, Thea negotiates access to solitude independently, even at a young age. Mrs. Kronborg reflects “Thea, from the time she was a little thing, had her own routine” (*Song* 59). In “Willa Cather’s Chosen Family: Fictional Formations and Transformations,” Rosowski explains how Thea benefits from the familial structure created by Mrs. Kronborg. According to Mrs. Kronborg, “the function of the family is to provide basic social, communal order; its responsibility is to leave the private, inner lives of its individuals alone” (Rosowski “Willa Cather’s Chosen Family” 70). Mrs. Kronborg gives her children, especially Thea, the freedom to develop their own inner lives. Thea needs solitude for this activity, and she successfully finds her own space for solitude. Thea demonstrates power by creating and negotiating how and where she spends her time. As part of her power, Thea makes her own choices about using community and solitude to develop who she is and who she will become.

Through the extensive use of detail, Cather repeatedly ensures that readers are made aware of the physical and social boundaries of Moonstone. Within the physical aspects of the community, the boundaries are significant, because the members of the white, middle-to-upper class social community rely on those boundaries to make decisions about who is respectable and respected, and who is not. Associated with these social designations are the boundaries drawn to separate respectable places from places that are not given the benefit of respectability. The communal decisions about respectability are simple enough for a young child to understand; as Cather describes, “they could easily
have indicated the social classifications of Moonstone, since these conformed to certain
topographical boundaries, and every child understood them perfectly" (Song 28). Cather
proceeds to detail Moonstone’s physical geography, locating the main business street in
the middle, dividing the town into west and east. Starting with the west side of town, the
description specifically locates the residences of Doctor Archie to the north and the
Kronborgs to the south, explaining the where the train depot is, where the Methodist
Church is, and where “the best dwellings were built along” Sylvester Street (Song 28).
Cather’s geography allows the reader to firmly locate the Kronborgs in the culture of the
middle class, since they live in a respectable part of town. The description continues on
the east side, further identifying the social difference: “east of Main Street, toward the
deep ravine which, farther south, wound by Mexican Town, lived all the humbler
citizens, the people who voted but did not run for office” (Song 28-29). The description
of the town creates a well-defined map of Moonstone, allowing for the location of all of
the significant characters in the first part of the novel. Cather also reveals Moonstone’s
incomplete development: “The long street which connected Moonstone with the depot
settlement traversed in its course a considerable stretch of rough open country, staked out
in lots, but not built up at all, a weedy hiatus between the town and the railroad” (Song
34). By mapping the boundaries in Moonstone, Cather shows that the population of the
town includes the cultures of persistence, middle class, and wealth. Furthermore, the
mapping of Moonstone serves a more specific purpose in relation to Thea: drawing the
communally designated boundaries that, for the most part, she will ignore. In search of
solitude and spaces away from her family, Thea ignores the social boundaries created by
the community and goes where she pleases, even though she is aware that not everyone
approves of her wanderings or her interest in and familiarity with the people who live in
Mexican Town. By ignoring the boundaries created by others, Thea demonstrates the power of her mobility and her inner resources. She refuses to limit herself to the communally defined boundaries drawn to separate the respectable from that which is excluded from the respectable. Her refusal to capitulate to popular opinion will serve her well as a music student, accompanist, and artist, since she evaluates her abilities and her self based on the criteria of art, not by any criteria decided by others or by public opinion.

In addition to solitude, Thea builds relationships with men outside of her family to create spaces where she can try out her thoughts and reflect on the possibilities for using her talents. Thea’s relationships with her piano instructor Wunsch, Ray Kennedy, and Doctor Archie reflect the building of spaces that articulate her talents and demonstrate her ability to ignore public opinion. As a young person, Thea spends a significant amount of time with adults and gains exposure to adult lives. Wunsch and Thea spend time together at the piano, but they also engage in discussions about music and the meaning behind the music Thea practices and learns. With Ray Kennedy, Thea finds “rest”—Ray offers a release from the intensity of her inner life; Ray also provides Thea with access to spaces outside of her home, including the outskirts of Moonstone and the sand hills. Thea and Doctor Archie spend a great deal of time together having conversations about books and other matters and traveling about Moonstone for visits to Doctor Archie’s patients. By entering into relationships with men outside of her family, Thea accesses an adult world, learning to participate in and wield power in the spaces created through the relationships.

All of these men represent outsiders to the white, middle-to-upper class Moonstone community. In *The Voyage Perilous: Willa Cather’s Romanticism*, Rosowski calls Wunsch (and Thea’s next piano instructor Harsanyi) “individuals at odds with society”
and certainly Doctor Archie, Ray Kennedy, and Spanish Johnny do not fully fit into the Moonstone social community (63). Wunsch’s personal background is a mystery, and his alcoholic fits do not make him a popular member of the community. His unreliability and unknown personal history keep him on the fringes of the Moonstone social community that needs his teaching ability to train girls to play the piano, fitting them for a cultural activity. While playing the piano is an appropriate activity for girls to pursue, the social community of Moonstone has doubts about the value of a grown man having musical ability as his only skill. The middle-to-upper class Moonstone community remains skeptical about Wunsch’s value. Though Doctor Archie and Ray Kennedy are deemed respectable, or at the very least, gain minimal respect because Moonstone needs their labor, both men remain positioned as outsiders to the Moonstone community.

Neither of the men was born in the town of Moonstone, so their experiences in other parts of the country make them questionable to the lifelong members of the Moonstone community. Neither man can completely fit into the Moonstone community—not because of their shortcomings, but instead because of the communally-defined boundaries that exclude them from attaining insider status. By having relationships with outsiders to the socially prescribed middle-to-upper class community, Thea, in addition to entering the adult world, gains access to a wide variety of experiences and world views.

In addition, Thea wields power by resisting these communally-defined boundaries and having long-term relationships with people viewed as outsiders. Her ability to resist social boundaries also prefigures the relatively smooth transition Thea will make from the culture of the middle class to the culture of wealth when she moves to Chicago.

Thea’s relationship with her piano instructor, A. Wunsch, gives her a space for trying out the production of art and acknowledging the reality of her talents. The best example
occurs when Thea goes to Wunsch for her piano lesson on her thirteenth birthday. After her lesson, Thea and Wunsch walk out into Mrs. Kohler's garden; in late June, the garden is beautiful and appealing. Flowers and trees are blooming, and “Mrs. Kohler, who was transplanting pansies, came up with her trowel and told Thea it was lucky to have your birthday when the lindens were in bloom” (Song 68). Birthday, blooming flowers and trees, luck, entrance into her teens: Thea and Wunsch, in their long-standing experience together enter a space where Thea-becoming-artist can be revealed. The trust between girl and man make them comfortable with each other, and in this space, Wunsch puts into words Thea’s desire to be an artist, pushing her farther toward acting on her desires. In discussing a German song, Wunsch speaks about learning and singing. The tone of his voice reflects gentleness and a degree of caution: “his tone was mild, even confidential. ‘There is always a way [to learn]. And if someday you are going to sing, it is necessary to know well the German language” (Song 68). To Wunsch, Thea possesses the ability to be a singer. He puts her thoughts into words, surprising her. “How did Wunsch know that, when the very roses on her wall-paper had never heard it” (Song 68)? Between Thea and Wunsch, in the private, lush garden, a space is created where Thea’s deepest personal desire can be exposed—without threat or risk. Wunsch says “‘if someday’” to leave Thea-becoming-artist enough room to acknowledge her desire and enough space to decide how she will act on this possibility. Thea asks Wunsch “‘But am I going to [sing]’” (Song 68)? His response is “‘That is for you to say’” (Song 68). The responsibility rests on Thea, since she is the only one who can act on her desire. Yet in the space of trust and familiarity established between Thea and Wunsch, the possibility is stated, out in the open. For the first time, in this safe, protected, vital space, in the presence of another person, Thea can acknowledge her abilities and her desire. In this
space, the truth about Thea is spoken; however, she has not yet reached the point in her development where she can resolutely act on her desire to be an artist.

This space also offers Thea an opportunity to demonstrate her power. She has already made a choice about her future, and the protected space gives her the freedom to state her preference. When Wunsch suggests that Thea might be better off married and keeping house, her response demonstrates her choice. With “a clear, laughing look. [She says,] ‘No, I don’t want to do that’” (Song 69). As a young person, Thea has already seen what her mother’s life is like and she makes clear her lack of interest in domestic life, as well as her preference for independence. By stating her choice, Thea demonstrates her ability to make decisions for herself, even with the long-term implications.

After their conversation, Wunsch teaches Thea to sing a German song. They wander in Mrs. Kohler’s garden, practicing, memorizing, remembering, and singing. Thea is learning, moving in the space toward acting on her desire to be an artist. Following the song, Thea leaves the muttering Wunsch to himself. Cather shows how the articulated moment between Wunsch and Thea leaves a big impression on her. Agitated,

[s]he did not go home, but wandered off into the sand dunes, where the prickly pear was in blossom and the green lizards were racing each other in the glittering light. She was shaken by a passionate excitement. She did not altogether understand what Wunsch was talking about; and yet, in a way she knew. She knew, of course, that there was something about her that was different. But it was more like a friendly spirit than like anything that was a part of herself. She brought everything to it, and it answered her; happiness consisted of that backward and forward movement of herself. (Song 72)
In the well-established comfort zone between Thea and Wunsch, Thea-becoming-artist can be acknowledged. Outside of that space, when Thea engages solitude in the sand hills, she enters a space for her own acknowledgment of wanting to become an artist. Moving from the space between herself and Wunsch gives Thea access to her own space, outside of the Kronborg family house and her attic room, which gives the Thea who wants to become an artist the room to breathe, live, and bloom. Thea finds hope, courage, and encouragement. The space created between Thea and Wunsch is temporary, but the effects are lasting. “Together they had lifted a lid, pulled out a drawer, and looked at something. They hid it away and never spoke of what they had seen; but neither of them forgot it” and Thea begins to trust in her abilities and her knowledge of those abilities (Song 73). Acknowledging and moving toward becoming an artist gives Thea confidence; looking at the sand hills “she knew that she was going to leave them all behind some day” (Song 72). Thea will access mobility and move away from Moonstone to move closer to Thea-becoming-artist and Thea-artist. Later in the novel, Thea will engage in a similar conversation with her Chicago piano teacher, Andor Harsanyi.

Thea’s relationship with Ray Kennedy creates another kind of space. Thea and Ray create a space of companionship, relaxation, and comfort. He “rests” Thea because he does not agitate her or stir her up. Thea and Ray create a space that allows Thea to have social experiences and companionship without the excessive pressure of acknowledging her interest in becoming an artist. She can protect her talents by keeping them hidden, while turning her attention to other thoughts and the experience of enjoying friendship. Ray “rested Thea because he was so different; because though he often told her interesting things, he never set lively fancies going in her head” (Song 99). With Ray, the pressure is off Thea, and “with Ray she was safe; by him she would never be discovered”
(Song 99)! Mobility is one of the features that create the friendly space between Thea and Ray—he takes her out to the sand hills and escorts Thea and her mother to Denver by train. Once Thea begins teaching piano to the youngsters of Moonstone, Ray “did everything he could to provide recreation for her. He brought her candy and magazines and pineapples” (Song 98). He makes effort to provide diversion and pleasure for Thea; their friendship is a space where Thea can forget her teaching and focus on listening to Ray’s many stories. Ray offers release from the challenges Thea faces as a teacher. She “was glad when Ray Kennedy had a Sunday in town and could take her driving. Out among the sand hills she could forget the ‘new room’ which was the scene of wearing and fruitless labor” (Song 113). The constellation of relations created between Thea and Ray also allow her to experience unconditional support; Ray is unquestionably Thea’s most loyal fan, though he is devoted to her as a person, not to her as an artist.

Even when Ray is severely injured in the train wreck, he and Thea create a space of companionship and rest. Coming to see Ray with Doctor Archie, Thea says to Ray, “‘I feel just as much at home with you as ever, now,’” which suggests not the idea of home reflected in the active, chaotic Kronborg household, but more so a home of companionship, reflecting their shared trust, calm, and pleasure (Song 133). Ray, like Wunsch, acknowledges Thea’s difference. Cather provides Ray’s inner thoughts, reflecting his adulation of Thea, as well as his awareness of her potential. “She had given him one grand dream. […] She was stroking his hand and looking off into the distance. He felt in her face that look of unconscious power that Wunsch had seen there. Yes, she was bound for the big terminals of the world; no way stations for her;” Ray recognizes Thea’s power—over him and others—and admits that she can only move forward toward her desires which will play out in “the big terminals” (Song 134). Ray’s reflections on
Thea also highlights her "unconscious power" as a young person who has physical strength, inner strength, and power over others, yet she has not come into full awareness or possession of who she is to become. Ray's financial provisions for Thea give her the ability to leave Moonstone and go to Chicago for musical training, an opportunity that would not have been possible otherwise.

Unlike the relationships with Wunsch and Ray Kennedy, Thea's relationship with Doctor Archie lasts throughout her life. In the early part of the novel, in Moonstone, their relationship creates a space where Thea observes adult life and can try or test out her ideas. Thea visits Doctor Archie's office, goes on patient visits with him, walks with him on the streets of Moonstone, and everywhere they go the two people treat each other as equals and peers. Later in the novel, Thea will call upon Doctor Archie to fund her trip to Germany for vocal training, and he eagerly responds to her telegram. Without hesitating, Doctor Archie goes to New York and pays for the trip. In the end, Doctor Archie will hear Thea perform, and they will get reacquainted in her apartment/enclave.

Throughout their relationship, Thea and Doctor Archie will treat each other with respect, warmth, and generosity. Doctor Archie lends young Thea some of the books from his library, and they spend time in conversation. One of their conversations takes place on the streets of Moonstone, at night, where Doctor Archie has discovered Thea walking about in the moonlight. In the space created between Thea and Doctor Archie, a space of trust, comfort, and mutual respect, Thea can speak about who and what she wants to become. Initially, Thea resists Doctor Archie's question about who she wants to be; her response is a quick "I don't know" (Song 75). Then he pushes her: "Honest, now" (Song 75)? In response, "Thea laughed and edged away from him" (Song 75). Though the space between the two is a comfort zone, Thea physically moves away from
Doctor Archie, as she will continue to do from all her friends—moving away from them toward artisthood. The conversation progresses until Thea can speak directly and almost enthusiastically about her future. When Archie asks if Thea wants to teach music, her answer foreshadows what she will do. ‘‘Maybe [I’ll teach music], but I want to be a good one [music teacher]. I’d like to go to Germany to study, some day. Wunsch says that’s the best place—the only place you can really learn” (Song 75). Thea speaks about what she would like to do, and in the space between her and Doctor Archie, studying music and going to Germany becomes an articulated, spoken possible reality. The conversation with Doctor Archie follows Thea’s talk with Wunsch about her desire to sing, and with Doctor Archie, Thea finds a comfort zone where she can speak about her interest in studying music in a foreign country; she can make a direct statement about wanting “to be something” (emphasis in original) (Song 76). In the space between Thea and Doctor Archie, Thea can state her desire without risking embarrassment or pressure. Thea has made a decision and she expresses her choice; though Doctor Archie does not encourage Thea, he does not discourage her either. In response to Thea’s impatience, Doctor Archie “gave one of his low, sympathetic chuckles” (Song 77). The space created between Thea and Doctor Archie gives Thea the powerful freedom to express her goal. Doctor Archie’s role in this space, as in the future, is to be sympathetic and supportive.

Thea and Doctor Archie recreate this articulated moment “when Thea was perplexed about religion” (Song 122). Even though her father is a minister, Thea goes to talk to Doctor Archie about the tramp who drowns himself in Moonstone’s water supply, causing the poisoning and death of “several adults and half a dozen children” (Song 124). Because “the drama of the tramp kept going on in the back of her head,” Thea seeks some way to resolve her conflicted feelings in conversation with Doctor Archie (Song 125). As
on the streets of Moonstone, in Doctor Archie’s office, the two create a comfort zone or depressurized space where Thea can freely discuss her conflicted feelings over the tramp and his demise. As Joseph R. Urgo explains, “[t]o Thea, however, the tramp’s story is the underside of her own ambition. Her achievements will sustain others as strongly as the tramp’s signal accomplishment destroyed them” (141). In the space created between Thea and Doctor Archie, she can openly suggest that the blame for the tramp’s death rests on the members of the Moonstone community, including herself, and her father. The destructiveness of the tramp threatens Thea’s artistic goals, but Doctor Archie, as supportive mentor, reassures Thea, telling her that “[t]he things that last are the good things. The people who forge ahead and do something, they really count” (Song 126). Urgo suggests that “[a]t this crossroads, Cather could have created out of Thea a servant of the people, a helpmate or a goodwife,” but Doctor Archie returns Thea’s peace of mind by reaffirming the value of her ambition (141). Doctor Archie and Thea create an articulated moment that repositions him as the helpful guide and her as the girl-becoming-artist. In the space created between the two characters, Thea’s ambitions and needs are given priority, and threats to her goals are excluded. Thea’s doubts are excluded from this space and Doctor Archie, by guiding Thea away from dwelling on the tramp, reinforces and supports her desire to become an artist without question.

When Thea leaves Moonstone after Ray Kennedy’s death, Doctor Archie is her escort, and he helps her to find a teacher and a room in Chicago. Though they will part ways and Thea will write him only infrequently, the space created between Thea and Doctor Archie remains a comfort zone of support, warmth, and respect. Eventually, the comfort zone will be re-established within Thea’s apartment/enclave toward the end of the novel.

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Moonstone, Colorado functions as a space of discovery, a space for trying out, testing, and considering possibilities. The town’s isolation and geographical position as a Western town keep the town at a distance from urban development, and consequently, at a distance from the distractions and threats of urban life which might interfere with Thea’s movement toward artisthood. Thea exerts power in Moonstone by ignoring and resisting the communally-defined social boundaries and building relationships with men outside of her family. As Thea becomes a young adult, she enters spaces where she can imagine and articulate a path toward artisthood. Thea’s relationships with Wunsch, Ray Kennedy, and Doctor Archie all create spaces of power, functioning as a constellation of relations that support and foster Thea’s development toward becoming an artist. Thea accesses and wields power in these spaces by observing adult life, making and stating her choices, and by choosing to leave. Evelyn Funda explains that “Thea goes forth from the Western landscape that inspires her (the plains of Laramie, the sandhills outside of Moonstone, the canyons of the Cliff-Dwellers), seeking an attentive audience” (emphasis in original) (19). Since Moonstone cannot offer an attentive audience or all of the training and opportunities Thea needs to become an artist, it is one of the many places Thea must leave.

Unlike Moonstone, Chicago will be a space of struggle, challenge, difficulty, and slow growth, yet Thea does eventually access and wield power within this space. To access the space of Chicago, and begin acting on her desire to be an artist, Thea will need to have mobility to enter and exit these spaces, as well as the inner resources that allow her to pursue her desire of becoming an artist. For Thea, mobility initially depends on economic resources. As a young music teacher, Thea does earn her own income; however, it is clear that she does not make an income that will give her the ability to
pursue piano or vocal training. Initially, Ray Kennedy's death and his bequest to Thea provide economic resources, allowing her to leave Moonstone and enter Chicago. Once in the city, Thea will earn an income by singing for church services, funerals, and weddings; she will also earn money as an accompanist. In the urban landscape of Chicago, Thea will struggle with economic survival and the task of becoming an artist.

At first, Thea is hardly aware of the city itself; like anyone entering a new space for the first time, she experiences a degree of disorientation and culture shock, feeling "as if she were still on the train, travelling without enough clothes to keep clean" (Song 147). Even with Doctor Archie's help, she struggles to find a room to live in, a space to claim. Once she does find a room, situated with Mrs. Lorch and Mrs. Anderson, Thea will struggle within and against the very space itself. The furniture in Thea's room takes up substantial space, making the room difficult to negotiate, as is Thea's movement toward artisthood. Thea's internal struggle plays out in her own room, since she "sat in the dark a good deal those first weeks, and sometimes a painful bump against one of those brutally immovable pedestals roused her temper and pulled her out of a heavy hour" (Song 155). In her room, as in her movement toward artisthood, Thea is not yet oriented; her path toward artisthood is unclear and blocked by obstacles. The difficulty of negotiating her room metaphorically matches the difficulty of negotiating Chicago itself and her piano studies with Andor Harsanyi, yet Thea demonstrates power by refusing to give up. As Harsanyi points out, Thea "had developed an unusual power of work. He noticed at once her way of charging at difficulties. She ran to meet them as if they were foes she had long been seeking" (Song 159). Harsanyi describes Thea's power as a student through her mobility—she charges and runs—actively connecting the power of Thea's body and her capacity for work.
Over time, Thea gradually engages the urban landscape of Chicago. She visits the Montgomery Ward store and the slaughter-houses (*Song 177*). Though encouraged by Mrs. Lorch and Mrs. Anderson to visit the Art Institute, Thea does not go to the Institute for several months after her arrival. When she does visit the Art Institute, Thea stays all day, which provokes “a serious reckoning with herself” (*Song 178*). She reflects on “her way of life, about what she ought or ought not to do” and comes to the conclusion that “she was missing a great deal” (*Song 178*). Encountering the art collection of the Art Institute provokes Thea and induces her to change. Her change is positive: “The Institute proved, indeed, a place of retreat, as the sand hills or the Kohlers’ garden used to be; a place where she could forget [...] even, for a little while, the torment of her work” (*Song 178*). The Institute offers a space for release, an experience of beauty, and the opportunity to engage something outside of her demanding life as a piano student.\(^5\)

Along with the Art Institute, Thea finally attends an afternoon concert, which produces a crucial space for her in movement toward artisthood. She leaves behind her work, focuses intently on the music of the concert, and refreshes her desire to be an artist. Following the experience of the concert, Thea locates the maturity she needs to move closer toward artisthood. Listening to “the theme of the Largo” she finds “a soul obsessed by what it did not know, under the cloud of a past it could not recall” (*Song 181*). Leaving the concert, Thea is confronted by a spring storm and a “furious gale” (*Song 182*). In response to the stimulation of the concert, Thea finally achieves awareness of Chicago, and her new awareness gives her access to a new maturity and power within herself. “For almost the first time Thea was conscious of the city itself, of the congestion of life all about her, of the brutality and power of those streams that flowed in the streets, threatening to drive one under;” and in facing obstacles on the
street, confronting the threat of strangers, being buffeted by the crowds and wind, Thea finally locates and begins to assert her ability to do what needs to be done to become an artist (Song 182-183). She becomes aware of the city as a space itself, and of its impositions and threat to her becoming an artist, but she finds that she is already equipped to meet the challenge of the city. In the violent space of Chicago, “Thea glared round her at the crowds, the ugly, sprawling streets, the long lines of lights, and she was not crying now” (Song 183). In the urban landscape, the concert, the storm, and the crowded city streets converge, creating the space for an articulated moment in Thea’s movement toward artisthood. The stormy violence of the space echoes Thea’s own dramatic internal decisiveness:

All these things and people were no longer remote and negligible; they had to be met, they were lined up against her, they were there to take something from her. Very well; they should never have it. They might trample her to death, but they should never have it. As long as she lived that ecstasy was going to be hers. She would live for it, work for it, die for it; but she was going to have it, time after time, height after height. She could hear the crash of the orchestra again, and she rose on the brasses. She would have it, what the trumpets were singing! She would have it—it! Under the old cape she pressed her hands upon her heaving bosom, that was a little girl’s no longer. (Song 183)

Thea’s experience here functions as the urban equivalent of the exit from Panther Canyon. She claims the power she wants for herself. Chicago itself, the Art Institute, the constant challenge of piano lessons, the concert, the spring storm, her desire: all of these parts of experience converge on and in Thea to produce an articulated, crucial space in which Thea attains maturity and accesses power that moves her significantly closer
toward artisthood. Unlike the vague, girlish ideas Thea plays with in her attic room, her conviction amid the constellation of relations that comprise the frenzied space of Chicago shapes a new person in Thea—a young woman with desire, talent, and resolve. In this space, Thea solidifies her commitment to becoming an artist.

Shortly after this experience, Harsanyi confronts Thea about her voice, echoing Thea’s conversation with Wunsch about her voice, creating an articulated space that moves Thea closer toward becoming an artist. Having previously, almost accidentally, discovered Thea’s voice “like a wild bird,” Harsanyi now wants to discuss how Thea should proceed with her music studies (Song 171). Unlike the tentative conversation Thea has with Wunsch, her conversation with Harsanyi is far more pointed and direct. Harsanyi makes the bold statement that “it is time you began to work seriously with your voice” (Song 188). Harsanyi states directly what Wunsch only hinted at; Thea’s talents do not lie in playing the piano, instead her true talent lies in her voice. What Harsanyi says seems harsh and frustrating to Thea, but he states explicitly what she needs to hear. He says that Thea has “brains enough and talent enough,” in addition to “vocation” (Song 190). Along with assessing Thea’s talent, Harsanyi forces Thea to state her desire and verbalize her longing to be an artist. Pointedly, Harsanyi asks Thea: “What you want more than anything else in the world is to be an artist; is that true?” (Song 190)? Her answer does not come easily, but comes “in a thickened voice. ‘Yes, I suppose so’” (Song 190). Then he asks her about singing: “Did you never think that you were going to sing?” (Song 190)? The only answer Thea can offer is yes, because Harsanyi knows the truth, realizing that she has kept her talent secret. Between Thea and Harsanyi, the truth about Thea and her talent finally comes out into the open, naked and revealed. Harsanyi presses her to confirm his suspicions: “Miss Kronborg, answer me this. You
**know that you can sing,** do you not? You have always known it. While we worked here together you sometimes said to yourself, ‘I have something you know nothing about; I could surprise you.’ Is that also true” (emphasis in original) (*Song* 191)? Harsanyi states exactly what Thea holds in her own mind, and she “nodded and hung her head” (*Song* 191). In this constellation of relations, this created space between teacher and student, Thea’s abilities and desire come out in the open to be revealed, and she gains access to power and resources. Instead of hiding her abilities and protecting her talents, Thea can now turn her energy toward the cultivation of her skills. Harsanyi distinguishes Thea-artist and her power in this space, even “greeting” Thea-artist with a kiss on the hand (*Song* 192). In the space created between Thea and Harsanyi, Thea’s powerful knowledge about her abilities becomes openly shared knowledge, and she is no longer alone with her desire to be an artist, and more specifically, her desire to sing.

Thea claims a space for herself in Chicago after her last summer in Moonstone, proving that she is no longer the little girl buffeted by wind outside the Chicago Art Institute. No longer is she struggling through the wilderness of Chicago; instead, she is located where she needs and wants to be. Madison Bowers’s studio functions as a site for Thea’s learning, for developing the ability to assess and evaluate, and for gaining access to resources. In Bowers’s studio, Thea not only learns about singing, but also about shaping her standards for art, distinguishing artistic vocal performance from what is not art. From Bowers, Thea also learns contempt for what the public considers art. Thea’s evaluation skills bleed out into her harsh assessment of the many rooms she moves through. As an artist and as a person, Thea demonstrates the employment of standards which must be met, and she disdainfully refuses to accept the things and persons who cannot meet her standards. Thea harshly evaluates the boarding houses and rooms she
moves through and "when she moved into a new place, her eyes challenged the beds, the carpets, the food, the mistress of the house" (*Song* 234).

Having made the transition from piano student to voice student, Thea claims a space for herself and accesses power in the studio of her new teacher. "While her living arrangements were so casual and fortuitous, Bowers’s studio was the one fixed thing in Thea's life. She went out from it to uncertainties, and hastened to it from nebulous confusion," signaling changes in Thea and the significance of the space (*Song* 239). The passage demonstrates the dramatic and explicit shift in Thea’s priorities and her understanding of why she is in Chicago; Thea’s true desire to be an artist is no longer something she has to hide or conceal. In addition, the text focuses on Thea’s actions within the space of Bowers’s studio, and her behavior inside and outside of the space demonstrates not the planning or preparation, but instead Thea’s actions toward her goal of being an artist. In the studio, Thea takes her lessons, works as an accompanist, and assesses the other singers who come to the studio. Her actions function to move Thea toward being an artist. As she challenges the quality of her living conditions, Thea will also evaluate the other singers taught by Bowers. In assessment, Thea further develops the standards she will need to be a successful artist. Bowers’s studio is a site for learning to sing, for growing as a person, and for becoming an artist. As an accompanist, Thea learns from the other vocalists how not to sing. From Bowers himself, Thea learns “dry contempt,” “to share his grudge,” and “cynicism” (*Song* 239). The studio, as a fixed space, shapes Thea’s definition and understanding of art, and in that space, Thea claims power by demonstrating in all of her actions the artistic conviction and maturity that she will need to become a successful artist.
Bowers’s studio also functions to develop a constellation of relations that will offer Thea access to other resources. In the constellation of relations that shape Bowers’s studio, Jessie Darcey is the model of what Thea does not want to be; Bowers offers a model for evaluation, shaping Thea’s increasingly demanding artistic and performance standards. More importantly, the studio is where Thea will meet Fred Ottenburg, who offers Thea social, economic, and emotional resources. Fred, even more so than Bowers, offers Thea access to people and places she would have great difficulty accessing otherwise; he “supplies Thea with experience in culture and sex, preparing her to take her place in the world” outside of Moonstone, Bowers’s studio, and Chicago itself (Rosowski *The Voyage Perilous* 69). Fred acts as a role model who will facilitate Thea’s entrance into the culture of wealth, initially by introducing Thea to the Nathanmeyers, and she performs in their home with great success. Fred takes Thea out to restaurants, giving her access to a social life outside of her vocal studies and providing meals. Fred also offers economic resources, paying for meals, giving her money for the trip to the Cliff Dwellings during the summer, and later offering to fund her trip to Germany. “Fred knew where all the pleasant things in the world were, she reflected, and knew the road to them. He had keys to all the nice places in his pocket, and seemed to jingle them from time to time,” and Thea is immediately attracted to Fred’s ability to access pleasure and nice things (*Song* 257). Keys, indeed; Fred offers economic, social, and other resources that would be extremely difficult for Thea to access on her own. Fred, firmly positioned in the culture of wealth, eliminates any obstacles that might interfere with Thea’s entrance to the culture of wealth and her pursuit of artisthood. He provides companionship and friendship for Thea, and since he happens to sing and play the piano, they can build a relationship on common ground, despite Thea’s upbringing in a small
town and Fred’s position as the son of a wealthy brewer. Meeting Fred in the studio proves to be a substantial benefit to Thea, fostering her power as an artist over the ten years of their relationship.

Chicago, unlike Moonstone, is the place where Thea matures as a person, acknowledges her talent, and asserting her desire to be an artist. Moonstone is a space of testing out, trying out, and possibility; in contrast, Chicago is the space where a more mature Thea will wield power through her specific, direct actions toward improving and using her talent. In Chicago, Thea’s goal of being an artist crystallizes, and she experiences an initial success in her performance for the Nathanmeyers. The city, as a space, shapes Thea more into the artist she is becoming, providing standards, resources, and power. The constellation of relations established between Thea and Chicago ensures that as Thea develops as an artist, she will need to leave the space of the city—first for restoration, and then for her vocal training in Germany.

When Thea returns to the United States, she takes an apartment in the city, and this space functions as an enclave for her. Now that Thea has become an artist, and a successful one at that, she claims a space for herself that protects her, offers her privacy, and gives her the power to decide who can enter her space. As an enclave, the apartment becomes the locus for relaxed social activities that create a warm, friendly, and harmonious atmosphere among old friends. Within Thea’s enclave, she wields power by directing and leading others in the space, including her maid and her friends.

The description of Thea’s apartment building suggests that she is attracted to certain kinds of spaces—elevated rooms with an open view, similar to the attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon. Unlike Thea’s attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon, the apartment/enclave does not function as a space for discovery, struggle, or pursuit. Thea
does not use the space for testing out her talents or struggling to learn singing. Instead, the apartment/enclave acts as the space where Thea can let her guard down and experience release from the challenges of her life as an artist. Cather provides a description of the apartment when Doctor Archie tracks down Thea’s address. He shies away from visiting her before the evening’s performance, but he walks about, looking up at the building: “The house in which Thea lived was as impersonal as the Waldorf, and quite as large” (Song 357). Doctor Archie has not been in touch with Thea for a long time, so the building’s lack of personality indicates some of how he feels about her, uncertain if he knows her any longer. “As Archie strolled about the paths which traversed this slope, below the street level, the fourteen stories of the apartment hotel rose above him like a perpendicular cliff” reminiscent of the structure of the Cliff Dwellings (Song 357). The building possesses a “forbidding hugeness” and the cliff-like façade suggests to Doctor Archie “that the outlook would be fine from any floor” (Song 357). In this urban space, the verticality of the building and the view seem to reproduce the space of the cave/room at Panther Canyon. However, Thea does not reproduce the sustained solitude of the cave in her urban apartment; instead, the apartment fosters social gatherings and engaging conversations.

Doctor Archie first enters the apartment/enclave when he goes to see Thea after the performance of Lohengrin. He waits in the reception-hall until Thea arrives, and when she finally recognizes him, “she pushed him into the elevator. She kept her hand on his arm while the cage shot up, and she looked away from him frowning. When the cage stopped, she pushed him out of the elevator through another door, which a maid opened, into a square hall” (Song 361). After all of this, Thea finally speaks to Doctor Archie: “‘Why didn’t you let me know’” (Song 361)? Exhausted, hoarse, and surprised, Thea
cannot speak to Doctor Archie until she enters her own space and can let her guard down. The unexpected visit, though not unwelcome, makes her unable to talk comfortably with her old friend, and she invites him to return the next day, to enter her space, on her terms, for their reacquaintance and the re-creation of the comfort zone between them. After making her invitation for the next day, Thea tells Doctor Archie good night “and gave him a little shove toward the door” (Song 363). Thea wields her power to include as well as her power to exclude. At this point, she cannot fully include Archie—there is neither enough food nor energy for two—so she must exclude him from her enclave at this time.

Harmonious, pleasant social gatherings take place in Thea’s apartment/enclave, and in that space, Thea directs and leads others to foster the amiable atmosphere and sustain the constellation of relations that define the space. When Doctor Archie returns for his appointment with Thea, she has already included her friend, Oliver Landry. Thea “rose, and came to meet him,” reassuring Doctor Archie that he knows her and she welcomes his presence (Song 370). Their old familiarity returns almost immediately and Doctor Archie reflects that “[l]ast night everything had been awkward; but now, as he held her hands, a kind of harmony came between them, a re-establishment of confidence” (Song 371). Thea does not lack for confidence; she is in a position of power as the successful artist, in the space she claims for herself. Doctor Archie is the one who receives confidence from Thea. In Thea’s enclave, the intimate, warm interaction restores a feeling of confidence in Doctor Archie, establishing the conditions much like the earlier comfort zone created between them on the streets of Moonstone and in Doctor Archie’s office. By introducing Archie to Landry, Thea further fosters the amiable atmosphere in her enclave. Thea tells the two men “‘I want you to be friends’” (Song 371). She directs the men with her words, guiding them toward the behavior she expects; in the enclave,
Thea wields her power to shape a friendly, social environment. When Fred arrives, Thea sustains the genial atmosphere, offering tea and toast for everyone. Doctor Archie notes "the animation of her figure [and that] her body seemed independent and unsubdued" (Song 374). The privacy of the enclave, the sociability of the company, and her established power all converge in Thea, creating a locus for her relaxation and refreshment. The friendly social atmosphere of the tea party created in the space of Thea's apartment is far from the isolated struggle of the attic room and the inward reflection of the cave at Panther Canyon. Thea, as artist, chooses and shapes her apartment/enclave into a space that gives her pleasure and companionship. With its friendly, social atmosphere, the apartment/enclave is a locus for Thea, a space carved out from within the surrounding urban space and dramatic space of the stage which is the space for the artist Kronborg.

The difference between the apartment/enclave and the surrounding space is demonstrated by Thea's use of clothing to protect and insulate herself as she makes the transition from the apartment to the urban space or vice versa. With clothing, Thea can bring some of the protection offered by her enclave with her out into urban, public spaces. When Doctor Archie first sees her in the entrance area of the apartment building, Thea wears a "white scarf that covered her face" and "thick gloves[s]" (Song 361). He hardly recognizes her, and the artist Kronborg gives "him a piercing, defiant glance" through her veil (Song 361). As previously discussed, she needs to get into her enclave to be Thea, who can finally acknowledge and speak to her old friend. In a similar manner, when Thea is called upon to take over a part in the middle of Sieglinde, she not only has to scramble get out of her enclave "behaving somewhat like a cyclone," but also to prepare to sing the part (Song 378). Thea becomes cyclonic, like a powerful force of
nature, transforming to enter the space outside of her enclave where she is the artist Kronborg. “In a few moments Thea came out enveloped in her long fur coat with a scarf over her head and knitted woollen gloves on her hands;” with headgear, hands covered, and fur coat, Thea dresses to do battle with the rush to get to the theater, to review the score in the cab, and to sing well on stage (Song 378). The clothing, as protective padding, allows Thea to rapidly become Kronborg, moving from the enclave rapidly into the street, and then onto the stage. Afterwards, Fred makes clear that her transformation and talent have made her successful in the unexpected performance: “You probably know you were magnificent” (Song 380). Thea Kronborg’s assessment is different, reflecting her skill and ambition: “I thought it went pretty well” (Song 381).

Thea retains the power of exclusion outside of the apartment/enclave; specifically, she excludes her conflict with Fred. Cather reinforces the difference between the apartment/enclave and the surrounding space when Thea and Fred discuss marriage by having their conversation take place outside of the apartment/enclave. The discussion is a passionate and straightforward one, and reflects a conflict between two people who have known each other for a long time. Thea does not want marriage to another person; she is clearly married to artisthood. Thea tells Fred, “I’m holding out for a big contract: forty performances” (Song 398). Fred, on the other hand, wants marriage. He says “I want things that wouldn’t interest you; that you probably wouldn’t understand. For one thing, I want a son to bring up” (Song 399). Their desires clearly conflict and neither seems willing to negotiate or compromise. Thea summarizes their relationship, saying “[w]e’ve been a help and a hindrance to each other. I guess it’s always that way” (Song 400). Thea and Fred’s discussion, animated and disruptive, takes place in the Park, outside of Thea’s apartment/enclave. In this case, Thea exerts power by retaining the
space of the apartment as a locus of privacy, friendship, and warmth, and excluding the conflict with Fred from entering her space.

Thea’s body, Moonstone, Chicago, and Thea’s urban apartment/enclave function as essential spaces in the novel. Defined by the constellation of relations that shape and re-shape them, these spaces are equal in importance to Thea’s attic room and the cave at Panther Canyon. As Thea overcomes the friction of distance between Moonstone and a larger world, she uses her physical resources in conjunction with her other resources to access and wield power. Her physical strength gives her the ability to use her talent and develop her abilities as a singer who can achieve success. Moonstone, Colorado offers Thea spaces for possibility and spaces created in relationships with others. What Thea learns in the spaces created between herself and Wunsch, Ray Kennedy, and Doctor Archie not only fosters her desire to become an artist, but also reinforces her self-knowledge of her talent, building the inner resources Thea will need to succeed once she leaves Moonstone. Chicago and its spaces help to crystallize Thea’s desire and goal, and she demonstrates power in these spaces by actively pursuing her goal and learning the skill of evaluation. When Cather depicts Thea at the end of the novel, in the apartment/enclave, the artist Kronborg finds power in the release offered by the private, social space carved out of the urban landscape. The power Thea demonstrates in the apartment is the power of inclusion/exclusion and direction; having attained success, she no longer struggles to figure out her self or who to be. Thea has the power of the artist and the security of withdrawing from Kronborg to enter a space of companionship and privacy. Taking into account other spaces in the novel offers a magnified understanding of Thea Kronborg and her personal and artistic power. As explained previously, using the
strategies of feminist geography intersected with class-based definitions of power reveals more of Thea's power.

Much like Thea Kronborg, Kitty Ayrshire shares the cultivated assertiveness that allows her to be a successful artist. In designing these characters, Cather endows both women with the self-possession and self-awareness that Thea refers to when leaving Moonstone: "Everything that was essential seemed to be right there in the car with her" (Song 143). Both women share an inherent competence that exists in and around their bodies, allowing them to access and wield power in the spaces they enter. Similar to the Thea depicted in the urban apartment/enclave, Ayrshire wields power over her audiences and others around her. Thea directs, instructs, and uses the men to support her artistic life. Ayrshire too is a director, a manager; she tells others what to do and leaves them to do it, demonstrating her claiming and wielding of power. The following analysis explains Ayrshire's ability to wield power by entering and exiting at will.

In "A Gold Slipper," (1920) one might be tempted to focus on the space of the stage, where Kitty Ayrshire is so clearly in control as an artist. The initial encounter with Marshall McKann leaves both characters feeling unsatisfied, so examining the other spaces where the characters interact creates a better opportunity for understanding how space reinforces Ayrshire's position of power. In the space of the taxicab, Ayrshire demonstrates the setting of boundaries as part of her dominance. Finally, the space of the train, specifically, in McKann's berth, Ayrshire uses her position of dominance to enter the berth, hold conversation, and emerge victorious from their debate over art.

Throughout the story, Kitty Ayrshire claims power and spatial dominance by entering and exiting at will the spaces of the stage, the taxicab, and the train berth.
"A Gold Slipper" narrates the interactions between Kitty Ayrshire, a singer, and Marshall McKann, a well-off businessman. McKann, forced to attend a concert he is not interested in, has a personal encounter with the performer, Ayrshire. The two characters have a personal encounter because Ayrshire's popularity sells out the concert hall, necessitating additional seating placed behind the performer on the stage. Ayrshire, while entering and exiting the stage, is forced to walk near to McKann, who is seated between the stage entrance and center stage. After the concert, McKann again encounters Ayrshire who is trying to catch the train to New York. The electric car Ayrshire takes to get to the train station malfunctions, leaving her to share a taxicab with McKann. The characters eventually get to the station and board the train, and Ayrshire enters McKann's berth to converse with him on the subject of artists. After their debate, sometime while McKann is sleeping, Ayrshire leaves one of her gold shoes in his berth, "to haunt [him] a little" ("A Gold Slipper" 152). The closing of the story tells of McKann's five-year illness, describing his attraction to morbid thoughts and musings over the shoe. In contrast, Ayrshire has forgotten the whole encounter.

The stage is the space within the Carnegie Music Hall where Kitty Ayrshire performs before her audience and McKann, his wife, and her friend, Mrs. Post. In the story, the stage is an altered space. Instead of being solely the space for the artist/performer, the stage also includes members of the audience. Much to the irritation of McKann, "Mrs. Post [...] had found that two hundred folding chairs were to be placed on the stage of the concert-hall, behind the piano" ("Slipper" 137). The audience's demand to see the performance of Ayrshire alters the performer's space. The audience intrudes on the stage, coming much closer to the performer than usual, and also viewing the performance from an unusual position behind the singer, rather than facing her. By sharing the space
of the stage, the performer and the audience enter into a spatial intimacy that brings the two parties unusually close. In the case of Ayrshire and McKann, performer and audience member encounter each other physically. While entering the stage, “[h]er velvet train brushed against his trousers as she passed him” (“Slipper” 139). What is interesting about their contact is the idea that her “gown that evening was really quite outrageous—the repartee of a conscienceless Parisian designer” (“Slipper” 139). In the interaction between Ayrshire and McKann, the “disconcerting” novelty of her gown and the contact it makes with his clothing signals both the friction of one fabric against another, as well as the friction of two views of the world resisting each other. Though the details of their world views will not be discussed until later in the story, at this point, Cather foreshadows the nature of the conversation that will take place on the train with the image of the velvet against the man’s clothing. The train of the gown is described as “like a serpent’s tail” and “prehensile” (“Slipper” 139 and 141). The fluid movement of the gown and train indicate Ayrshire’s mastery as a performer—she possesses an ease and power that gives her full control on the stage. Part of her ease comes from her physical attributes; she is “supple and sinuous and quick-silverish; thin” (“Slipper” 140). In addition, Ayrshire does not lack for talent or skill; she wins over “this hard-shelled public” with “the beauty of her voice and the subtlety of her interpretation” (“Slipper” 139 and 140). Despite the altered space of the stage and the positioning of McKann’s chair between the stage entrance and center stage, Ayrshire enters and exits at will. Because of her power as an artist and performer, the altered stage does not affect the success of her performance. The stage is hers, her space for mastery, for creation, and for power.
In contrast to Ayrshire’s ease on stage is the unyielding discomfort experienced by McKann. Though McKann has the social and economic resources to give him access to the sold out concert, he does not want to be there. From the beginning, he feels that he does not belong at the concert. His irritation is “ill-concealed. […] Heaven knew he never went to concerts, and to be mounted on the stage in this fashion, as if he were a ‘highbrow’ from Sewickley, or some unfortunate with a musical wife, was ludicrous” (“Slipper” 137). McKann distinguishes himself as a member of the culture of wealth, with previously established economic connections, which he believes free him from the social obligation for engaging in cultural events—he is a businessman, not a “highbrow.” Aside from not wanting to be at the concert hall in the first place, McKann finds himself “hot and uncomfortable, in a chair much too small for him, with a row of blinding footlights glaring in his eyes” (“Slipper” 138). Cather portrays McKann as a large man, uncomfortable in his own skin. Even worse, his seat is positioned between the stage entrance and center stage where Ayrshire is to perform. “He had not foreseen that the singer would walk over him every time she came upon the stage” (“Slipper” 139). McKann is unavoidably in the way. In his brief interaction with the performer, when “she paused long enough to glance down at him” the story provides a more detailed physical description of McKann: “He beheld himself a heavy, solid figure, unsuitably clad for the time and place, with a florid, square face, well-visored with good living and sane opinions” (“Slipper” 140-141). Coupled with his discomfort on the stage, the description of McKann leaves little doubt about his lack of attractiveness. Clearly, this heavyset, aging man does not fit well in the space of the stage, already claimed and mastered by Ayrshire. She belongs on stage and he does not. Moreover, Ayrshire
controls McKann's entrance and exit—he cannot leave until the performance is over, despite his desire to “make a dash for his train” (“Slipper” 141).

Altered by the additional chairs and audience members, the public space of the stage influences the performer's interactions with her audience. She must acknowledge and perform for the audience in front of her, as well as the audience placed behind her. The additional audience also changes the performer's movement within the space of the stage. First, she seems to apologize for the physical contact, then “took marked precaution that her dress did not touch him” (“Slipper” 140 and 141). Ayrshire holds the superior position in this situation, having more experience than McKann with being on stage. Her comment to him, interpreted by Mrs. Post as a “gracious” act, is not “Pardon [me]” but more accurately “Pardon [you for being in the way]” (“Slipper” 140). The spontaneous interaction between Ayrshire and McKann is an unusual event on stage. As a space, a stage is usually designed to separate performer and audience, and keep the two parties at a distance, precluding intimate relations between performer and audience. Despite the altered space of the stage and the position of McKann's chair between the stage entrance and center stage, Ayrshire enters and exits at will. Her fluid entrance matches her graceful exit. Despite the “clamor[ing]” of the audience “for more of it,” she leaves the stage when she is ready: “She shrugged her shoulders, blew them a kiss, and was gone” (“Slipper” 142). Neither Ayrshire’s mastery of the stage or the performance is hampered by the altered stage. By using the initial interaction between the characters on the stage, the story sets up a more lengthy interaction, and the train of the velvet dress works effectively as a symbol for the competing world views that the characters will discuss on the train. Ayrshire’s ease and proficiency on the stage will give her an advantage over McKann. Though he considers himself “a person of substance,” the singer is by far the
more worldly and powerful of the two characters, as demonstrated by her ability to enter and exit at will ("Slipper" 137).

After sharing the space of the stage, the characters will again share space in the taxicab. Again, Ayrshire enters and exits at will. The cab becomes a space where the two are thrust together and in the smaller space, Ayrshire again holds the role of superior, drawing the boundaries between herself and McKann. On his way to the train station, the driver of McKann’s cab stops, and they discover Ayrshire and her maid stranded on an electric car. Since all parties are headed for the train station, to catch the late train to New York, Ayrshire and her maid simply share the cab with McKann. In the cab, Ayrshire re-establishes her dominance, drawing explicit boundaries between herself and McKann. When Ayrshire exits the electric car, “[s]he moved deliberately” ("Slipper" 143). Once installed in the taxicab, Ayrshire sends McKann to claim her “jewel-case” left on the seat of the electric car ("Slipper" 143). In other words, she puts him to work, directing his actions, much like a manager. McKann accepts her directions and recovers the jewelry bag, confirming his acceptance of her dominance. After the transfer of luggage from the electric car to the cab, she excuses herself from any conversation, saying “‘You will excuse me if I’m uncommunicative, won’t you? I must not talk in this raw air. My throat is sensitive after a long program’” ("Slipper" 144). She then withdraws from McKann with closed eyes ("Slipper" 144). Even in the enclosed space of the taxicab, Ayrshire controls the interaction between the two and retains her dominance with reinforced personal boundaries. When the taxicab arrives at the station, Ayrshire and McKann have little time for pleasantries, but to make the train, they must run. Like her easy exit from the stage, Ayrshire has no trouble with the physical challenge of a short sprint to catch the train with her “feet so quick and sure,” and she

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fares much better than McKann, who “was ashamed of the way he was panting” (“Slipper” 144). Again, Cather portrays a short encounter between the two characters that shows Ayrshire in full control of the situation. The power Ayrshire demonstrates in mastering the stage gives her equal power in entering and exiting at will the space of the taxicab.

So too will Ayrshire master the space of the train. The train acts as not only a means of travel, but also as an intimate setting for a serious conversation about art and artists. By putting the characters on the train, Cather creates a new setting for the interaction of the characters. The intimacy of the train fosters a more frank and intense interaction between the characters than the more public spaces of the stage and the taxicab. The train functions as a significant space because the characters enter a space that is moving, indicating progression and advancement. Ayrshire and McKann are “going places.” When Ayrshire enters McKann’s berth, he becomes a captive audience; he cannot retreat from her because there is nowhere to go until the train stops in New York.

Ayrshire initiates the discussion with McKann, saying “I wanted a word with you anyway” (“Slipper” 145). Once the conversation begins, the space of the train, as a setting, disappears. The dialogue between the characters takes over the text, with only a few breaks for description. The breaks in the dialogue present Ayrshire as McKann perceives her. Despite his “natural distrust” of artists, McKann offers a view of Ayrshire that portrays her positively, emphasizing the power that goes beyond her abilities as an artist. During the conversation, she remains indefatigable. McKann’s perspective focuses on her physical body, which, as has been discussed, he finds attractive. In their face-to-face conversation, McKann notices all of her positive qualities, including her “demure” clothing, speaking voice, “remarkable eyes,” “slender person,” charm,
fearlessness, and confidence ("Slipper" 147-150). As seen through McKann's perspective, she is a woman comfortable with herself. Of equal significance is her verbal ability. Though she asks McKann to talk to her, Ayrshire participates in the conversation fully, and at several points, determines the course of the discussion. Her entrance into his space—the train berth—signals her previously established dominance. Coupled with her verbal statement, "'I wanted a word with you, anyway'" ("Slipper" 145), her entrance into McKann's space gives her the advantage of the workplace superior who manages and directs others and consistently retains the power to enter and exit the offices or workspaces of her/his employees at will. Since Ayrshire's superiority has already been established on the stage and in the taxicab, she has no difficulty sustaining her dominance on the train. She enters McKann's berth without invitation; she directs the topic and course of the conversation; and finally, she ends the conversation with her evaluation of McKann and his world view. She, like a manager, tells him what to do: "'And, by the way, dream of me tonight'" ("Slipper" 151). She pronounces him "naïf," "so cautious," and "naturally afraid of everything new" ("Slipper" 151). After her critique, Ayrshire continues to control the space of the train berth, and chooses an exit that is to her liking: "She rose, smiling, and paused with her hand on the door of her stateroom" ("Slipper" 151). As before, Ayrshire enters and exits at will, reinforcing the power she previously displays on stage and in the taxicab.

One may notice that the analysis above refers to the language of the workplace: manager, supervisor, subordinate, and employee. The use of these terms is intentional, since Cather's characters in the story are largely defined by their occupations. Kitty Ayrshire is a singer in the business of performing and creating art, which is the most important occupation Cather can imagine. Marshall McKann is a businessman in the coal
business. The differences in occupation do not indicate class differences—since both are members of a wealthy elite—but instead differences in world views. The encounter between the characters reveals how spatial dominance can be established and reinforced, even against the stereotype of gender. From beginning to end, Ayrshire establishes and maintains her dominance over McKann in different spaces. By entering and exiting spaces at will, Ayrshire demonstrates her refusal to be passive, accommodating, and inferior.

Marilyn Arnold critiques “Slipper” by explaining that “[i]t is easy to condemn McKann for the stolid self-satisfaction that will not let him even consider that art has meaning beyond frills and frosting” (110). More so, Arnold criticizes Ayrshire for “treating another human being with dehumanizing contempt” (110-111). The attitudes the characters express in their conversation “keep[s] adding stones to the growing wall between them, and any hope for reconciliation or understanding steadily fades” (Arnold 111). The “growing wall” that separates the characters serves the specific purpose of defining and sustaining what might otherwise be called “professional distance.” On the train, Ayrshire enters McKann’s space in the role of the superior, and the wall Arnold refers to is a requirement for the power dynamic that has already been established. The distance between the two characters reinforces their positions and actually creates a comfort zone for each of the characters. With boundaries firmly in place, both Ayrshire and McKann can converse without the pressing threat of having those boundaries challenged.

Linda McDowell explains that work, or rather, occupations “are not gender neutral—rather they are created as appropriate for either men or women, and the set of social practices that constitute and maintain them is constructed so as to embody socially
sanctioned but *variable* characteristics of masculinity and femininity" (emphasis in original) (*Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City* 25). Ayrshire resists stereotypes by engaging in an occupation that takes her outside of the home (the location most frequently, and stereotypically, associated with the feminine) and fosters her access to other spaces. Her choice of occupation also reflects characteristics defined as masculine, rather than feminine. In describing the work available to women at the beginning of the twentieth century when few upper class women were entering the workplace, Harriet Bradley lists the following similarities: work located indoors, work that is “clean, safe, physically undemanding, often repetitive and considered boring, requires dexterity rather than ‘skill’, often has domestic associations; it tends to lack mobility” (345). Ayrshire’s occupation as singer reflects only one of Bradley’s descriptors—she sings indoors. Singing for a living and performing for a less-than friendly public does place physical demands on Ayrshire; additionally, her creative occupation cannot be repetitive (though practice and preparation for singing may be), nor does singing have domestic associations. Cather gives her character in the most important occupation she can imagine—that of artist. With this choice, Cather distances her character from the majority of stereotypically feminine occupations. In contrast to women’s work, men’s work is associated with “physicality,” “is often highly mobile […], it requires ‘skill’ and training” and “at the highest level, it requires characteristics of creativity, innovation, intelligence, responsibility, authority, and power” (Bradley 345). Ayrshire’s occupation as singer directly matches all of the characteristics associated with work usually done by men. As a singer, she is required to actively exert control over her body and her voice; she must be creative in choosing roles, music, and how she will perform; she must “command” the stage and produce a successful performance on a consistent basis; she
must also, to sustain her career, be innovative and refreshing to keep her audiences interested enough to return to hear her performances. Ayrshire must also be highly mobile—she must travel regularly to sustain her career in response to new performing roles. Her occupation gives her power she can use with audiences and individuals, as she does with McKann. Ayrshire accesses power from her occupation that women in other occupations are denied. One of the most important aspects of Ayrshire’s occupation is the element of mobility, since her success relies on new audiences and new opportunities for performance. Though the urban setting of the story (Pittsburgh) has a built-in audience for Ayrshire, that is, the members of the upper class like the McKanns who have the disposable income and leisure time for attending concerts, as well as Carnegie Hall itself, the singer cannot perform repeatedly in the same location. Her occupation requires mobility, which also offers her greater mobility within other spaces defined on a smaller scale. She is comfortable with the demands of mobility that are part of her occupation, giving her an equal comfort with mobility within spaces. Ayrshire moves with ease entering the stage, gracefully makes the transfer from the electric car to the taxicab, and enters the train berth to engage McKann in conversation without any difficulty. She uses mobility to demonstrate and reinforce her power. The story explicitly reflects Ayrshire’s access to power based on mobility. Because she can enter and exit at will, the singer maintains her position as superior and leaves the role of inferior to others.

Mobility is not the only aspect of Ayrshire’s occupation that gives her access to power. The training required to become a successful performer also gives her access to power. Although the story does not extensively explain Ayrshire’s training, her performance indicates that she has received the benefits of professional training that
make her a woman who can sing for a living in culturally rich cities like Pittsburgh, New York, and Paris. In addition, the story underscores her success with the audience in Pittsburgh to demonstrate her creativity, innovation, intelligence, and authority as a performer. When she gets past McKann to center stage, “Kitty sensed the chill in the air, and it amused her” (“Slipper” 139). She demonstrates her awareness of the audience’s mood, and she uses that information to shape her performance. The singer is “amused”—not embarrassed, not overwhelmed, and not intimidated. She possesses enough talent and skill as a singer to create a memorable performance. She responds to the information provided by the audience to exert power over her audience. Ayrshire demonstrates her intelligence and authority by “study[ing] her audience with an appraising eye” (“Slipper” 139). She evaluates and judges her audience even before she begins, making decisions about her performance; sizing up her audience in order to determine how to best win them over. Though the audience is important to the singer, Ayrshire knows that the definition of success goes beyond winning over a single audience, since “you were not a thoroughly paying proposition until your name meant something on the sidewalk and in the barbershop” (“Slipper” 139). As a talented performer, Ayrshire acknowledges that her exploits on the stage require an audience, and also require an audience that will talk about her performance afterwards, outside of the theater, in the public spaces of the sidewalk and barbershop. Ayrshire likes the challenge of the demanding audience; before “this hard-shelled public she felt keen and interested; she knew that she would give such a recital as cannot often be heard for money” (“Slipper” 139). Ayrshire’s “interest” reveals her calm confidence and her awareness of her ability to perform well and exceed the expectations of the audience. Her “[c]lean singing, [and] finished artistry” demonstrate Ayrshire’s abilities and her creativity; despite the hard-shell of the
audience, her “popular aria [...] brought her audience all the way” (“Slipper 140, 141-142). As a performer and artist, Ayrshire creates a performance that wins over her audience, solidifies her reputation, and demonstrates her power. As with McKann, Ayrshire enters and exits at will before her audience, despite the audience’s applause calling for more (“Slipper” 142). In this case, her power gives her the ability to refuse the audience’s demands.

The story demonstrates the power of spatial dominance in action. Kitty Ayrshire possesses artistic power that complements and reinforces her power in other spaces—spaces where she holds the position of superior over Marshall McKann. Her power comes partly from mobility, but also from her occupation, her training, her establishment as an artist, and most certainly from entering and exiting at will with her audience and McKann. Spatial dominance occurs in on the stage, in the taxicab, and on the train, suggesting that Cather has designed a character who wields power in any space she cares to enter. The intersection of class-based definitions of power and geography provide a clearer understanding of Ayrshire’s finely-tuned ability to wield power.

Thea Kronborg and Kitty Ayrshire, both endowed with the essential power of the artist that resides in their physical bodies, claim power in the spaces they live in, move through, and work in. Though Thea may not dominate spaces as assertively as Ayrshire does, both women move through spaces in ways that foster their power, both as individuals and as artists. In creating these two characters, Cather designs them, from the very beginning, to claim and wield power. The power of the artist, for Cather, is not limited to the stage, nor is the artist merely “privileged.” Cather creates Thea and Ayrshire to be capable, independent women, yet their power functions in spaces that may be unexpected. Using Massey’s definition of place and understanding the power of
entering and exiting at will offers a potential framework for further analysis of Cather’s other works, especially the short stories. Employing the strategies of feminist geography and the class-based definitions of power facilitates an amplified and detailed comprehension of the power accessed and wielded by Thea Kronborg and Kitty Ayrshire.

Endnotes

1 An early perspective on Cather’s use of land, landscape, and the Southwest includes the work of Sister Lucy Schneider, C.S. J., in “‘Land’ Relevance in ‘Neighbor Rosicky,’” who makes effort to articulate and define a “land-philosophy” in Cather’s work. Schneider recognizes that the land or landscape is “[n]o mere backdrop or place of action, the land fundamentally qualifies or conditions the action and characterization in Miss Cather’s novels and short stories. Demanding attention in its own right, it serves as a controlling image that gives philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life” (“‘Land’ Relevance in ‘Neighbor Rosicky’” 105). Schneider defines “land-philosophy” on a set of “cardinal principles,” stated as equations between the land and various positive, powerful concepts (“‘Land’ Relevance” 105). The most important equation, in relation to The Song of the Lark, is the idea that the “land fosters transcendence; it represents the very real and complex world on which a long continuum of human effort is exercised” (“‘Land’ Relevance” 106). The analysis at this early stage can only discuss land or landscape in the most general terms; for whatever reason, the view Schneider argues for cannot look at the specific or scaled spaces where Cather locates her characters. Nor can Schneider address the reciprocal production of meaning and power occurring between humans and the spaces they live in, work in, and move through. A few years later, in “Willa Cather’s ‘The Best Years’: The Essence of her ‘Land-Philosophy,’” Schneider

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restates Cather's "land-philosophy" to suggest that Cather's final story (published posthumously) "presents a complex, seasoned relationship between human beings and the land" ("The Essence of her 'Land-Philosophy'" 61). The thesis Schneider argues for appears oversimplified—that Cather's work reflects shifts in her "emotional attitude" toward the land ("The Essence of her 'Land-Philosophy'" 61). Thea's "long continuum of human effort" occurs in her sustained effort and movement toward artisthood and the production of art. Not only must Thea overcome the physical space between her self and the world of art, which exists at significant distance from the small town of Moonstone, but also the space between, or more appropriately, the "long continuum" between her origins as a small-town girl and the full attainment of artisthood.

A somewhat problematic view, suggested by Audrey Goodman, in "The Immeasurable Possession of Air: Willa Cather and Southwestern Romance," analyzes The Song of the Lark, The Professor's House, and Death Comes for the Archbishop, to argue that the novels "construct visual and social landscapes in order to investigate the places where meaning eludes the observer or reader. They articulate the gaps between outside and native perceptions through historic sites in the American Southwest, a region whose relentless commodification endangered its local histories and cultures" (51-52). Goodman problematizes Cather's use of the romanticized Southwest, suggesting that capitalism and romanticism have harmful effects. "Cather heightens the differences between a place, its inhabitants, and the observer by organizing space through moments of individual sensation, scrutiny of artifacts, and scenes of cross-cultural contact," and Goodman indicates that Cather's characters, like Thea, "partially comprehend[] this strange and immense place [the Southwest]" (53, 58). Thea's experience in the cave at Panther Canyon and her exposure to the artifacts left by the Cliff Dwellers create an
“imagined alignment and thus construct the visionary link between native, outsider, and reader” (Goodman 59-60). The analysis offers some important insights; among these is the suggestion that Thea does not fully and only “partially” understands the significance of the Cliff Dwellings. On the other hand, Goodman fails to acknowledge that perhaps linked or connected Native and non-Native understandings of the Cliff Dwellings cannot be constructed by a non-Native writer. Furthermore, like other critics, Goodman focuses exclusively on the cave, without examining other spaces in the novel.

Using Thea and her development in the novel as a model, “artist,” according to Cather, means involvement in the activity of producing art, but also the engagement in the self-fashioning that the writer and her character devote so much time and energy to. Thea is a singer, producing art through her vocal performances, but Cather also places value on Thea’s development into an artist. Cather views Thea’s development itself as an artistic endeavor required of the artist. Based on the novel, it seems that Cather sees human life as art (Art) or nothing.

In the novel, Cather contrasts the physical strength of Thea’s vigorous, artistic body with several other bodies, including the shriveled body of Mrs. Doctor Archie, the tramp who uses his body against the town, he “got even with Moonstone” by drowning himself in the standpipe and poisoning the water supply (Song 124). See also Funda, Evelyn I. "Womanhood Distorted: Mrs. Archie as Thea’s Foil in The Song of the Lark." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter 39.2-3 (1995): 30-33. Thea’s body is also contrasted with Ray Kennedy’s wrecked body after the train accident: “‘Kennedy’s all broke up’” (Song 129). A more significant contrast occurs between Thea’s powerful body and the singer Jessie Darcey, who is “thin and awkward in person” (Song 236). As a “singer with poor digestion and low vitality; [Darcey] needed no seer to cast her
horoscope" (Song 236). Darcey struggles to sing high notes without “placing” her hand in the air (Song 237).

4 In The Voyage Perilous: Willa Cather’s Romanticism, Rosowski explains that “Moonstone, Colorado is Red Cloud, Nebraska. Cather reproduced her hometown so precisely that one could map the stores, churches, houses, and streets of one and find her way in the other” (emphasis in original) (62).

5 In the Art Institute, Thea sees the Jules Breton painting that gives the novel its title. Rosowski points out “a certain irony in Cather’s use of Breton’s painting. While Breton painted a peasant girl awakening to the rural beauty about her, Cather wrote of a peasant girl awakening to the beauty of an art that enables her to escape from her own neighborhood” (“Willa Cather and the French Rural Tradition of Breton and Millet: Of Pioneers!, The Song of the Lark, and My Ántonia” 58). Overcoming the friction of distance, Thea is able to leave Moonstone, but she does not forget the value of her early environment. In fact, toward the end of the novel she will use her memories of the Kronborg house in Moonstone to relax herself to sleep (Song 405).

6 The only struggles occur in the apartment/enclave when Thea is alone, “after an exhausting rehearsal” (Song 403). Thea is irritated by the bad meal, angry over missing underclothing, uncertain whether her bath will soothe or agitate her, and even begins considering moving to another apartment hotel until she “checked herself,” to admit that she would not be able to move into another space at that time (Song 404).

7 In “The Way Out West: Development and the Rhetoric of Mobility in Postmodern Feminist Theory,” Elizabeth A. Pritchard cautions against feminists relying too heavily on the rhetoric of mobility as a marker for women attaining freedom, since the “development binary of mobility and stasis is, of course, gendered” (51). Pritchard
explains that the “real problem is whether a given rhetoric legitimizes injustice and jeopardizes women’s well-being” (57). The three criteria Pritchard employs for questioning mobility include that “mobility, per se, is a wholly inadequate index of freedom and development,” “there are rich nomads and there are poor nomads,” and finally, “a fixation on development or liberty as escaping or exiting the ‘closure’ entailed in various locations reinscribes a utopianism that jeopardizes the possibility of a politics directed toward constructing an alternative and liveable world” (57, 58, and 60). Kitty Ayrshire is mobile, but she also demonstrates power in other significant ways, as the discussion shows.
CHAPTER THREE

LETICIA NAZARENO AND NENA DACONTE

Born 6 March 1928, in Aracataca, Colombia, Gabriel José García Márquez was primarily raised by his grandparents. After reading Franz Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis,” García Márquez became interested in reading classic literature, including the Bible, which eventually led him to begin his own writing. His early journalism for El Espectador and El Heraldo gave him the opportunity to learn about writing as a profession and develop his ability to tell the most outrageous stories in a straightforward, journalistic style yet remain believable to a reader. Best known for the novel One Hundred Years of Solitude, García Márquez began his publishing career with Leaf Storm and Other Stories in 1955. García Márquez’s work has covered several genres: journalism, non-fiction, telenovelas, fiction, and most recently, autobiography. Vivir Para Contarla was published in December of 2002. For the novel One Hundred Years of Solitude, García Márquez received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

In The Autumn of the Patriarch (1976) and “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow” (1993), Gabriel García Márquez creates female characters who successfully negotiate power in specific spaces. In the case of Leticia Nazareno, in Autumn, she claims power in the microgeographies of the presidential palace—as a survival strategy and in her proximity to the most powerful character in the novel, the unnamed general/dictator. Nazareno faces destruction because she lacks any model for negotiating power beyond
the imprisoning space of the presidential palace. For Nena Daconte, in “Trail,” her power operates in the spaces where her relationship with her husband is initiated. In the process of overcoming the friction of distance, or the obstacle of space itself, and traveling beyond those spaces, Daconte will be gradually drained of her power and lifeblood in her symbolic role as representative of Latin American identity. Using the strategies of feminist geography intersected with class-based definitions of power reveals more female power working through Nazareno and Daconte. Ultimately, both of the female characters are destroyed—despite their access to power, neither woman is able to secure a future for herself or her progeny. In its two sections, this chapter analyzes the novel *The Autumn of the Patriarch* and the short story “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow.” Both of the female characters negotiate access to power, as defined according to the culture of wealth, uncovering the complexity of negotiating power on various scales. Overall, the emphasis on the culture of wealth suggests that García Márquez critiques those who have the most decision-making power and greatest access to resources. The power of the female characters and their location in the culture of wealth, in García Márquez’s writing indicates that the culture of wealth is also most responsible for change, especially in urban Latin America.

Leticia Nazareno, kidnapped from a Jamaican convent, is the general’s concubine-become-wife who also bears the only child who bears the general’s name. In her movement within and through the microgeographies of the presidential palace, Nazareno exploits her proximity to the general and his power, to eventually gain access to power of her own. However, as she moves from the palace to the public marketplace, she remains a prisoner. Her identity as the wife of the general, regardless of her location, makes her hated and vulnerable. Despite her access to power and her close proximity to the general,
Nazareno remains isolated from anyone who might act as a role model and show her how to wield power. Without a role model, Nazareno cannot effectively wield the power she does access, and these limits to her power and restrictions on her identity lead to her destruction.

Since most critics consider *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to be Gabriel García Márquez's most important work, considering three similarities between that novel and *The Autumn of the Patriarch* will highlight geographical and class elements that few critics have discussed at length. First, the novels reflect many classes of people, from the poorest of the poor to the hyperelite. Though both novels focus mostly on the elite, those with the fewest resources also play important roles. Second, *Autumn* and *Solitude* both bring into play the powerful maternal forces of Bendición Alvarado and Ursula Buendía, who function as central, dominant characters in their respective narratives. For the purposes of my analysis, the most important similarity between the two novels is the use of a single material structure that functions as a central location for the events of the narrative. The presidential palace in *Autumn* functions much like the Buendía house in *Solitude.* Admittedly, there are many other similarities between *Autumn* and *Solitude.* However, calling attention to the presence of the wealthy and the poor, the central female characters, and the single material structure as centralized setting, provides a starting point for analyzing the complex of class-related and geographical issues operating in the literary works. The similarities between the novels also reinforce García Márquez's view, as summarized by Harley D. Oberhelman, "that in general a writer writes only one book, although that book may appear in several volumes under different titles" (3). Clearly, in simple topical terms, *Autumn* is about a dictator and *Solitude* about a family.
As in *Solitude*, the central material structure functions as the setting for the majority of *Autumn*. The overall setting for *Autumn* is the presidential palace, which functions as a locus of power; as a space of power, the palace is where the general lives, works, eats, sleeps, imprisons Nazareno, gives orders, enacts cruelty, and dies. Within the microgeographies of the presidential palace, Nazareno exerts an intimidating and dictatorial power, almost in the same manner that the general exerts power in the nation. García Márquez covers entire life cycles, from birth to death in the space of the palace, though the characters also take readers far and wide. The general spends his second childhood in the pansy bower of the palace, and he is, repeatedly, found dead in various rooms of the palace. Manuela Sánchez's successful disappearance and escape from the general's advances, and José Ignacio Saenz de la Barra's cruel and violent search for the assassins of Leticia Nazareno, and the other enemies of the general suggest the larger scale of the nation. Furthermore, information about "out there"—the people, the nation, the other areas of the country, and the violence enacted on behalf of the general's regime are brought to the presidential palace by way of foreign visitors, the communal narrator, Leticia Nazareno, Saenz de la Barra, and the countless unnamed aides and officials.

According to García Márquez, *Autumn* began for him as a writer with the "image of a very old, inconceivably old, dictator all alone in a palace full of cows" (Apuleyo Mendoza 83). The decrepitude of the palace, with its decaying, decadent baroque splendor, metaphorically matches the general's own physical, mental, and emotional decline. However, the visual image refers to a space which already possesses its own imaginative power—by setting the characters in a palace, the author automatically endows the characters in that space with status and power. The central image of the palace functions as a locus of power. The dictator, the military and political leaders,
along with the numerous aides and assistants, all access the power within and of the palace. As a locus of power, the palace facilitates the solitude of power by maintaining physical distance between the general and others, by crystallizing boundaries over which others cannot cross, and by strictly excluding others. In geographical terms, the palace is a space of exclusion where “a powerful human grouping more or less consciously seeks to distance itself from other less powerful groupings” (McDowell and Sharp 259). The presidential palace also contains other spaces of exclusion, or microgeographies, including the bridal bedroom, the pansy bower, the private office, the presidential bedroom, and the toilet. In these microgeographies, human spaces within the larger space of the palace, Nazareno and the dictator will play out their power dynamic on an intimate human scale.

The presidential palace does not exist in a vacuum; Nazareno will seek to leave the prison of the palace to enter the city and the public market place. However, the complexity of the city surrounding the palace does not permit Nazareno to wield power in that space for long. In using the palace as a central material structure for the events of the novel, García Márquez also exploits the urban setting outside of the palace to exhibit the power of the general’s regime. While the presidential palace in Autumn represents the central locus for events in the novel, the city and nation described in the novel remain unidentified, miasmic, and nonspecific. Anton Benjamin Rosenthal compares the Latin American city to Los Angeles, where the increasing size and complexity of the city make it “more problematic as a unit of analysis” (33). The same could be said of the nation and city as represented in Autumn. The novel pursues an urban vision, yet this imagined city, despite the many repetitions, never comes into detailed focus. “The city is seemingly everywhere and nowhere, and it is becoming an increasingly difficult site to map on any
level" (Rosenthal 37). Though the city described in the novel does function as an important space, my analysis will focus on the presidential palace and its microgeographies, since mapping the city would include only a limited number of identified spaces defined outside of the presidential palace: the presidential plaza outside of the palace, the waterfront, the cathedral, the dogfight district, the frequently blocked or cordoned off public streets, the marketplace, the National Theater, the baseball stadium, and the invaded home of Francisca Linero. In considering Leticia Nazareno, my analysis will focus on the microgeographies of the presidential palace and the public marketplace, since mapping the city represented in *Autumn* would provide only a limited understanding of the hierarchies and movements of power among the novel's characters. The analysis will maintain the assumptions that the nation in the novel is a Latin American nation, and that the city of the novel is a Latin American city (Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Bogotá or any of the other large cities designed with a blend of New World and European influences). However, instead of using a larger scale, like city or region, I suggest that focusing on the microgeographies of the presidential palace creates the most effective geographical strategy for understanding Leticia Nazareno's power in the novel.

Interviews with García Márquez indicate the importance of the city in his work, and highlight some of his process used in developing settings. The construction of the city in the *Autumn* involves the creating of an urban, multifaceted, and multicultural location. According to García Márquez, the city represented in *Autumn* is assembled from several cities he has lived in and visited:

I’ve been through the Caribbean island by island, city by city, and I’ve put all of it in the book. I’ve put in my Caribbean first of all. The brothel where I lived in
Barranquilla; the Cartagena of my student days; the dockside bars where I used to eat when I left the paper at four in the morning, and even the schooners sailing for Aruba and Curacao at daybreak laden with whores. There are streets which resemble the Calle del Comercio in Panama, there are corners of Old Havana, of San Juan, or La Guaira, but there are also places reminiscent of the British West Indies, with its Indians, Dutch and Chinese. (Apuleyo Mendoza 87)

In a later interview with Raymond Leslie Williams, García Márquez confirms his use of a collage strategy for assembling the setting of the novel. Because of his concern with the daily and the ordinary, García Márquez explains that he “had the idea of creating a total world in The Autumn of the Patriarch. It was a world that hadn’t been very well documented” (Williams “An Interview” 134). In order to “document” this “total world,” García Márquez puts together the places and spaces that serve the overall purpose of the novel. Furthermore, by describing and attempting to explain more about the issue of where the novel is set, the author confirms the importance of the places and spaces constructed in the novel.²

The following analysis will focus on the character of Leticia Nazareno since the majority of the criticism³ of the novel fails to discuss at length her movement from concubine to wife or the spaces through which Nazareno will move to gain access to power. In fact, only a very few critics have discussed space as significant in Autumn. In an article published in 1976 titled “Forma, sentido e interpretación del espacio imaginario en El otono del patriarca,” Roberto Onstine, though discussing imaginary space, makes several relevant points. Onstine acknowledges the significance of the “houses” of the novel—the presidential palace, the suburban mansion of Bendición Alvarado, and the barrio home of Manuela Sánchez—suggesting that these spaces function as “núcleos
graficos [vivid nuclei]" for events (428). In addition, Onstine draws a connection between the decay of the presidential palace and the decay of the dictator, making the world of the tyrant "su propio infierno [his own hell]" (429). Regarding the negotiation of space and movements through spaces in the novel, Onstine states that the named characters, including Bendición Alvarado, Manuela Sánchez and Leticia Nazareno are subject to fluctuations in their environment(s) “que los encarcelan [that imprison them]” (430). The idea is that the spaces are in flux, which puts the characters in flux as well. Onstine argues that the fluctuations in surroundings reflects the internal life of the characters; in other words, a means for “un configurar el mundo interior [a configuration of the interior world]” (430). Because Onstine’s analysis focuses on imaginary space, his discussion is limited to a rather simplified equation between imaginary spaces and the interior world of the characters. Moreover, Onstine wants to provide means for demythifying the dictator, and focuses the majority of the analysis on this process.

Ernesto Gil López, in “El espacio en El otono del patriarca de Gabriel García Márquez,” provides a summary for understanding spaces in the novel. To begin, Gil López divides spaces into categories of kinetic or static. The kinetic spaces are those that foster action, such as the presidential palace or the marketplace (66). In contrast, the static spaces do not foster action, but instead function as referential spaces, or locations that the novel merely refers to. Gil López also points out that the spaces/places in Autumn “se rompen las fronteras del mítico ‘Macondo’ para extenderse a todo un territorio nacional [break the borders of the mythical ‘Macondo’ extending to create a national territory]” (66). Using a location beyond the borders of Macondo is a revolution in García Márquez’s writing, but Gil López emphasizes the (Latin) American “markers” or “dispositions” that firmly set the novel in the Americas, including references to the
Caribbean, foods, the cumbia, the Indians, and the mixing of New and Old World cultures (66-67). Like Onstine, Gil López suggests parallels between spaces and characters in the novel; however, Gil López views the spaces as symbolic representations of the trajectory of the dictator and his regime (68). In a similar fashion, the chaos of the dogfight district alludes to the chaos of ever-present violence enacted in other parts of the nation (69). Rather than in-depth analysis, this article offers a summary of spatial perspectives but no discussion on the movement of characters through the spaces of the novel.

Raymond L. Williams discusses the relationship between time and space in Autumn in an overview of several Colombian novels. “El tiempo en la novela: Observaciones en torno al tiempo en la novela colombiana contemporánea” analyzes the use of time as it functions in several Colombian novels, including One Hundred Years of Solitude and Autumn. Williams begins by stating his agreement with critic Ricardo Gullón, who does not distinguish between time and space. According to Williams, Gullón acknowledges the psychological time and space which must be distinguished from “clock time” (12). By refusing to separate time and space, Gullón (and consequently, Williams) follows the theoretical trend in thinking about time and space demonstrated among critics like David Harvey and Edward Soja. In analyzing Autumn, Williams focuses on the structure of the novel “se basa en un un sistema de apertura progresivas que corresponden en el tiempo y el espacio [is based in a system of progressive apertures that correspond in time and space]” (20). The system of apertures or entrances, according to Williams, allows the narrator(s) to tell the general’s story which comes from within the space of the presidential palace—“el espacio inmediato” (20). In order to tell the story, the narrator(s) must tell of the past by “mudanza de espacio a tiempo [changing space into time]” (20).
By changing space into time, Williams explains that the novel’s apertures or entrances provide access to “una historia más amplia [a more complex story]” (21). In other words, the descriptions of the palace interior and other spaces provide openings through which the novel moves into the expanded story of the dictator and his ongoing isolation. Williams indicates that the novel “ha creado un sistema narrative único y absolutamente functional [has created a unique and absolutely functional narrative system]” (21). While providing a valuable understanding of the narrative system that organizes the novel, Williams’s analysis does not explicate the meanings of other spaces in the novel, nor does the analysis acknowledge any relationship between space and power.

Conspicuous in these critical perspectives is the absence of any analysis of the female characters and their roles. While Onstine acknowledges that the suburban mansion and the presidential palace represent important spaces in the novel, his analysis does not deal with the issue of power demonstrated in the interactions between characters in those spaces. Gil López offers several perspectives on space in the novel, but also fails to address the interactions between characters. Williams addresses the novel’s narrative system, yet does not examine the role of that system in portraying the general or the novel’s female characters. Overall, since critics tend to focus on the dictator, the women of the novel—Bendición Alvarado, Manuela Sánchez, Francisca Linero, Leticia Nazareno, the nameless maids and servants, and the nameless “girl” prostitutes—have received very little critical attention. Michael Bell notes that Leticia Nazareno “re-enacts [the general’s] only true, if deeply retarded, human relationship which was with his mother” (70-71). Bell does not pursue the power dynamics that keep the general from having mature, adult relationship. In “Scenes of Instruction in Gabriel García Márquez,” Maarten van Delden discusses Nazareno in relationship to the general. “When he [the
general] finally gets married, his relation to his wife is much like that of a student to his teacher. It is from Leticia Nazareno that he learns, among other things, to read and write” (71). The dynamics between the general and Nazareno are seriously skewed from the beginning of their relationship, and while she may be his teacher, van Delden emphasizes that, aside from reading and writing, “everything else he [the general] learns is of a ludicrously superficial nature” (71). Despite the superficiality of the general’s learning, the relationship between Nazareno and the general places her in a position of power, which she will exploit to gain access to power that expands beyond the bridal bedroom, into the corners of the palace, outside of the palace, and eventually, to influence the lives of the nation’s people.

While Bendición Alvarado functions as the central female character, Leticia Nazareno is located at the center. As a female character, Nazareno is located between the extreme maternal represented by the general’s mother, and the extreme virginal, represented by Manuela Sánchez, the queen of the dogfight district. Nazareno negotiates a variety of roles: object, concubine, surrogate mother, lover, caretaker, parent, wife, giver of orders, and public figure. While moving through these roles, Nazareno remains a prisoner. Her identity, which is imposed upon her, keeps her separated from anyone who might act as a role model for wielding power. Wrapped up in the power of the presidential palace and the fact of being the woman chosen by the dictator, Nazareno’s identity effectively isolates her, keeping her from establishing any social relations that might offer her alternative means for wielding power. Nazareno differs from the other women of the novel in that her proximity to power eventually gives her a means for accessing her own power and demonstrating agency in using her power. Her destruction is the result of her failure to negotiate the spaces outside of the presidential palace—
though she gains access to those spaces and moves through those spaces, she cannot retain power in those spaces.

Apparently, the general is attracted to Nazareno (or by her), and his repetition of her name was “enough for the presidential security services to kidnap her from the convent in Jamaica” (Autumn 160). Like the other nuns, “it was possible to distinguish their high-class origins, the difference in their condition, and the inequality of their office” (Autumn 159). The women of the convent come from wealthy backgrounds, which is apparent even in their nakedness. The upper class share physical characteristics, and Leticia is no exception, as “she was small and sturdy, robust, with opulent buttocks, large full teats, clumsy hands, protuberant sex, hair cut with pruning shears, spaced teeth firm as ax heads, snub nose, flat feet, a novice as mediocre as all of them” (Autumn 159).

Something about Nazareno makes her different, and the general notices that she “had left the obscure trail of a wild animal” (Autumn 159). Nazareno’s wildness suggests her self-certainty, her sense of confidence and superiority. Her physical description indicates her objectification by the dictator and his security force. As a woman, she is described more like chattel or a savage animal—perhaps even to suggest that she will become a savage mate to match the cruel tyranny perpetrated by the general. Yet from the beginning, Nazareno possesses a masculine quality, a toughness and firmness, which appear to give her the ability to survive the kidnapping and her ensuing imprisonment as the general’s concubine. Eventually she will access power and her voice indicates how she will give orders; prior to the kidnapping “when the officer from the identification services found her name in alphabetical order in the roster and shouted Nazareno Leticia, and she answered with a man’s voice, present” (Autumn 160). Physically solid and sturdy, Nazareno possesses “a man’s voice” which she will eventually use to command others.
Her body is the focus of the kidnapping, and the description of her kidnapping reflects the cruelty of the general’s regime. Not only is Nazareno kidnapped, but she is also dehumanized, and temporarily converted into an object. Her imprisonment begins immediately; she is “gagged and in a strait jacket inside a pine box with metal hoops saying fragile and in English do not drop this side up and an export license in accordance with the necessary consular permission for the two thousand eight hundred champagne glasses of genuine crystal for the presidential wine cellar” (Autumn 160). While both “fragile” and valuable, Nazareno’s body becomes transformed into “crystal” (an object) in order to transport a human being like cargo. Nazareno, like other women, cannot escape her body, nor can she escape her imprisonment in the space of her body. In this part of the text, “body” is equated with “material goods,” resulting in the destruction of Nazareno’s humanity. Like crystal, her body becomes transparent, irrelevant, and immobilized. So too are the bodies of those crushed by the general’s regime—they are insignificant and unimportant. At the same time, Nazareno’s body has value, but not the value given to a human being. At this point, Nazareno only has value as an object; the general will receive the “goods.” However, Nazareno remains “present,” and her presence will eventually provide the opportunity to access and wield a portion of her own power.

The transformation of Nazareno’s body into the object of crystal functions as a complex symbol for the control the general’s regime has attempted to sustain. While body equals goods, clearly Nazareno’s body has value, as crystal has value. Simultaneously, both her body and the crystal are fragile, breakable. Furthermore, in the hierarchy separating the poor from the wealthy, champagne glasses belong to the realm of the elite. On this side of the textual equation, Nazareno becomes associated with the
social and political elite. Her kidnapping removes her from her less powerful position, as a nun, to a more powerful position, as the general’s concubine/wife. Her association with the social and political elite magnifies the power of Nazareno’s body. In sustaining the textual equation, the body/crystal must be protected in order to preserve the integrity and worth of the goods. By exerting control over Nazareno’s body as object and explicitly acknowledging the value of her body, the kidnapping leaves the general (and his regime) open to the possibility that her body, with its preserved integrity and worth, will enter the space(s) of power, and in turn, be re-transformed (as body) into an agent, able to access her own power. By entering the space(s) of power, namely the presidential palace, Leticia Nazareno will indeed find a way to access her own power. In a similar fashion, the people of the unidentified nation, though with only limited access to the presidential palace or the general, will also create and exert power of their own in other space(s).

The sudden cruelty of the kidnapping extends to her installation in the presidential palace. Once the box containing Nazareno is brought to the palace, she is laid “naked and drugged on the columned bed in the bed room for distinguished guests” (Autumn 160). Though not subject to the prison cell, she is just as surely imprisoned in “the bridal bedroom” (Autumn 44). In the bedroom, the general watches Nazareno sleep in “the lethargy of the Luminal” (Autumn 161). From this point forward, she will be under the watchful eye of the general, his associates, and the general public. Created by the eyes and gazes of others, Nazareno’s imprisonment begins and ends under the scrutiny of others; since she does not get to choose her identity, her imprisonment, therefore, is the prison of identity as the woman chosen by the general. Though chosen against her will, Nazareno, and specifically her body, will access power, starting with the power of her body. As the general watches her, Nazareno appears completely vulnerable, yet as she
sleeps, her drugged body exerts itself on the general, producing a “kind of infantile amazement” (*Autumn* 161). Just watching the sleeping woman influences the general to respond, not with sexual desire, but instead with an “infantile” response. The skewed dynamics between Nazareno are already established; her presence makes him subordinate, and he will follow her lead, like a student following his teacher, as described by van Delden (71). Her power begins in her body—which protects her and gives her a way to survive her concubinage. Perilli describes the general’s weakness in the face of Nazareno’s nudity: “Tiene miedo del cuerpo inerme de la mujer y lo respeta [the general fears and respects the defenseless body of Nazareno]” (216). While she sleeps, Nazareno evokes “amazement” in the general; however, when she wakes, his feeling becomes outright fear. He was “frightened with the unforeseeable aims of her silence because he couldn’t imagine anything in spite of his uncountable years and his measureless power he was more frightened than she, more alone, more not knowing what to do, as confused and defenseless as he had been the first time” (*Autumn* 161). Though Nazareno wakes to the “bewilderment” of the general’s gaze, she effectively uses “silence” (*Autumn* 161). Without speaking, Nazareno can influence the general and keep him from harming her. Silence also gives Nazareno the opportunity to assess where she is, what she is doing there, and how she will survive her imprisonment. She controls the general’s body with her silence, keeping “him motionless” (*Autumn* 162).

For over two years, Nazareno is subject to “the rigors of captivity […] and the punishment of nudity so that she would understand that […] she had no possibility of escaping that fate” (*Autumn* 163). Her body, even in the bedroom prison, is a powerful body and the general “enjoyed her without touching her during the first year of captivity” (*Autumn* 163). Whether by using her physical sturdiness or masculine voice, Nazareno is
a woman endowed with so much power that at first, the general cannot muster the
courage to touch her; she intimidates him. When she does speak to the general and they
begin to interact, her masculine voice makes the general respond. Nazareno speaks to the
general in the language that will produce results; in accordance with the rigid military
regime, "she ordered him without saying please to open the window" [emphasis added]
and "he ended up doing what she ordered" [emphasis added] (Autumn 163 and 164). The
general is accustomed to following orders, and Nazareno intelligently uses her voice and
body to prevent the general from harming her and eventually, to follow her directions.

The first physical sexual encounter between the former nun and the general—"the
final cataclysm occurred a short time after the second anniversary of the kidnapping"—
happens as directed by Nazareno (Autumn 164). By giving orders, she is able to disarm
the general, forcing him to meet her as an equal; in other words, in utter nakedness.
Urging the general to remove his military gear, clothing, and even the truss for his
herniated testicle, Nazareno strips the general, until "he was left as only his mother had
known him" (Autumn 164). Disarmed, naked, and vulnerable, the general becomes an
infant again, reduced to the most fundamental physical pleasures. The lovemaking
produces not pleasure, but "torment," and instead of ejaculate, "shit" (Autumn 165).
Instead of physical pleasure, "las sensaciones masculinas asociadas al coito son de
angustia y de muerte [the masculine sensations associated with sex are those of anguish
and death]" (Perilli 216). Though the description of the lovemaking focuses on the
general, Nazareno exerts her power—as a woman—in negotiating her complex role as
concubine/mistress/mother/lover. The exerts power over the general as a woman, using
her silence, her voice, her body, and her imprisonment. Her power takes a unique form in
that she does not respond to the general with what might be stereotypical feminine
expressions; she does not scream, cry, or faint. Instead, she communicates by giving orders and using the military language that the general is accustomed to. In addition, Nazareno seems aware of the general's awe and fear of her, so she takes advantage of her power and motivates him to act. The limited space of the bedroom prison actually favors Nazareno, because in that bounded space, the bedroom contains only a woman and a man. The skewed nature of their relationship also favors Nazareno because she can enter, and eventually exploit, the role of substitute mother, while the general enters the subordinate role of infantilized child.

By being in proximity to power, Nazareno can access power through and with her body. She spends more than two years in the "bridal" bedroom as the general's naked concubine. In that space, she exerts power as a woman. The boundaries of the bedroom prison reveal the concentration of power; Nazareno is of significant worth. Kept within the bedroom walls, she is stored and protected with in a space that is much like the special pine box for her kidnapping. Her femininity and sexual power give her a way to direct the evolution of their relationship. She physically and emotionally disarms the general, and over time, the two negotiate some kind of system of trust and communication that eventually allows Nazareno access to other areas of the presidential palace. Nazareno also accesses power by mimicking or replicating the general's behavior and actions. Since Nazareno is isolated from the community at large, her social resources are extremely limited. After her kidnapping, her only social contacts are with the general and the aides/servants who keep the presidential palace running. Nazareno also accesses power by negotiating and maintaining an intimate relationship with the dictator. The relationship between Nazareno and the general may be a faulty, retarded, and dysfunctional one, but the relationship does give her access to power. Nazareno, not the
general, controls their earliest interactions. The general’s fear of her feminine, wild body gives her access to power over him as a man, while also giving her power over him as a decision-maker. The physical intimacy of the relationship leads to her pregnancy and the eventual marriage. The marriage and birth of the child, occurring almost simultaneously in the text (Autumn 177-178), give legitimacy to Nazareno, providing her with a position of power in the novel’s social hierarchy. As the general’s wife, Nazareno receives legitimacy that erases the disgrace of her concubinage, despite the fact that she was kidnapped against her will. The marriage gives her access to power by making her socially acceptable and forcing others to acknowledge and accept her position of power. Through her marriage to the dictator, Nazareno accesses the power of the married woman; she is assured security, stability, and recognition. Though her access to power works through norms defined by patriarchy—physical intimacy and marriage— Nazareno’s ability to mimic the general’s behavior represents not a capitulation to patriarchy, but rather the adaptation of his behaviors for her own self-centered purposes.

The power wielded by Nazareno begins with her body, but also operates beyond her body. She becomes parent and teacher to the general; she develops her body’s power into an expanded position of dominance over him by reproducing the role of his mother. Perilli explains that “Leticia Nazareno se convierte en la dueña del poder y sustituye a Bendición en el cuidado y crianza del anciano [Leticia Nazareno becomes the mistress of power and replaces Bendición in caring for and raising of the general]” (217). Adelaida López Mejía agrees, indicating that Nazareno “clearly becomes the dictator’s surrogate mother” (314). As explained earlier, the power dynamics between the general and Leticia are seriously skewed from the beginning of their relationship. She becomes caretaker for the general: bathing him, dressing him, playing with him as if with a child.
In a passage that reveals some of the luxuries of the presidential palace, “she submerged him in the lustral waters of the pewter bathtub with lion’s paws and lathered him with Reuter soap, scrubbed him with washcloths, and rinsed him off with the water of boiled herbs” (Autumn 173). Their physical intimacy goes farther, and Nazareno reveals that she is not squeamish about her duties as wife/mother: “she would daub the joints of his legs with cocoa butter to alleviate the rash from his truss, she would put boric acid powder on the moldy star of his asshole” (Autumn 173). Nazareno’s role in this case is indeed that of mother, since the description of her care for the general sounds much like the process of diapering a baby, complete with ointment for diaper “rash.” As surrogate mother, she exerts control over the general as infant/child, retaining the ability to punish or “correct,” even if only in a mocking manner; Nazareno would “whack his behind like a tender mother for your bad manners with the minister of Holland, plap, plap” (Autumn 173). Establishing and exploiting the physical intimacies between mother-child and wife-husband initiate a base of power from which Nazareno can build and expand her power.

Moving from the physical to the mental, Nazareno becomes the general’s teacher. Though van Delden expresses concern over the quality of the general’s learning and its “ludicrously superficial nature,” the slippery and uncertain nature of power functions as a more significant issue (71). As the general’s teacher, Nazareno expands her power. As teacher, she takes on a female role closely related to mother, and she acts as a possessor of knowledge, which makes the general a student, one who lacks knowledge. By possessing knowledge, Nazareno wields power over the general—she has something that he lacks. Though the general appears to be master of the nation, his relationship with his wife indicates a relationship dynamic that gives Nazareno power. She spends time teaching him children’s songs and table etiquette. The general’s lack of literacy is an
especially important gap, since Nazareno takes advantage of the opportunity to exert her knowledge and impose her learning on him. She

would sit him down every afternoon between two and four o’clock at a school desk under the pansy bower to teach him how to read and write, she had put her novice’s tenacity into that heroic enterprise, and he had matched it with his terrifying old man’s patience, with the terrifying will of his limitless power, with all my heart, so that he would chant with all his soul the tuna in the tin the loony in the bin the neat nightcap, [...]. (Autumn 171)

The chanting makes the general seem like “the loony in the bin” (Autumn 171) himself, especially when sheer enthusiasm leads to “the rote reading lessons which he repeated at every moment and everywhere just like his portraits even in the presence of the treasury minister from Holland,” causing significant confusion and embarrassment (Autumn 172). The literacy training he receives not only allows him to read the graffiti on the walls of the toilets of the palace (Autumn 193), but also to participate, as a writer of his own graffiti, in the dialogue (Autumn 201). While the role of teacher appears to be a traditionally female role, López Mejía’s psychoanalytic analysis of the novel argues that Nazareno as teacher places her in a masculine or paternal role. “In Lacan’s view, it is the symbolic father, represented by a masculine intermediary, who introduces the subject into culture and language” (López Mejía 315). Having already established that Nazareno is a surrogate mother who induces fear, López Mejía indicates that Nazareno also fulfills the role of the phallic mother (314-315). By successfully fulfilling paternal and maternal roles, Nazareno wields power that is more than strictly feminine or female power. López Mejía describes Nazareno’s dual roles: “as imaginary father she [Nazareno] introduces the dictator to the spectacle of literature, as phallic mother she wields a power that
eventually costs her and her child their life” (315). By fulfilling paternal and maternal roles, Nazareno expands her power base and demonstrates that she holds a position of mastery. Not only does she possess knowledge, but she also wields that knowledge to claim power for herself.

As in the intimate space of the bridal bedroom, and the womb-like space of the bathtub, Nazareno and the general interact in a space within the presidential palace that concentrates and reinforces the previously established power relationship between the two. In “the pansy bower” the two characters are isolated from the others in the palace and those outside of the palace (Autumn 171). Setting instruction in “the pansy bower” serves to isolate and idealize the teaching and learning processes, which distracts from the idea that power remains at stake in the private garden. The setting of “the pansy bower” effectively reproduces the power dynamics of the “bridal bedroom” where Nazareno exerts control over the general and his actions. As a space of exclusion, the pansy bower keeps the couple in and keeps others out, all the while reinforcing Nazareno’s power over the general. However, Nazareno has not yet been allowed outside of the presidential palace, keeping her keenly aware of her ongoing imprisonment. Within the private garden, Nazareno controls the general’s body and mind by seating the general at “a school desk”—sustaining the spatial patterns of infantilization that foster her power. As mother become teacher, she can expand her power over the general and control him in ways that go beyond the physical. In the space where teaching and learning take place, Nazareno exerts power over the general by controlling how he spends his time, what information is offered, how the lessons are presented, and by establishing a position of power that the general will not question. Nazareno tells the general what to do and how to do it. The repetitive nature of the lessons echoes the
repetitive features of the novel itself—repeated over and over, ideas become unquestioned and irreplaceable truths. Nazareno is obviously an effective, perhaps even hypnotic, teacher, since the general willingly and automatically repeats his lessons “everywhere” (Autumn 172). Whatever happens in the teaching and learning space impacts the general so deeply that he continues his lessons outside of the initial space where learning occurs, indicating Nazareno’s success in wielding and expanding her power over the general. As the next step in expanding her power, Nazareno will exert her power as a consumer, claiming the power of the presidential palace for her own use.

When Nazareno eventually gains access to space outside of the presidential palace, she becomes a public figure who functions as a substitute for the general. Though not the general, Nazareno represents the next closest thing to the general himself. Because the general cannot enter public space, Nazareno takes the place of his public “body.” As the woman chosen by the general and his public surrogate, her identity cannot be self-defined. The descriptions of Nazareno, once she gains access to spaces outside of the palace, shift drastically from the positive, feminine images of giving, caring, teaching, and providing to the negative images of taking, lack of caring, and withholding. Where Nazareno is gentle and supportive with the general, she is harsh and unforgiving to members of the larger community. Where she is kind in the presidential palace, she becomes unkind, jealous, and greedy in public. By revealing Nazareno’s failures as a public figure, the text complicates the character, creating a woman who is more than a kidnapping victim, more than a concubine, more than a lover, more than a teacher, and more than a wife. The reversal of the character’s behavior reinforces her complexity, while also demonstrating how the microgeographies that make a prison of the presidential palace serve as spaces for fostering some behaviors and hiding others. Once she leaves
the presidential palace, Nazareno remains subject to the prison of her identity as the
general’s concubine/wife—the public refuses to allow her any positive, self-defined role.
In other words, she remains a prisoner to her status. Her behavior indicates that she is
aware of her power as the general’s wife, using her position to act as an insatiable
consumer. Nazareno “carried off everything she found in her path to satisfy the only
thing left from her former status as novice which was her childish poor taste and the vice
of asking for something when there was no need” (Autumn 183). Instead of paying for
the goods, she steals “in army trucks everything that pleased her wishes without any more
sacrifice on her part except the peremptory order of send the bill to the government”
(Autumn 183). Of course, none of the vendors can collect payment from the inaccessible
government; “it was the same as saying collect from God” (Autumn 183). In public
spaces, Nazareno does wield power as selfish consumer; however, she cannot escape her
imprisonment as the wife and surrogate for the general. Isolated from others by the
presidential palace, Nazareno behaves like the general by abusing her power. Her
maladapted use of power leads to her inevitable destruction.

Nazareno’s destruction takes place in a public space—the marketplace. “Analyzing
public space, since its meaning or even its existence is situational, reveals changing
relations of power, particularly between social classes” and the marketplace offers the
space for the members of the lower classes (those without decision making power or
adequate resources) to access and claim power that actually affects the general (Rosenthal
41). When Nazareno and her son are torn to pieces in the marketplace, their deaths
resonate with several meanings about power. The general, of course, knows that his wife
and child are vulnerable. Moreover, Nazareno’s public outings make him vulnerable to
her loss; “upset by so many imaginary risks and real threats he forbade her to go out
without the ferocious escort of presidential guards under instructions to kill without cause,” yet the threat of violence cannot prevent violence (Autumn 196). The assassination is violent, sudden, unexpected. As reported in the plural voice of “two of his aides:”

Leticia Nazareno and the child had been torn to pieces and eaten by the stray dogs at the public market, they ate them alive general sir, but they weren’t the same usual street dogs but hunting animals with frightened yellow eyes and the smooth skin of a shark that someone had set upon the blue foxes, sixty dogs all alike who nobody knew when leapt out from among the vegetable stands and fell upon Leticia Nazareno and the child without giving us time to shoot for fear of killing them who looked as if they were drowning along with the dogs in a hellish whirlpool[…]. (Autumn 197).

As the surrogate body of the general, Nazareno represents the general, his power, and all of the horror of his regime. Therefore, her destruction represents the annihilation of the “public” body of the general. Since Nazareno and the general are roughly equivalent in public, her destruction is more than a statement about the community’s dislike of the general’s wife, and becomes a significant political expression of communal vengeance, frustration, and anger.

On one level, Nazareno’s destruction represents the public’s annoyance with her bad behavior in the marketplace:

she chose the most delicious fruits and the tenderest vegetables which would wither the instant she touched them, unaware of the evil virtue of her hands which made mold grow on bread that was still warm and had blackened the gold of her wedding ring, so that she heaped curses on the vegetable women for having
hidden their best wares and for the house of power had only these miserable pig mangoes left, sneak thieves, this pumpkin that sounds like a musician’s gourd inside, ill-born wenches, these shitty ribs with wormy blood[...]. (Autumn 181).

By criticizing the goods in the marketplace, Nazareno angers the vendors. She fails to recognize her dependence on the vendors, who might otherwise help her by setting aside the best produce or negotiating an official discount. While the passage above reflects Nazareno’s negative side of her mysterious physical power that rots fruit and “blackened the gold of her wedding ring,” her power, in the public space of the marketplace is an “evil virtue” (Autumn 181). Aside from criticizing the wares in the marketplace, Nazareno abuses the vendors themselves, screaming about their “evil mothers” (Autumn 181). She mistakenly believes that the far-reaching and institutionalized power of the presidential palace will protect her privileged position outside of that space in the public market. Despite her criticism of the goods available in the marketplace, Nazareno further angers the vendors with outright theft: “the serving girls with their baskets and the orderlies with their troughs cleaned out everything edible in sight” (Autumn 181).

Nazareno repeats her abuse and theft in the business district, where she “had despoiled the Hindu bazaars of their terrible glass swans and mirrors with seashell frames and coral ashtrays, had stripped the Syrian shops of mortuary taffetas and carried off by the fistful the strings of little gold fish and the protective figs of the ambulant silversmiths [...] she carried off everything she found in her path” (Autumn 182-183). She never pays for what she takes, leaving only “the peremptory order of send the bill to the government,” leaving the vendors without recourse (Autumn 183). Through her offensive behavior, Nazareno abuses her power and alienates herself from members of the community. Why would anyone want to help or extend kindness toward such a greedy woman? Her public
behavior suggests that Nazareno seeks only to reinforce her superiority over others, while ignoring the judgment of the public. In addition, Nazareno represents the public face of the general’s regime; her public behavior toward others only serves to remind members of the community that they are vulnerable to the abuse and violence of the general’s regime.

Since members of the community do not have access to the private, protected space of the presidential palace, the closest they can get to the general is to gain access to Nazareno and her son within the public space of the marketplace. In summarizing Foucault, Setha M. Low reinforces the idea that “architecture and urban planning contribute to the dominance of one group over another and function as mechanisms for coding their reciprocal relationships at a level that includes not only the surveillance of the body but even the movements themselves” (75). The power of the general’s regime does extend to the marketplace—putting Nazareno in a position to steal from the vendors by using the general’s name, but the surrogate entering the marketplace becomes subject to the communal power of those who inhabit the space of the marketplace and the surrounding spaces. The absolute and protective power of the presidential palace, with its strict boundaries, fails to function as an extended protective “umbrella” over Leticia Nazareno when she leaves the palace. The marketplace gives the community at large a space for expressing dominance over the general and his regime, by providing a zone of anonymity that permits a limited expression of power. In the public marketplace, the power of the presidential palace as a space of exclusion cannot prevent the community’s expression of anger through the voices of the “foul-mouthed macaws whose mistresses taught them in secret what they themselves could not have the pleasure of shouting leticia larceny, whorehouse nun, they shrieked” (Autumn 181). The macaws express the
community's frustration with Nazareno, her behavior, giving voice to feelings that also indicate attitudes toward the general and his oppressive regime. In the case of Nazareno’s destruction, members of the community at large exert power over the general through the bodies of his wife and child. The marketplace represents a site of monetary exchange, so Nazareno and her son being ripped to pieces functions as a bloody financial transaction, where everyone (in the public) gets her/his “piece” of satisfaction.

Nazareno’s body, which might be used for economic gain—in marriage or prostitution—becomes null and void. Without integrity, her body loses value and usefulness, much like during the kidnapping where Nazareno’s body is transformed into crystal. If the crystal is broken, it becomes worthless. Similarly, the body of Nazareno’s son—her offspring, the product of her body—is made null and void. The destruction of the offspring also functions as a way for the public to deny the general any claim to legitimate paternity. The denial of paternity gives the public means for questioning the general’s virility.

Despite the countless “seven-monthers,” Emanuel remains the only child the general ever claims as his own. Without the child as proof of potency, the general suffers the lessening of his masculinity and the denial of paternity at the hands of the public.

The destruction of Nazareno and her son in the marketplace demonstrates the violent spectacle of the space where anything may happen. Protest, spectacle, and violence mingle to produce an historical event. As Rosenthal explains, “[f]ear and wonder often seem to exist side by side in modern Latin American cities. The very same streets that serve as staging grounds for various types of spectacles and celebrations in one era can become sites of danger and terror in another” (50). Nazareno’s assassination evokes this fear and wonder, but the novel makes it clear that the marketplace existed as a communal space long before she came to terrorize and abuse the vendors and will continue to exist.
long after her destruction. The marketplace, as a public space, remains under the control of the community and resists the control of the general, or the general’s surrogate—his wife. The general does attempt to change the space and influence the meaning of the market: “he ordered them to tear down the iron cupola […] and build in its place a garden with magnolias and quails and a marble cross” (Autumn 198). The physical changes to the marketplace do not amend the public’s opinion of what happened in that space, and “the monument [the marble cross] was demolished by a nocturnal explosion that no one avenged” (Autumn 198). Though the general orders changes to the space, those changes do not impact the meaning of the space, which is controlled by the community. The general’s attempt to change or revise the space (and its meaning) is countered by an anonymous revision that emphatically restates the public’s established meaning for the space. Unlike the dogfight district where Manuela Sánchez reigns, the marketplace—a community controlled space—remains under public control, as all of the people who make up the community cannot be displaced. The dogfight district, on the other hand, comes under the control of the regime through drastic renovations and displacement of the people who define the space to accommodate the general’s visits to Manuela Sánchez. Manuela “had been moved without leaving her house into a district of strangers, she was alone” (Autumn 79). In contrast to the residential and stabilized population of the dogfight district, the marketplace, with a fluid and constantly changing population, has the ability to resist the general’s attempts to effect change in the space.

As previously explained, Nazareno wields power with her feminine body, as a parent/teacher, and as a consumer. She uses her power over the general in the microgeographies of the presidential palace, as well as in the public marketplace to take what she desires. Eventually, she exerts power that goes beyond the palace and the
marketplace. According to Perilli, Nazareno is distinguished from the other women in
the novel “por su avidez de poder [by her desire for power]” (216). In this respect, she is
most like the general. By wielding her power over the general and gradually expanding
her power over him, she gains the ability to wield power that goes far beyond the
presidential palace and the marketplace. From the labyrinthine and closed
microgeographies of the presidential palace, Nazareno exercises her power by issuing
orders which are approved by the general and carried out. Examining the
microgeographies of the presidential palace reveals Nazareno’s access to and use of
power that might otherwise go unrecognized.

Nazareno’s power as the spouse of the general not only gives her the ability to
consume without consequences (at least for some time), but also the power to rule as the
general’s equal. The dictator, who has already given Nazareno power as his surrogate
mother and teacher, further endows her with power, calling her “my only and legitimate
wife Leticia Nazareno” (Autumn 180). Her proximity to the general results in a
relationship that gives her security and status. Initially, she will use her position to make
requests of the general: “she asked him to permit the return to the country of the
communities of poor nuns” (Autumn 173); “she asked him [...] that you grant me one
thing [...] that the mission territory communities who work on the fringes of the whims
of power might return” (Autumn 173-174); and finally, “to ask him for the restitution of
the confessional schools expropriated by the government” (Autumn 174). Nazareno’s
requests seem intended to benefit her former convent community and the community at
large. The general refuses repeatedly, saying “never in a million years” (Autumn 174).
Despite the refusals, the communal narrator reveals that “they [the nuns] did come back
general sir, they returned to the country through the narrowest slits [...] in accordance

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with his confidential order" (*Autumn* 174). In her initial requests, Nazareno uses the general to ask for what she wants. By planting ideas, she influences him to carry out her wishes. The nuns return to the country, and “they were paid enormous indemnities, their expropriated holdings were restored with interest and the recent laws concerning civil marriage, divorce, lay education were repealed” (*Autumn* 174). The significant and sudden changes reflect financial benefits, the return of property, and legal changes that demonstrate Nazareno’s power in action. After her first success, Nazareno moves to use the general as a microphone, using his voice to issue her orders. Her next desire is to reinstate the religious communities with the freedom to serve the community in public celebrations, parades, and festivals. The general finds “flowers on the balconies, martial music, and all of it in fulfillment of an order he had not given but which had been an order of his without the slightest doubt general sir because it had the tranquil decision of his voice and the unappealable style of his authority, and he approved, agreed” (*Autumn* 175). The request for action belongs to Nazareno, demonstrating her wishes and desires. However, given in the voice and style of the general, the order is acted upon, put into effect. At this point, the general becomes a microphone through which Nazareno speaks, wielding her power to do away with “the shadows of official mourning” for the general’s mother (*Autumn* 175). These changes fail to fulfill Nazareno’s desire for power; she “was not satisfied with all that but asked for more” (*Autumn* 174). Just as Nazareno demands more in the marketplace, she seeks to claim more power from among the few presidential aides and military associates who have access to the general. She succeeds in claiming power—piece by piece, bit by bit—until she can issue her own orders with absolute authority. The communal narrator describes Nazareno’s process, calling her “the newcomer who had managed to accumulate more power than the supreme
command, more than the government, more than he, for Leticia Nazareno had come so far with her airs of a queen” (Autumn 185). She gathers her power gradually, taking advantage of “the former perquisites with which he [the general] had favored the commanders of the various branches of the armed services so as to keep them away from other kinds of ambition and which Leticia Nazareno had been snatching away from them little by little through his orders which he did not give but approved, agreed” (Autumn 189). By moving slowly, deliberately, and patiently, Nazareno gains the ability to issue orders that will be carried out. No one, least of all the general, questions her orders. Her status and assumed regal manner gives her access to and the ability to wield power—outside of the presidential palace. Recognizing that she can dominate the general and impose her desires on others seems to make Nazareno desire more power. She becomes driven by the desire to exert her will on others and apparently faces no one who will stop her.

In the microgeographies of the presidential palace and in the public space of the marketplace, Leticia Nazareno draws power to herself. Forced to abandon the community of the convent, Nazareno turns her energy toward the claiming of all of the power available to her. Over time, she comes to dominate the general as his caretaker, teacher, lover, and wife, yet in the process of building a relationship that allows her access to power, Nazareno fails to connect to any other person. The spaces of exclusion, created by the presidential palace, keep her isolated from any genuine, human relationships that might give her an alternative model for wielding her power. Even entering public space fails to offer opportunities for relationships because Nazareno’s greed and selfishness keeps others from taking a personal interest in her. In addition to her greed, Nazareno’s inability to be a discriminating consumer makes her reviled by the
public. Isolated by her identity and her desire for power, Nazareno fails in wielding her power. Though she does negotiate a path to power, she cannot wield her power effectively enough to ensure her own survival. Nazareno’s efforts to imitate the general’s use of power lead to her own destruction. “[S]he moved with the insolent domination of her authority” to go beyond the microgeographies of the bridal bedroom and the pansy bower into the public space of the marketplace, but throughout her movements, Nazareno remains isolated and distanced from anyone who might offer another model for the use of power (Azzmnn 181). Her death at the hands of the public thus reinforces the reality of Nazareno’s situation. Because she has no context for behavior outside of the palace, she remains a prisoner. Nazareno negotiates the microgeographies of the presidential palace and public spaces to access power, but lacking a role model, she remains unable to wield her power outside of the palace. As highlighted in this analysis, employing the strategies of feminist geography intersected with class-based definitions of power reveals more female power as accessed and wielded by Leticia Nazareno.

As with Nazareno, Nena Daconte will be destroyed. This section of the chapter analyzes Nena’s movement from intimate to international spaces, where, in her symbolic role as representative of Latin American identity, she will bleed to death. Despite her position in the culture of wealth, Nena’s resources and access to power will become limited once she leaves Cartagena de Indias for her European honeymoon. Nena exerts power over her husband, wielding power in the intimate spaces where their relationship begins and develops. Once they leave the protection of these intimate spaces, enclosed in the warm familiarity of urban Latin America, Nena cannot sustain her power.

Latin America neither wants, nor has any reason, to be a pawn without a will of its own; nor is it merely wishful thinking that its quest for independence and
originality should become a Western aspiration. However, the navigational advances that have narrowed such distances between our Americas and Europe seem, conversely, to have accentuated our cultural remoteness. Why is the originality so readily granted us in literature so mistrustfully denied us in our difficult attempts at social change? (García Márquez “The Solitude of Latin America”)

In the passage above from the Nobel Prize Lecture, the author places explicit value on Latin America, its peoples, cultures, and identities. Clearly, the author calls for Latin America and its peoples to have agency, the freedom to make decisions about the direction of each Latin American nation. According to García Márquez, Latin America and its peoples have the right to agency and decision-making power already granted to other Western nations and peoples. Latin America deserves the right to self-determination, without the ongoing concern of colonialism in its many forms. In addition, the author explains that the ability to overcome the friction of distance with “navigational advances” allows international travel for Latin Americans and Westerners; even with access to international travel and all of its associated benefits, Latin Americans have been wrongly condemned to “cultural remoteness,” or been viewed as culturally inferior to Westerners, who view themselves as more advanced—in technology, in politics, in social advancement—in all aspects of culture. The closing question of the passage reflects García Márquez’s frustration with the Western ideologies that are more tolerant and accepting of Latin American literature than with Latin American peoples and cultures. Even though García Márquez delivered this lecture in 1982, the issue of Latin American identity remains an important concern in works written prior to and after the Nobel Prize Lecture. Among the best examples of García Márquez’s concern with Latin
American identity is the story “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow,” written in 1976 and published in 1992 as the last story in the collection published under the English title of *Strange Pilgrims*. In “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow,” García Márquez explores the issues of cultural identity and cultural remoteness through the characters of Nena Daconte and Billy Sánchez de Ávila. By placing Nena in a position of power, García Márquez can call attention to the implications of her cultural identity. Taken as a whole, the story reveals García Márquez’s deeper concerns about the loss of Latin American identity.

“The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow” narrates the beginning and end of a passionate relationship between two young people, who, in the course of the story, meet, marry, and go on their honeymoon. The narrative uses flashbacks to move the relationship forward in a non-linear pattern toward the dénouement where Billy Sánchez de Ávila discovers that his bride, Nena Daconte, has bled to death only two days after he dropped her off at the hospital, while he has spent a full week waiting for the hospital’s visiting day.

The critical discussions of *Strange Pilgrims* tend not to isolate and critique the individual stories. Two areas of analysis appear in the criticism; one which emphasizes the similarities in tone and style that permeate and connect the stories in *Strange Pilgrims,* and another that desires to make sense out of the collection’s introductory section titled “Prologue: Why Twelve, Why Stories, Why Pilgrims.” My view of The Prologue is that García Márquez uses the story of how the stories were written to mythologize the collection.

Luis Carlos Herrera Molina offers an insightful analysis of the stories in *Strange Pilgrims,* one that details the explicit contrasts between Latin America and Europe. In the closing chapter of *El cuento, estructura y símbolo: Análisis tentative de los cuentos*
de Gabriel García Márquez [Story, Structure and Symbol: Tentative Analysis of the Stories of Gabriel García Márquez], Herrera Molina calls García Márquez "una especie de psiquiatra de los sueños de América, que en el oleaje del subconsciente human, vive y expresa su propia palpitación [a kind of psychiatrist of the dreams of America, where in the waves of human subconscious, he lives and expresses his own perceptions]" (160).

Herrera Molina endows García Márquez with a position of authority on Latin America, its people and its culture. With this authority in place, Herrera Molina suggests that the stories in Strange Pilgrims function as a kind of warning to readers about the dangers of losing one’s culture. "Según García Márquez, cultura es el aprovechamiento social de la inteligencia humana [According to García Márquez, culture is the social utilization of human intelligence]" and Herrera Molina explains that García Márquez wants readers to value the active preservation of Latin American culture(s), so that Latin American peoples will have the opportunity to produce "un futuro mejor [a better future]" (160).

Herrera Molina reproduces an analysis of "Trail" written by Carlos J. María, which argues that "Trail" works as a study in contrasts between the Caribbean, its culture and way of life, contrasted with the European. To place value on Latin American culture and identity, María argues that García Márquez contrasts the freedom and sensuality of the Caribbean with the rationality and restrictiveness of the European. María calls the European "el mundo sórdido [the sordid world]" (Herrera Molina 188). The result of the contrasts, according to María, is a better definition of Latin American identity (Herrera Molina 188). In agreement with María, Herrera Molina takes the argument a step farther, asking this question about the significance of the cultural contrasts: "¿Es la Nena Daconte el símbolo del desangre de la cultura y de la pérdida de identidad? [Is Nena Daconte a symbol of the bleeding of culture and the loss of identity?]" (188). Herrera
Molina answers the question by referring to Nena’s feeling about her bleeding finger; as the couple approaches Paris “her finger bled in an uncontrollable flood, and she felt as if her soul were escaping through the scratch” (“Trail” 174). The historic, famous urbanity of Paris, in its winter gloom, sucks the blood and very soul out of the vital and pregnant body of Nena Daconte. Herrera Molina explains the symbolic meaning of the passage, writing that “[l]a muerte de la cultura es el desangre, es el riesgo de ser absorbidos por otra cultura de países que se consideran civilizados por sus criterios antiguos y sabidos [the death of a culture is the loss of blood, the risk of being absorbed by the cultures of other countries considered “civilized” by their ancient and wise criteria]” (188). Later Herrera Molina writes “Nena Daconte es la cultura desangrada. Billy Sánchez de Avila el joven caribeño adinerado y sin cultura [Nena Daconte symbolizes the culture that is losing its lifeblood. Billy Sánchez de Avila represents young, wealthy Caribbeans (Latin Americans) without culture]” (189). Though Hererra Molina touches on some of the spaces mentioned in the story, his analysis does not fully explore the geographical features (as elements of culture) that further support the thesis he puts forth. The following discussion will more closely examine the spaces García Márquez uses in the story which work to concentrate or dissolve Nena’s power.

As Herrera Molina proposes, “Trail” is ultimately a story about the dissipation of Latin American identity as represented by Nena Daconte. As Linda McDowell and Joanne P. Sharp explain, “[o]ur sense of who we are is related in quite fundamental ways to where we are; identity is spatially as well as socially constituted” (emphasis in original) (133). Nena begins her passionate love affair with Billy in Cartagena de Indias, but moving beyond the familiar spaces of the city puts Nena and her relationship with Billy at risk. Her Latin American identity comes under the pressure of spaces outside of
Latin America. As the couple move farther away from the small place in which Nena and Billy first meet, their relationship will also be subject to pressure, which they will not be able to withstand. Though intense, the relationship between Nena and Billy cannot survive outside of the space where it was conceived. More so, Nena’s symbolic function as the representative of Latin American culture and the generations to follow makes her powerful and simultaneously vulnerable to the influences surrounding her. Geography matters in the story, and while the contrasts between Latin America and Europe are important, those spaces indicate only one of the scales where Nena’s power will fail. Understanding Nena’s destruction requires closer study of the spaces of the story as they intersect with the couple’s position in the culture of wealth.

Nena and Billy’s first meeting takes place in an intimate, closed, private space. The two young people meet in probably the most intimate setting possible for an initial meeting—Nena and Billy meet body-to-body—and both are naked. In the dressing room of a beach cabana, Nena “had stripped to the skin and was about to put on her bathing suit” (“Trail” 165). Billy bursts in on Nena and he appears to her as “the most beautiful bandit imaginable” (“Trail” 165). Billy then exposes himself to Nena: “He lowered his leopard-skin briefs and showed her his respectable erected manhood” (“Trail” 166). From the very beginning of their relationship, Nena and Billy establish the foundation of their love in physical, visual, and intimate terms. Though Nena and Billy have been acquainted with each other since childhood, the intimacy of the dressing room creates, in a flash, a bond between the two young people, which can be attributed to “[l]a calidez de la sangre [the heat of the blood]” (Herrera Molina 161).

Nena and Billy’s initial meeting also establishes the power relations that will drive the whole relationship. Once established, the power relations between Nena and Billy
will be reproduced, again and again, in the close, small spaces where their relationship is initiated. Nena possesses intelligence, creativity, and control. Billy has “the peaceful, elastic body and golden color of those who live by the ocean” and physical strength (“Trail” 166). Nena’s response to his “puerile ritual” establishes her ability to command him and to maturely control her own emotions. Nena expresses “no sign of surprise,” and verbally confronts the physical threat that Billy represents (“Trail” 166). “I’ve seen them bigger and harder,’ she said, controlling her terror. ‘So think again about what you’re doing, because with me you’ll have to perform better than a black man’” (“Trail” 166). Notice that Nena uses language to respond to Billy; the use of her quick intelligence allows her to avoid being raped (or at the very least, becoming the victim of unwanted physical abuse). Her challenge intends to hold him off and keep him from advancing or attacking. Nena’s challenge stops short of emasculation by including the slightly disguised invitation, “with me,” that reveals her interest in and attraction to Billy. Nena shows her creativity by addressing Billy with the same issue he has confronted her with—sexuality. Using her verbal abilities, Nena invents a story about her own sexuality to shift the pressure placed on her back onto Billy. The invented story allows Nena to control the situation, using her power to take charge of the cabana’s intimate space. Furthermore, by convincingly speaking about her own sexuality and expectations for Billy’s sexuality, Nena places herself in a position of power in the relationship. In the geography of the story, Nena will claim power in other intimate spaces as well. 

Billy’s physical response to Nena’s verbal challenge brings the two together, while also establishing the locus for their relationship in the physicality of their bodies. Nena’s challenge to Billy’s sexuality forces him to respond with the primary resource he has access to—the physical: “All that Billy Sánchez could think to do was to smash the fist
rolled in chain against the wall and break his hand” (“Trail” 166). Billy’s violent and sudden response to Nena’s comment establishes her power over him. Herrera Molina points out that “Billy se presenta como un bandolero capaz de todo; se descubre débil e inseguro ante la reacción de Nena [Billy is presented as a bandit capable of anything; he discovers that he is weak and insecure in the face of Nena’s reaction]” (189). Nena obligingly takes Billy to the hospital and becomes his nurse. While the bones of Billy’s hand are “knitting,” so too are Nena and Billy becoming fundamentally joined in their bodies. Nena will use her intelligence, creativity, and control to guide Billy through all of the spaces they will move through up to their parting in the Parisian hospital.

The relationship that begins on such a fundamentally physical level requires incubation in order to grow. The next space where Nena and Billy spend time together is, of course, the home, an appropriate setting for courtship. Their courtship takes place in Nena’s house, which protects the couple, allowing a slow, controlled expansion of their relationship. Nena’s home is no ordinary house; the house has a history of “six generations where Nena Daconte’s illustrious ancestors had died” (“Trail” 167). These “cuadros de historia familiar [rooms of familial history]” offer the security of the well-known (Herrera Molina 189). In the incubating space of the house, the newly born or newly begun is juxtaposed against the past and death. The house is oriented toward decay, decrepitude: “The house had countless floor-to-ceiling windows that faced the fetid stillwater of the bay, and it was one of the largest and oldest in the district of La Manga, and beyond any doubt the ugliest” (“Trail” 167). Perhaps the house is even as ugly as the face of death. Nena’s passionate saxophone playing takes place on “a courtyard with generous shade and mango trees and banana plants, under which there was a grave and a nameless tombstone older than the house and the family’s memory.”
(“Trail” 167). The plants suggest a tiny Edenic place, but again, the new (Nena and Billy) is juxtaposed with the dead (the tombstone). The house provides a familiar place for the incubation of the relationship, but the space cannot exclude the reality of death’s presence. The courtyard and tombstone also foreshadow Nena’s death—in the intimate, familiar space of the house, life and death seem compressed into a small space. Nena’s parents are absent, creating a gap or break in Nena’s connection to her ancestors. The earlier generational gap, symbolized by the tombstone, also foreshadows the gap that will occur in the family’s bloodline as a result of Nena’s death.

The culmination of the incubation period is the couple’s movement into a sexual relationship. In the bed where they make love, Nena, as before, holds power; she decides when she is ready to act on her sexual desires and initiate a physical relationship with Billy. She “took him [Billy] to her virgin’s bed” where they make love “beneath the astonished gaze of the portraits of civil warriors and insatiable grandmothers who had preceded them in the paradise of that historic bed” (“Trail” 168). While a bed functions as an intimate space for sleeping, lovemaking, nakedness, and abandon, Nena’s “virgin’s bed” already possesses its own history of previous relationships. The bed and the portraits suggest that the love story of Nena and Billy has been written and seen before—complete with all of the joys and sorrows of passionate relationships. The bed tells the story of passionate (and perhaps hidden or forbidden) love as a space that contains the story, while also recreating that story. The bed may also represent a site for the beginning and ending of life, functioning as a space for the processes of birthing and dying. As with the courtyard and tombstone, the bed suggests the juxtaposition of the newly born and the dead. The house, the courtyard, the tombstone, and the bed are all embedded in the past, yet the couple (re)create a new space.
The relationship between Nena and Billy, aside from its physical foundation, relies on familiar, intimate and enclosed spaces, and these spaces are reproduced in the couple’s sexual excursions outside of Nena’s house. After the house, Nena and Billy will pursue their lovemaking in Billy’s cars, then “the deserted cabanas of Marbella where destiny had first brought them together” (“Trail” 168). Nena and Billy also “went in costume to the rooms for hire in the old slave district of Getsemani, under the protection of the matrons” (“Trail” 168). Though Nena and Billy go beyond the incubating space of the house, the crossing of boundaries requires “costume” and “protection.” As with the courtyard with its tombstone and Nena’s virgin’s bed, the past imposes itself on the present, calling attention to death, suffering, and tragedy signaled by the “old slave district” (“Trail” 168). The developing relationship, in the familiarity of home and city, is fostered by the ease with which the couple can negotiate their surroundings: “En Cartagena es fácil ubicarse por la pequeñez de la ciudad [In Cartagena, locating oneself is made easy by the small size of the city]” (Herrera Molina 190). Explicit boundaries circumscribe the world of Nena and Billy—revealing their reliance on the familiar, known spaces delineated by the familiar spaces within Cartagena. Nena controls the relationship within these spaces and continues to exert power over Billy, directing the progress of their relationship.

Nena and Billy’s sexual encounter on their flight from Cartagena de Indias to Madrid offers the first intimation of the dissipation which will challenge their relationship and threaten Nena’s life. The couple “fulfilled their vow to love each other over the Atlantic, while the stewardesses slept and they were crammed into the airplane lavatory, overcome more by laughter than by pleasure” (“Trail” 169). Here the couple attempts to recapture and reenact their passionate lovemaking in an intimate, enclosed, protected space. The
space meets the requirements of their needs, and the sleeping "stewardesses" offer protection for the couple earlier provided by the matrons of the rooms for hire. However, the result of their sexual activity indicates a change in the relationship, a shift in the power dynamics. While the encounter partially succeeds by "fulfilling their vow," the encounter produces more "laughter" than physical satisfaction. While laughter does not necessarily preclude intimacy and sexual pleasure, the encounter has a different quality than the earlier fervency of Nena and Billy's lovemaking. The reality of marriage and Nena's early stage of pregnancy (two months) substantially impact the earlier eagerness with which Nena and Billy have pursued sexual pleasure.

Despite their more than adequate resources, Nena and Billy will find the pressure placed on their relationship by the cold, unfamiliar surroundings difficult to withstand, and their relationship will undergo change. The change in Nena and Billy's relationship signals also the reduction of Nena's power. The couple is greeted by the "diplomatic mission [...] in the official reception room" (169). In this official, public space, so dramatically distanced from the familiar protection of home, Nena and Billy separate, behaving as individuals, rather than as a married couple. Nena "greeted them both [the ambassador and his wife] with false kisses, uncomfortable with her somewhat premature status as bride" (169). Earlier confident and assured, Nena purposefully directs her relationship with Billy in their enclosed, intimate spaces, yet in the official, public space she lacks confidence and feels "uncomfortable." Nena's discomfort is aggravated by the accident that brings about her death. The ambassador and his wife offer Nena "a bouquet of roses so radiant and fresh that even the dewdrops seemed artificial [...] As she took them, she pricked her finger on a thorn" (169). The injury seems small and insignificant, but in the unfamiliar and cold spaces of Madrid and the
official reception room, a little damage is enough to begin the process of bleeding to
death. The entrance into public space makes Nena uncomfortable and vulnerable. The
public space also exerts pressure on Nena and Billy; pressure neither is accustomed to.
The pressure on Nena and her Latin American identity is invisible, insidious: “no one
noticed that her finger had begun to bleed” ("Trail" 170). The injury is so small, Nena
herself hardly notices the bleeding; she “did not realize her finger was bleeding until they
left Madrid on an afternoon that had turned transparent” and “on the saxophone, her ring
finger had hardly bothered her” ("Trail" 171). Though seemingly transparent and hardly
worth notice, the bleeding finger indicates the pressure of tremendous forces working
against Nena’s power.

Instead of directing his energies and attention toward his wife and the diplomatic
representatives, Billy focuses exclusively on the wedding gift he has received: the car.
After leaving Cartegena, Billy, behaves for the most part like a selfish child, interested
only in the new “toy” before him and his own needs and desires. Billy “was so eager to
see the car that he tore away the wrapping all at once and stood there breathless. It was
that year’s Bentley convertible, with genuine leather upholstery” ("Trail" 170). Though
firmly positioned in the culture of wealth, Billy lacks Nena’s international experience,
and his eagerness about the car demonstrates his inexperience, insensitivity, and lack of
maturity. Billy further demonstrates his insensitivity by keeping “the diplomatic mission
in the outdoor parking lot, unaware that they were freezing for the sake of courtesy”
("Trail" 170). Even with the ambassador as his guide to “the most famous sights in the
city, […] Billy Sánchez seemed attentive only to the magic of the car” ("Trail" 170).
Billy’s interest in and passion for the car nearly erases Nena; she seems to have
completely disappeared from his mind. The car takes up all of the passion Billy can
generate and Herrera Molina argues that “el regalo de bodas constituye su mundo [the wedding gift constitutes his entire world]” (“Trail” 189). The relationship between Nena and Billy has changed and their earlier passionate connection fails in the public spaces where they cannot exclude others.

The car functions in two ways in the story—first as a marker of affluence and second as a means by which Billy can establish his masculinity and claim power. The act of the young Colombians driving a British car from Madrid to Paris calls attention to the couple’s status as members of the culture of wealth, while also emphasizing the geographical movements of the characters, moving from the scale of the body to the car, from the car to an international location and public spaces. Wealth provides access to resources that are not available to all; the car serves to distinguish Nena and Billy from others as they travel. The couple will not be traveling by train, as would many Europeans. The privilege of freedom to travel at will that comes with the car is a gendered privilege, primarily granted to men. Especially “[i]n the United States, the early development of the mass automobile culture was intentionally and thoroughly masculinized” (Domosh and Seager 123). Other countries reproduce the association between cars and masculinity. Automobile culture constructs masculinity by associating the car with power, freedom, and control. “Being in the driver’s seat” means being male, being active, and being in control of choices and directions. Gendering cars and the act of driving as masculine creates explicit inequalities, since “many women gain access to transportation only through a male member of their household” (Domosh and Seager 127). The Bentley confers status and reaffirms membership in the culture of wealth for both Nena and Billy; however, in terms of conveying messages about power, only Billy benefits, putting further pressure on Nena.
The car, so wonderful and impressive to Billy, becomes a kind of hearse for Nena, who is impossibly bleeding to death from the scratch on her finger from the rose's thorn. The meaning of the car as a space shifts from life-affirming to deathtrap. Billy, entranced by the magnificent, expensive car, cannot conceive of Nena's condition as serious. Nena, previously the leader and guide of the relationship, becomes the passive passenger, which appears to contradict her previous, more powerful position in the relationship. In the car, Nena is reduced to sitting, bleeding, sleeping, and talking with her husband. These activities contrast sharply with the earlier activities Nena engaged in—going to the beach, caring for Billy, playing the saxophone, and having sex. In the car, Nena does not have enough space to be active. In her symbolic role of Latin American identity, Nena becomes immobilized, and the direction of her movement is out of her control.

Nena continues to bleed as they drive north toward Paris, and her inability to resist the pressure placed on her becomes more and more clear. As Herrera Molina describes, Nena's bleeding symbolizes the dissolution of her identity as a Latin American and the loss of a culture that deserves all of the advantages available to it (188). Where Nena bleeds also shifts the meaning of the intimate, small spaces that Nena and Billy rely on. While they drive north toward Paris, Nena "was telling her husband the shortest routes to the border, [and] she sucked her finger in an unconscious way each time it bled" ("Trail" 171). Earlier the cars were places of refuge, spaces that allowed the exclusion of others and fostered sexual pleasure. At this point in the story, the earlier meanings attached to the intimate space of the cars disappear. Nena and Billy, in the face of the pressure placed on them by the foreign space, have great difficulty connecting on a fundamental level, even though they are in the same kind of space that earlier fostered their connection. Nena falls asleep, and then wakes "with a start to the nightmarish impression"
that the car was going through water” (“Trail” 171). The reference to water implies a kind of washing or rinsing that dissolves Nena’s power, alters the already changing relationship, and dilutes the identity seeping out of Nena. In contrast to Nena, Billy becomes more and more alert: “His rapture at the wheel was so intense that the more he drove, the less tired he felt” and he is determined to reach Bordeaux (“Trail” 164).

García Márquez further calls attention to the dissipation by contrasting Nena and Billy in the same sentence. Billy “was so delighted with his big, £25,000 toy that he did not even ask himself if the radiant creature asleep at his side—the bandage on her ring finger soaked with blood and her adolescent dream pierced for the first time by lightning flashes of uncertainty—felt the same way too” (“Trail” 165). Billy cares more about the car than about his wife and her feelings. Not only is Nena “pierced” figuratively by “uncertainty,” but she has also literally been “pierced” or punctured by the rose thorn. The “world” created in the relationship between Nena and Billy no longer supports the “dream” of happiness and intimacy. The “flashes of uncertainty” Nena experiences also refer to the “flashes of uncertainty” in the ongoing process of defining the Latin American identity in the twenty-first century.

France as a specific place is overwhelmingly present in the text to remind the reader that Nena and Billy are far from home. By referring to specific towns and cities, the story provides a mental map for the reader who knows the border areas between Spain and France, which also implies all of the complications with any border: cultural contrasts, historical conflicts, and power struggles for deciding where and how lines will be drawn. The text mentions the Pyrenees, Hendaye, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Paris, and other specific towns and cities between Madrid and Paris. The journalistic detail underscores the distance Nena and Billy have traveled, while also allowing García
Márquez to blend reality and fantasy. Nena recognizes that they "were driving along the flooded dike of the Loire. Moonlight filtered through the mist, and the silhouettes of castles through the pines seemed to come from fairy tales" ("Trail" 171-172). In this surreal landscape juxtaposed on a real location in France, the couple establishes their own (new) borders for defining their relationship. In other words, as Nena continues to bleed, she changes, as does her relationship with Billy. As a result, the couple draws a new set of emotional and physical boundaries between themselves.

The new boundaries of their relationship are demonstrated by significant changes in the physical connection between Nena and Billy. The unlimited physical freedom and sexuality the couple shared earlier no longer functions in the foreign and cold place they travel through. Instead of making love in the snow on the roadside, Nena suggests that they "'wait until Paris, [...] all nice and warm in a bed with clean sheets, like married people'" ("Trail" 173). The significance of her deferral cannot be ignored; instead of the earlier enthusiasm that Nena and Billy devoted to lovemaking "anytime, anywhere, trying to reinvent it each time they did," ("Trail" 168) Nena designates a specific place, with specific conditions that match their newlywed state. Instead of heated, physical abandon, Nena insists on a specific place, with specific conditions to match their newlywed state. Nena, bleeding and facing the cold unfriendliness of France, seems to have been influenced to limit her sexual activity to a more private space. According to Nena, neither the car nor the snow on the roadside are appropriate places for lovemaking. New lines have been drawn, and the change receives emphasis through humor. In order to bolster his sense of masculinity, Billy says "'it's the first time you've turned me down'" and Nena responds with a flippant, almost dismissive answer: "'Of course,' she replied. "'It's the first time we've been married'" ("Trail" 173). Though marriage ought to bring
the couple closer, the reference to their marriage highlights the rapid separation occurring between Nena and Billy. The changes in their physical relationship also alter the meaning of the space within the car. The intimacy of the car becomes the space where Billy drives, rejecting his wife, and Nena the passenger bleeds, marking the path they travel with "the trail of [her] blood in the snow" (174). Leaving a trail of blood not only indicates the dissipation of Nena’s vital essence and identity, but also a change in her ability to act as leader in her marriage.

The story’s movement along changing geographical scales serves to magnify the tragedy of Nena’s death. Nena and Billy begin their romance on the scale of the body—meeting each other in utter nakedness. As their relationship develops, they take up the space that is Nena’s house, and then return to their bodies in Nena’s “virgin’s bed.” While Nena and Billy must eventually move beyond the house and the bed into the cars and brothels for their lovemaking, the relationship, even at the start, seems to have no boundaries in terms of potential. Everything and everywhere seem available to the young couple. Because of their firm placement in the class of elites, as evidenced by their many material advantages including their honeymoon trip, Nena’s education, the wedding ring, the mink coat, and the Bentley convertible, Nena and Billy can go anywhere and do as they please. Wealth makes the couple appear to have every possibility, every choice available.

Yet as the scale changes from the familiar urbanity of Cartagena to the foreign internationality of Madrid and the diplomatic mission, Nena and Billy have begun the process of separation. Their lovemaking takes on a new tone on the airplane, and the couple must acknowledge the reality of Nena’s pregnancy. At the diplomatic mission, in the official reception room, Nena and Billy disconnect from each other. The official

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space makes Nena uncomfortable, and in this space, she is injured. Billy, ignorant of the
needs of others and depressed by the magnificence of Madrid, can only express childish
excitement about the Bentley convertible. Nena’s discomfort and Billy’s feeling of
“desolation” highlight their separation as well as their alienation—the couple is very far
away from the spaces where their relationship was initiated, incubated, and fostered. The
cold, unwelcoming spaces of Europe place enough pressure on the couple to diminish
Nena and isolate her from her husband. Though Nena and Billy have access to the world
on a global scale, they are clearly very far from home, under significant pressure, and
unable to withstand the pressure placed on their relationship.

Despite the severity of her blood loss, Nena maintains her ability to use language and
command Billy. Her blood loss increases as they approach Paris: “[i]n the suburbs of
Paris her finger bled in an uncontrollable flood, and she felt as if her soul were escaping
through the scratch” (“Trail” 174). The bleeding finger that seemed incidental before
now becomes the focus of the story. Nena, in trouble, needs medical attention. The
pressure on the couple increases, and the tension in the story grows. The need for
medical attention brings greater urgency to the story, suggesting that rapid attention is
needed to stop the loss of culture as well. Despite Billy’s fear, he still disregards Nena
and her needs. Nena maintains her control over Billy, again using her language abilities,
preventing him from fighting with another driver in heavy traffic. She understands the
people who live in this foreign place, convincing Billy to do as she says: “Nena Daconte
managed to convince him that although the French were the rudest people in the world,
they never had fistfights” (“Trail” 175). Nena demonstrates the benefits of her education
and travel experience. Yet neither of these advantages can stop the bleeding of her
finger, and time and energy are wasted on her efforts to control Billy. When they arrive

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at the “huge, gloomy hospital,” Nena is wheeled away from her husband “waving good-bye until she disappeared from sight at the end of the corridor” (“Trail” 174, 176). All of Nena’s talents, abilities, passions, and advantages are merely “wheeled away” as if her vitality is no significant loss.

Why is Nena destroyed? Her death contradicts all of the advantages she possesses: youth, education, wealth, vitality, passion, and a mate. Nena’s destruction appears incomprehensible, nonsensical. Certainly, dismissing Nena’s death by attributing it to the absurdity that pervades much of García Márquez’s work offers one way to understand her destruction. However, her symbolic role, as described by Herrera Molina, in conjunction with the aspects of class and geography in the story, creates a more effective means for understanding why Nena is destroyed. As discussed earlier, the geography working in the story, along with the shifts in scale, and the way spaces change meaning, provides some explanation for Nena’s destruction. Nena’s status as a member of the culture of wealth also contributes to her destruction. Méndez, in describing the characters in the stories of Strange Pilgrims, calls the majority of the characters “inadaptadas, soñadoras, nostálgicos [maladjusted, dreaming, nostalgic] (165). But Nena, according to Méndez, is an exception, able to “se mueve en Europa como el pez en el agua [move in Europe like a fish in water]” (165). Nena’s ease in the Old World makes her vulnerable: “Quizas precisamente por ello fallece desangrada luego de pincharse un dedo con las espina de una rosa [Perhaps because of this she later bleeds to death from pricking her finger on a rose thorn]” (Méndez 165). While Méndez attributes Nena’s death to her ease in Europe, this suggestion veers away from the complexities of Nena as a character. Undoubtedly, Nena has more travel experience and language ability than her spouse; she knows where she is going. Her knowledge of Europe gives her power within those spaces; Nena can
act on equal footing with the ambassador, his wife, and the diplomatic representatives.

Nor does she accept without question "al racionalismo, el burocratismo o el autoritarismo de los europeos [the rationalism, bureaucracy, or authoritarianism of the Europeans]" (Méndez 165). Her spontaneous and reactionary relationship with Billy reflects the irrationality of a sudden reacquaintance and falling in love. Moreover, setting the developmental period of the relationship in Nena's childhood home, without the supervision or interference of authority figures also represents resistance to social norms and expectations, where "the astonished gaze of the portraits" indicates disapproval ("Trail" 168). Even in Europe, Nena is not completely at ease—her new role as wife and impending role as mother contribute to the discomfort she experiences in the public spaces where she and Billy are not alone. Both Nena and Billy are subject to the pressure of their foreign surroundings. More significantly, Nena is isolated from others by her foreignness and access to wealth—her familiarity with Europe does not mean that she is European. Michael Keith and Steve Pile assert that "[a]ny articulation of identity [...] is only momentarily complete, it is always in part constituted by the forces that oppose it (the constitutive outside), always contingent upon surviving the contradictions that it subsumes (forces of dislocation)" (emphasis in original) (27). In the case of Nena (as symbol of Latin American identity), the forces of dislocation, or the pressure of the foreign spaces, overwhelm her, despite her position in the culture of wealth. The resources Nena and Billy have access to, which ought to protect the couple, also serve to separate them from others. At the same time, all of their resources and advantages cannot stop Nena's bleeding. The cold and foreign space places overriding pressure on Nena that makes the bleeding uncontrollable and resistant to all logic and reason, European or otherwise.
In the culture of wealth, power is defined by the ability to make and sustain social, financial, and political connections that reinforce and reinscribe the culture itself. The story makes clear Nena’s access to this kind of power. As previously described, Nena exerts power over Billy. In addition, her marriage to Billy receives “the personal blessing of the archbishop” (“Trail” 165). Her family’s social and political connections give her access to the social approval of the highest representative of the church. Another example of Nena’s access to power is demonstrated in the greeting she and Billy receive from the ambassador, his wife, and the diplomatic representatives. The couple receives welcome from political officials who acknowledge the social and political power of Nena’s family and reinscribe her position within that structure of power. Billy also receives the advantages of participating in the culture of wealth. He is given the benefit of “courtesy” by the diplomatic representatives, while he inspects the Bentley (“Trail” 170). The wedding gift of the car provides the couple with a resource and the freedom to travel at will, while also providing visible, material means for reinforcing Nena and Billy’s place in the culture of wealth. Similar to the car, Nena’s expensive mink coat and Billy’s shearling coat not only insulate from the cold weather, but also provide visual messages about affluence. Nena’s place in the culture of wealth is firmly established; for the most part, her power rests securely in previously established relationships that offer social, financial, and political benefits.

Once Nena begins to bleed and she and Billy leave for Madrid, the important social connections that welcomed the couple into the foreign space function less effectively. In the tiny space of the car, Nena and Billy will face the full pressure of a cold, foreign, and unwelcoming space. When Nena and Billy cross the border from Spain to France in the middle of the snowstorm, they stop to ask for directions to a pharmacy. Repeatedly
honking the horn of the Bentley does not produce the desired results, so Nena “got out of the car and asked the guard in perfect French where there was a pharmacy” (“Trail”163). The benefits of Nena’s education and travel experience eventually provide her with the information she desires, but the guard’s initial response is “that it was no affair of his, least of all in a storm like this” (“Trail” 163). The border guard does not initially acknowledge her place in the culture of wealth or offer her special attention. At the border between two countries, Nena also stands on another border which separates her from other human beings (who do not share the advantages of affluence) and other world views. The border guard does not offer the couple the same welcome as the ambassador and his wife, nor is he as forthcoming and patient as the members of the diplomatic mission. After a second look, the border guard “explained that the closest city was Biarritz, but in the middle of winter, and in that wind howling like wolves, they might not find a pharmacy open until Bayonne, a little farther on” (“Trail” 164). Instead of an immediate response, Nena has to wait for a second look and the border guard’s reconsideration. Though the border guard does provide information to Nena, he has little motivation to offer her further assistance. The two share no social connection that Nena needs to foster, and her “mink coat that could not have been bought with the year’s wages of the entire frontier garrison” calls attention to the significant gap between the material advantages she has access to and the poverty experienced by the border guards (“Trail” 162). The “wind howling like wolves” also emphasizes the pressure of the unfriendly and nearly savage environment Nena and Billy are traveling through. In the case of the border crossing, the advantages of wealth do not function with the same strength as with the ambassador and the diplomatic mission or as in Cartagena.
In a similar manner, Nena’s experience in the Parisian hospital reinforces the idea that her social connections exert less influence in the foreign space of Paris. In the Parisian hospital, a doctor who is “a very young man with a shaved head and skin the color of old copper” examines Nena (“Trail” 175). In her effort to calm Billy, Nena tells her husband not to be scared, and “with her invincible humor,” she adds, ‘[t]he only thing that can happen is that this cannibal will cut off my hand and eat it’” (“Trail” 176). Nena irresponsibly assumes that the doctor cannot understand her, since she uses her native tongue—Spanish. In her attempt to calm her husband with humor, she insults the person who is supposed to help her. When the doctor “surprised them by speaking very correct Spanish,” Nena and Billy are “embarrassed,” as they should be (“Trail” 176). In all of their previous social and public experiences, Nena and Billy retain the arrogance of the culture of wealth that protects or shields them from any kind of embarrassment. In the hospital, in the foreign, unfriendly space of Paris, arrogance cannot protect Nena and Billy from embarrassment and shame. In this case as well, Nena is socially and economically separated from the doctor—he works. The social connections that reinforce Nena’s (and Billy’s) position as a member of the culture of wealth function only weakly in the Parisian hospital. Nena is too far from home to exert the power of affluence that has served her so well in the course of her affair with Billy, her marriage, and the start of her honeymoon. Her education, ability to use language, supportive parents, social connections, and international travel experience all represent power. Nena clearly possesses the tools for accessing and wielding power in the culture of wealth. Unfortunately, those tools are rendered ineffective in the Parisian hospital, too distant from the place that initiates Nena’s position in the culture of wealth.
Nena’s separation from Billy suggests the importance of a relationship that will allow Latin America and its peoples to participate in the global community without being dismissed as merely a comic figure. After Nena goes to intensive care, Billy waits at the hospital until forced to leave. Billy becomes subject to solitude when separated from Nena. Billy’s solitude is punctuated by his comical efforts to communicate with others, find a hotel, park the car on the correct side of the street, eat cafeteria meals, and stand vigilant outside the hospital. In his sad hotel room, “a triangular garret on the ninth floor,” Billy “felt so confused and alone that he could not understand how he had ever lived without the help and protection of Nena Daconte” (“Trail” 178, 179). Billy needs Nena, especially in the foreign, alien, confounding space of Paris. In her symbolic role as representative of Latin American culture and identity, Nena (and the advantages of her Swiss education) gives Billy a way to enter unfamiliar European spaces. Without Nena, Billy has great difficulty negotiating the space that does not welcome him or tolerate his worldview. Billy’s multiple cultural conflicts and difficulties suggest that Nena, as representative of Latin American identity, should take advantage of educational and other opportunities that will foster communication and relationships, but should not rely on the cultural institutions and world views promoted by others.

Accepting the perspective that Nena Daconte and her bleeding finger represent the loss of identity and the associated dangers of allowing Latin American culture to bleed to death positions the story as a message of warning. Herrera Molina intimates that the story carries a serious meaning, but does not explain in detail. To offer a better understanding of the intersections between Nena as a powerful woman, geography, and affluence, the implications of Nena’s symbolic role must be stated directly. First of all, the indifference and brutality embodied in Billy is not the way for Latin America to make
its place in the larger world. Billy’s indifference toward and ignorance of European or other cultures make him a comic figure, hardly worth serious consideration. Worse than being laughed at is the isolation Billy is subject to. The story indicates that his isolation is the result of his “sad reputation as an ignorant brute” (“Trail” 167). Billy, abandoned and alone at the end of the story, reveals that negotiating other cultures successfully depends on active interaction with, and not strict isolation from, other cultures. Along the same lines, Nena’s education and experiences with European culture should be viewed as worthwhile resources. Her familiarity with European cultures gives her access to those cultures as an equal and potentially mature participant. However, Nena’s death indicates that the spaces where Latin Americans live their lives have a great deal to contribute to the ongoing development of Latin American identity; Nena’s destruction, in a place far from the spaces where her power flourished, shows that the story values the Caribbean, and more specifically, Cartagena and all of the spaces the city contains. Herrera Molina points out that “Nena Daconte habfa recibido toda su formación en Suiza [Nena Daconte received all of her education or upbringing in Switzerland]” (188). Herrera Molina implies a critique of the affluent who can afford to send their children overseas for education far from home. More specifically, Herrera Molina hints at the risk of giving the upbringing of children over to foreign influences, implying that a child’s formative years would be better spent in Latin American countries and spaces. His idea appears to be that the childhood years, when identity and self-awareness are shaped, and world views are inculcated, ought not be given completely over to foreign influences. How can balance—between the Caribbean and other cultures—be achieved? Nena’s death indicates that this balance has not yet been successfully put into place. Furthermore, the story calls for specific responses. One response García Márquez
appears to be calling for includes the honoring and preservation of *la calidez de la sangre*—the heat of the blood produced by the Caribbean heat and humidity that instills the vital essence of Latin American identity. The story also calls for Latin Americans to make a place in the world community that does not sacrifice the younger generation and the succeeding generations. In addition, since Nena and Billy are securely members of the culture of wealth, Nena’s death reveals that the upper class has the most to lose if no action is taken. The story calls for swift action to prevent the loss of Latin American identity and culture, before all is dissolved and lost.

Two destroyed women. Leticia Nazareno and Nena Daconte have the ability to access and wield power, and both succeed in using their power within certain spaces. The failures of their power outside of certain spaces either suggests that García Márquez cannot imagine women wielding power outside of the microgeographies of the presidential palace or the familiar confines of Cartagena de Indias or that the destruction of these characters represents something else. As I have argued, Nena’s symbolic role as representative of Latin American identity makes her death a political statement that calls for specific responses that can preserve Latin American identity and culture. In contrast, Nazareno’s destruction reinforces the corruption of the general’s decomposing corpse and the corruption that permeates the presidential palace. As spaces are shaped, so are we; as the presidential palace is a space of corruption, so too is the power that Nazareno claims and wields. Her destruction prefigures the destruction of the dictator. In considering the two women together, these characters suggest that there is a larger political statement to be made about corruption or dilution of Latin American identity. *Autumn*, and specifically Nazareno, represents a warning about the dangers of unchecked, corrupt power, since this corrupted power produces violent disruption. Nena and her Latin
American identity is subject to dilution, another form of corruption, and the tragedy of "Trail" suggests that action should be take to prevent the loss of identity and culture.

Endnotes

\(^1\) Indeed, García Márquez stated in his interview with Claudia Dreifus that his original attempt to write about the Buendía family was a novel titled *La casa* (The House) (Oberhelman 74).

\(^2\) In the interview with Raymond Leslie Williams, García Márquez states that his "geographic and emotional referents in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* were Cartagena" (138). As part of the published text of the interview, Williams also includes a portrait of García Márquez, a map of Colombia, and the all-important photograph that García Márquez says "solved my writing of the novel" (134). The photograph is by the well-known and often-studied photographer Alfred Eisenstadt. Eisenstadt, who worked for *Life*, is best known for the exuberant and memorable VJ Day photograph of a sailor kissing a nurse. Eisenstadt traveled the world making pictures for the magazine, but the photograph García Márquez refers to is not one that the photographer is well known for.

\(^3\) The criticism on *The Autumn of the Patriarch* tends to be grouped around many of the issues that appear in García Márquez's other works: solitude and isolation, death, mythology and mythification, archetypes, violence, satire and the carnivalesque. Among the most useful are the works of Michael Bell, Martha Canfield, Adelaida López Mejía, Michael Palencia-Roth and Raymond L. Williams.

Worthy of special attention are Isabel Rodríguez-Vergara’s *El mundo satírico de Gabriel García Márquez*, Jaime Mejía Duque’s *Gabriel García Márquez: Mito y realidad de América*, and Michael Palencia-Roth’s *Gabriel García Márquez: La línea, el*
circular y las metamorfosis del mito. I can also recommend Gabriel García Márquez: *Revolutions in Wonderland* by Regina Janes.

The majority of critics writing in Spanish are more concerned with the relationship of García Márquez's dictator to the dictator as represented in the work of other Latin American writers. Critics have established a triumvirate of novels and writers: *Autumn* by García Márquez, *Reasons of State* [*El recurso del método*] by Alejo Carpentier, and *I, the Supreme* [*Yo el Supremo*] by Augusto Roa Bastos. A valuable introduction to the issues raised by this vein of criticism is Ángel Rama's *Los Dictadores latinoamericanos* [*The Latin American Dictators*]. Additional studies compare/contrast *Autumn* with Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo* and Miguel Ángel Asturias's *The President* [*El Presidente*].

4 Comparing and contrasting the lovemaking of Leticia Nazareno and the general to the lovemaking of Pilar Ternera and the Buendía sons would make for an interesting view of female power, especially in the language used and the "result" or outcome of the orgasms.

5 The "strings of gold fishes" gracefully allude to the repetitive goldsmithing of Colonel Aureliano Buendía in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

6 The assassination of Leticia Nazareno and her son in the public space of the marketplace also hints at the possibility that the attacking "dogs" are not dogs at all. The public sentiment toward Nazareno is not positive, and her destruction is foreshadowed by the bombing of "the armored limousine" that scatters "twisted pieces" "all over the city" (*Autumn* 193). The attacking animals "weren't the same usual street dogs" (*Autumn* 197). The attacking animals are unusual, foreign, unknown—perhaps intentionally so, as a means of protecting the identities of those involved. The sudden attack takes the form of "a hellish whirlpool," suggesting that the souls in peril are not merely the souls of
Nazareno and her son (Autumn 197). Furthermore, the aides report the sight of “ephemeral hands reaching out to us,” which describes not only the human act of asking for help, but also the human act of asking for acceptance and physical connection. As “the rest of the body was disappearing into pieces, we saw fleeting and ungraspable expressions that sometimes were of terror, other times of pity, other times of jubilation” (Autumn 197). To whom do these expressions belong? As evolutions of emotion moving from fear to sympathy to joy, the changes in feeling cannot be attributed to Nazareno and her son. The description only seems to make sense if the attackers are human—first experiencing the initial shock of the attack and uncertainty about its result, then progressing to the sense of crossing the boundary from a position of uncertainty and weakness to a position of power and sympathy. Finally, the expression of “jubilation” points toward feelings of relief, release, accomplishment, and the acknowledgment that the violence has come to an end for the time being.

Luz Mery Giraldo, in “Peregrinaje y levitación en Doce cuentos peregrinos, [Pilgrimage and Levitation in Strange Pilgrims]” classifies the stories into three groups, providing a title for each group. Macondo va a Europa [Macondo Goes to Europe], El placer instable de la modernidad [The Fragile Pleasure of Modernity], and Perversidad y desamparo [Perversity and Abandonment] (145). Placing “Trail” in the group called Macondo va a Europa [Macondo Goes to Europe] allows Giraldo to emphasize “aquéllos cuentos en los que prima la perspectiva latinoamérica, aunque su entorno se nutra de espacios o condiciones cosmopolitas [those stories in which a Latin American perspective comes first, even though their surroundings are composed of cosmopolitan spaces and conditions]” (145). In “Trail,” García Márquez unfailingly presents Madrid, the border towns in the south of France, and Paris through the lenses of Nena and Billy.
In “Trail” and the other stories of the collection, Europe is a place “donde la muerte se constituye en presencia triunfal y la vida da apenas una última esperanza [where death is established as a triumphal presence and life hardly provides a final hope]” (Giraldo 141).

In “La magia de la belleza y del horror el fondo tragico de García Márquez en Doce cuentos peregrinos [The Magic of the Beauty and Horror in the Tragic Essence of García Márquez in Strange Pilgrims],” Miguel García Posada calls attention to the balance between beauty and horror in the stories, emphasizing that

\[\text{[I]a narración fluye con soltura, instalada en universos urbanos reconocibles para el lector, sobre los que se proyecta la poderosa imaginación del autor, fiel en esto a una de las leyes más firmes de su poética: la combinación de cotidianeidad y fantasía [the narration flows with ease, installed in an urbane universe well-known by the reader, on which is projected the powerful imagination of the author, faithful in one of the most solid laws of his poetics: the combination of the ordinary and fantasy]. (169)}\]

Posada also suggests that the number of stories in the collection provides indirect reference to classical literature: “doces son las Novelas exemplares de Cervantes, pero también los trabajos de Hércules, los signos del zodiaco, las horas, las apóstoles [twelve are the Novelas exemplares of Cervantes, and also the labors of Hercules, the signs of the zodiac, the hours, the apostles]” (169). Like Posada, José Luis Méndez call attention to the similarities in tone and style that work throughout Strange Pilgrims in “Los peregrinos extraviados: Reflexiones sobre ‘Las cosas extrañas que le suceden a los latinoamericanos en Europa’ [The Lost Pilgrims: Reflections on ‘The Strange Things That Happen to Latin Americans in Europe’].” Méndez emphasizes the journalistic tone and the similarities among the characters. For the most part,
Los peregrinos de sus cuentos son en ese sentido todas personas inadaptadas, soñadores, nostálgicos o, por lo menos, gente de una lógica distinta al medio cultural y geográfico en que se desenvuelven [the pilgrims of García Márquez's stories are in this sense all maladjusted, dreaming, nostalgic persons, or at least, people of a logic distinguished from the cultural and geographic environment in which they are portrayed]. (Méndez 165).

Méndez suggests that Nena Daconte is an exception; "se mueve en Europa como el pez en el agua [she moves in Europe like a fish in water]" (165). The point of this observation, and its implications in relationship to the geography of "Trail" will be discussed at length at a later point.

In “Escritura, creación y destrucción en Doce cuentos peregrinos de Gabriel García Márquez [Writing, Creation and Destruction in Strange Pilgrims by Gabriel García Márquez],” Isabel R. Vergara acknowledges the similarities in tone and style that establish relationships among the twelve stories. However, Vergara considers The Prologue a tool for reading and making sense out of the stories. Vergara states

En mi opinión, los cuentos deben ser leídos como una metáfora de la creación literaria, como una discusión del acto de la escritura (resultado del puro placer, según García Márquez), del sentido de la lógica (la importancia del lenguaje) y del proceso de interpretación (al declarar el carácter onírico de ellos) [In my opinion, the stories must be read as a metaphor for literary creation, as a discussion of the act of writing (according to García Márquez, the result of pure pleasure), of the feeling of logic (the importance of language), and of the process of interpretation (in order to declare the linked character of the stories.)]” (348)
Similar to Vergara, Eugenia Houvenaghel uses the Prologue to discuss the probability and improbability of the narrated events in the stories. According to Houvenaghel’s article titled “La doble retórica de lo verosímil en Doce cuentos peregrinos [The Double Rhetoric of Verisimilitude in Strange Pilgrims],” the reader decides whether or not a story is believable, but the author can use a wide array of techniques to “guide” the reader to accept the improbable. Houvenaghel lists and describes the techniques García Márquez uses: distancing between the teller and the tale, skepticism expressed by the narrator, and references to the daily and ordinary (in languages or activities).

Houvenaghel’s conclusion is that “García Márquez se muestra un hábil estratega que obra con una doble tactica, la de lo verosímil ‘moderno’ y la de lo verosímil ‘clásico’, para lograr la credulidad del lector [García Márquez shows readers a skillful strategy that works with a double tactic, that of ‘modern’ verisimilitude and that of ‘classical’ verisimilitude to achieve believability with readers]” (69).

8 Pedro Lenz, in an article titled “Calas en el proceso creativo de García Márquez: Cómo se cuenta un cuento y Doce cuentos peregrinos [Samples of the Creative Process of García Márquez: How to Tell a Story and Strange Pilgrims]” also analyzes the Prologue, outlining if and how García Márquez follows the rules set forth in the Prologue. Lenz points to García Márquez’s difficulty with completing the stories: “The effort involved in writing a short story is as intense as beginning a novel, where everything must be defined in the first paragraph: structure, tone, style, rhythm, length, and sometimes even the personality of a character” (“Prologue” ix). Lenz analyzes two stories in Strange Pilgrims—“I Only Came to Use the Phone” and “The Trail of Your Blood in the Snow”—focusing on the material in the first paragraphs and early sections of the stories. The opening paragraph of “Trail” includes references to Nena Daconte’s youth, eyes,
skin, and radiance; Lenz writes “[c]on estos elementos el lector ya no se confunde; sabe que lo que está leyendo es una cuento de amor, posiblemente trágico [the reader is not confused by these elements; the reader already knows that s/he is reading a love story, possibly a tragic one]” (20). According to Lenz, the story not only follows the rules García Márquez has described in the Prologue, but also intentionally and purposely foreshadows Nena’s death.

Though the first paragraph of “Trail” does build suspense and asks the reader to be concerned about Nena and her bleeding finger, her death does not appear imminent. The density of the first paragraph provides a great deal of information—primarily about Nena and Billy’s place in the culture of wealth. Nena wears “a mink coat that could not have been bought with the year’s wages of the entire garrison” (“Trail” 162). The images of Nena and Billy’s material advantages sharply contrast with the environment they are in. García Márquez directly associates Nena and Billy with wealth and luxury by describing their car: “What best revealed the status of them both was the silver automobile whose interior exhaled a breath of living animal” (“Trail” 163). The animalistic quality of the car places Nena and Billy in direct contrast to those who live and work “along that impoverished border” (“Trail” 163). Certainly taking care of the bleeding finger is an issue, but the young couple, at least in the first paragraph, has more than enough resources to solve Nena’s problem.

Lenz argues that the story provides specific elements that “prepare” the reader for Nena’s death, including Nena’s physical condition, the significance of blood in the title, and other associations that go with information provided by the title. According to Lenz, “[l]a protagonista es físicamente débil y vulnerable, une especie de Cenicienta o princesa de un cuento de hadas [the protagonist is physically weak and vulnerable, a kind of
Cinderella or fairy tale princess]” (21). Nena, portrayed as a passionate saxophone player and lover, seems far from “weak” as Lenz indicates, especially since she is in love and happy, and possesses “molasses skin still radiant with the bright Caribbean sun” (“Trail” 162). If Nena is a princess, then her royal or courtly behavior results from her access to numerous resources, her education, and her knowledge of the “French provinces which she had known since she was a little girl making countless trips there with her parents” (“Trail” 172-173). She does not appear to be physically weak or frail as Lenz suggests. Furthermore, Lenz does not acknowledge that the fairy tales his analysis refers to—Cinderella and Snow White—most commonly employ happy endings. The point of Lenz’s argument is that the story reveals what will happen in the title and through the name of the character; in other words, “el desenlace trágico se da por descontado [the dénouement of the tragedy is taken for granted]” (22). Despite the interpretation Lenz offers, the argument does not address the non-linear structure of the story which interferes with the assumed “development” of the tragedy.

The Prologue provides the author with the means for mythologizing his own work. By discussing the writing process, the amount of time devoted to the creation of the stories, the loss of the notebook, and the travel required for reacquaintance with the cities where the stories are set, García Márquez sets up the “story behind the story,” which he wants readers to accept without question. However, my perspective is that The Prologue is another story on its own that encourages readers to value the stories in a particular way (as aesthetic products) and to be alerted to the subtle and intricate connections between all twelve of the stories. Though The Prologue describes his writing process, we as readers can never really know how accurately his description matches the actual process. Any writer who spends enough time at writing knows that practice makes writing easier,
but any writing also includes an element of mystery that does not disappear with practice (or publication). Even if The Prologue is an invented narrative, the mention of reacquaintance with the cities where the stories are set calls attention to the “Europeanness” of and the role of geography in the stories. García Márquez sets the stories in specific cities, but the myth he sets up for the stories indicates that the places are invented by time, memory, and nostalgia. The strangeness of Europe “meant [that the author] could not detect the dividing line between disillusionment and nostalgia” (Prologue xii). In other words, the invention of Europe in the author’s memory creates new spaces the characters will have to negotiate.

10 The tombstone under the tree also alludes to the tenure of the Buendía patriarch, José Arcadio, who lives out the end of his life tied to a tree in the courtyard of the Buendía home.

11 Here the reference to “Getsemaní” and the “slave district” points toward not only Christ’s sacrifice and blood, but also the history of colonialism in Colombia.

12 The kisses in this passage refer to indirect “air” kisses on the cheek—common practice for greeting among Europeans.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANNEY BOATWRIGHT, RUTH ANNE "BONE" BOATWRIGHT, AND THE NARRATOR OF "I'M WORKING ON MY CHARM"

Born 11 April 1949 in Greenville, South Carolina, Dorothy Allison survived years of physical and sexual abuse to become a college graduate with an advanced degree in anthropology and a successful writer. Her genuine claim to working class identity is reflected extensively in her writing; she has written book and music reviews, poetry, essays, short stories, and two novels. Leaving Greenville for St. Petersburg, Florida, Allison has also lived in New York, and currently lives outside of San Francisco.

According to an interview with Susan Salter, Allison “wrote urban ethnographies about the lower east side” during her time in New York, which may account for her detailed sensibility for the difficult conditions and lives of her characters (PublishersWeekly.com online). Her first novel, Bastard Out of Carolina, was a finalist for the 1992 National Book Award. Published first in 1988, Trash, a collection of short stories which includes “I’m Working on My Charm,” was republished in 2002.

Despite locating her characters in the culture of persistence, Allison consistently creates characters who demonstrate power on multiple scales. Though subject to limited economic resources, Allison’s female characters have an abundance of social, emotional, and physical resources that foster their survival and provide access to power. The characters in Bastard Out of Carolina and “I’m Working on My Charm” successfully
negotiate spaces to access and wield power. Evaluating the characters on the basis of how the culture of persistence defines power—as the ability to survive—provides a better perspective of female power. In the spaces of bodies, homes, families, communities, places of work, and regions, the female characters in Allison’s work demonstrate power through their sheer persistence and ability to successfully participate in intricate emotional and social familial networks that foster their survival. Allison’s characters, as successful survivors in the culture of persistence, demonstrate that power is accessible even among characters that might initially appear to have little, if any power.

In the novel, *Bastard Out of Carolina,* evaluating the characters of Anney Boatwright and her daughter Ruth Anne “Bone” Boatwright on the scales of the body, home, family/community, and region, provides a more detailed and complex understanding of the power Anney and Bone access and wield. Despite their position in the culture of persistence, Anney and Bone are successful, heroic, and powerful in their ability to negotiate survival.

In the case of the story “I’m Working on My Charm,” the narrator claims power in the space where she employs her acting and performance skills. By viewing the spaces in the story through Doreen Massey’s concept of space as socially defined, the power of the women in the novel is expressed through the sharing of economic resources, the establishment of communally defined boundaries, and the use of shared practices and behaviors. More significantly, the narrator accesses and wields power by developing performance and acting skills for use in the workspace and in the social space of the party.

Dorothy Allison and Gabriel García Márquez share a common purpose as writers. Just as García Márquez indicates in his Nobel lecture, establishing the valuable reality of
her world and experiences is an urgent and necessary goal for Allison. She explains that
"[t]he need to make my world believable to people who have never experienced it is part
of why I write fiction" (Allison *Trash* 14). The novel emphasizes the scales of body,
home, community, and region, with the purpose of making real the spaces/places where
Allison’s characters engage in their struggle for survival. The novel asks the reader to
imagine not “the South,” but instead the ways in which the South separates into scales
that impose meaning in relationship to the characters. By accessing and wielding power
on several scales, the characters in the novel can be more fully understood as the
powerful, heroic women they are.

*Bastard Out of Carolina* describes the coming of age of Ruth Anne “Bone”
Boatwright, detailing the emotional and physical abuse she endures at the hands of her
stepfather, Glen Waddell. Bone’s mother, Anney Boatwright, ultimately faces the choice
between her husband and her child. Anney is both heroic and powerful, since she is a
successful survivor, and she is able to use her resources to foster survival. Bone, as a
rough copy of her mother, is also powerful as a survivor, explicitly demonstrating her
power in several ways. Though she is a survivor, Bone must leave her home and
community in order to escape Glen’s abuse. In writing about her own experience in
poverty, Allison explains “[t]he poverty I knew was dreary, deadening, shameful, the
women powerful in ways not generally seen as heroic by the world outside the family”
(“A Question of Class” 17). Anney and Bone will exemplify this “heroic” power. The
novel situates the struggle for survival in places/spaces that include the body, the home,
the family/community, and the region. The analysis that follows demonstrates the
reciprocal relationship between the culture of persistence and places/spaces to explain
how Anney and Bone access and wield power.

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Critical analyses of the novel focus heavily on incest and sexual violence, leading many critics to explain the function and meaning of the incest using psychological approaches. Among these critics, the most useful arguments are put forth by Brenda Bourdreaux, Laurie Vickroy, Deborah Horvitz, and Connie D. Griffin in analyzing sexual violence. In her discussion of incest, Griffin also addresses questions about autobiography and identity in “I Will Not Wear that Coat: Cross-Dressing in the Works of Dorothy Allison.” Griffin analyzes Allison’s process of creating identity, pointing out that “Allison foregrounds her identity as southern, white, working-class, and lesbian” (145). Identity functions on regional (southern), community (working-class and lesbian), and body (lesbian) scales. But Griffin also notes that in “[w]riting against the cultural construction of patrilineal authority and its powers of defining legitimacy, Allison’s project [her writing] demonstrates that subjects always exist within the confines of legal and cultural definitions, even when they are defined as outside such categories” [emphasis in original] (145). Though Griffin praises Allison's work for resisting the myth of the noble poor, the analysis does not include explanations of the "legal and cultural definitions" Allison uses. In resisting the myth of the noble poor, Griffin suggests that Allison's writing can be situated "within one of the most significant debates of the day--literary and historical representation of the culturally marginalized" (147). Griffin offers what appears to be an apt explanation for the title of the novel: “Bastard Out of Carolina," denotes not only the geographical state of her [Allison's] protagonist's birth--South Carolina--but the legal, social, and patriarchal state of her birth--illegitimacy--identifying a complex sense of subjective dis/location from birth onward” (145). Such an explanation is possible, but does not acknowledge the power Bone accesses despite her “dis/location” from the external forces—social and legal—that fail to
confer legitimacy on her. Nor does Griffin explore the possibility that Bone’s dis/location might be a positive movement, a step that will foster her survival and give her means for separating from her mother and family.

In exploring the idea of sexual identity in *Bastard*, Deborah Horvitz calls the novel “[a] powerful indictment of men, marriage, and heterosexuality, [which] yokes male-female intimacy with the potential denial/destruction of women. No heterosexual relationship in this novel (and many are portrayed) offers anything desirable or appealing” (244). Laurie Vickroy’s discussion of trauma summarizes the dysfunctional relationships in the novel, while highlighting the aspects of physical/sexual violence that characterize such relationships. Regarding Daddy Glen and Bone’s efforts to dominate and control others, Vickroy points out that “[a]ny sense of control, even if it is self-abusing or ineffectual, is necessary to building a perception of an integrated identity” (41). While both Horvitz and Vickroy critique relationships in the novel, neither critic fully addresses the power that the female characters access and wield through their network of familial relationships. In order to move away from a psychological approach, my analysis focuses on the definition of power functioning in the culture of persistence (the ability to survive) in conjunction with the geographical strategy of scaling that allows us to see the full extent of the power wielded by Anney and Bone.

More recently some critics have called attention to the representation of ethnic minorities in relation to Bone’s outsider status. In addition, many critics address the class issues of the novel, with special attention to stereotypes of and representations of poverty. Jennifer Campbell argues for the use of texts written by those outside of the middle class, like Dorothy Allison, to force college and university students to think about and recognize class boundaries, through language and material differences. Jillian

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Sandell effectively explores the novel's narrative as a statement about class and politics in "Telling Stories of 'Queer White Trash': Race, Class, and Sexuality in the Work of Dorothy Allison." The majority of critics, because of the many published interviews with Allison, view the novel as autobiographical or semi-autobiographical. The link to Allison's own experiences also leads critics to incorporate queer theory in analyzing the development of Bone's identity. Ann Cvetkovich and Mary M. Wiles offer valuable discussions that do not shy away from discussing Allison's or Bone's lesbian identities and desires. Wiles combines psychoanalytic theory and queer theory to discuss Bone's body, masturbatory fantasies, and identity in relation to the trawling hook. Cvetkovich examines the power Bone derives from her fantasies and masturbation. The analysis also explains how the novel "produces [...] a particular, and proudly queer, national and regional identity" (Cvetkovich 372). Cvetkovich demonstrates how scales contain each other, leading Allison to encompass the body, the home, the family/community, the region, and the nation in a novel that might otherwise be deemed merely "regional."

Since "Bone claims a sexual self out of her history of violence, Dorothy Allison also claims the value of white-trash origins, claims as legitimately American literature the story of [Bone]" (Cvetkovich 372). National and regional identity is negotiated through the powerful and sexual body of Bone.

Geographical studies of Bastard specifically addressing space/place or regional issues include the work of Jocelyn Hazelwood Donlon, Moira P. Baker, Minrose Gwin, and Laura S. Patterson. Patterson focuses on Allison's revising of the "southern rape complex" through the use of the "first-person 'real time'" structure of the rape scene (49). Patterson's analysis calls attention to the entrances and exits which foster the first-person perspective. Minrose Gwin uses Gaston Bachelard's notion of homes as "felicitous
spaces” to examine the construction of the opposite—what she calls “non-felicitous spaces”—as depicted in three Southern novels, including Bastard.

In “Dorothy Allison’s Topography of Resistance,” Moira P. Baker uses Foucault’s ideas of “how power permeates discourses” to explain how Bastard “presents a lesbian space of resistance that is central to its two-fold vision of survival: it provides a locus for opposing the violence visited upon the working poor by an abusive class system; and it affords a site for beginning the process of surviving childhood sexual abuse” (“Topography” 23). According to Baker, Raylene represents the character who most successfully resists capitalism and patriarchy by working for herself and living without a husband. While the article uses the terms “locus” and “site” in reference to resistance, the argument focuses on Raylene’s behavior and place, indicating that “[Raylene’s] freedom provides a model for Bone” (“Topography” 24). Baker also views the powerful Boatwright women who make up the family/community as “an almost subterranean, matrilineal network on the margins of patriarchy and capitalism” (“Topography” 24).

Rather than understanding the matriarchal power that fosters the survival of and connects individuals in the culture of persistence, Baker marginalizes the Boatwright women. By putting Bone at the center of the novel and privileging her point of view, Allison indicates that the female characters and their experiences are central, primary, and vital in an effective reading of the novel. Since Bone, her mother, and her aunts are the active agents in the novel, their lives and experiences can hardly be conceived as marginal. In an expanded discussion, titled “‘The Politics of They’: Dorothy Allison’s Bastard Out of Carolina as Critique of Class, Gender and Sexual Ideologies,” Baker explains Allison’s deconstruction of categories and stereotypes that pervade the novel. Baker maintains the
position that Anney and her sisters are marginalized, suggesting that not until the end of the novel does Bone “exert agency by asserting her own worth” (“Politics” 125).

Jocelyn Hazelwood Donlon’s article, “‘Born on the Wrong Side of the Porch’: Violating Traditions in *Bastard Out of Carolina,*” posits the porch as a liminal, thresholding space that traditionally fosters heterosexual romance. Porches are the sites for courting between young women and men, and she sites oral stories which “celebrate [...] porch romance” while acknowledging that the stories “originate from within traditional nuclear families and that they give voice to heterosexual, middle class romance” (Donlon 137). Regarding *Bastard,* Donlon argues that the porch represents a safe space for Bone, a space in which the character feels connected to her family and protected from Daddy Glen’s violent abuse. The porch “is a place to which Bone returns for safety, where she can temporarily escape the terrors that lay beyond the threshold of her own home” (Donlon 139). In analyzing the closing section of the novel, Donlon points out that “Raylene’s porch safely situates Bone on the threshold of her emerging identity, positioning her to embrace and affirm her own transgressiveness and ready to face the world on her own terms. Repositioned for survival, Bone’s future seems not only bearable but hopeful” (141). Though offering important insight into the significance of the porch in the novel, Donlon does not acknowledge Bone’s previous success at surviving in the novel. Donlon’s book, *Swinging in Place: Porch Life in Southern Culture,* summarizes the argument of the article, and positions Allison’s construction and use of the porch in the larger context of Southern fiction and history. The following analysis goes beyond these exclusively geographical approaches by using geographical scaling in conjunction with the definition of power operating in the culture of persistence (the ability to survive), providing a magnified view of female power in the novel.
Anney Boatwright faces explicit criteria for judging her success as a woman in the specific setting of the culture of persistence. The expectations for women include emphasis on men, children, caretaking, and maintaining the complex set of relationships necessary for survival. Basically, the unwritten rules that operate in the culture of persistence dictate that “[a] ‘good’ woman is expected to take care of and rescue her man and children as needed” (Payne 69). A real woman supports her family and her extended family in a variety of ways—she negotiates relationships and problems by using her ability to charm and coax. Additionally, “[a] real woman takes care of her man by feeding him and downplaying his shortcomings” (Payne 77). Above all, a good woman, according to the culture of persistence, knows how to best use limited resources. The culture of persistence also imposes compulsory heterosexuality on women, meaning that homosexual behavior must be hidden. Even though multiple heterosexual relationships (and even promiscuity) are acceptable, any suggestion of homosexual attraction produces serious consequences, including violence and exclusion from the network of relationships.

In the novel, Allison portrays Anney Boatwright as a successful survivor, despite the difficult choice she must eventually make; moreover, Anney demonstrates power on multiple scales. She is successful at survival—master of the hidden rules of the culture of persistence—and is able to exert power at the levels of the body, the home, the community, and the region. She uses her body as a tool to establish relationships with Lyle Parsons and Daddy Glen. Additionally, Anney works most consistently as a waitress, a physically demanding job. When there is no food in the house, Anney uses her body to produce money for food. Anney exerts power on the level of the home by working outside of the home to support her family, and by fostering Daddy Glen’s ideal
of middle class life. In the home, Anney also functions as a boundary between Daddy Glen and Bone, trying to avert Glen from abusing Bone when she can. Though excluded from the space where the abuse occurs, Anney exerts power in her position of witness outside the bathroom door, and she functions as a barrier that seems to keep Glen from killing Bone. Though she is not an eyewitness to the abuse until late in the novel, Anney acts as an aural witness by listening to the sounds of the abuse, behind the closed bathroom door. Anney also exerts power in the family/community composed of her sisters, brothers, and other relatives. She knows the importance of maintaining relationships for survival, making effort to sustain the relationships that will, in turn, foster the survival of her family unit. As a character, Anney also exerts power on the scale of the regional. Through some unknown channels, Anney procures a birth certificate which lacks the stigmatizing “illegitimate” stamp. The following analysis elaborates how Anney accesses and demonstrates her power on the scales of the body, home, family/community, and region.

Anney demonstrates power at the scale of the body by using her body to obtain money for the purchase of food. When facing one of the ugly realities of poverty, hunger, Anney demonstrates creativity. She distracts the girls by telling stories and making them laugh. Beyond distracting and entertaining the girls, Anney takes action to provide food. She cannot rely on Glen, so she takes specific steps to prepare herself to earn money and to provide food for her daughters. She begins by attending to the needs of her daughters with creative, enthusiastic wordplay and storytelling. Though the girls need food, Anney provides with the current resource she has access to—her useful and creative ability to entertain. “Mama made us laugh....all the time laughing and teasing and tickling our shoulders with her long nails as she walked back and forth” (Bastard Out
of Carolina 73). Anney's ability to entertain her daughters and distract them from their hunger represents one of her strengths within the culture of persistence; at this time, she cannot give them food, but she can provide laughter.

Bone describes Anney's obvious anger toward her situation and details her refusal to listen to Glen; she "slapped his hand down and jumped back like a snake that's caught a rat" (BOC 73). Anney is able to use both her anger and her fearlessness to propel herself through what she must do. Anney will need to be fearless in order to fulfill her role as caretaker and provide for her daughters, taking drastic steps to solve the problem of hunger. Determined, Anney washes up, gets dressed, and takes herself out to earn money for food with her body. The language describing Anney's determined manner creates the image of a woman going out to do battle. Bone describes the process:

Mama put on a clean bra and one of the sleeveless red pullover sweaters she'd gotten from her friend Mab down at the diner—the one Mab joked was made to show just how high her tits could point....Mama outlined her mouth in bold red lipstick, combed back her dark blond hair, and hung her big old purse on one arm....[then] reached under the bedframe to pull out the box where she stored her shiny black patent-leather high heels. When she stood up in those, she looked like a different person, older and harder, her mouth set in a grim little smile. (BOC 74)

Indeed Anney transforms herself into another woman who will use her body for profit. The reference to her "tits" implies that she dresses for sexual activity. Anney dresses in the colors most often associated with prostitutes in Western culture—red and black. She dresses to emphasize her assets, and to transform herself into another person. What Anney does requires a strong will and the appropriate costume. Anney succeeds in her
transformation, and Bone describes the change: “Her blond hair looked even brighter, her eyes darker, her complexion paler. She was coldly beautiful” (BOC 74). With her special clothing and cold beauty, Anney becomes a powerful magician casting a spell—to make food appear out of thin air.

Though Anney does not feel wholly comfortable about what she has done, and chastises herself with “‘Damn, damn,’” she does make everything “‘all right’” producing money for food (BOC 77). Anney brings her daughters home and gleefully serves them a late night meal. As if by magic, food appears, including “flour in a can, a jar of jelly, butter in a dish, a bag of tomatoes, fatback in a sealed, package, and a carton of fresh eggs all speckled brown” (BOC 77). Successful at providing food, Anney prepares the meal, entertaining her children with her description of the cooking process.

Anney demonstrates power by doing what needs to be done to provide food for her children, sustaining herself as a successful survivor according to the expectations of the culture of persistence. By using her body, Anney can provide for her children. Every step in this process indicates her power in using the hidden rules of the culture of persistence. Though she does not like to use her body for this purpose, she demonstrates power by doing it anyway and controlling her own discomfort. Anney engages power in her actions as well as in controlling her emotional response to her actions. Though her actions do not solve the problems of poverty and hunger, Anney’s determination allows her to address the problem she faces in the present: hungry daughters. In the culture of persistence, “one of the rules in generational poverty is this: you may need to use your body for survival. After all, that is all that is truly yours. Sex will bring in money and favors” (Payne 38). In this case, her body is a resource that Anney uses. The remorse Anney expresses provides a glimpse of the deeper frustration she must live with. Feeding
her daughters does provide a sense of relief and release, since Anney is able to successfully fulfill her role as caretaker and demonstrate her knowledge of the hidden rules of the culture of persistence.

The power to use her body also gives Anney the ability to wield power in the home. In the shift of scales, Anney’s power expands. As an important space in the novel, the home(s) that Anney and Glen move into and through is a space of constant conflict, tension, and violence. “[T]he idea that home can be equated with a fixed, safe place of residence and a permanent social support network has been questioned” and Bastard joins the numerous other voices challenging the myth of home as a haven from the outside world (McDowell and Sharp Glossary 125). In the space of home, Anney wields power by tolerating the transience of moving from house to house and making the temporary space livable and hospitable. Anney also wields power over her husband in the space of the home. Anney does prevent Glen from killing her daughter, even though she is not able to stop him from abusing Bone.

In “Women, Chora, Dwelling,” Elizabeth Grosz discusses women and the conceptualization of the home. Founding her discussion in Luce Irigaray’s argument for the reconfiguration of space and time, Grosz suggests that women are inevitably without their own space(s). Grosz indicates that

[t]he containment of women within a dwelling that they did not build, nor was even built for them can only amount to a homelessness within the very home itself: it becomes the space of duty, of endless and infinitely repeatable chores that have no social value or recognition, the space of the affirmation and replenishment of others at the expense and erasure of the self, the space of
domestic violence and abuse, the space that harms as much as it isolates women.

(emphasis in original) (122)

Anney seems especially vulnerable to the homelessness Grosz describes—Glen makes effort to physically separate her from her family, while also imposing on her the demands of constant moving, financial lack, and homemaking in a place where they will not stay long. Though not involved in choosing the places where they will live, Anney is expected to contribute financially and to make those spaces hospitable. Bone describes the transience: “We moved and then moved again. We lived in no one house more than eight months. Rented houses; houses leased with an option to buy; shared houses on the city limits. […] We moved so often Mama learned to keep the newspapers in the cardboard dish barrels, the pads and cords and sturdy boxes” (BOC 64-65). Anney remains prepared for the next move, saving the packing materials. Glen longs for houses like his brothers’, yet the “houses he chose for us were always shabby imitations,” while Anney has no choice in the matter (BOC 81). The constant moving repeatedly puts Anney into the impossible task of transforming substandard housing into livable space; she “sewed curtains, washed windows, and polished floors” (BOC 81). Anney’s strategy for dealing with the constant moving is to keep quiet. Bone points out that “Mama, who said nothing, just unpacked the dishes one more time” (BOC 83). Rather than expending energy in arguing with her husband, Anney focuses on the tasks she can control. By cleaning the floors and making new curtains, Anney demonstrates power by making the space hers. Despite the constant strain of transience, Anney demonstrates power in the space of the home by claiming the space with her efforts to create a hospitable space.

Anney also exerts power in the space of the home by preventing Glen from killing Bone, though she cannot stop the physical abuse. Bone says “[w]hen Daddy Glen beat
me there was always a reason, and Mama would stand right outside the bathroom door” (BOC 110). Standing outside the door, Anney functions as a “guardian of the unspeakable,” as defined by Beatriz Colomina. In analyzing the architectural designs of Adolf Loos, Colomina insightfully describes the placement of women in home space(s):

The raised alcove of the Moller house and the Zimmer der Dame of the Muller house, on the other hand, not only overlook the social spaces but are exactly positioned at the end of the sequence on the threshold of the private, the secret, the upper rooms where sexuality is hidden away. At the intersection of the visible and the invisible, women are placed as the guardians of the unspeakable.

(Colomina 81-82)

Colomina also explains that the majority of homes are designed with private spaces that are visually separated from other parts of the home. Because of these visually separated spaces, Colomina argues, women are relegated to positions that force them to act as “guardians of the unspeakable” without giving them any choice in the matter. In Anney’s case, instead of guarding or hiding sexuality, she becomes a guardian for the unspeakable reality of Glen’s physical violence against Bone. Anney stands outside of the bathroom door, at the threshold between the hidden violence and the visible areas of the home. The truth about Glen’s abuse of Bone cannot be articulated: “All of us were screaming, and no one could help” (BOC 106). Anney plays dual roles outside the bathroom door; both of these roles demonstrate her power. First, her presence prevents Glen from simply killing Bone outright. His childishness and rage, especially the hands that Bone hates, make him more than capable of killing her. With Anney present, just outside of the door, acting as guardian, Glen has some awareness that he cannot kill Bone because Anney will know, and will more than likely reject him for such an act. Anney, in her role as
guardian of the unspeakable, also acts as a boundary that Glen cannot cross in her presence. Unfortunately, Anney cannot always mitigate Glen's rage, but she still holds power over Glen. Childish and childlike, Glen most fears being abandoned by Anney, making her presence outside of the bathroom a painful reminder of the limits in their relationship. Second, her presence outside of the bathroom puts Anney in the position of aural witness who does not observe the violence, but instead is forced to imagine the beatings, matching up the inhuman sounds she hears with the marks she sees on Bone's body after each episode. Anney absorbs the beatings, subjecting her to the suffering of her own imagination. In her position outside of the bathroom, Anney is reminded of the fine line between life and death, which in turn, reminds her of the limited choices she faces. Little of Anney's position outside of the bathroom can be positive or pleasant—she can only hope for the crisis to pass so that the painful reminders of her situation can fade. Anney demonstrates strength and power by surviving the violence enacted on Bone over an extended period of time. She lives through these crises, the pain, the tears, the suffering, and the violence—trying each time to comfort Bone, ease the pain of her wounds, and demonstrate her love for her daughter. In the demanding yet powerful role as guardian of the unspeakable, Anney demonstrates power as a woman who is able to survive, even though she moves through home(s) as a temporary space with unrelenting tension and violence.

For Anney Boatwright and her daughters, family equals community. Anney's power on the scales of body and home expands to the scale of family/community, where she is especially powerful in maintaining the intricate familial relationships that foster the survival of Anney and her daughters. The variation and fluidity in the setting of boundaries allows Allison to equate family and community. In this equation, the
Boatwright women can explicitly exclude others. The way boundaries in the novel are
drawn in the novel even allows the exclusion of spouses in some cases, especially male
spouses. The text never refers to Anney Boatwright as “Anney Parsons” or “Anney
Waddell,” suggesting that Anney holds her position in the Boatwright family regardless
of her marital status. Her position in the family is secure, and she knows that she can
count on her sisters and brothers for assistance through shared resources. Anney
maintains a secure position in her community by sharing her resources—including using
Bone as babysitter for the younger children, as nurse to the dying Ruth (BOC 121-134),
and as a helper/worker for Raylene. By maintaining reciprocal relationships with other
members of her family, Anney both stabilizes her own resources and improves her
standing with other members of the family. Sending Bone to act as babysitter or nurse
keeps her out of the house and away from Daddy Glen, while also allowing Anney to
work without having to pay for childcare. Anney demonstrates power in her community
by contributing to the network that fosters the survival of the Boatwright family.

In her critique of the novel, Moira P. Baker writes that

[u]nfortunately, Anney and most of her sisters have so internalized patriarchal
norms that the discourse they speak among themselves cannot counteract the
powerful interpellative effects of the surrounding society’s discourses on
femininity, sexuality, and the family that bombard them from every quarter,
telling them that their life is incomplete without a male lover, that their ultimate
validation comes from bearing children to their husbands, and that they are
nothing without a man no matter how much income they bring home to support
their children. Though they share a woman-centered kinship network on the
margins of society, the grid of heteropatriarchy is superimposed on their lives.

(121)

Baker's critique fails to acknowledge that the family structure in generational poverty "tends to be matriarchal" (Payne 59). The "women-centered kinship network" Baker refers to reflects the matriarchal structure that holds the women of the Boatwright family together in a network that fosters survival. Though admitting that the women share a network, the critique does not acknowledge the power of the Boatwright network and how Anney uses that network. Furthermore, Baker's critique fails to acknowledge the criteria by which women are judged in the culture of persistence. Just because the caretaking of men and children does not hold the same value in the culture of the middle class does not mean that caretaking activities are not valued in the culture of persistence.

In addition, what Baker calls "the margins of society" actually refers to the dispersal of the family/community in the culture of persistence. However, for Anney, those spaces represent familial/communal spaces where she is judged by her ability to care for her husband and children, rather than by standards defined outside of the family/community. The fundamental criteria for evaluating women in the culture of persistence remain oriented toward caretaking activities. In light of these expectations, Anney can only be viewed as a successful, heroic woman.

Anney demonstrates power on the scales of the body and the home, and that power expands on the scale of the family/community, where she is equally successful. Anney's power in the Boatwright family/community is best demonstrated in her ability to care for her sister Alma after an episode where Alma wrecks her house and threatens to kill her husband. Anney calms her sister down, gets her cleaned up, and directs Bone to begin cleaning up the house (BOC 265-274). Bone describes her mother's calming influence:
“Mama had stayed right beside Alma, keeping her hands on her, steadying and quieting her, and keeping between me and that razor that never left Aunt Alma’s hand. She talked as if nothing had happened, [...]” (BOC 271). Anney calms, consoles, reassures, and even “gathered Aunt Alma up like a little girl, rocked her back and forth while she cried” (BOC 272). Anney seems to understand her sister’s desperation and temporary insanity and is able to prevent her sister from hurting herself or doing further damage. None of Alma’s behavior during this episode changes her status in the family; her value and importance does not change. Bone confirms Alma’s identity and position in the family, explaining that “Alma, [...] was, after all, a Boatwright, and dangerous as any man even when she wasn’t crazy” (BOC 273). Caring for her sister represents one of many exchanges that occur in the novel; on the scale of family/community, Anney wields power by turning chaos into calm, directing the children away from Alma, and re-establishing order. She does not hesitate; she is both gentle and forceful. As when she used her body to obtain money for food, Anney does what needs to be done, wielding her influence in the Boatwright family to initiate and carry out action.

Anney’s power on the scale of family/community even extends through her relationship with Reese’s grandmother, Mrs. Parsons. Though the relationship between Anney and Mrs. Parsons is somewhat strained, Anney makes an effort to connect with Mrs. Parsons, since she functions as another possible resource. Anney demonstrates power by inviting Mrs. Parsons in for iced tea and to stay for dinner. She makes effort to make Mrs. Parsons feel welcome, even though Anney knows that Glen could come home at any moment and interfere with the friendliness she wants to maintain with Mrs. Parsons. Despite her own discomfort, Anney acts to maintain a good relationship with Mrs. Parsons, knowing that, aside from the paltry $250 death benefit from Lyle Parsons’
time in the Army, Mrs. Parsons represents another person who may act as a resource for Anney in the future. Anney wields power by balancing her desire to have a good relationship with Mrs. Parson and her fear of Glen’s interference in the delicate process of managing relationships.  

The power Anney wields on the scales of the body, the home, and the family/community also gives her access to power on the scale of the region. She is able to be a successful survivor on all of these scales, accessing power with her ability to exploit the hidden rules of the culture of persistence. Generally, the novel makes it clear that Anney will do “anything to deny what Greenville County wanted to name her” (BOC 4). Part of the heroism of Anney Boatwright comes from her ability to struggle against these labels and to choose methods of being successful in the culture of persistence. By resisting labels and procuring a new birth certificate for Bone, Anney takes her power beyond her body, outside of the home, and outside of the family/community in order to exert agency at the scale of region. One of the primary challenges Anney will have to face as a parent is how to let go of her daughter and give Bone an opportunity to choose for herself, since Anney is unable to make good decisions where her husband and her oldest daughter are concerned. By obtaining the new birth certificate, Anney can demonstrate power, and at the same time, give Bone the freedom for self-definition and a token of memory to connect to the past.  

The first conflict in the novel is the absence of the father of Anney’s first child—and his absence results in the labeling of the child as illegitimate. The label (and all of its negative connotations) represents a legal situation that Anney resists. “The stamp on that birth certificate burned her like the stamp she knew they’d tried to put on her. No-good, lazy, shiftless” [italics in original] (BOC 3). Resisting the labels assigned to her by
outsiders, though difficult, is not impossible for Anney. Within the culture of persistence, she is obviously successful, demonstrating strength, knowledge of the unspoken rules that function in the culture of persistence, and a sheer will to survive even in the face of the terrible choice she must make. Anney is by no means a "no-good," as nearly all of her choices are motivated by love of her daughters. Many of her decisions represent efforts to improve her daughters' lives. Nor is Anney a "lazy" person; she works and works hard.

Anney's ability to survive in the culture of persistence and claim the survival strategies of the culture for herself also indicate her heroism, which in part comes from her ability to resist the negative and limiting labels suggested by "Greenville County." "There was only one way to fight off the pity and hatefulness. Mama learned to laugh with them, before they could laugh at her, and to do it so well no one could be sure what she really thought or felt" (BOC 10). As another example of her power, Anney masters the ability to conceal her inner thoughts and feelings—developing a way to defend her self. Much of her success comes from her ability to create and maintain defense mechanisms that will protect her from others. Bone, too, will master this complex set of skills as a defense mechanism against Daddy Glen's abuse. Part of Anney's strength comes from her ability to deflect the powerful messages directed toward her by others. She successfully hides her inner thoughts and feelings so that "[n]o one knew that she cried in the night for Lyle [her first husband] and her lost happiness, that under that biscuit-crust exterior she was all butter grief and hunger, that more than anything else in the world she wanted someone strong to love her like she loved her girls" (BOC 10). Anney's desire for "someone strong" indicates her value of inner strength—a quality she develops to protect herself and her daughters. Her "biscuit-crust exterior" protects both
herself and her daughters. In a sense, survival depends on Anney’s toughness and her ability to hide her weaknesses.

As proof of Anney’s power on the scale of region, she obtains a new birth certificate for Bone, one that lacks the “Illegitimate” stamp. Anney’s actions to obtain the birth certificate take place outside of the home and the family/community, locating her power in the region. As Cvetkovich explains, “[m]ore than merely a private sexual or family matter, her [Bone’s] illegitimate status becomes the sign of Southern white trash culture’s backwardness” (372). Anney cannot accept the meaning of the stamped birth certificate for her child or for herself, because tolerating Bone’s illegitimate status becomes the equivalent of accepting the label “white trash.” By obtaining the new birth certificate, Anney proves her own power and legitimacy in the region, and effectively resists the label of “white trash.” At the same time, Anney can reinforce her daughter’s “tangible identity outside the realm of the patriarchy” (Patterson 57). Anney’s resistance might be misinterpreted as a rejection of her daughter, but she directs her resistance against the institutionalized legal structure that deems her daughter less valuable or less important than legitimate children. Anney finds some way to circumvent the law. Though the novel does not reveal what she has to do to obtain the new birth certificate, Anney finds a way to legitimize Bone, demonstrating her ability to exert agency on the scale of region, beyond the scale of the family/community. Anney Boatwright, as a successful survivor, wields power on the scales of the body, the home, the family/community, and the region. Using the geographical strategy of scaling, in conjunction with the definition of power employed in the culture of persistence (the ability to survive), makes obvious the full extent of Anney’s power as her power is accessed and wielded on multiple scales.
Born while her mother was unconscious, Ruth Anne "Bone" Boatwright, the central character and narrator of the novel, demonstrates power on the scales of the body, the home, the community/family, and the region. In many ways, Bone is a rough copy of her mother, successful at surviving, and able to develop many of the same resources as her mother to access power. As mentioned before, using the geographical strategy of scaling, along with the definition of power at work in the culture of persistence (the ability to survive), produces a clear understanding of the power Bone accesses and wields. Anney and Bone are both described as snake-like and as having the ability to magically cast spells. Glen, who fears both Anney and Bone, calls Bone "'Cold as death, mean as a snake, and twice as twisty'" (BOC 111). Just as Anney's ability to be snake-like allows her to survive, so too will Bone's ability to be "mean as a snake" foster her survival. Both Anney and Bone cast spells—Anney when she needs to produce food for her children, and Bone when she needs to protect herself from the terror of abuse and to entertain her cousins. Careful observation of her mother and her other relatives and the eventual replication of their power-accessing behaviors allows Bone to survive poverty and the physical, mental, and sexual abuse of Glen Waddell. The concurrence of Bone's many resources allows her to withstand the horror of the abuse and demonstrate power on the scales of the body, the home, the family/community, and the region.

Though her body is often out of her control, Bone does exert power on the scale of the body, mostly through persisting, using fantasy, and putting her body in motion in masturbation. In her psychosexual analysis of the novel, Wiles suggests that Bone's body is so much less and so much more than an ordinary body. Wiles identifies how "Bone and her mother inhabit abject social space," and describes Bone’s "lack of identity" (147). According to Wiles, "[t]he failure of narcissism in Bone that derives
from the lack of a lovable female body is reconfirmed for her in the sadistic sexual abuse of her by Daddy Glen. Sexual abuse scenarios are detailed as the locus of psychic trauma in which Bone’s body is denied, vilified, made into a hole, into a body for the master” (154). Yet Bone’s body persists, refusing to disappear into nothingness. Because her body is so often out of her control while she is beaten by Glen, Bone responds to the abuse by seeking out ways to control her body and exert her will on others. One of the ways Bone demonstrates control over her body is by masturbating. In the act of masturbation, Bone finds pleasure and a means for the release of some of her feelings of tension and frustration. For a short time, she is able to control her own body without the interference of others or violence. Bone’s masturbatory fantasies are also under her control, which demonstrate the mental resources Bone will use to exert control over others. Wiles calls attention to the fact that “Bone’s fantasies later escalate to include an audience of spectators […]. In these fantasies, Bone becomes not only the masochistic heroine but the active agent who is sadistically imposing her scripted scenarios on others rather than a passive object-body” (155). In a similar argument, Jillian Sandell points out that “[s]ex and power remain linked in Bone’s fantasies, and the fantasies become a safe space within which she can confront and overcome Daddy Glen” (220). On the scale of the body, Bone negotiates a complex path toward accessing and employing the power of her body. Her fantasies include pleasure, pain, violence, sex, fear, and a host of other emotions and ideas representing the normal and the abnormal, the healthy and unhealthy, and the positive and negative. Negotiating her way through the tensions between opposites brings Bone power. Furthermore, Bone finds pleasure and control of her body through the fantasies and actions that bring her to orgasm. "As the price of sexual agency, Bone must contend with the shamefulness of her beating fantasies" and she has
already demonstrated the ability to live with the shame of poverty (Cvetkovich 369).

Even if only on a temporary basis, fantasizing while masturbating allows Bone to control her mind and body in a space that belongs exclusively to her. Cvetkovich explains that

\[\text{out of the pain and shame of being beaten, Bone is able to salvage the pride of pleasure in her fantasies and orgasms. To call these fantasies masochistic in a simply derogatory sense, or to consider them the "perverse" product of sexual violence, is to underestimate their capacity to provide not only pleasure but power which Bone herself is responsible for (370).}\]

In order to survive, Bone uses her own invented narrative (the fantasies) to control her body and create an opportunity for pleasure, while also imposing her will on her imagined observers—forcing others to witness the abuse. As Wiles argues, “the multiple identificatory positions that Bone assumes within the framework of her fantasy point to the radical potential of fantasy as a site of revolt and resistance” or in other words, power (155). Though her body is often out of her control, Bone uses the strategies of fantasizing and masturbation to foster her own survival, creating what Sandell calls “an individual coping strategy” (220). Her individual and private experiences of pleasure demonstrate how Bone "acquires power by putting her body in motion, in this case by rocking on the hand that brings her to orgasm" (Cvetkovich 370). By putting her body in motion, Bone combines the power of her body and mind. Masturbation and fantasy give Bone pleasure, respite from the horrors of poverty and abuse, control over her own body, and power.

Through the power of her body, Bone will also access power on the scale of the home. Primarily, she exerts power on the scale of home by finding ways to be away from home, thus protecting herself from Glen’s abuse. She spends hours reading, begins
washing dishes at the diner, and gets sent to care for her dying Aunt Ruth. Bone also goes to live with her Aunt Raylene. She also travels with the Pearls to visit religious revivals and to hear gospel singers perform. By absenting herself from home, Bone gains experience, begins to build relationships with other members of her family, and develops a wider perspective of the world she lives in. Additionally, these experiences give Bone ways to understand her self and who she wants to become. By showing the range of Bone’s experiences, Allison provides a view of poverty that demonstrates more than sheer lack or depravity. Bone’s travels with the Pearls offer one of the best examples, since she experiences the revivals for herself, sees what the performers are like on stage and off, and eventually makes her own judgment. The hours she spends reading provide imaginative fodder for the captivating stories Bone creates to tell to her cousins. Bone accesses power on the scale of the home by absenting herself from that space and finding other resources to nurture her inner resources, fostering her ability to survive, and protecting her from Glen’s abuse.

Though Bone’s primary means of accessing power on the scale of home is by absenting herself, she also exerts power in the home by putting her body in motion in that space. Laura S. Patterson, in critiquing W. J. Cash’s construction of the “rape complex,” draws attention to Bone’s power and agency even during the brutal rape that takes place in Aunt Alma’s kitchen. Patterson’s analysis highlights the microgeography of the house by pointing out that “entries, exits, fearful anticipation, as well as phallic presences define the moment of rape” (Patterson 49). Bone’s rape, described in the first person, “allows the reader no distance from the moment-by-moment violence of rape” (Patterson 50). Despite the violence of the rape scene, it is important to note that the rape takes place in Alma’s kitchen, a space drastically different in spatial dimensions and meaning from the...
bathroom where Glen has been physically abusing Bone. The significance of the kitchen will be discussed shortly. Though Bone does not feel comfortable in the presence of Daddy Glen, she clearly has enough inner strength and sense of herself to resist. Even before the rape, Bone says no, repeatedly, to Daddy Glen's proposal that she "tell her [Anney] you want us all to be together again" (BOC 281). In the text, Bone says "no" four times in response to Daddy Glen's demands, demonstrating her power and ability to exert agency. She refuses to listen to the promises she knows are empty, finally arriving at her own ultimatum: "'No.' I said it louder. 'I'd rather die than go back to living with you'" (BOC 282). Bone raises her voice and draws her own proverbial line in the sand. The line represents Bone's active decision to protect herself and refuse to live with Daddy Glen, which will also mean relinquishing her mother. By articulating her desire to survive, even if she must be separated from her mother, Bone makes a powerful statement. Bone will also have to demonstrate power by surviving the rape. According to Patterson, the time space of the rape "featur[es] a young woman who doles out her own retribution before the sexual violence begins" (50). Bone uses language to demonstrate power and agency, but she also "actively fights her attacker during the rape event" (Patterson 51). Patterson cites Bone's attempt to stab Daddy Glen, and Bone also resists by refusing to "hold still anymore. I tried to wiggle free" (BOC 282-281). As discussed earlier, putting her body in motion gives Bone access to power; in this case, she claims the power of resisting and surviving an extremely traumatic experience. Though her resistance is "not ultimately effective, Bone gains agency in the scene, acting out her own sexualized violence, though pale in contrast to what she experiences" (Patterson 51). As with the earlier beatings of Bone, Glen is out of control—physically and emotionally: "Daddy Glen's eyes were just as crazy [as Alma's], more crazy" (BOC 283). Patterson
explains how Allison gives control of the scene over to Bone, arguing that “the rape scene might not contain a fully defended victim, but it keeps the rising agency and voice in the control of the victim rather than in the control of her male aggressor or male defenders” (51). By refusing to mediate the rape through another person or perspective, Allison reveals that Bone possesses the power to withstand the physical and psychological trauma of the rape and go on living.

Bone’s rape takes place in the kitchen of her Aunt Alma’s home, which is a very different space from the bathroom where the earlier abuse occurs. First, in comparison to the bathroom, the kitchen is a much more public space. More often than not, more than one person is in the kitchen at any given time. Second, throughout the novel, Allison maintains the kitchen as a shared work space for the Boatwright women, claiming the microgeography of the kitchen as a space where women control what happens. The bathroom, in contrast, is a private space for one person. By attacking Bone in the kitchen, Glen attacks not only a girl, but also the women who control the space of the kitchen.

The power Bone wields on the scales of the body and the home also gives her access to power on the scale of the family/community. She demonstrates power on the level of family/community through her skill as a storyteller, in the invention of games she plays with her cousins, and in the Woolworth’s break in. She engages in storytelling, expressing her creativity in vivid language and imagery. Her ability to tell a good story also increases her worth in the culture of persistence, because she can entertain others. Bone devotes time to analyzing people and situations, and like her mother, she masters the ability to handle people and achieve desired results. The Woolworth’s break-in represents the culmination of Bone’s many resources in action. Since the break-in is
planned over time, Bone must not only sustain her emotional motive for entering the store, but also decide how to get into the store. In the three examples that follow, Bone wields complex personal, mental, and emotional power, revealing her developing mastery of the rules of the culture of persistence, as well as her engagement of the many skills that Anney uses in being a successful survivor.

On the scale of family/community, Bone demonstrates power in the activity of telling stories. Because of the emphasis placed on entertainment in the culture of persistence, Bone demonstrates her knowledge of the culture by listening to others tell stories, and more significantly, using her vivid imagination and creativity to tell her own stories. Bone’s storytelling ability is a powerful survival skill that allows her to participate in and maintain her value in the culture of persistence. Granny, Aunt Ruth, Aunt Alma, and Uncle Earle all act as storytellers who entertain others with stories about the Boatwright family members in all of their infamous glory. The stories told reinforce ideas about identity and power, emphasizing who the Boatwrights are and what they are capable of. Bone succeeds at telling stories because she inventively mirrors the behaviors she observes in her aunts and uncle with dramatic results. While Anney works as a waitress, her daughters spend time at Aunt Alma’s. Bone explains that her task is to “help Aunt Alma with her garden or her canning, and while we worked, I would make up stories in my head” (BOC 118). Bone demonstrates a sort of multitasking—using one activity (gardening or canning) as background for the creative activity of making up stories. Bone stands out at storytelling, since “[m]y cousins loved my stories—especially the ones that featured bloodsuckers who consumed only the freshly butchered bodies of newborn babies, green-faced dwarfs promising untold riches to children who would bring them the hearts of four and forty grown men” (BOC 118-119). The vivid and
exaggerated language shows that Bone knows what her audience wants, allowing Bone to manipulate and control her audience. The violence Bone experiences at the hands of Daddy Glen finds release in “stories...full of boys and girls gruesomely raped and murdered, babies cooked in pots of boiling beans, vampires and soldiers and long razor-sharp knives. Witches [...] Gangs of women [...] fire [...] and green-black lizard tongues” (BOC 119). Bone uses powerful imagery, violence, and fear to gain power over her audience. She succeeds at storytelling despite her gender; Bone’s cousin Grey remarks “that [she] had a very interesting mind for a girl” (BOC 119). Bone also finds that storytelling provides means for controlling others. Using her mind as a storyteller can produce certain results; Bone explains that “I got to be very popular as a baby-sitter; everyone was quiet and well-behaved while I told stories, their eyes fixed on my face in a way that made me feel like one of my own witches casting a spell” (BOC 119). Not only does Bone experience power while telling stories, but she also tests out an alternate, temporary identity, that of witch. Also, the passage directly connects Bone with her mother who casts another kind of spell—using her sexual powers—to make money to buy food for her daughters (74-75), as discussed earlier. By referring to the activity of “casting a spell,” Allison can depict Bone as a rough copy or reproduction of her mother. Bone, as a successful storyteller, accesses power in three ways. First, the act and process of creating stories makes Bone an artist, a creative being, who invents something that did not exist before. Second, Bone realizes that she can exert control over her cousins—very different from the experience of being subject to Daddy Glen’s violence. Third, Bone finds a way to try out an alternate identity or identities, which give her a sense of power that comes from the realization that she is more than a “bastard” (according to her birth certificate) and more than a recipient of rage (according to Daddy Glen).
Bone also demonstrates power on the scale of family/community by mastering the complex set of skills possessed by her mother—planning, organizing, and people management. The best example of Bone’s organizational and management skills occurs in the intricate, “invented” games that she plays with her sister and cousins. The play Bone gets the children to engage in demonstrates a plan for controlling others, the management of sustained activity, and an outlet for her conflicting feelings about herself and her family. Like Anney, Bone also shows that she can function as a caretaker: “As long as everybody did what I told them, I was the best baby-sitter Aunt Alma had ever seen” (BOC 210). Bone directs her “cousins to act out complicated stories,” (BOC 210). Even when challenged, Bone justifies the roles with an air of authority, providing justification for her assignments, indicating an organized plan that she impresses on the game. She will argue, manipulate, and pressure the children in order to carry out her plan. In this case, Bone demonstrates her ability to negotiate power over her female cousin, Patsy Ruth; later, Bone will successfully wield power over her male cousin, Grey. Bone, like Anney, develops strategies that she can use to manipulate both genders.

Bone also demonstrates power on the scale of the family/community when she invents the “mean sisters” game (BOC 212). In order to force the world to make sense in the face of the abuse Bone is subject to, she seeks out opportunities to exert control and agency. Inventing games and manipulating her sisters and cousins provide Bone with the best opportunities for wielding her power. Simultaneously, Bone, keenly aware of the value placed on entertainment in the culture of persistence, wields power by offering entertainment she has created for others. She invents something—the mean sisters game—out of nothing except her own anger and frustration.
The Woolworth’s break-in further demonstrates Bone’s ability to use her resources and wield power in her family/community. After finding trawling hooks tangled in “the muddy trash” in the river near Raylene’s place, Bone begins her quest to find an appropriate use for the single hook she claims for herself (BOC 183). Sharing her plan only with her cousin Grey, Bone decides that she wants to use the hook to break into the Woolworth’s store she was banished from for stealing candy (BOC 97-98). In short, in the middle of the night, Bone and Grey throw the trawling hook onto the roof of the building. Bone climbs up the attached rope and enters the store through one of the fan ducts. Bone falls through the duct onto a display case, and then lets Grey in through the front door. When leaving, they leave the doors unlocked (BOC 219-222).

On the scale of the family/community, Bone demonstrates the power of all of her best qualities in planning for and carrying out the break-in. Bone finds a way to assert herself, penetrate another’s space, achieve revenge, and show her intelligence. Most significantly, the break-in reveals Bone’s ability to self-manage, echoing her mother’s skill at self-management. Creating the plan, enticing her cousin to participate, and keeping the whole thing secret (over a period of time) indicates Bone’s skill at self-control and self-management. Bone keeps the incident secret in two ways: first, by not stealing anything from the store (effectively resisting the stereotype her mother warns her about—“trash steals”); second, by managing her internal experiences and not revealing her feelings about the break-in. Bone, much like her mother, knows the dangers of exposing her internal self to others.

Once inside the store, Bone has the ability to resist greed, unlike her cousin, whose greed is obvious, since “Grey was running up and down the aisles, grabbing stuff and then dropping it” behaving and “sounding like a happy child” (BOC 225). Bone,
prematurely adult in her thinking abilities, expresses little interest in the objects available to her. She demonstrates power by harshly judging the value of the merchandise. She sees “[j]unk everywhere” that is “tawdry and useless” and “cheap” (BOC 224-225). Her criterion for judging the Woolworth’s merchandise is explicit: usefulness. Bone asks herself: “What was there here that I could use? I remembered the rows of canned vegetables and fruit at Aunt Raylene’s place—rows of tomatoes and okra, peaches and green beans, blackberries and plums that stretched for shelf on shelf in her cellar. That was worth something” (BOC 224-225). Bone’s keen awareness that the resource of foodstuffs fosters survival leads her to place higher value on Aunt Raylene’s stored food than on the material objects in the Woolworth’s. Despite the availability of the things in the store, Bone feels little desire for the merchandise because she knows that nothing is genuinely useful to her. She seems to instinctively realize that stealing will not satisfy her. She reflects on the merchandise and what she has achieved with her plan: “I swung my hook back and forth, trying to think what it was that I really wanted, who I really wanted to hurt” (BOC 225). The answer seems fairly clear—Bone senses that breaking into the Woolworth’s will not hurt Daddy Glen or Tyler Highgarden, the store manager who humiliated Bone by excluding her from the store.

By breaking into the Woolworth’s, Bone demonstrates power within her family and within her community, and her power overlaps the boundaries between family and community. She commands the space inside the store, even if only on a temporary basis. Penetrating and controlling the space represents one form of Bone’s resistance against Daddy Glen and his tyranny. Bone momentarily considers excluding Grey from the store, satisfied that he would “have to hold his pride and wait down below for me to open a door for him. And if he made me too mad, he could stand around...all night” (BOC
Bone wields the power to decide whether or not to let someone into the space she controls. In planning the break-in, Bone demonstrates her mastery of the skills learned from her mother that allow her to manipulate Grey, her cousin, into helping. On the scale of family/community, Bone shows an understanding of male needs that gives her power over her cousin. When she tells Grey about the plan, Bone “thought about the way Mama was always gentling Daddy Glen, and I deliberately made my voice soft and slow” (BOC 191). Imitating her mother allows Bone to make Grey her ally without necessarily telling him all the details. As a rough copy of her mother, Bone easily wins Grey over. To keep Grey from telling others about the plan, Bone uses another strategy—imitating her beloved Uncle Earle and his bravado to create a sense of mystery and veiled threat. Bone tells Grey that “‘[t]here are things I’ve done you don’t know nothing about, cousin. Stuff I an’t never gonna tell you’” (BOC 192) and Bone is telling the truth, since she has learned to keep silent about the abuse she suffers. But creating mystery and ambiguity allows Bone to influence Grey and get him to do what she wants. Bone mimics Earle in order to make a deeper impression on Grey: “I tried to narrow my eyes the way Uncle Earle’s would shrink down when he played poker” (BOC 192). By concealing her thoughts and feelings, Bone makes Grey subordinate to her, soliciting not only his help, but also his silence. Bone’s power over Grey comes from observing her mother and uncle, as well as her ability to self-manage. Like Anney, Bone accesses power by controlling her self and using her self-control to manipulate and influence others. Unlike Glen’s uncontrolled rage and violence, Bone maintains control over herself, giving her power over Grey.
The power Bone wields on the scales of the body, the home, and the family/community also gives her access to power on the scale of the region. Throughout the novel, Allison provides a perspective on poverty that privileges Bone’s experiences over adult experiences. Bone’s life serves as a valuable commentary on the experience of poverty in the South. Her observant eyes and compelling narrative voice offer direct views of the experience of poverty, and as Connie D. Griffin argues, the novel offers “a dynamics of self-re/presentation that serves to correct cultural misrepresentation” (155). Bone narrates the whole story, “re/presenting” an experience of the South that gives her a valued place in the world. More importantly, as child, narrator, and representative of poverty, Bone tells a story that profoundly alters any stereotypes about childhood and poverty as experienced in the specific location of the South. Childhood in the South, for Bone, is not a place represented by a positive nostalgia or sustained happiness. In a similar manner, the experience of poverty, for Bone, is not a place where one is “poor but happy;” instead, poverty in the South is a place of hunger, violence, suffering, and trauma. Bone’s regional power comes from her narrative, altering assumptions and overturning stereotypes throughout the novel. Bone’s experiences also shed light on the complexity of poverty and the reasons behind generational poverty, explaining in detail that poverty is not strictly an economic problem.

The dilemma Bone and Anney must confront after Bone’s rape involves the question of survival. Can Bone survive without her mother? Clearly, she cannot survive in the same house as Glen. Anney recognizes her daughter’s strengths and power to survive, even though Bone may not be fully aware of her power. As mentioned earlier, at the end of the novel, Anney gives Bone a new copy of her birth certificate, one that is free from the “Illegitimate” stamp: “It was blank, unmarked, unstamped” (BOC 309). What the
Birth certificate means to Bone is very different from what it means to Anney. Though blank, the new birth certificate is not "the tabula rasa" Wiles argues for, because the document will connect Bone to Anney, and the future to the past (160). As a rough copy of Anney, Bone already possesses the resources and power that come to her by inheritance (the persistence and toughness of the Boatwright clan) and the resources that come to her by way of surviving incest and physical violence (creativity, survival strategies, and mental strength). Bone, unlike Anney, is more free to create her own life.

For Bone, the birth certificate is not so much a legal document, but more so a new kind of document that reinforces the power Bone wields on the scale of region. The "unmarked" space, as represented on an official form, transforms the birth certificate into a new kind of document. The birth certificate becomes a passport which provides Bone the opportunity to leave her family and the freedom to "fill in the blank" as she chooses. With the new birth certificate "Anney memorializes Bone's escape from patriarchal violence," but the document does not assign or limit Bone to an identity defined by others (Patterson 57). The "clean" document gives Bone permission to write her own identity and create her own persona. Anney knows that she and her daughter will be separated, and the act of giving Bone the new birth certificate also works as the granting of her permission to become a new person. The birth certificate, as a special kind of gift, also indicates Anney's desire to be remembered. Essentially, Anney gives Bone a going-away present that provides freedom from the stigma of the past (being an illegitimate child), an enduring link to the past (her mother as a loving parent), and hope for the future in the form of a blank space to be filled. Cvetkovich argues correctly that "Bastard Out of Carolina [through Bone] contends with the 'culture of poverty' argument that holds white trash culture capable of producing only 'bastards,' of passing down violence and
deprivation as though they were genetic conditions” (372). The blank birth certificate indicates that Bone has access to the power to leave her mother and the family/community, and can access power that will foster her survival outside of those boundaries; Bone has access to the power of self-definition. Though overwhelmed by the new birth certificate, Bone claims the power of a deeper understanding of herself and her place among the Boatwrights: “I was who I was going to be, someone like her [Raylene], like Mama, a Boatwright woman” (BOC 309). In other words, Bone is and will be a powerful woman on the scales of the body, the home, the family/community, and the region, fully capable of being a successful survivor, even outside of those scales.

Reading Bastard Out of Carolina with an awareness of the culturally-defined criteria for evaluating women located on geographical scales makes possible a more detailed picture of the power the female characters use, without dismissing them as victims of patriarchy. As has been argued, Anney and Bone represent female characters who access and demonstrate power on the scales of the body, the home, the family/community, and the region. Using the geographical strategy of scaling permits a much broader understanding of how Anney and her daughter demonstrate power in the process of negotiating survival, since the culture of persistence defines power as the ability to survive. In the end, despite the difficult choices that must be made, this reading shows the full extent of the power accessed and wielded by Anney and Bone.

In addition to Anney Boatwright and Bone Boatwright, Dorothy Allison features another mother/daughter pairing of female power in her short story, “I’m Working on My Charm.” In the story, Allison depicts women claiming and wielding power in the space of a lunch counter (a workspace) and a party (a social space). In the story, the narrator reflects on her introduction to waitressing and describes the education she receives from
her mother and the other waitresses. The central section of the story that deals with
waitressing is framed by the narrator’s experiences at a party where she interacts briefly
with her co-workers. Though the central section of the story depicts the narrator and her
mother as members of the culture of persistence, the opening and closing sections of the
story describe the narrator as a somewhat skeptical, unimpressed member of the culture
of the middle class. The following analysis explains how the narrator relocates herself in
a place where she wields power through the development and use of acting skills.
Dorothy Sue Cobble points out the relationship between waitressing and acting,
explaining how

[w]aitressing reveals the deeply gendered expectations surrounding the world of
work. In the theater of eating out, the waitress plays multiple parts, each
reflecting a female role. To fulfill the emotional and fantasy needs of the male
customer, she quickly learns the all-too-common scripts: scolding wife, doting
mother, sexy mistress, or sweet, admiring daughter. Other customers, typically
female, demand obsequious and excessive service—to compensate, perhaps, for
the status denied them in other encounters. For once they are not the servers but
the ones being served. (2)

These direct references to “theater,” “parts,” and “scripts” reveal the complex set of
performance and acting skills required for being a successful waitress. Performance and
acting skills are at the core of “Charm,” from Allison’s first collection of stories, Trash,
initially published in 1988, and republished in 2002.8 Liz Galst reviewed the collection
for the Women’s Review of Books, calling the stories “an analysis of what it means to be
expendable in this country, and what it takes to pick yourself off the junk heap” (14).
Despite the mention of “junk heap,” “Charm” is a success story.
“I’m Working on My Charm” might easily be misread as a narrative about how the waitresses are forced to act as a defense mechanism against their oppressive working conditions. The narrator’s comment, confirming her ability to cook, at the end of the story would be viewed as a self-protective remark, made to allow the narrator to avoid conversation with the man. However, Allison’s ability to present the shared rules and practices of the work community, in conjunction with the relationship between the narrator and her mother, provides an insider’s perspective on the counter and the skills required to succeed in that workspace. The narrator accesses and employs power through the development and use of her acting and performance skills. Like her mother charming the Yankee tourists, the narrator claims power at the party by charming the man who comments on the cornbread. The story defines female power and the spaces in which that power can be used. The lunch counter functions as a locus of power that is defined, claimed, and employed by the narrator, her mother, and the other waitresses. By using her acting ability at the party, the narrator proves that her power works in whatever place she chooses to use her acting and performance skills.

“Charm” uses a frame technique to present the unnamed narrator in what appears to be two separate locations (a party and a counter) and two separate times (the present and the past, respectively). Though the two parts of the story are separated by significant distance in time, the two sections of the story present the narrator in the same place: in a social place or position that demands the use of her acting skills. In order to succeed as a waitress, the narrator, at sixteen, is required to learn acting skills and become “charming.” At the party, which opens and closes the story, the narrator is also asked to use her acting skills and employ, in this social space, her ability to charm. The opening line of the story is “I’m working on my charm” and by using her acting skills in each part
of the story, the narrator suggests that “working on [her] charm” is a lifelong practice (“I’m Working on My Charm” 73). By employing her charm, the narrator can acknowledge the value of acting, analyze and critique others around her, and demonstrate power. The activity and process of “charming” shows the narrator’s advanced skills developed from extensive observation, practice, and refinement, while also demonstrating the use of emotional, mental, and physical resources.

To understand how the narrator re-locates herself into the same place, despite the time difference, place needs to be defined through the people using that space and the social interactions carried out in a specific space. In arguing against Heidegger’s view of space/place as Being, Doreen Massey offers “an alternative interpretation of place” (“Power-Geometry and A Progressive Sense of Place” 66). The counter is a specific place and the party is a specific place, but for Massey, “what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus” (“Power-Geometry” 66). The power claimed by the waitresses in their shared values, rules, and practices, along with their relationships to each other and their customers, in conjunction with the process of defining the boundaries of the work community, creates an ongoing process, a “constellation of relations,” that constitutes the specificity of the counter. Furthermore, Massey explains that the

uniqueness of a place, or a locality, in other words is constructed out of particular interactions and mutual articulations of social relations, social processes, experiences and understandings, in a situation of co-presence, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are actually constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment...
as the place itself, whether that be a street, a region or even a continent. Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings.

(“Power-Geometry” 66)

Massey rejects the reliance on physical boundaries that are too frequently used to define “space” and “place,” choosing instead to define space through a social perspective that forces the acknowledgment of gender (and a host of other) differences that shape spaces and the persons within those spaces. In a similar fashion, Allison, in describing her personal struggle for identity, illustrates a closely related concept, arguing that “class, gender, sexual preference, and prejudice—racial, ethnic, and religious—form an intricate lattice that restricts and shapes our lives” (“A Question of Class” 23). Allison’s concept of “lattice” directly relates to Massey’s description of place in reference to “co-presence,” “articulated moments,” and “social relations.” Blending the concepts of place described by Massey and Allison identifies the place of the narrator—while working and at the party—as a space in which the skills of acting and performance come into play in the process of controlling an encounter and demonstrating power in social interactions.

This story reflects Allison’s cultivated and detailed understanding of distinctions between peoples from different classes. The initial setting of the story is “one of those parties where everyone pretends to know everyone else” (“Charm” 73). From there, the story shifts quickly into reflection on a time and place in the past. The framing strategy allows the narrator (the unnamed “I” of the story) to recall, in detail, the education she gained while working as a waitress in the past. By using a time and space that is distinct from the party setting, Allison creates distance between the narrator in the present (at the party) and the narrator in the past (as a sixteen-year-old waitress). The distance between
the narrator in the present and the narrator in the past may initially seem great; however, Allison juxtaposes the experiences of the narrator and her wielding of power, effectively relocating the narrator into the same place.

Allison locates her characters in the culture of persistence, yet the women in the story, including the narrator and her mother, access and wield power in spite of limited financial resources. Since financial resources are limited, work is necessary in order to obtain access to higher education. The narrator, in the process of saving money for education, also discusses her mother's attitude toward money, which further emphasizes the limited financial resources. For the most part, the attitudes toward money expressed in the story suggest that money is to be used in the present. According to the narrator, her mother's money "was spent even before we got home—at the Winn Dixie at the far end of the mall or the Maryland Fried Chicken right next to it" ("Charm" 74). The immediate use of funds reflects an attitude toward money that is not held by members of the middle class or the culture of wealth. According to the values at work in the culture of persistence, money, as a resource, is to be used, not saved, reserved, or held back. However, as a limited resource, money is to be divided equally, which is reflected in the waitresses' practice of evenly sharing the money generated by the game of guessing tips. In the story, the prevailing attitudes toward money reflect the values held by the culture of persistence, which shapes the articulated moments where the narrator, along with the other women, accesses and wields power.

One of the ways the waitresses access and wield power is revealed in their tip game. The waitresses predict their tips and any difference between the guess and the actual tip goes into a communal fund. "It was a game all the waitresses played. There was a butter bowl on the back counter where the difference was kept, the difference between what you
guessed and what you got. The rules were simple. You had to make your guess at the tip before the order was taken” [emphasis in original] (“Charm” 75). The game not only reflects attitudes towards money and work, but also indicates a survival strategy. In economic terms, the division of the butter bowl money protects the women who may not have received the best tips. At the same time, in emotional terms, the butter bowl money protects the women who have received good tips from the resentment or anger of others. The communal use of financial resources shows the power of communal practices that unite the women working in a space where they can produce good tips by using specific behaviors. The division of the communal fund also bonds the women together, creating a sense of responsibility for each other. The practice of tip sharing reflects a female strategy for maintaining the group in the workspace where nearly all of the encounters with customers are witnessed by others. Both successes and failures are known to all members of the work community.

The waitresses’ ability to evaluate their customers quickly and effectively indicates another means by which they access and wield power, even though the narrator calls her entrance into the tip game “guessing.” As part of their acting skills, the other waitresses employ well-developed observation and keen listening skills, along with past experiences, to make decisions about how much a customer will tip. The narrator discusses the evaluation process in general, saying “[s]alesmen and truckers were always a high guess. Women who came with a group were low, while women alone were usually a fair twenty-five cents on a light lunch—if you were polite and brought them their coffee first” (“Charm” 76). The narrator points out gender differences and explains specific behavior that results in success. As Cobble emphasizes, “[o]ther customers, typically female, demand obsequious and excessive service—to compensate, perhaps, for
the status denied them in other encounters. For once they are not the servers but the ones being served” (2). The narrator knows that women require special attention, and she responds with the politeness that her female customers desire. The distinctions the narrator makes between women, men, tourists, parents with children, and couples, also reflects her increasing awareness of others. The keen perceptions used in the tip game indicate the power of assessment that the waitresses have developed, or in the case of the narrator, are developing. The waitresses translate skills of observation, judgment of persons and groups, past experiences, and communal support into economic terms: a person’s or group’s potential for leaving a specific amount of money for a tip. The waitresses also demonstrate power by being aware of and using the behaviors that are most likely to produce the best tips from a specific person or group.

Along with learning about the evaluation skills needed to succeed at the tip game, the narrator also accesses and wields power by using knowledge about locations outside of the counter. Knowing about “the Jamaica Inn just up the road, which had a terrible restaurant but served the strongest drinks in the county” gives the narrator an advantage over these “[e]arly morning tourists” (“Charm” 77). The narrator’s knowledge gives her the power to use adapted behavior—a soft voice—to avoid aggravating the customer’s hangover and produce a good tip.

While the narrator is initiated into the group of waitresses through the communal tip game, the narrator’s attitudes about money are not clear, though her behavior suggests that she may not fully share the thinking about money represented by the other women in the story. The narrator attempts to access the power of financial resources, even though she has no model for using money other than her mother and the communal fund. The narrator explains that she “was trying to save money for college, and ritually, every night,
I’d pour my tips into a can on the back of my dresser” (“Charm 74). Unlike her mother, who spends her funds the same day they are earned, the narrator saves money for an unknown and uncertain future. Though the reader recognizes that the narrator must have attained access to education or at the very least found other means for entering the culture of the middle class (as evidenced by the narrator’s ability to attend a party with a different group of people), at this point the narrator does not know how the money will be used. However, the narrator’s behavior indicates that she thinks differently about money than those around her. By saving funds for college and questioning her mother about the reporting of tips, the narrator indicates that she may not fully share the thinking about money demonstrated by the other women in the story.

Connecting through the communal fund and the tip game gives the waitresses power in their workspace. The women are also connected by their method of withholding specific information about their earnings. Much like the sharing of funds, officially inscribing the same amount as tips promotes and maintains equality among the women. The narrator’s mother explains the practice, saying, “we all report the same amount. They expect that” (“Charm” 76). The waitresses express solidarity with each other by sharing the money in the butter bowl and by recording (on tax forms) the same amount as tips. The practice of sharing resources, and the official inscription of such equality, builds solidarity among the members of the group. Sustained good will among the members of the group is necessary, since the waitresses depend on each other for economic security and stability. Furthermore, the solidarity shared by the waitresses and the economic equality working in their system also indicates the high quality of the support system functioning within the group. The success and maintenance of the group depends on all of the members playing by the same rules and supporting the practices that
foster survival. The shared rules and practices also function in this constellation of
relations to define the place.

The best example of the shared rules and practices occurs in the story's exploration of
the customers defined as outsiders to the working community claimed by the waitresses.
In the constellation of relations that shape the counter as a workspace, the waitresses use
their sophisticated observation skills to draw explicit boundaries between themselves and
the persons who are most excluded from their community: the outsiders are labeled
"Yankees." Though the waitresses may not completely understand these outsiders, the
process of labeling the Yankees is an expression of power. Defining Yankees as
outsiders gives the waitresses the power to feel only contempt or hatred toward them.
Since the behavior of the Yankees at the lunch counter, is, for the most part, inexplicable
to the waitresses, they function as antitheses to the behaviors and attitudes deemed
positive by the waitresses. Negating the Yankees and what they represent serves to
solidify relationships among the waitresses, validating their established behaviors and
attitudes. Since the waitresses have identified themselves as insiders, they can claim
power in the workspace through their dismissal of Yankees and their negative behaviors.
Distinguishing "us" from "them" provides the waitresses a sense of identity and control,
while also defending against the most outstanding characteristic of Yankees—their
"enraging sense of superiority" ("Charm" 79). In this constellation of relations, the
waitresses claim the power of superiority as insiders and excluding Yankees. In other
words, they demonstrate power by controlling where the boundaries are drawn. In
addition to drawing boundaries between themselves and Yankees, the waitresses claim
the real world for themselves. Alien, separate, and excluded from the working
community of the waitresses, Yankees represent outsiders. Harriet, one of the waitresses,
sums up the group's thinking about Yankees when she says, "they don't live in the real world with the rest of us" ("Charm" 80). Harriet's statement reconfirms the boundaries drawn between the waitresses and Yankees—she powerfully claims the "real world" for herself and the women she works with; anyone else is consciously excluded.

The narrator claims power for herself by carefully reflecting on the other waitresses' view of Yankees and her own understanding. Her struggle to understand the boundaries demonstrates her independence, self-control, and her refusal to accept the thinking of others without question. The narrator explains her own thinking about the Yankees while also indirectly showing the geographical position of the counter and its waitresses:

"There seemed to be a great many varieties of them, not just Northerners, but Westerners, Canadians, Black people who talked oddly enough to show they were foreign, and occasionally strangers who didn't even speak English" ("Charm" 78-79). While the narrator's age may have something to do with her uncertainty about the boundaries between the work community and outsiders, the narrator reveals her thinking process and the evolution of her ability to detect pretense in observing and thinking about Yankees.

By refusing to oversimplify, the narrator claims power in the process of acknowledging the differences between herself and the Yankees.

The narrator and her mother claim power in the workspace by using the emotional resources that allow them to choose when and how to act for customers. The narrator demonstrates her emotional maturity with her ability to adapt to the job, to enter the community of waitresses, and to respond to customers in an appropriate manner. The best example of their emotional resources occurs when the narrator makes a correct "guess" for a five dollar tip on "the old man who ordered egg salad" ("Charm" 77). The narrator has previous knowledge about the old man, similar to her knowledge about the
Jamaica Inn, but she does not reveal her knowledge to the other waitresses. She controls
the situation in order to display her skill at the tip game, while also making an impression
on the other waitresses. The only person who is not impressed by the narrator's skill is
her mother. After the narrator makes what appears to be the wildly inflated guess of five
dollars, "Mama frowned while Mabel rolled her shoulders and said, 'An't we growing up
fast'" ("Charm" 77). In this scene, the narrator displays power and emotional control,
while her mother's displeasure with her daughter's success suggests a darker, more
cautious view of the customer and his overly generous tip. Understanding the dangers of
a big tipper demands a more sophisticated knowledge of customers that the narrator does
not yet possess. The narrator's mother asks her about the customer in order to make
sense out of the tip: "'How'd you know?' she asked" ("Charm" 77). The narrator is
forced to reveal her previous experience with the customer, responding with "'Cause
that's what he always leaves,'" ("Charm" 77). The situation may seem confusing—
receiving a big tip ought to be viewed as a beneficial, positive event. However, the
narrator's conversation with her mother reveals two possible problems with the customer
who leaves the big tips. The narrator explains that the customer leaves five dollars
"'[e]very Thursday evening when I close up'" ("Charm" 77). The mother's response
"sounded strange, not angry exactly but not at all pleased either" ("Charm" 77). Why
should the narrator's mother be angry, or almost angry? As a more experienced waitress,
the narrator's mother recognizes that the customer's big tip represents a power play and a
threat, a way of expressing superiority over the person serving him. The big tip also
represents a form of payment, not so much for good service, but perhaps more for a more
significant, or perhaps even sexual, favor in the future. The five dollar tip threatens her
daughter, because "'[r]egardless of employer practices, some male customers expected
intimacies or sexual favors in exchange for the tip” (Cobble 44). The narrator’s mother must decide how to protect her daughter, and she thinks about the situation carefully, “breathing deeply around the Pall Mall and watching me” (“Charm” 77). After her careful reflection, the narrator’s mother acts, “dropping the cigarette and walking on, ‘you’re not working any more Thursday nights’” (“Charm” 77-78). Making such a decision reflects emotional resources—the narrator’s mother knows she must protect her child, and she knows that protecting her child also means affecting her daughter’s tendency to trust. The narrator may be in need of “practical experience,” but gaining practical experience does not need to mean enduring a threatening customer. Though the narrator may recognize that her mother has concerns about the five dollar tip, the narrator does not recognize the full implications of accepting the five dollar tip. In this section of the story, the emotional dynamic reflects not only a mother protecting her child in a general sense, but also a mother protecting her child’s ability to trust. The narrator displays significant emotional resources, but her mother possesses even greater emotional resources that protect both herself and her child. In order to protect her child, the narrator’s mother must assess her daughter’s ability to act and prevent her from performing, since, in this case, the narrator’s mother recognizes her daughter’s limits. Clearly, the narrator’s mother realizes that her daughter does not know how to handle this particular customer. The mother’s decision, though not fully understood by the narrator, represents the insightful abilities of a woman who possesses what the narrator lacks: experience that translates into power.

Though the other waitresses are described in the story, the narrator emphasizes the outstanding skill displayed by her mother, who obviously possesses not only physical resources, but also the best acting abilities or the most charm, and therefore, the most
power. The narrator’s descriptions emphasize her mother’s mastery of the wide range of
skills needed to be a successful waitress. The narrator illustrates how her mother
operates as a powerful model for herself and the other waitresses. With the angry Yankee
couple that wants breakfast on Sunday, the narrator’s mother not only assuages their
anger, but also charms them, winning them over, along with the other patrons in the
diner. The narrator’s mother responds to the couple, after the narrator has given the bad
news that “we don’t cook on the grill on Sundays” (“Charm” 78). “Then she [Mama]
might go over with an offer of boiled eggs, that ham, and a biscuit. She’d talk nice,
drawling like she never did with me or friends, while she moved slower than you’d think
a wide-awake person could” (“Charm” 78). The narrator describes her mother’s mental,
emotional, and physical control in a less-than-ideal situation. The couple could leave—
taking away business and a tip, however small. In this constellation of relations, the
narrator’s mother exerts power and uses her acting skills to produce the desired outcome:
getting the couple to spend money. Skillfully, Mama would “offer them honey for their
biscuits or tell them how red-eye gravy is made, or talk about how sorry it is that we
don’t serve grits on Sunday” (“Charm” 78). As a successful waitress, she has “learned to
control situations by initiating action rather than […] let[ting] the customer define the
interaction” (Cobble 187). The narrator’s mother acts to take control of the situation and
gets the couple to respond to her, and more importantly, respond in the manner that she
wants them to. Her ability to combine mental, emotional, and physical resources
produces nearly immediate results: “That couple would grin wide and start slowing their
words down, while the regulars would choke on their coffee” (“Charm” 78). The
narrator’s mother, powerful in this role, meets the customer’s needs by using her ability
to move and speak in a particular way; in other words, she acts. Moreover, she acts with
precise timing, using nonverbal and verbal language that produces the desired effect. Her obvious success pleases the other diners, as the tip “was usually enough to provoke a round of applause after the couple was safely out the door” (“Charm” 78). The narrator’s mother uses her skills to influence both the customers and the other waitresses.

Succeeding in charming the Yankee couple might put the narrator’s mother at risk in the constellation of relations that make up her work community, since she demonstrates her power with the high quality of her skills and receives a generous tip as a reward. However, she can prevent turbulence among the waitresses; she “just put it [the tip] all into the pot” (“Charm” 78). By putting the Yankee couple’s tip into the butter bowl for communal use, the narrator’s mother reinforces one of the most important values functioning in the work culture of the waitresses: the value of community over self. In reinforcing the value of communal use of funds, the narrator’s mother can also re-establish herself as a member of the community. She contributes her tip to the communal fund as a way of resisting the economic power of the Yankee couple. In order to please the customer, the narrator’s mother uses her resources in a new way to achieve her goal of getting them to spend money, even though she might not frequently act in that manner. In addition, the narrator’s mother reinforces the values of her work culture by showing that the members of the community need to share the same set of rules and behaviors. Since she has deviated from the accepted set of behaviors for the Yankee couple, putting the tip in the butter bowl indicates to the other waitresses that her special behavior was anomalous, and she “pays the price” for the deviation by sacrificing herself for communal gain, not for individual gain. In addition, the contribution of the Yankee couple’s tip to the communal fund offers the narrator’s mother a way to separate herself from the negative associations of the Yankees themselves. Giving up the tip for the benefit of the
community functions as an act of purification—the narrator's mother has a way to wash herself clean after contact with the other. Finally, in giving the tip to the communal fund, the narrator's mother has a way to be an example to others, including her daughter. Her behavior communicates to the other waitresses and her daughter the powerful message that self is less important than the group. Contributing the Yankee couple's tip to the communal fund allows the narrator's mother to claim power with her acting skills, seemingly for the benefit of the Yankee couple, while simultaneously reinforcing the rules and practices of the work community that privileges the power of the group over the individual.

The narrator's mother, the narrator, and the other waitresses access and wield power with their ability to act and perform for customers that produce specific monetary rewards. The ability to act, along with the rules and practices that the waitresses use, fosters the work community described in the story. The work community of waitresses functions as a set of social relations operating in a specific location, that is, the counter. The geography of the story emphasizes this workspace, so the following analysis will place the counter in relation to other places/spaces in the story.

On the scale of region, the majority of the story is set in the South, and the narrator claims her Southern identity in both the opening and closing sections of the story. In the opening section of the story, the narrator describes the comments of a woman who speaks to her at the party: "'Southerners are so charming, I always say, giving their children such clever names'" and praising the narrator, saying "'we have so much to learn from you—gentility, you know, courtesy, manners, charm, all of that'" ("Charm" 73). The woman at the party expresses her stereotype of Southerners, assuming that all Southerners are people like herself—financially able to perform "sudden acts of well-
publicized generosity” (“Charm 73). The woman at the party fails to acknowledge the possibility of more than one Southern experience. By listing characteristics such as “courtesy, manners, charm, all of that,” the woman at the party states her assumptions about Southern behaviors that represent stereotypes about members of the culture of wealth: landowners and a patriarchal code that separates women from men, while requiring strict adherence to social codes about speech, dress, and behavior.  

In contrast to the limited vision of the woman at the party, the narrator represents another kind of Southern experience, one that requires the “practical experience” of acting lessons and employs the power and skill of charm for economic benefit. The narrator explicitly claims her own Southern identity in the opening section when she describes her “mother’s voice hissing...Yankee... It was all I could do not to nod” (“Charm” 73). The narrator agrees silently, without moving her head, claiming her Southern identity on her own terms, which are distinguished from the assumptions of the woman speaking to her. The narrator is a Southerner, meaning that she is not a Yankee. Though the story has not yet defined “Yankee,” the hiss of the narrator’s mother suggests the negative connotations of the term. In the closing section of the story, the narrator reconfirms her Southern identity by using her “Mississippi accent” and “heartbreaker’s smile” (“Charm” 80). Both the accent and the smile are powerful tools used by the narrator while working as a waitress. Her accent and smile reconfirm Southern identity by relocating the narrator in a space where she uses her acting skills for specific results. Allison purposefully closes the story with the narrator’s display of power, since the narrator (and her mother) already demonstrates the ability to achieve results in the central section of the story.

The narrator, by privileging the central section of the story that describes her waitressing experiences, sets up a geography focused on a workplace: a counter. “When
I was sixteen I worked counter with my mama back of a Moses Drugstore planted in the middle of a Highway 50 shopping mall” locating all of the description that follows in this specific constellation of relations (“Charm” 74). The counter becomes a space of power in the constellation of relations that are controlled by the women who work in that space; the waitresses use acting skills to access and wield power. By opening the central section of the story with this sentence, the narrator establishes a geography in which she can locate herself, her values, and her perspective on the people at the party. The narrator provides her age (sixteen) to locate herself at a particular point in her life. Her age also provides a context for contrast with the party scenes of the story. When the narrator describes the party, she must be somewhat older since the party includes a bartender and wine glasses (“Charm” 73). The narrator uses the term “counter” to describe her workplace, distinguishing that location from eatery, restaurant, and diner. In addition, the narrator puts herself in that place with her mother, suggesting that the space permits growth and change with the protection and nurturance provided by the parental presence. Mona Domosh and Joni Seager point out that “[m]ost women work in jobs where the workplace is predominantly female, and women work in a far narrower range of occupations than do men” (58). The gender pattern remains consistent; the counter is a workplace dominated by women. The other women who work at the counter will “mother” or “parent” the narrator in their own ways, sharing skills that assist the narrator in accessing and wielding power. The counter is in “back of a Moses Drugstore” and this detail provides more information about the workspace. Counter and drugstore combine, creating a hybrid space for the purpose of consuming food and goods. The concept of hybrid space also explains the description of the counter as “planted,” indicating how the counter works for the narrator, the other waitresses, and the regular customers. In
addition, the location of the counter provides contrast between the rootedness of the
waitresses and their transient tourist customers from the highway. The counter relies on
the travelers who need a meal while passing through. The hybrid space of the
counter/drugstore, located in a shopping mall, shares an economic interdependence with
the highway. Travelers moving through the area, also move through the space of the
counter, spending money on meals and tips. The planted space of the counter relies on
the space designated for mobility—the highway. The constellation of relations that make
up the counter, including the hybridity of the space, provide the narrator with most of the
skills she needs to claim power in other spaces, namely the space of the party, despite the
time difference.

While the work community of the waitresses that functions in the space of the counter
relies on the economy of tourists and travelers, the separation between “us” and “them,”
“real world” and “not-real world,” and waitresses and Yankees also requires a set of
social relations that influence the construction of the space. Reading the counter through
Massey’s conception of space as defined through “a particular constellation of relations”
(“Power-Geometry” 66) not only creates a means for the waitresses to claim power, but
also sets up the narrator to claim power in other spaces she negotiates, including the
party. Regardless of time, the narrator re-locates herself into identical places in both
sections of the story. Her acting and performance skills come in to play at the party, not
only in the opening section of the story with the woman with stereotypical assumptions
about Southerners, but also in the closing section of the story with the man the narrator
“work[s] with every day” (“Charm” 80). The party, unlike the counter, is not a
workspace. The fact that the narrator works in a mixed gender workplace indicates that
she is probably no longer a waitress; she now works at an “organization” (“Charm” 73).
The narrator no longer works at the counter, and she has free time for the leisure activity of attending a party—apparently the changes in her life have been significant. Yet the narrator re-accesses her performance skills at the party to respond to the man who comments on the cornbread. While his comment may be intended as a compliment, his statement reflects stereotypical assumptions about the narrator’s Southern and gender identities. The man says, “I bet you sure can cook” (“Charm” 80). His stereotypical assumption that the female narrator possesses the ability to make tasty meals suggests that the narrator has no other skills, abilities, or interests. The man’s comment attempts to stereotype the narrator and negate any other possibilities for her in terms of creativity. The closing lines of the story indicate the narrator’s response: “‘Bet on it,’ I say, with my Mississippi accent. I swallow the rest of a cherry tomato and give him my heartbreaker’s smile” (“Charm” 80). Using her performance skills to deflect the man’s assumptions shows the narrator’s power, in the same way the waitresses claim power in their work community through their shared values, practices and rules. The narrator does not attempt to take issue with the man’s comment; the social environment of the party makes arguments inappropriate and disruptive. However, the narrator effectively locates herself in the same articulated moment—using her acting ability in a social encounter to claim power.

By controlling the interaction, the narrator claims power, not for financial benefit, but instead for social benefit; in effect, the narrator reproduces what she has seen her mother do with Yankees. The narrator disengages herself from the mistaken assumptions of the man she works with. At the same time, re-locating herself gives the narrator creative power; she intends to “write her [mother] about this party” and make her “laugh about it all” (“Charm” 80). The space where the party is held and the narrator’s social
interactions at the party produce material that reinforces the narrator’s power through her claiming of, control over, and reproduction of the interactions. At the party, the narrator claims power by separating herself from the mistaken assumptions of others and by defining the experience and meaning of the party for her own purpose: to produce writing and entertain her mother. In the constellation of relations that make up the space of the party, the narrator wields power by controlling the interactions she has with others and using her acting skills for social benefit.

“T’m Working on My Charm” is a success story because Allison shows her narrator developing acting skills that will allow her to reproduce the charming behavior of her mother. In conjunction, the narrator uses her acting skills to access and wield power as a member of the work community of the lunch counter and as a member of the middle class. The work community described in the story wields its own power through the sharing of economic resources, the establishment of communally defined boundaries, and the use of shared practices and behaviors. Allison provides an insider’s view of the counter, detailing the extensive complex of skills required to be successful in that workspace. Female power, in the workspace and the social space, is demonstrated by the narrator’s successful use of her acting and performance skills. Using the lens of Massey’s definition of place as socially defined and the definition of power used in the culture of persistence (the ability to survive) provides a magnified view of the power accessed and wielded in the story.

Allison’s characters, much like Cather’s, function as powerful women who access power in the spaces they live in, work in, and move through by consistently demonstrating their ability to survive. Evaluating these women on the basis of their ability to survive locates their power in spaces and on scales that amplify an
understanding of female power, especially in contexts that present these characters as active agents, rather than as victims or subjects. Reading the characters through their geographies provides an understanding of how these women are “powerful in ways not generally seen as heroic by the world outside the family” (“A Question of Class” 17). Using the strategies of feminist geography, including scaling and a social definition of place, magnifies an understanding of the power accessed and wielded by Anney Boatwright, Bone Boatwright, and the narrator of “Charm” in the spaces where they live, work, and move through.

Endnotes

1 “I dare to think that it is this outsized reality, and not just its literary expression, that has deserved the attention of the Swedish Academy of Letters. A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty, of which this roving and nostalgic Colombian is but one cipher more, singled out by fortune” from Gabriel García Márquez’s Nobel Prize Lecture, delivered in December of 1982. Both García Márquez and Allison seek to make real the vital human lives that have been previously unacknowledged.

2 Laura Fine, in “Gender Conflicts and Their ‘Dark’ Projections in Coming of Age White Female Southern Novels,” argues that Allison, along with other Southern writers, uses “the community’s distorted racial relations to represent the confusion [her] protagonist[] feel[s] about gender roles and sexual relations” (121). Fine discusses the “skewed power dynamics” that deeply affect Anney, Bone, and other women in the novel (126). The “dark” projection Fine calls attention to outlines the idea that Bone identifies with the African American characters in the novel because of their shared status as outsiders.
Having Bone identify with the African American characters reflects “Allison’s desire to portray African Americans positively, but [also] to her desire to locate the outsider part of Bone’s self as positive, too” (Fine 127). In addition, Fine suggests that “Bone identifies strongly with the victimization of African Americans because she feels herself to have been the despised object of people with a higher social standing” like the Pearls and the Waddells (127). Fine praises Allison for being “able to avoid the othering of African Americans” (127).

Along with Fine, there is at least one scholar who would like to see Allison’s novel read in closer relationship to ethnic or minority literatures. In "The Shadow of Latinidad in US Literature," Marcus Embry argues for the greater inclusion of ethnic literatures in "American" literature. Specifically, Embry calls for using the canon in novel ways to be more broadly inclusive; he invites literature educators to begin a sort of reading revolution: "We need to demonstrate that the necessity to reconfigure the tradition of 'American' literature comes from within the traditional canon itself" (82). Embry even goes so far as to provide examples of "readings and analytical methods by which we can find the shadow of Latinidad in 'American' texts" (84). Embry’s reading of Bastard Out of Carolina seeks to uncover "a trace of an interpretation that should be made, but has not" (90). According to Embry, the shadow of La Llorona occurs in Bastard. While his idea is an interesting one, Embry only mentions a connection between the two texts and does not provide any details as to how this connection might be pursued.

3 Though the culture of the middle class tends to define the term “family” on a more limited basis (i.e. father, mother, and children), the culture of persistence tends to define the term more broadly. In the novel, Allison represents the Boatwright family as a community that spreads out over several households. As Brian Massumi indicates
[Fluidity and boundary setting are not in contradiction, for two reasons. First, the boundaries themselves are as easily displaceable as the perception of risk. “The family” is a code word for an immensely complex set of laws, regulations, charity campaigns, social work, medical practices, and social custom that varies locally and is under constant revision. The boundaries of “the family” fluctuate as welfare, abortion, and tax laws change, as church influence and temperance movements rise and recede. “The family”—any bounded social space—simply does not exist as an effectively self-enclosed, self-identical entity. “Bounded” social spaces are fields of variation. (26-27)

The matriarchal family structure represented in generational poverty stems from the highly gendered roles that women and men are placed in. Women, oriented toward caretaking and relationships that foster survival, are viewed as a stabilizing force. On the other hand, men, oriented toward work and reinforcing manhood, are viewed as less stable, and more subject to absence from the family/community. Men, in the culture of persistence, may leave the family/community to find work, to escape pressure, or to be incarcerated.

Anney’s relationship with Mrs. Parsons, though somewhat strained, contrasts sharply with her relationship with Glen’s relatives. Her perspective on the Waddell family seems clear enough, as she distinguishes Glen from his relatives: “‘Glen loves me, loves my girls. Don’t matter if his family is stuck-up and full of themselves. Glen’s not like that’” (Allison 37). Later Bone reports on her mother’s comments as she gets the girls ready to go to the Waddell home: “‘I hate to go over there,’ Mama said, ‘hate standing around waiting for his daddy to notice us’” (Allison 100). At the birthday party, Anney and her daughters are excluded—physically and emotionally. Bone and Reese are segregated from other children and the adults at the party, where “[t]hey served us tea in the...
backyard, just us—Anney’s girls, they called us” (Allison 101). The girls are prevented from entering the house, and Anney “didn’t smoke in Daddy Waddell’s house, though no one ever told her she couldn’t” (Allison 101). The Boatwright community operates under assumptions and values that differ significantly from the assumptions held by the Waddells. Anney’s “shaking hands” betray her nervousness and discomfort in the house with “polished windows and flowered drapes, the china plates gleaming behind glass cabinets” (Allison 101, 102). In the Waddell home, Anney becomes uncomfortable in a space she is unfamiliar with; she recognizes that the rules and expectations for behavior are different from the patterns she follows in her own home and in the homes of her sisters. Anney may not know or understand all of the unspoken rules, yet she recognizes at least one of the rules, which leads her to avoid smoking in the house. The description of the interior of the Waddell home signals that Anney and Glen are from very different places. Bone describes “the spines of those books, wanting it all, wanting the furniture, the garden, the big open kitchen with its dishes for everyday and others for special, the freezer in the utility room and the plushy seats on all the dining-room chairs” (Allison 102). The home Bone describes is filled with possessions and items for leisure purposes—all of which are missing from the places where Anney and her daughters have lived. Bone’s description of the Waddells’ home reveals the Waddells’ position in the culture of the middle class, complete with its motivation toward achievement and the consumption of possessions. The distance between Anney and Glen’s family is reinforced in the conversation Bone overhears between Glen’s brothers, Daryl and James: “‘Look at that car. Just like any nigger trash, getting something like that.’ ‘What’d you expect? Look what he married.’ ‘Her and her kids sure go with that car’” (Allison 102). Daryl and James place Anney and her children in the category of “trash,” drawing
boundaries between the Boatwrights and themselves, a process of labeling that simultaneously shows how little they think of Anney and her daughters. Keeping Bone and Reese in the backyard allows the Waddells to ignore the girls, denying their presence. In addition, the segregation of Bone and Reese from the other children reinforces the idea that the children belong exclusively to Anney and not to Anney and Glen. Keeping the girls in the backyard places Anney in a difficult position—she too is asked to ignore the girls, and seek the acceptance of the Waddells in the home where she is obviously not comfortable.

6 In examining where Daddy Glen abuses Bone, the practical and psychological reasons for using the bathroom offer further insight into his frustration, immaturity, and lack of emotional control. First of all, the bathroom is a confined and confining space; the space prevents Bone from attempting to hide or running away. He will have less trouble controlling her in that small space than in any other part of the house. In the bathroom he will only have to worry about her and the hard, cold fixtures: bathtub, sink, toilet, tile floor. Second, Glen uses the bathroom as the place for abuse for psychological reasons. The acts performed in the bathroom—urination, defecation, nakedness for bathing, and in Bone's case, violation—are acts of physical defilement, acts which are to be performed in private because they are supposedly shameful. Using the bathroom allows Glen to hide his own shameful actions, including the shame of his rage and lack of self-control. On a psychological level, Glen wants to hide the ugliness of his violence enacted on Bone, but he also wishes to hide the ugliness of himself as a person who cannot control his anger. Because he does not have a healthy or constructive method for releasing his emotions, Glen is ashamed of his outbursts and cannot bear to let Anney see the extremity and nakedness of his rage. Glen also relies on the mediating door which effectively prevents
anyone from seeing or witnessing the abuse, allowing him to make excuses for his behavior and pretend that he is not responsible. The closed door excludes the witnesses from the depravity of Glen's abuse of Bone.

The "mean sisters" game indicates female power (or at the very least, girl power) that resists male power by being simultaneously original ("first") and relational ("sisters"). Girl power, according to Bone, views the blood relationships of sisterhood as contributing to power. By creating the "mean sisters" game, Bone envisions a place where the girls hold power and are free to express "meanness" (as a kind of internal violence) usually reserved for males. "Mean sisters" functions as a particular space where the girls can invest in their own agency and ability to make choices. The game also functions as an outlet for Bone's repressed anger toward Daddy Glen. While the other girls play "mean sisters" enthusiastically enough, Bone "played mean sisters for all [she] was worth" (Allison 213). Bone makes a greater investment in the game because of the game's greater value to her as the inventor.

Christina Jarvis appears to be the only critic interested in analyzing Allison's short stories. Her 2000 article, "Gendered Appetites: Feminisms, Dorothy Allison, and the Body," refers to the stories "Mama" and "A Lesbian Appetite," offering extensive interpretation of the latter. Using the theoretical frameworks set up by Judith Butler, Susan Bordo, and Donna Haraway, Jarvis shows how "the story explores a variety of lesbian relationships, opening and experimental space for the narrator to perform lesbian subject positions—ranging from recognizable butch/femme roles to the exploration of other identities within and between femme/butch categories" (764). Instead of the disembodied subject, Jarvis argues that Allison's story, "A Lesbian Appetite," functions to "[intervene] within recent queer theory, offering sexual identities that are performative".
as well as attentive to the specificities of race, class, sex, ethnicity, and the body” (764). The analysis concludes with the idea that the experimental space created by the narrator of “A Lesbian Appetite” allows “for linking feminist and queer theories” (786).

In Jarvis’s analysis, space refers to a theoretical space described as “interconnected dimensions of an ever-shifting, paradoxical web or ‘whole’ (for lack of a better word)” (Jarvis 774). Jarvis does not refer to the term Allison herself uses (“lattice”), which would have integrated Allison’s non-fiction and fiction to improve the argument, and provide a better word than whole. Though the article emphasizes theoretical and not geographical space(s), her examination of Allison’s short fiction offers a theoretical framework that can easily lead to geographical interpretations. By discussing race, class, sex, ethnicity, and the body, Jarvis refers directly to issues that feminist geographers are concerned with and working on.

9 It might be argued that the woman at the party imagines all Southerners to be the product of an exaggerated, romanticized South, which she assumes to be a culture of wealth and privilege.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The characters created by Willa Cather, Gabriel García Márquez, and Dorothy Allison demonstrate a shared ability to access and wield power despite the obstacles and interference they face. These female characters develop and manage the skills that foster their power, using their knowledge of the hidden rules of their class culture. By carefully considering the respective positions of these characters in the cultures of persistence and wealth, in conjunction with the spaces and places where the characters live, work, and travel through, identifying the quality and depth of their power becomes easier. Seeing the lives of these characters through the lens of geography and class fosters a clear vision of them as powerful.

Probably the biggest surprise in the dissertation is that the culture of wealth has received so little attention as a subject of analysis. There is little critique of the culture of wealth, probably since gaining entrance to or having adequate resources to mimic the culture of wealth is viewed as an ideal. The extensive studies done on the culture of persistence largely position the condition of poverty exclusively as a problem to be solved. While I agree that no one should have to live in poverty, few studies put forth the same sociological and scientific effort in examining the culture of wealth. If only to offset the studies on the culture of persistence, the culture of wealth should come under
the same scrutiny as the culture of persistence for a variety of other reasons. Studying the
culture of wealth might initially lead to "the way in," that is, an understanding of how to
gain access to the culture of wealth, though it could be argued that the members of the
middle class are already wholeheartedly engaged in this activity. The initial
establishment of an understanding of how to enter the culture of wealth would probably
be followed by a more important and useful question: what is the value of entering the
culture of wealth? After this second question follows a third: what is the value of the
culture itself? I suggest that interrogating the culture of wealth in this manner will offer
the valuable knowledge of how best to influence, shape, and change the culture of wealth.
Reshaping the culture of wealth through such analysis will not only offer better means for
guiding members of the culture of wealth to understand the cultures of the middle class
and persistence, but will also change the boundaries of the culture of wealth, allowing
more individuals greater access to the resources of the culture.

Linda McDowell, in her reflections on fifteen years of doing feminist geography,
argues that feminist geographers will turn to literary analysis (along with architecture and
art history) "for inspiration" ("Women/Gender/Feminisms: Doing Feminist Geography"
397). The works of Cather, García Márquez, and Allison should genuinely provide
inspiration for others seeking to redefine and better understand female power, and to
produce means for challenging inequality, an ongoing, vital process for many feminists
(McDowell "Women/Gender/Feminisms: Doing Feminist Geography" 398).

Acknowledging that power is defined in different ways in the cultures of persistence, the
middle class, and wealth creates a broader understanding of power, and essentially
includes female characters that might otherwise be viewed as powerless victims. The
power claimed and wielded by the characters of Cather, García Márquez, and Allison is

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demonstrated in specific spaces/places that can be most effectively described through the strategies of feminist geographies. The intersection between the culture of class and spaces/places magnifies an understanding of female power.

Chapter One, in studying Thea Kronborg and Kitty Ayrshire, depicts powerful women able to claim and wield power as artists, locating their power in specific places, yet Cather has clearly designed both characters to have the ability to enter spaces where they can exert power over others, and, in many cases, dominate the spaces they enter. Though it is not difficult to see how Thea Kronborg and Kitty Ayrshire are powerful—positioned as they are in the culture of wealth—recognizing the full implications of their power is useful for understanding how, from the start of these works, Cather designs characters to access and wield power in nearly any space they enter. Thea, even as a young person, has an artistic sensibility and personal power that should be fostered in every girl. Endowed with a strong, flexible body, Thea accesses mobility and further exerts power within the spaces of Moonstone, Chicago, and her urban apartment/enclave indicating not only her artistic development, but also her ability to use her power in different spaces and on different scales in her relationships, and in her ability to include or exclude others. Kitty wields her power with such security and confidence that she could be a model for any girl/woman who wants to claim power for herself. In the practice of entering and exiting at will, Kitty dominates space for her audience, Marshall McKann, and others to see.

Chapter Two, in analyzing Leticia Nazareno and Nena Daconte, makes clear that both women have access to power that functions in microgeographies shaped through relationships and what appears to be the unlimited potential behind the culture of wealth. Yet García Márquez creates powerful women and then destroys them, making his work
vulnerable to feminist criticism and very unfriendly to women readers. Leticia Nazareno, though able to access power in the presidential palace through her proximity to the general, cannot adjust her practice and process of wielding power to successfully negotiate spaces outside of the palace/prison. Her destruction in the public space of the marketplace geographically signals the limits of her power. She claims power in the microgeographies of the presidential palace, but, like the general, fails to acknowledge that power is defined and operates in different ways outside of the culture of wealth. Nena Daconte, with so many resources, has the power of unlimited potential, wealth, youth, and a mate, yet García Márquez uses her symbolically to represent Latin America, dooming her to destruction as a means for critiquing the culture of wealth. The female characters García Márquez constructs have great potential, yet end up destroyed, since their power operates only in microgeographical spaces. Perhaps García Márquez has not yet conceived a female character who exhibits the kind of domination and mastery of space seen in the characters designed by Cather.

Chapter Three, by examining Anney Boatwright, Ruth Anne “Bone” Boatwright, and the narrator of “I’m Working on My Charm,” demonstrates female characters with access to power and depicts these women as fully capable of wielding their power as defined by the culture of persistence. Allison’s characters function as women who succeed at surviving, exerting power on several scales and accessing the power to cross the boundaries between classes. Anney, master survivor, exerts power in all of the spaces where her husband cannot through her extensive knowledge of the culture of persistence. Bone, as a rough copy of her mother, will take her survival skills and write her own future, something that her mother cannot do. Both Anney and Bone exert power on the scales of the body, the home, the family/community, and the region. The narrator of “I’m
Working on My Charm” demonstrates her power by mastering the acting and performance skills that give her the ability to succeed as a waitress. In moving beyond the space of the lunch counter and the culture of persistence into the culture of the middle class, the narrator also demonstrates power by using her acting and performance skills to recreate a space where she controls the situation.

As Michael Keith and Steve Pile point out, “space is not an innocent backdrop” in shaping power relations (4). Positions in the cultures of wealth, the middle class, and persistence come under the influence of and reflexively influence the spaces and places where the female characters created by Cather, García Márquez, and Allison access and wield power. Interrogating these characters identifies their access to culturally defined power that is reinforced within spaces/places—expressed through the body, mobility, power over others, power to act and choose for oneself, power to include or exclude others, power wielded in spaces large and small. Ultimately, all of the analysis serves to magnify an understanding of female power.
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