SUBLIME VIEWS AND PICTURESQUE EMBELLISHMENTS: WESTWARD EXPANSION AND “PROGRESS” IN GILDED AGE
GUIDEBOOK ILLUSTRATION

by

CAROLYN MARIE HERNANDEZ

A THESIS

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Student: Carolyn Marie Hernandez

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture by:

Dr. Nina Amstutz Chair
Dr. Derek Burdette Member
Dr. Keith Eggener Member

and

Dr. Janet Woodruff-Borden Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Carolyn Marie Hernandez

Master of Arts

Department of the History of Art and Architecture

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Title: Sublime Views and Picturesque Embellishments: Westward Expansion and “Progress” in Gilded Age Guidebooks Illustration

Abstract:

In this thesis I apply literary analysis to railroad guidebook illustration (1880-1890) to argue that the framing and decorative embellishments aided the nineteenth century reader in imagining an idealized version of the Western landscape. Although rail travel was quick and removed from the physical experience of the landscape, guidebook illustrations highlight the picturesque aspects of the Western environment and supplement the rail travel experience by guiding the viewer through a contemplative and romantic reading of the landscape. Guidebooks immersed the reader in the progressive narrative of the guidebooks. The authors utilize language that assumes the readers are riding along the transcontinental path as they read, and the imagery serves to engage the readers’ imaginations and guide the viewers in viewing the picturesque and idealized version of the Western landscape.
CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Carolyn Marie Hernandez

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
Brigham Young University—Idaho, Rexburg, Idaho

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, Art History, 2019, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Art History, 2016, Brigham Young University—Idaho

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

History of Photography
Nineteenth-century Illustration
Romanticism
Tourism Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Masterworks on Loan Research Intern, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon, 2018-2019

Finance Chair, Art History Students Association, University of Oregon, 2018-2019

Camille Leach Practicum in Data Management, Knight Library Digital Scholarship Center, University of Oregon, 2018

Graduate Employee (Teaching Assistant), Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Oregon, 2017-2019

Curatorial Intern, Lane County History Museum, 2017-2019

Gallery Intern, Jacob Spori Art Gallery, 2016
GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Marian Donnelly Student Travel Grant, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Oregon, 2018.

Marian Donnelly Student Award, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Oregon, 2018.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The completion of the transcontinental railroad route in the 1870s established an entire genre of tourist literature to market the ease of overland travel to upper-class tourists. Guidebook illustrations differ from the prints within previous travel literature in a few important ways. In the place of sweeping panoramic vistas and ethnographic and botanical studies, they have closely cropped, partial views of carefully-chosen portions of the landscape and a plethora of decorative borders and marginalia. The framing and embellishments on these images helped the nineteenth-century reader to imagine an idealized version of the landscape of the West. To demonstrate, my thesis focuses on the use and narrative context of three guidebooks—Henry T. Williams’, *The Pacific Tourist*... (1881); George A. Crofutt’s, *New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide* (1884); and, Stanley Wood’s, *Over the Range to Golden Gate*... (1889).

The guidebooks I have chosen are linked in their purpose and subject. Each of my cases were created to advise the transcontinental railroad traveler and provide detailed instruction with copious illustration. *The Pacific Tourist*... by Henry T. Williams is a 9.25” by 6.875” guidebook that provides instructions on traveling the Union and Central Railroad routes from East coast cities—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, or Chicago—across the United States with stops in Nebraska, Montana, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, California, Oregon, and Washington. *The Pacific Tourist* was published by Adams & Bishops, a New York-based publishing house that produced both

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1 This genre will be referred to as *guidebooks.*
maps and guidebooks for tourists. The Pacific Tourist was available for purchase at “publisher’s agencies” across the United States for the price of $2.00 for a hardback cover and $1.50 for a “flexible [paper] cover” meant to be light-weight, portable, and ideal for the railroad traveler. The publication features illustrations by Thomas Moran, A. C. Warren, W. Snyder, F. Schell, H. W. Troy, A. Will., all engraved by the Meeder & Chubb. Engraving Company, and apart from a few illustrations, the individual images are not credited to any specific artist.

George A. Crofutt’s, New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide, is a 7.5” by 5.25” guidebook also meant to advise transcontinental tourists on the Pacific Railroad. Crofutt’s guidebook was sold with a “flexible clothe” cover for $1.50 and could have been purchased at railroad agencies, newsstands, and book stores across the United States. Unlike Williams’s The Pacific Tourist, New Overland Tourist, was published by a company owned by Crofutt himself, The Overland Publishing Company of Chicago, Illinois, which published publications and an illustrated monthly on the topic of

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3 Ibid. The publisher’s agency that sold The Pacific Tourist were in Omaha, Nebraska; Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Chicago, Illinois; San Francisco, California.


5 George A. Crofutt, New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide, n.p. Unlike Williams’s, Crofutt’s narrative also includes instructions for travelers riding the Southern route, but for the purpose of this thesis, I focus on my study on cross-continent travel.

6 Ibid.
transcontinental travel. Crofutt divides his illustrations into two categories: “large views,” full-page illustrations inserted between pages of text, and “illustrations,” smaller decorative details that are interjected within the textual narrative. Unlike Williams’s guidebook, the original artists for Crofutt’s images are not credited within the text, but the engraving company is mentioned on a few of the illustrations.

Stanley Wood’s, Over the Range to Golden Gate… is a 7.75” x 5” guidebook available in “paper” binding for $1.50. The guidebook was published by the R. R. Donnelly & Sons Publishing Company of Chicago, which published a wide range of books on travel and the West, and additionally, the author, Wood was the editor of a monthly magazine dedicated to the “Wild West” called the Great Divide. Like Crofutt’s guidebook, Wood does not credit his individual artists.

These three case studies use illustration and text to curate the traveler’s visual experience of the American West. At each junction, the authors tell the reader which tickets to purchase, and at times in the texts the authors point out key attractions as the train passes them by. The all-encompassing nature of tourist guidebooks caused them to function as a means for interpreting the lands travelled. Beyond instructive detail, however, the guidebooks engage the reader’s imagination and function as a virtual picturesque travel experience which guides reader in interpreting scenic views from their rail window.

7 Ibid.
8 Ibid. 13, 20. The engravers that Crofutt cites include: Wes. Erneger Co. and Bond & Chandler
9 Stanley Wood, Over the Range to the Golden Gate…, n.p.
10 The Cosmopolitan, “20 Gemstones All Free With The Great Divide,” October 1891, 11, 6, 44.
American travel writers’ views of the picturesque tour were rooted in the European aesthetic tradition. Mary Louise Pratt marks this as the Humboldtian turn in travel writing as a genre in the early nineteenth century, inspired by Alexander von Humboldt’s writings of South America published in the United States from the late eighteenth century and posthumously well into the 1880s.\(^\text{11}\) Humboldt combined his scientific writing with personal narrative, balancing empiricism with the subjectivity of romanticism. This style became particularly popular in American travel writing and exploration narratives with the works of Washington Irving and George Catlin, who combined personal narrative with lavish environmental details and an emphasis on capturing the picturesque qualities of the landscape.\(^\text{12}\)

Americans of the 1790-1860s were also well versed in the theories of the picturesque developed by British author William Gilpin and implemented ideas from his writings to depict American scenery as picturesque.\(^\text{13}\) In this thesis, I refer to Gilpin’s definition of the picturesque because his theories were still relevant to Gilded Age American writers. Within a year of its publication, Gilpin’s essay, *Three essays: on*


\(^\text{12}\) For more comprehensive readings of Romantic themes in nineteenth-century American literature see Mick Gidley et al., *Views of American Landscapes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 53., John Dolis, *Transnational Na(rra)tion: Home and Homeland in Nineteenth-century American Literature* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015), 44. Donald A. Ringe best summarizes Irving’s position among the romantic authors of the nineteenth century on page 1: “…nineteenth century American literature from Washington Irving to Walt Whitman contains a strong emphasis on the visual—on ‘seeing’ the world described… [there is] a recurring strain of the pictorial, a stress on images of sight, and a deep concern with the need for close and accurate observation of the physical world.” Additionally, John Dolis further demonstrates the romantic reading of Washington Irving’s work, which he describes on page 42 as receiving criticism for its “adoration, if not idolization, of the English [aesthetic] tradition.”

picturesque beauty; on picturesque travel; and on sketching landscape: to which is added a poem, On landscape painting (1792), was circulated in American literary magazines.\textsuperscript{14} Gilpin’s theory of picturesque travel establishes three aims of the picturesque traveler: “amusement,” viewing beautiful scenery, and “the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view.”\textsuperscript{15} Gilpin’s theory relies on the leisurely, sometimes aimless, enjoyment of the landscape.

American conceptions of the sublime was, likewise, rooted in European aesthetic traditions.\textsuperscript{16} Though there are two competing historically relevant definitions of the sublime—that of Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant—in this thesis I refer to the Kantian sublime. Burke defines sublime as a phenomena where: “the state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror” in response to an object of observation that is sublime within itself.\textsuperscript{17} In contrast, Kant defines the sublime as existing as a reaction within the viewer’s mind, not as a quality that is inherent to the object of observation.\textsuperscript{18}

Though the picturesque tour traditionally relied on a meandering pilgrimage taking in the landscape at one’s own pace, railroad companies marketed their experience as picturesque. Contrary to many of the traditional tenets of picturesque travel, rail


\textsuperscript{15} William Gilpin, \textit{Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: To Which Is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting} (London: Printed for R. Blamire, 1792), 55-56.

\textsuperscript{16} Mary Arensberg. \textit{The American Sublime} (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 36

\textsuperscript{17} Edmund Burke, \textit{A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful} (London, New York: Routledge and Paul; Columbia University Press, 1958), 95.

travelers were removed from the physical experience of the natural environment, not in control of their own pace or path, and viewed the landscape from the perspective provided by the rail window. Operating largely under the assumption that these guidebooks “augmented” and enhanced the experience of travel, the analysis in these chapters has sought to reveal that the images from my case studies provide a virtual picturesque tour of the American landscape specifically through the framing of the landscape prints.

Using these three case studies as representations of the guidebook genre, I focus my thesis around the framing of the innovative illustrative styles that are deserving of further art historical investigation and split my thesis into three sections. The first section will serve as an introduction and literature review to situate my case studies among the larger field of art historical studies of the American West and literary analysis of Victorian literature and print.

The second section will contextualize my chosen guidebooks within the “romantic” travel writing produced in the nineteenth century to demonstrate the affect rail and steam travel had on picturesque viewing experience. Then, by examining my case study images, I demonstrate how the engravers embellished their illustrations to highlight picturesque or painterly qualities of the landscape and allow the reader to study even the more minor aspects of the landscape.

The third section focuses on the use and experience of these guidebooks and applies the linguistic theory of deixis to demonstrate how overland guidebooks immersed the reader in the narrative. By deixis, I refer to Lynne E. Hewitt’s study of deictic centering in fictional narratives, which situate the reader in relation to the story. Words
that require context, such as “here” and “you” establish where readers position themselves cognitively in relation to the narrative of the story. Unlike travel narratives of the mid-nineteenth century, my case studies move from “I” statements and an exclusive “we” to referring to the reader directly. Second, I apply theories of the window in art to the illustrations within these guidebooks to demonstrate how they immerse the reader in the storyworld, or the imaginary mental space constructed when reading a text, as described by Laura Daniel Buchholz in her application of Lynne E. Hewitt’s theory of deictic centering in Victorian narratives.

Literature Review

I situate my research within previous study of nineteenth-century print materials and the American West. Depictions of the Western United States are not neutral, and previous post-colonial approaches to the study of travel literature have demonstrated the ideology of Westward expansion and manifest destiny that is present within these texts. *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*, provides the most complete reinterpretation of the imagery of the Western states and explains that the mythic West promoted in nineteenth-century print materials represents the Eastern states’ ideas of progress, nationalism, and natural resource policy. Additionally, Mary Louise

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Pratt’s study *Imperial Eyes* discusses how the imperial “gaze,” inherent to travel literature published by non-autochthonous authors frames the landscape and indigenous peoples as subaltern.\(^{22}\) These guidebooks largely erased evidence of indigenous groups.\(^{23}\) There representations of indigenous peoples are present in only a fraction of the prints within my case studies; in these Gilded Age guidebooks, the imperial gaze takes the form of panoramic and bird’s-eye views that allowed for an overhead, god-like perspective of nature.\(^{24}\)

In George A. Crofutt’s guidebook, *New Overland Tourist*, the author includes a detailed formal analysis of a reprinted copy of John Gast’s painting, “American Progress” (Figure 1-1). In Gast’s original composition, two trains charge into the great American plain from the right side of the composition. Gast painted the right side of the composition illuminated in a soft glow of light that gradually turns into dark shadows on the left of the composition which gives the impression that are set in suspended animation on the left of the composition are entering the dark unknown or unsettled land, or “terra incognita,” colonizers frame the regions they explore as unknown peripheries of globe.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{22}\) Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008), 35. Any study of travel literature must consider that these three guidebooks contain very little Indigenous representation, and the textual narrative contains many of the problems inherent to travel literature as pointed out in Pratt’s *imperial gaze*—stereotyping, marginalizing, and justifying expansion or colonization. In the imperial gaze, the “eye” becomes a dominant subject that views the landscape and people encountered as objects.


\(^{24}\) Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 59. As Pratt explains on page 59 using landscape viewing as an example, “the eye ‘commands’ what falls within its gaze; mountains and valleys ‘show themselves,’ ‘present a picture’; the country ‘opens up’ before the visitors.”

\(^{25}\) Thrush, *Native Seattle*, 22. As historian Thrush describes in his study of the indigenous history of Seattle, Washington, what Euro-American explorers and settlers described as “terra incognita” was actually “terra
Crofutt invokes a similar rhetoric of manifest destiny and a pro-settlement stance in his visual analysis of Gast’s painting and breaks the image down section by section in his analysis. The central woman serves as a symbol of “progress.” She is depicted laying telephone lines as she moves from the right of the composition to the left with a school book in her arms representing education. His analysis ends with:

Fleeing from ‘Progress,’ and toward the blue waters of the Pacific… are the Indians, buffalo, wild horses, bears, and other game, moving westward—ever westward. …What American man, woman or child, does not feel a heart-throb of exultation as they think of the glorious achievements of PROGRESS since the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, on staunch old Plymouth Rock! The picture was the design of the author of the TOURIST—is National, and illustrates, in the most artistic manner, all those gigantic results of American brains and hands, which have caused the mighty wilderness to blossom like the rose.

In his description of Gast’s image, Crofutt evokes the image of a non-specific Pan-Indian running from Westward expansion. In grouping the “Indians, buffalo, wild horses, bears, and other game” separately from the technological advancements and “progress” Crofutt perpetuates the myth of the “savage” and describes the American settlement of the West—and the laying of the railroad—as a civilizing tool.

Most of the landscape prints within guidebooks do not express ideas of “progress” as obviously as the painting “American Progress” does, but in the three case studies I

miscognita,” or land misunderstood, because knowledge of places explored by Euro-Americans did exist within autochthonous groups.


27 Crofutt, New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide, 261. “Tourist” is a shortened term to refer to his own publication. The “American Progress” print is a full-page insert positioned between pages of text.

28 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 127. Pratt argues that German explorer Alexander von Humboldt’s eighteenth-century scientific writings of South America likewise equated indigenous populations with nature as a means of supporting the imperial enterprise.
have analyzed more than one-fifth of the illustrations depict the railroad.\textsuperscript{29} The layout on pages 48-49 of \textit{Over the Range of Golden Gate} presents a two-page view containing two landscape prints: “Currecanti Needle, Black Cañon,” on the left, and “Trout Fishing on the Cimarron,” on the first (Figure 1-2). On the left, a landscape of the Curecanti Needle Mountains in Western Colorado occupies most of a vertical full-page view, but in the background of the composition there are railroad tracks and telephone lines—two symbols of progress. On the right, a view of the Cimarron River—a portion of the Arkansas River basin that stretched from Missouri to New Mexico—is displayed between two paragraphs of text. The landscape view presents still waters with a small figure fishing. In the background, a horizon line is made by a bridge that stretches over the still waters and smoke billows off a railcar as it is displayed cross the river. In both images railroad tracks—as symbols of “progress”—occupy a large portion of the scenic landscape view.

Historian and professor of American studies Leo Marx describes in \textit{The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America}, starting with the creation of the New England railroad lines in the 1830s, the railroad became a symbol of modernity and progress, and the completion of the transcontinental route was seen as a means of securing and Americanizing the West.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} In Stanley Wood’s \textit{Over the Range to Golden Gate}..., there are 140 images in 313 pages of text and thirty-two depict the railroad. In Henry T. Williams’, \textit{The Pacific Tourist}... there are 136 images in 355 pages of text and thirty-four representations of the railroad. In George A. Crofutt’s, \textit{New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide}, there are 100 images in 319 pages of text and twenty-six depict the railroad. This page count does not include perfunctory pages or appendices.

\textsuperscript{30} Leo Marx, \textit{The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America} (Oxford University Press, 1967), 117. Leo Marx describes the railroad as tool for securing the West: “…it appears when needed most: when the great west finally is open to massive settlement, when democracy is triumphant and gold is discovered in California… comes a new power commensurate with the golden opportunity of all history...”
In an article published in the *New England Magazine* in 1832, shortly after the creation of the first railroad lines in the United States, physician and theorist Charles Caldwell wrote:

No age has illustrated so strongly as the present the empire of mind over matter — and the ability of man to rise . . . above the obstacles with which nature has surrounded him. . . It is a happy privilege we enjoy of living in an age, which for its inventions and discoveries, its improvement in intelligence and virtue, stands without a rival in the history of the world. . .

Caldwell’s description of the power of man-made inventions over the environment parallels Crofutt’s statement which described progress as causing the “wilderness to blossom like the rose” through expansion efforts and settlers on the Oregon Trail.

These guidebooks were published just a few decades after immigration on the Oregon Trail began in the 1840s. Though my case studies focus on tourism to the West, and not the Oregon Trail, they are still products of their time. My case studies are inherently associated with manifest destiny and “progress,” but their audience—upper-class American tourists—is distinct from the Oregon Trail immigrant based upon two factors: the travelers’ intent and socio-economic status. In the Oregon Trail, the traveler’s goal was to settle in the West, but the railroad tourist booked a round trip ticket to enjoy the travel experience and return home. Additionally, my chosen case studies are written for an audience who would ride the “Pull-man car,” a luxury sleeping car depicted in an


33 Anderson, *The West as America*, 11. Though there were American settlers to the West before the 1840s, I use the same dates as Nancy K. Anderson et al. because of the peak in influx of settlers from 1843-1845.
illustrated advertisement in the perfunctory pages of Crofutt’s *New Overland Tourist* (Figure 1-3).\(^\text{34}\) In the image, the people represented enjoying a meal in the Pullman car and engaging in conversation, and on the bottom left of the composition, a figure is depicted raising his glass in a toast to the party across the aisle from him. The passengers each are wearing formal attire and are being waited on as they leisure take in the scenes that pass them through the rail window.

Conversely, a majority of those that traveled the Oregon Trail were lower class Americans seeking land through the Homestead Act and agricultural opportunity following droughts in the Southern states.\(^\text{35}\)

In a study more specific to tourism, Martha Sandweiss’s *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* analyzes the role nineteenth-century American photographs and printed materials had in the Reconstruction and Progressive eras in the United States. Photographs—and other mechanically reproduced images—were used to establish a nationalist and unified American identity following the fragmentation following the American Civil War.\(^\text{36}\) In a more recent study, Matthew N. Johnston’s *Narrating the Landscape: Print Culture and American Expansion in the Nineteenth*

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\(^{34}\) The railroad was ridden by a wide range of economic classes and ethnicities. I am focusing my research on the audience of my guidebooks: passengers in the luxury sleeping cars, but in the late nineteenth century on other parts of the train, the railroad in Northwest was ridden by many workers—particularly lumber and mining. See: Carlos A. Schwantes, *Hard Traveling: A Portrait of Work Life in the New Northwest* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).


\(^{36}\) Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 4. Sandweiss’s study presents beneficial background information; however, unlike this thesis, Sandweiss studied print culture in general without a focus on guidebooks or travel.
Century represents a study of travel literature most closely related to this thesis. Johnston argues that these Gilded Age texts represent the changing “lateral framework,” defined as the way in which the work causes the reader to engage with time. Though *Narrating the Landscape* closely looks at a few images from my case studies, Johnston emphasizes reading these images like narrative paintings, without a comprehensive analysis of the framing techniques or their interpretation.

To address this gap in scholarship, I focus on the user’s experience of my guidebooks while riding the transcontinental railroad route and draw on previous scholarship on the experience of rail travel in the nineteenth century. Wolfgang Schivelbusch’s study, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century*, emphasizes how mechanized travel impacted Victorian conceptions of space and time. He argues that with the speed of rail travel, the tourist experienced the landscape at a distance, ultimately creating a disembodied and anxious feeling for the passenger. In response, the overland guides provided a groundedness and offered visual information that tourists may not have seen from their position within the rail car. Though Schivelbusch provides a wealth of historical context, his study does not compare this experience to guidebook prints or analyze deeply how the changes in

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38 Ibid., 52. Johnston specifically mentions the *Pacific Tourist* on page 52, but he only references the frontispiece of the text, “America’s Greatest Wonder!” The frontispiece provides view of a train passing a setting sun on the right of the composition, with in non-specific Native American figure on looking towards the setting sun on the left of the composition.

39 Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986), 28; Schivelbusch argues this “shock” of travel lead to the creation of overland guides and travel literature meant to offset the unsettling nature of travel.
conceptions of space and time would be represented visually. Alison Byerly’s *Are We There Yet?: Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism* provides an in-depth study of the effect of new image-making methods, such as photography and the panorama, had on the Victorian experience. Byerly argues that Victorian fiction created a “virtual travel” experience which is “an almost physical sense of presence within the fictional world—a sense of locatedness and embodiment,” akin to modern augmented reality. These studies, while routed in Victorian English experiences, set the groundwork for the simulated and virtual experience of traveling into the American West, which is the object of this thesis.

While scholars have explored the narrative of these texts, as well as how they supplemented the rail traveler’s experience, few have conducted investigations into how the illustrations within guidebooks are framed. Most scholarship on guidebooks focuses on the use of “Bird’s-Eye Views” and “panoramic vision” as evidence of nineteenth-century expansionism and ideas of progress. My case studies present manipulated and embellished landscape scenes with decorative foliage in the margins. “Long’s Peak From Estes Park,” on page 61 of the *Pacific Tourist*, presents a mountainscape in a circle border (Figure 1-4). The defined border is broken at the bottom by trees and rocks entering the white space of the page.

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41 An exception is Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006). I use framing to describe the defined borders that outline the illustrations into unique shapes such as circles, diamonds, and combinations of multiple views. I base this defining on Anne Friedberg’s study of the history of symbolic windows and screens in art.
Given the multidisciplinary nature of print culture, this thesis draws methodology from literary analysis and the study of Victorian and Gilded Age print culture. Lorraine Janzen Kooistra’s theory of bitextuality, which she elaborates in *Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-Siècle Illustrated Books*, demonstrates the need to study text and image together in fin-de-siècle Victorian novels.\(^{42}\) Kooistra’s theory applies to Gilded Age American novels as well, and all image analysis in this thesis considers the relationship between the text and the narrative. More recently, Julia Thomas’s study of illustrated texts in Victorian England, *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image*, calls for a similar simultaneous study of image and text and highlights the way the illustrated press borrowed from narrative painting. As Thomas wrote, “the construction of narratives is not just a textual activity… Illustration requires the viewer to shift between words and images.”\(^{43}\)

The decorative nature of my case studies goes beyond attracting a tourist to the location and making the reading fun and engaging for the viewer. The framing of the images contributes to the nineteenth-century virtual experience of guidebooks. The illustrations within my case studies can be compared to Michael Baxandall’s “the period eye,” as described in his study of the social history of fifteenth century paintings.\(^{44}\)

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\(^{42}\) Lorraine Janzen Kooistra. *The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-siècle Illustrated Books* (Nineteenth Century Series. Aldershot, England: Brookfield, Vt., USA: Scholar Press ; Ashgate Pub., 1995), 4; Though Kooistra’s study primarily focuses on the boom of Victorian era first edition, the sentiment stands that though historically the text narrative receives more attention than the visual narrative, but: “meaning is actively produced in the intercourse between picture and word and their shared subject matter and cultural context.”


theory, Baxandall states, “the best paintings often express their culture not just directly but complementarily…”\textsuperscript{45} In guiding the viewer to imagine a picturesque and idealized version of the landscape of the West, my guidebooks serve as representations of the visual representation of the changing conceptions of time and space at the end of the nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
CHAPTER II

“ANNIHILATION OF SPACE” AND PICTURESQUE TRAVEL

In 1844, American travel writer Henry T. Tuckerman published an article in the Democratic Review titled “The Philosophy of Travel” that criticized modern travel and mourned the loss of romantic first-person travel narratives. He attributed the change to the quick and impersonal nature of mechanized travel and stated:

Steam is annihilating space…Traveling is changed from an isolated pilgrimage to a kind of triumphal procession…Peculiarities of costume, interesting observances, all that is picturesque and striking in national character wear gradually away in the whirl of promiscuous intercourse.  

Tuckerman’s use of the term “picturesque” refers to the distinct and geographically-specific characteristics of a landscape that are emphasized in romantic travel narratives of the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, British critic John Ruskin said of the railroad:

“…whether you have eyes or are asleep or blind, intelligent or dull, all that you can know, at best, of the country you pass is its geological structure and general clothing.”

Like Tuckerman, Ruskin argues that the speed of travel makes it harder for the traveler to process the smaller and specific aspects of the landscape, and what they are left with are

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46 Henry T. Tuckerman, “The Philosophy of Travel,” The United States Democratic Review (May 1844): 527-528; Emphasis added. Henry T. Tuckerman’s criticism was written in 1844—after the creation of the New England rail lines but thirty years before the completion of the transcontinental railroad—and, as the nineteenth century progressed, social criticisms of the railroad only progressed.

47 Andrew Menard, Sight Unseen: How Frémont’s First Expedition Changed the American Landscape (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 40. Andrew Menard’s research into overland exploration of the United States from roughly 1800-1850s demonstrates the impact that Charles Frémont’s topographical study had on American travel writing. Frémont’s focus on high level of description of the specific aspects of the Midwestern landscape (the ground, rocks, and foliage) inspired an aesthetic and nationalistic appreciation of the geographically-specific features of the American landscape in later nineteenth-century travel writers. By stating “all that is picturesque and striking in national character” Tuckerman references the stylistic precedent set by Frémont and narrative change in travel writing of the nineteenth century.

general impressions and observances of the larger landscape features such as mountains, valleys, and lakes. Curiously, while social critics like Tuckerman and Ruskin described the steam engine and the railroad as the sad end to picturesque travel, railroad companies specifically marketed their experience as a round-trip picturesque tour of the American landscape.

The illustrations within my case studies emphasize the aspects of picturesque viewing that are lost in railroad travel, and in doing this, the guidebook illustrations serve to instruct the reader in a picturesque reading of the landscape. To demonstrate my argument, I first examine the terms picturesque and romantic in the context of nineteenth-century travel narratives, and I analyze the physical experience of rail travel to demonstrate how it differed from many of the key tenets of picturesque travel and highlight how their embellishments and decorative details emphasize picturesque aspects of the landscape.

**Contextualizing Picturesque and Romantic Travel**

The physical experience of steam and rail travel often limited the key tenets of the traditional picturesque tour. As an 1854 travel narrative from a railroad tourist traveling from Virginia to Alabama published in *The Youth’s Companion* described, the rail travelers could not deeply contemplate the elements of the natural scenery that they past:

A long journey has only been productive of increasing remembrance. The speed of the Rail-roads is not the best assistance though, *when we want to recollect the scenes through which we pass*, and as the hissing engine flew and flew, and I caught tantalizing glimpses of the loveliest wild roses, woodbine, honeysuckle, and violets, *I could not help wishing it were possible to inhale the fragrance as well as enjoy the sight.*

The author presents two aspects of the railroad that go against picturesque travel: the rail tourist is not allowed to control their movement and stop to consider portions of the landscape that capture their attention, and they are removed from the sense experience (smelling, touching, and closely examining the flowers).

While the railroad traveler could sit and leisurely take in the landscapes that they passed, between depots and planned stops all encounters with the landscape were mitigated through the rail window. Small landscape details, like the roses and the honeysuckles, which the author was only able to gather a “glimpse” of, would be more difficult to fully appreciate from the rail car where most windows were curtained, and the traveler would have to lift the fabric to view the landscape.50

The rail cars themselves were uncomfortable and dirty, which would further the unpleasantness of rail travel. High speeds, loud noises, and an overall distracting environment would detract from the leisurely, picturesque viewing experience. For instance, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened the first, complete commercial rail lines in the United States in the 1830. An article titled, “An early traveller by rail” in the February 16th, 1899 edition of The Youth’s Companion reports on a first-person account from an anonymous reader of the magazine. The reader complains that:

The speed is very terrifying and the clattering and jolting inconceivably unpleasant. The atmosphere is less oily than I expected; but on the other hand, there is much soot and grime upon everything, even shortly upon the faces and hands of the travellers. Then the appalling screeches proceeding from the locomotive engine, which it gives out on coming to a stop and at other times, are most distressing and discordant. It is a method of travel with but one advantage, a

saving of time; and with more disadvantages than can be enumerated, beginning as they do with Danger, and concluding with Dirt.\textsuperscript{51}

Though this quote presents an overall disagreeable traveling experience for the mid-nineteenth century traveler, the Youth Companion’s editor wrote in response to the anonymous author’s complaints: “but what would she have said could she have lived to ride in a parlor car, dine at a flying buffet, or sleep away a journey of three or four hundred miles, secluded in a comfortable berth?”\textsuperscript{52} The editor’s response indicates a desire to promote rail experience as improved, pleasurable, and as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, picturesque.

This same sentiment is expressed in each of my case studies which were produced by railroad companies to advertise the experience of travel, and the authors of my three case studies strive to actively go against the past associations with grit and grime to frame the railroad as comfortable and luxurious. The frontispiece of The Pacific Tourist, presents an illustration of the interior of a rail car. In the image, “Palace-Car Life on the Pacific Railroad,” a combination of views highlighting a leisurely and pleasant travel experience are artfully arranged (Figure 2-1). In the middle and bottom rows of the full-page view, the reader can see people chatting, a child being tucked into bed, two women sharing a novel, and people gathered around a piano as someone plays. The text meant to accompany the image states: “It is impossible to tell of the pleasures and joys of the palace ride you will have…”\textsuperscript{53} In all accounts, this sells an idea of ease and refinement.

\textsuperscript{51} The Youth’s Companion, “An early traveller by rail,” February 16, 1899, 73. Though a magazine aimed at children and young adults, The Youth’s Companion consistently published first-hand accounts of rail travel and reports on the railroad. This was published in the magazine’s anonymous editorial section.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Williams, The Pacific Tourist (1881), n.p.
**Picturesque Embellishments**

Despite the conflict between railroad travel and picturesque tourism, railroad companies advertised their transcontinental routes as romantic tours. An 1897 advertisement for the Pennsylvania Railroad describes a Pull-man car tour starting from New York or Pennsylvania to the “picturesque” California landscape, which they compare to ancient Rome and Greece:

In Southern California is found the realization of a *dream of the ancients*. Here are the ‘Golden Apples of the Hesperides,’ ripening beneath a sky more beautiful than that of Rome, and in a climate more perfect than that of Athens. Never in the wildest flights of his imagination did Homer or Hesiod ever conceive of a garden richer in verdant beauty, more productive of luscious fruit, or set amid more *picturesque and lovely surroundings*.54

By highlighting the lush gardens and fruit of the area, the Pennsylvania Railroad exoticizes California for their Eastern United States’ audience through comparisons to the Mediterranean.55 The illustrations within my case studies present decorative embellishments meant to emphasize the elements of picturesque travel and the advertised glamour of the West that were lost due to the physical experience of rail travel.

In my case studies, each author continually argues that their writing is truthful and objective.56 But contextualized among nineteenth-century conceptions of “objectivity,”

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55 Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2011), 176. The roughly from 1810-1920 the descriptions of California and Oregon as “paradise garden[s]” was a popular motif. See Chapter: “Syria on the Pacific: California as the Near East/Middle East.”

56 Williams, *The Pacific Tourist...* n.p., Crofutt, *New Overland Tourist, and Pacific Coast Guide* n.p., Wood, *Over the Range to Golden Gate...* n.p. On the title page of Williams’s who includes the tagline “The Most Complete, Accurate and Reliable Continental Guide Ever Known.” Crofutt wrote in his preface, “Special effort has been made to avoid generalizing; instead, to give facts, names, dates, distances, altitudes, where to go, how to go, where to stop, and what it costs, as near as possible...” Wood wrote in his preface, “this book is one written in the field and not the study,” emphasizing that his travel account is based on empirical study.
my case studies employ a style of empiricism that follows Humboldt. In *Objectivity*, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison describe a stylistic shift towards the end of the nineteenth century demonstrated in atlas illustrations of nature that sought to remove the observer’s own subjective interpretation and “let nature speak for itself.”\(^{57}\) The interest in objectivity at the end of the nineteenth century was rooted in Victorian morality that glorified hard work and dedication to one’s studies; subjectivity was viewed as evidence of the observer’s lack of self-control.\(^{58}\) Moralizing theorists praise the writings of Humboldt for his empiricism and commitment to his craft.\(^{59}\)

In the introduction of one of my case studies, *Over the Range to Golden Gate*, Wood states:

> The descriptions of scenes given here are *reproductions of the feelings* inspired by those scenes. There has been no bias in any direction. On the contrary, every effort has been made to write judicially and, at the same time, retain the enthusiasm which the traveler naturally feels in beholding new sights and scenes.\(^{60}\)

While emphasizing that his book is meant to represent the West accurately, Wood also demonstrates that his descriptions are based upon his own feelings and subjective responses to the landscape that he saw, and he combined empirical observations made “in

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57 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 69, 209. Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison demonstrated that the concept of “objectivity” does not have one singular, unified definition for the nineteenth-century public. I use the term to refer Daston and Galison’s description of “mechanical objectivity,” where atlas artists were sought to depict accurate representations that “[were] published warts and all; [with] texts so laconic that they threaten to disappear entirely…”


59 Ibid., 119.

the field” with “the feelings inspired by [the landscape].” This Humboldtian approach provides the groundwork for a picturesque and romantic reading of the narrative.

Guiding the Readers’ Eyes to Picturesque Views

The illustration “Marshall Pass-Eastern Slope,” on page 37 of Over the Range to Golden Gate, provides an analogy between the peaks of the Rocky Mountains and painting. The image has an artist’s palette overlain over a panoramic photographic view of a train passing through the Rocky Mountains in Colorado (Figure 2-2). The painter’s palette outlines the peaks of the Rockies, suggesting an association between painting and the mountains themselves. In Gilpin’s writings of the picturesque, he established a clear distinction between that which is beautiful, or scenes “which please the eye in their natural state” and that which is picturesque, or scenes “which please from some quality of being illustrated in painting.” By placing the artist’s palette over the mountain peaks, the illustration draws attention to an aspect of the picturesque, which Gilpin describes as the “roughness” of stone. Through its rough texture, the mountain peaks would give the artist an avenue to explore the atmospheric effects of light and shadow on the stone. The placement here, therefore, guides the reader’s eye to a feature of the picturesque beauty of the Rocky Mountains.

It could be argued that this is simply a decorative motif, but the rail traveler would need to rely on visual information given by the guidebook because of the limited landscape view possible from within the rail car. As the rail car moved in and out of the

61 Ibid.

62 Gilpin, Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: To Which Is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting. 16.

63 Ibid. 15.
mountainside, the rider would never capture an entire view of the scenery, but instead he or she would only see the mountainscape in parts. Further demonstrating this point, the textual narrative accompanying this image describes the landscape scene as sublime. Wood provides an account of the almost incomprehensible size of the mountains and then states: “Man becomes dwarfed and dumb in the sublime scene, and Nature exhibits the power she possesses.”\textsuperscript{64} Wood’s description of the mountain’s size in this quote is in line with Immanuel Kant’s description of the mathematically sublime, caused by the inability to fully judge the scale of an object. As Kant wrote, “we can never arrive at a first or fundamental measure, and so cannot get any definite concept of a given magnitude.”\textsuperscript{65} Kant’s conception of the sublime differ from previous theories because they emphasize that sublimity is a mental affect experienced by the viewer and not something that is inherent to the object of observation itself.\textsuperscript{66} The experience recorded in the textual narrative is one of sublimity and the illustration of the Rockies serves to highlight picturesque qualities of the mountainscape. Though these are both distinct aesthetic traditions, they both relate to an overarching romantic reading of the landscape within guidebook narratives.

An illustration within Harper’s Weekly of the interior of the Palace Car demonstrates the obstruction of the landscape from the rider’s perspective (Figure 2-3). “Interior of a Palace Hotel Car Used On The Pacific Railroad” presents a similar

\textsuperscript{64} Wood, \textit{Over the Range to the Golden Gate...}, 37.


\textsuperscript{66} Immanuel Kant, \textit{The Critique of Practical Reason} (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), 97. Immanuel Kant describes sublimity as a mental affect caused by the “inadequacy of the greatest faculty of sense” to perceive the massive size of the mountain leads to simultaneous feelings of awe and fear in the viewer.
representation of luxury and refinement as the frontispiece of *The Pacific Tourist* expressed, but from this composition we can also get a better sense of the positioning of the windows. The windows are relatively small, and with the distractions of food and conversation, the rider may not have gotten a full view of the landscape. For comparison, circa 1869, Carleton Watkins’s produced a stereoview of the interior of the Pull-man sleeping car (Figure 2-4). The photograph showcases the same plush and ornate seating with elegant drapery across the windows. Like the two prints, the rider’s view of the landscape is limited only to the window openings, which periodically provide a break in the wooden interior. Because the full view of the mountain is obstructed from the viewer’s site, by providing a full view of the Rockies and highlighting their picturesque features, viewing “Marshall Pass-Eastern Slope” added picturesque qualities lacking in rail travel to the rider’s experience.

**Depicting Details: Picturing What Cannot be Seen**

Due to the high speeds of rail travel, the smaller portions of the landscape, such as flowers and foliage, would blur into the background and be lost during rail travel. In the illustrated monthly magazine, *The Cosmopolitan*, American writer, Bander Matthews, published a six-page critique of the state of travel writing in 1891 titled, “About Books of Travel, Old and New.” After expressing concerns of the proliferation of cheaply made and dull guidebooks on the market place, he concludes:

> … there are others who can give us more than a bill of fare at the monotonous dinner and more than the timetable of the necessary railroad. There are those who can lend charm even to the burr like nothings that cling needlessly to the traveller’s memory….

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Matthews calls for authors to go beyond just necessary instructive detail and suggests that guidebooks should be beautiful for their viewers. He specifically mentions that guidebooks can illuminate even small or insignificant portions of the landscape that would have otherwise escaped the reader’s attention. In my case studies, the decorative borders and creative framing from the guidebooks aim to do similarly, replacing the details that were lost to travelers due to the constraints of rail travel.

On page 242 of *The Pacific Tourist* an illustration titled, “A Vision of the Golden Country” by Thomas Moran, presents a circular picture window framing a pristine mountainscape as fruit, flowers, and insects spill into the foreground extending into the white plane of the page at the bottom (Figure 2-5). “A Vision of the Golden Country” presents the Sacramento Valley and the Californian countryside as more of a still life than a landscape. On the bottom half of the composition, pears, oranges, grapes, flowers, and insects are arranged out in a cornucopia for the viewer to see; the accompanying text describes the seemingly limitless orange trees that grow near the tracks of the train surrounding the Sacramento Valley that will capture the traveler’s attention.68

The round composition of “A Vision of the Golden Country” equates it with theories of vision, and most importantly, to the tradition of picturesque viewing. In fifteen-century Florence, artists painted and sculpted tondos, circular compositions of often religious imagery. Scholars have described the round composition of the tondo as a metaphorical celestial “window,” akin to Renaissance ceiling frescos which give the illusion of open air extending to the heavens.69 An example of an illusionistic tondo is

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*Madonna and Sleeping Child with Angels* created ca. 1490 by Filippino Lippi and Workshop (Figure 2-6). Mary is centered holding Jesus, and angels lean towards Mary on either side lending symmetry to the arrangement. In the bottom third of composition, Mary’s shawl hangs over a painted wall she is seated on. The dangling is illusionist and gives the impression of extending towards the viewer. The round composition itself can be compared to the gaze, mimicking the round shape of the human eye, as the viewer is granted access to view this private familial scene. Previous scholars have likewise described the round camera lens as a symbol of vision.  

The associations between round or ovular compositions and viewing can be associated with picturesque viewing traditions. Brett Culbert’s article “Natural Vision in Picturesque Travel Itineraries” examines the effect that railroad travel in New England had on the “American tour.” Culbert argues that the tension between Gilpin’s picturesque travel and the railroad experience led to a dramatic shift in visual representation of the landscape. Culbert uses an example of Gilpin’s ovular landscape aquatints from *Observations on the River Wye* (1782) as a representation of picturesque viewing (Figure 2-7). The shape is similar to the Claude Glass—such as this example from the British Museum—, which an artist would use to study the tonal variations of the

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72 Ibid., 76.
landscape (Figure 2-8). Culbert points out, by using the ovular frame, Gilpin’s aquatint rendering serves as a representation of the picturesque viewing traditions.

Though the Claude Glass was an eighteen-century European invention, it was used by American artists in the nineteenth century, and American art periodicals refer to convex mirrors used to aid landscape painters. The *Art Amateur* in 1894, suggested learning artists should utilize the Claude Glass because it “subdues the effect of light when it is very strong, and brings down the landscape more to the tone that might be looked for in a picture.” Because of the Claude Glass was still in use in America in the nineteenth century, it is not unfounded to associate the round border in guidebook illustration with the often round or oval shaped Claude Glass as a representation of picturesque viewing traditions, and the “broken circles” can be partially interpreted as relating to picturesque illustrations created with the aid of the Claude Glass, and the round shape is almost instructive in guiding the reader’s eye to the picturesque views.

The images within my case studies also differ from Gilpin’s aquatint in their framing. Gilpin’s has a fully defined border forming a complete oval, but the guidebook illustration style depicts portions of the landscape that extend beyond the defined border.

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73 Arnaud Maillet, *The Claude Glass: Use and Meaning of the Black Mirror in Western Art* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 32. The Claude Glass varied in material, size, and mirror shape and nineteenth-century sources refer to them as “black mirrors,” “Claude Lorraine glasses,” and “Claude black mirrors.” For the purpose of this comparison I refer to them as “Claude Glass” and focus on their shared purpose (to capture a picturesque view in a mirrored surface) regardless of material or mirror shape.

74 Ibid., 74. Ultimately my argument differs from Culpert’s in that he sees rail travel as influencing an aesthetic turn away from picturesque representations of the landscape. He argues that Gilpin’s sketch represents a pre-railroad travel appreciation of the landscape, and that the “mechanization of space and time” of rail travel lead to a choppier and fragmented landscape depiction, which he describes as exemplified by the photographs of Alfred Watkins in the 1920s, whereas in the specific case of overland guidebooks, the picturesque aesthetic is chosen to supplement mechanized travel.

The framing the scene is reminiscent of Harry Fenn’s illustrations for *Picturesque America* (1872), a table-top book written by William Cullen Bryant. An illustration within *Picturesque America* presents the same circular framing technique that frames a dramatic rock formation at its center, with stormy clouds behind it (Figure 2-9). Bryant makes it clear in the Preface of *Picturesque America* that he sets out to publish a series of views to demonstrate the beauty of the American landscape. He wrote:

> It is the purpose of the work to illustrate with greater fullness, and with superior excellence, so far as art is concerned, the places which attract curiosity by their interesting associations, and, at the same time, to challenge the admiration of the public for many of the glorious scenes which lie in the by-ways of travel.\(^{76}\)

Bryant clearly sets his goal to highlight the picturesque beauty of the American landscape. In *Creating a World on Paper: Harry Fenn's Career in Art*, Sue Rainey describes Fenn’s process in illustrating *Picturesque America*, and describes this style of illustration—“circle[s] broken at the bottom”—as unique to Fenn.\(^{77}\) These images draw on ideas from painting to artificially bring nature towards the viewer. Bryant, when explaining why he chose to use illustrations instead of photographs as the source image for his illustrations, stated, “photographs, however accurate, lack the spirit and personal quality which the accomplished painter or draughtsman infuses into his work.”\(^{78}\)

By imitating the unique style of Fenn’s imagery within Bryant’s text, the authors of my case studies are similarly pointing out picturesque qualities in the Western

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\(^{77}\) Sue Rainey. *Creating a World on Paper: Harry Fenn's Career in Art* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013): 26. By describing these as “broken,” Sue Rainey is referring to the elements of the illustration that disrupt the defined edge of the illustration.

\(^{78}\) Bryant, *Picturesque America*, iv.
landscape. The illusionistic nature of Fenn’s framing style used in these guidebooks invites the reader to consider even the minute aspects of the landscape they pass—in this case, flowers, fruit trees, and insects—in terms of the picturesque. Additionally, this would provide visual information that would be harder to see in the limited field of vision provided by the rail window.

For further evidence of the supplementary nature of these guidebooks, in the preface of his 1883 guidebook, Crofutt stated:

To some ‘correspondents’ across the continent our books have proved an unusual ‘God-send,’ enabling them to minutely describe the wonders of the trip passed in the night, while sleeping soundly in a palace car, equally as well as though they were awake and in perpetual daylight.\(^7^9\)

Crofutt expressed two key distinctions that separate the railroad guidebooks of the late nineteenth century from the rest of the travel genre. The authors of railroad guidebooks assume the reader is traveling to the places described as they read, and the quote suggests that the books supplement the traveler’s experience and allows them to know intimately the sites they had not seen in person.

The expectation that the guidebook reader is physically riding the transcontinental route while reading the publication sets it apart from Bryant’s *Picturesque America* and *Picturesque Palestine*. Bryant’s work was a table top book meant to highlight the American tour of the East coast of the United States and not a publication meant to aid travelers. There is no expectation in Bryant’s writing that the reader would be traveling along with him, and there is little relationship between the images and the text in Bryant’s work.

On pages 26-27 of *Picturesque America*, we see the separation between image

and text in Bryant’s work (Figure 2-10). Though the illustrations are placed in the middle of the page, there is little connection between the textual narrative presented and the images themselves, and the author does not make direct references to the imagery, as the authors of the guidebooks do. For comparison, on pages 236-237 of *Over the Range*, the text describes the picturesque surroundings of the Columbia River Gorge, including descriptions of the trees (Figure 2-11). Accompanying this page, an illustration of large trees and a lumber mill cuts through the text, and the text falls around it, emphasizing the shape of the illustration. While *Picturesque America* and *Picturesque Palestine* encouraged nineteenth-century readers to consider the American landscape as picturesque *from the comfort of their own home*, my case studies employ this framing style to encourage readers to consider the American landscape as picturesque *while they are viewing it from the rail car*. 
CHAPTER III
IMAGINATION AND IMMERSION IN THE STORYWORLD

In an 1837 article, “On Picturesque Descriptions in Books of Travel,” Colonel Jackson calls on publishers to produce picturesque travel narratives with decorative borders because of their ability to engage the mind of the reader. Describing the effect of the marginalia he writes:

This not only arouses our attention but keeps it awake. It is the flowery margin by the way-side, which invites us to the path, and lures us insensibly on till we arrive at the goal, which a dreary and desolate road would have diverted us from attempting to reach.  

Jackson describes the decorations included with the text as not only entertaining additions that captivate the mind of the reader, but he also describes the travel narrative as a mental journey, where the flowers on each page greet the reader just like actual flowers on a physical path. In this section, I employ Hewitt’s theory of deixis and theories of the “window” in art to argue that my case study guidebooks engage the imagination of the reader through their unique framing styles.

Hewitt’s theory uses the term “window” to refer to the point of perception the reader has mentally with the narrative and divides the window into two types: “objective windowing” and “perspective windowing” in his theory. The narration style of my case studies followings “perspective windowing,” which serves to further immerse the reader in the story world. In both objective and perspective windowing the narration presents a controlled vision of an artificial story world, but the key distinction that Hewitt makes

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81 Hewitt et al., Deixis in Narrative, 132-133.
between objective and perspective windowing is where the reader is positioned mentally in relation to events that are unfolding in the story. In objective windowing the events unfold in front of the reader in a controlled stationary window which can be compared to watching figures move across a television screen (Figure 3-1). In perspective windowing, the narration uses positioning words such as “I,” “you,” “here,” and “now” to establish an “origin of perspective,” or a place for readers to cognitively imagine themselves in story world (Figure 3-2).

Though this theory is typically used to analyze how immersive fictional narratives function, Byerly argues that periodicals and travel narratives also adapted immersive qualities towards the end of the nineteenth century. Unlike past travel narratives, the authors of my case studies used terms that assume the reader is in the railcar and refer directly to the reader.

**Deictic Centering and the Overland Guidebook**

In all three guidebooks, the narrative of the text follows the gradual and periodic progression of rail travel. In *Over the Range to Golden Gate*, Wood punctuates his clear, direct language with large bolded headings that signpost common tourist destinations along the rail path and create a visual rhythm between short written

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82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Byerly, *Are We There Yet? Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism*, 106.

85 Jennifer Raab, "Panoramic Vision, Telegraphic Language: Selling the American West, 1869-1884," (*Journal of American Studies*, no. 47, 2013): 495. Jennifer Raab points this out in Crofutt’s work. It stands to reason that guidebooks that are meant to assist in rail travel would narratively follow the mandated railroad stops, but the language within the text is very “stop and go,” and is punctuated by big bolded headings of various towns that the tourist can stop at along the way.
description and attention-grabbing headlines (Figure 3-3). As the reader’s eye moves across the written page, the change in typeface and font size would easily catch their attention and move the reader mentally from destination to destination. These bolded headings could be explained by simply being a means to organize information, but Jennifer Raab’s analysis of Crofutt’s guidebook in “Panoramic Vision, Telegraphic Language: Selling the American West, 1869-1884” reveals that the repeating pattern of large bolded font and smaller long-form text creates a “stop and go” rhythm for the reader that parallels the physical experience of rail travel. 86

Throughout Over the Range to Golden Gate, Wood refers to the reader directly and assumes readers are positioned on the train as they read the narrative. He details what the reader will see or do “here.” On page 17, Wood wrote: “As the train rolls into the station the traveler sees to his left a beautiful little lake cradled in the hills.” 87 By referring directly to “the traveler” and stating a specific direction for him or her to look, Wood is placing the reader within the storyworld. Another example comes from page 231 of the same book. Wood writes:

For a stretch of over one hundred and fifty miles from Grant’s Pass, the country presents a wonderful panorama of grand and beautiful scenery. Mountains are all around us. To the right the Cascade Range, to the left the Coast Range. Gorges before us!—cañons behind us! Little valleys of entrancing loveliness are crossed; sparkling streams abound, forests of oaks and pines, of hemlocks and madrones are threaded; in a word, the variety is infinite… 88

Wood is guiding the reader’s gaze in all directions—to the right, forward, to the left, and behind—as he points out the picturesque scenery of the Columbia River Gorge in

86 Ibid.

87 Wood, Over the Range to Golden Gate, 17.

88 Ibid., 231. Emphasis added.
Oregon. However, these locating words lose their meaning if the reader is not on the railroad and able to look to each side and view what Wood points out. Additionally, Wood uses an inclusive “us” to refer to readers, so that each reader feels that he or she is part of the narrative being described. This narrative device differs from previous travel narratives, in which the writer uses “I” and an exclusive “we.”

**The Window, Vision, and Photography**

In his journals, American romantic writer Ralph Waldo Emerson described the experience of train travel as “dreamlike,” where individual towns are indistinct and the landscape encountered is “like pictures on a wall.”

Emerson is not alone in comparing the view from the rail window to a photograph. One nineteenth-century railroad traveler expressed his or her surprise when he lifted the curtain of his rail compartment and mistook the view for a photographed winter-scape:

> I pulled up the blind and looked into the night. Ah the deceitfulness of this world! I beheld so many Post and Eickemeyer winter scenes that shivering I fell asleep. In the morning, I could hardly trust my eyes when I behold one ‘Hand of Man’ after another coming towards me down the track [as quoted in The Railroad in American Art: Representations of Technological Change].

By comparing the world outside the rail window to two-dimensional pictures, both quotes express the rail window’s flattening effect on the view. In the previous section I demonstrated how the textual narrative engages the reader mentally.

The illustrations serve to further immerse the reader in the narrative. By its very nature, the window draws upon theories of vision and sight in representational art, and the two-dimensional picture has often been compared to a metaphorical window,

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particularly in the case of photography.\textsuperscript{90} Leon Battista Alberti’s \textit{On Painting}, for instance, describes a square picture plane as “a Window through which [the artist] aim[s] to view the Story which is to be painted.”\textsuperscript{91} In Anne Friedberg’s survey of the “window” in art history, \textit{The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft}, Friedberg makes the distinction between “windows,” “screens,” and “frames,” where the “window” in art follows Descartes’s philosophy of perception and the eye functions as a camera obscura.\textsuperscript{92} In the nineteenth-century context, romantic genre scenes represent the window, usually with a figure standing in front of it, as a symbol for appreciating the natural landscape.\textsuperscript{93}

This Western tradition carries over into American art production in the nineteenth century as well. American romantic artists, such as Winslow Homer, produced series of young female figures standing in front of windows in the 1870s and 1880s (Figure 3-4). As an influential artist of the nineteenth, many prints adapted from Homer’s work were used in the illustrated press and popular literature. In “The Open Window and the Storm-Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism,” art historian Lorenz Eitner demonstrates how the common figure at the window trope in art history serves as a

\textsuperscript{90} E. H. Gombrich et al., \textit{Illusion in Nature and Art} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 241. As quoted in John Hyman, “Pictorial Art and Visual Experience,” \textit{The British Journal of Aesthetics} 40, no. 1 (2000): 23; “What may make a painting like a distant view through a window’, he writes, ‘is not the fact that the two can be as indistinguishable as is a facsimile from the original: it is the similarity between the mental activities both can arouse.’ ‘The goal which the artist seeks . . . [is] a psychological effect.’”


\textsuperscript{92} René Descartes, \textit{Philosophical Writings} (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), 198.

\textsuperscript{93} Francesca Bernasconi et al., \textit{A window on the world: From Dürer to Mondrian and beyond: Looking through the window of art from the Renaissance to today} (Milano: Skira, 2012), 238, 248, 273; Francesca Bernasconi et al. argue that Alberti’s interpretation of the window related to the idea of fooling the eye. Metaphoric interpretations of the photographic plane can compare to the screen (in landscape prints).
surrogate for the viewer.\(^94\) The presence of a human figure in the scene provides a place for viewers to imagine themselves.

The illustrations within my case studies function as a symbolic window into the textual storyworld. They include small figures in the landscape meant to provide the viewer with a means for imagining oneself within the scene. In “Agnes Park—Black Hills” a circular frame is used to present a landscape of the Black Hill in South Dakota (Figure 3-5). Once again, this circular frame has a semi-defined bordered that is broken by the illusion of a tree on the right side and rock formations extending towards the viewer. On the rocks an anonymous figure stands looking over the landscape. The figure has one leg stepping towards the landscape and gives the impression that he or she is moving towards the scene. This gives a means for viewers to imagine themselves in the scene as well.

In their thematic catalog of “windows” in art, Francesca Bernasconi, Marco Francioli, and Giovanni Iovane describe how illusionistic Dutch still lives serve as symbolic windows into the picture plane for two reasons: the trompe l’oeil effect created by the hyper-realistic compositions and the positioning of the elements on the canvas give the illusion that one could reach into pictorial space and grab the represented fruits themselves.\(^95\) In the nineteenth century American context, Severin Roesen, Raphaelle Peale, William Michael Harnett, and others were creating still life scenes in a similarly

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\(^{95}\) Bernasconi et al, \textit{A Window on the World: From Dürer to Mondrian and beyond: Looking through the Window of Art from the Renaissance to Today}, 55.
realistic style. “Still Life With Strawberries in a Compote” by Severin Roesen depicts a table top fruit scene with fruit laid out before the viewer (Figure 3-6).

In his composition of “A Vision of the Golden Country,” Thomas Moran has utilized some elements of still life. In comparing one of Severin Roesen’s “Still Life with Strawberries in a Compote” to “A Vision of the Golden Country,” both have a rounded border and realistically-depicted fruits extending towards the viewer. In Roesen’s piece, grapes drape delicately off the edge of a table in a similar manner to the fruit in Moran’s illustration that extend onto the white of the page.96 By presenting the fruit life sprawled out upon the table, the still life is an illusionistic scene that appears as if viewers themselves could reach in and grab the grapes or oranges, the broken circles, in conjunction with the textual narrative serve to engage the reader’s imagination with an idealized western landscape. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the guidebooks served to provide a picturesque experience for the viewer despite the unpleasant and disorienting nature of rail travel. The illusionistic nature of the imagery and the text in guidebooks served this goal by providing imagery of the idealized abundance advertised in railroad advertisements.

Eighteenth-century British theorist Samuel Johnson described the “fallacy of the imagination” in travel:

The inn is crowded, his orders are neglected, and nothing remains but that he devour in haste what the cook has spoiled, and drive on in a quest of better entertainment...the best is always worse than he expected.97

96 Judith A. Barter et al., Art and Appetite: American Painting, Culture, and Cuisine (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2013), 68. This study demonstrates that many American still life painters—William Michael Harnett, Raphaelle Peale, and Severin Roesen—implemented European still life styles in the United States. I do not suggest that Moran was responding directly to Roesen’s piece in his illustration design, but rather, the composition of the “broken circles” draws on the tradition of still life representation in Western art.

97 Samuel Johnson et al., Essays from the Rambler, Adventurer, and Idler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 325. Emphasis added. Samuel Johnson’s work was originally published in May 26th, 1759,
Johnson describes his disappointment when the lived experience of travel failed to meet his expectations. Modern cultural anthropologist, Noel B. Salazar has applied Samuel Johnson’s theory to modern travel. He argues that tourists’ “imagined geographies” are born from a disconnect between expectation and reality.\(^{98}\)

In the context of my guidebooks, something similar would have occurred. After reading advertisements of the beautiful views and luxurious experience of rail travel, the reality of railroad travel would not have compared to the advertised glamour. The “broken circles,” therefore, are presented as an imagined geography of an abundant and fruitful West. As Anderson et al. have pointed out, the “myth of the West” promoted the region as an exploitable land ripe with opportunity for Americans in the Eastern States.\(^{99}\)

When expectations of a picturesque and viewing experience would not match the experience of travel, the “broken circle” images in conjunction with the textual narrative would engage the reader’s imagination and help them to picture a West that more closely fit popular conceptions of the region at the end of the nineteenth century.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Victorian fiction has often been compared to virtual reality in the way that the narrative constructs the storyworld within the mind of the reader. In my case studies, context-based phrasing assumes that the reader is traveling the overland route while progressing through the book, continually describing what readers should be seeing around them. To the same effect, the scenic vistas, overhead views, and composite illustrations provide a complete vision of the places travelled, often not completely visible from their position within the rail compartment. These richly detailed illustrations then serve the purpose of providing visual information of the picturesque views on which the reader would miss out. This is done primarily through how the printmakers dynamically framed their landscape prints and provide lush landscape detail.

There is room for further study in the field of representation within overland guidebooks. The printing techniques are varied and each provide a unique representation of the landscape. Additionally, there is further room for studies that analyze the other stages of travel. Oregon, Washington, and California were stops on an American railroad tour West, where each stop along the way shaped the tourist’s travel experience.

Decorative embellishments serve to guide the viewer through a picturesque and romantic reading of the landscape to highlight nature as picturesque and sublime. The imagery and text within my case studies encourages a subjective, romantic reading of the landscape despite the authors’ emphasis on objectivity. The phrasing in the text and the illustrations serve to immerse the reader in the narrative, but they still present a very

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100 Byerly, Are We There Yet? Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism, 1.
controlled version of the Western states because rail travel was confined to time schedules.
Figure 2-4: Carleton E. Watkins, “Pullman’s Palace Commissary Car,” Stereograph, Albumen print, ca. 1869, 1974:0163:0006, George Eastman House.
Figure 2-6: Filippino Lippi and Workshop, Madonna and Sleeping Child with Angels, oil on board, created ca. 1490, location unknown, in The Florentine Tondo, page 31, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
Figure 2-8: Claude glass, ca. 1775-1780. Blackened mirror glass, Victoria and Albert Museum, P.18-1972.
Figure 2-10: Harry Fenn, “The Lookout” (Upper Left), “A Post-office on the Ocklawaha” (Lower Left), and “A Slight Obstruction in the Ocklawaha” (Right), Illustrations on pages 26-27 of *Picturesque America; or the Land We Live In*, Volume 1 (New York: D. Appleton Company). E168. P586 Pennell. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Figure 2-11: Unknown artist, “Forest on the Columbia” (Left) and “Rooster Rock, Columbia River” (Right), Illustrations on pages 236-237 of *Over the Range to Golden Gate*, (Chicago: R. R. Donnelly & Sons, 1889). 1042975010. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Figure 3-1: “Objective windowing of the Deictic Center,” Figure from *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, page 132 (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995).
Figure 3-2: “Perspective windowing of the Deictic Center,” Figure from *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, page 133 (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995).
Figure 3-4: *Reverie*, Winslow Homer, oil on canvas, 1872, Sotheby’s, Photo Courtesy of Bruce M. White; *An Open Window*, Winslow Homer, oil on canvas, 1872, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine; *She Turned Her Face To The Window*, Edward Sears, after Winslow Homer, Wood Engraving, 1868, 33.96.3, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.
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