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LEGEND

The texts that are regularly referred to in this dissertation are assigned abbreviations, where necessary, which follow the title and date of publication.

Susanna Moodie (1803-1885)

Roughing It in the Bush (1852)	RI
Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush (1853)	*Life*
Mark Hurdlestone, or The Two Brothers (1853)	MH
Flora Lyndsay (1854)	FL
Matrimonial Speculations (1854)	MS
Geoffrey Moncton (1855)	GM
The World Before Them (1868)	TWBT

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865)

Mary Barton (1848)	MB
The Moorland Cottage (1850)	MC
Cranford (1851-3)	*Cranford*
Ruth (1853)	*Ruth*
North & South (1854-5)	N&S
My Lady Ludlow (1858)	MLL
Lois the Witch (1859)	*Lois*
Sylvia's Lovers (1863)	SL
Cousin Phillis (1864)	CP
Wives & Daughters (1864-65)	W&D

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

> "We confront gigantic entities that the Victorians also confronted—geological time, vast networks of industry. And we have the same feelings about them."
> –Timothy Morton, "Victorian Hyperobjects"

> "This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home: so far as the anxieties of outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in."
> –John Ruskin, "Of Queen's Gardens"

In a posthuman, postnatural[1] era, when a great deal of our living is done virtually, the idea of a home filled with screens as a space in which we can negotiate the terms of our relationship with nature[2] seems ludicrous. When John Ruskin, that great arbiter of Victorian taste, casts his ideal home space as a place of protection and repose, and everything beyond as dangerous, the idea of Victorian home space as an encounter point with nature seems equally ludicrous. However, ecocriticism—the study of the relationship between literature and the environment—provides a lens that allows a redefinition of home

[1] "Posthuman" and "postnatural" are used to define the current questioning of the boundaries of the human and of nature respectively, following the rise in technology that approximates human intellect and the greater knowledge of the capabilities of animals, as well as greater environmental destruction and degradation.

[2] For this dissertation, I will use the term "nature" (without quotation marks) to indicate the concept as it is commonly used, with its contemporary conceptual baggage implied, and "Nature" (with quotation marks and a capital N) to describe what Ellen E. Frank calls "the citified Victorian longing for an escape into natural scenery… [contenting] himself with a Nature of home furnishings without finding external Nature an oppressive critique of his carefully secured, even more carefully rationalized, haven of retreat" (69). I will use "nonhuman" as my all-purpose term, as it is one of two terms used in general ecocritical practice (the other being "more-than-human").

space. So far, ecocritical readings of domestic space have been largely limited to contemporary texts, but since post-Industrial revolution concerns about place and space were as prevalent in the nineteenth century as they are presently, reading certain British and Canadian texts in this light may not only allow new interpretations of these texts but also shed new light on the way we think about home space and its relationship with the nonhuman.

For this purpose, I have chosen the work of Elizabeth Gaskell and Susanna Moodie. Over most of the mid-nineteenth century, both authors wrote about home and "Home" in a variety of contexts. Susanna Moodie emigrated from England to Canada in 1832. Before emigrating, she wrote poetry and moral tales for children. After her emigration, she continued to write, producing fiction, poetry, and autobiographical sketches. Her best-known work, the autobiographical *Roughing It in the Bush*, was published in 1852, and this continues to be her best-known and most studied text, despite her numerous novels and short stories. Moodie is a significant figure in the Canadian literary canon and a Canadian cultural touchstone. Both her work and its critical and creative interpretations have been integral to the formation of a Canadian ecological consciousness. In 1832, the year that Moodie emigrated, Elizabeth Gaskell married and moved from rural Knutsford to industrial Manchester. She did not begin writing until the late eighteen-forties, after the death of her seventeen-month-old son Willie from scarlet fever; following publication of her first novel, *Mary Barton*, in 1848, she wrote several novels and a biography of Charlotte Brontë as well as numerous short stories. She was considered a minor figure in Victorian literature until

the mid-1950s, despite being a quite famous and widely read author in her lifetime, but now her work is considered critically important in terms of both industrial and domestic fiction.

Gaskell and Moodie dealt with the subjects of permeability and instability. They were writers of division, of compromise, of duality and beyond duality. They recognized multiple perspectives and reconciled these perspectives, writing texts that conformed to the ideals of their time and crossed boundaries of social acceptability, and it is for this reason that their work is a useful starting point for an ecocritical analysis that questions seemingly fundamental constructs like home and nature.

The publication of *Silent Spring* (1962), Rachel Carson's antipesticide manifesto, changed the way that literary critics looked at nature. The book sparked not only many thematic critical works, but also precipitated a more theoretical approach towards human engagement with the nonhuman. Subsequently, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (1964) by Leo Marx, and *The Country and the City* (1973) by Raymond Williams were published. Marx deals with tension between culture and technology in American literature, while Williams addresses the myth of the ideal past and attempts to better define place; these books are considered cornerstones of ecocritical thought, along with works on comedy and ecology and ecofeminism.

Throughout the nineteen-eighties, there were "scattered projects and publications involving the connection between literature and the environment" (Heise, "Hitchhiker's Guide" 505). Much of this work was done in reaction to the state of literary theory in which critical practice was perceived as being completely separate from the existing world: "the

stormy confluence of scientific ecology and…strange translations of 'theory' opened up a new ecological niche in culture, and it was into this niche that ecocritics were able to move and self-organise" (Wheeler and Dunkeley 10). Ecocriticism coalesced as a critical movement in the mid-nineties, after scholars working under "a miscellany of subject headings"(Glotfelty and Fromm xix) came together as ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) in 1992; the association's journal, ISLE (*Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*), began publication in 1993.

From the beginning, ASLE and ISLE have maintained that one of the strengths of ecocriticism is its diversity of approaches. Glotfelty stipulates a "broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication" (xix), while Scott Slovic, current editor of ISLE, summarizes the eclectic range of ecological thinking as an "energetic and diverse array of approaches" (472). In her influential 2006 article "Theorizing Ecocriticism", Serpil Oppermann summarizes the overall philosophy of diversity in theory: "Almost no definition of ecocriticism signals a move towards a field-defining theoretical method, or provides a viable model of interpretation….ecocriticism seems to resist a single definition" (105). Rather, ecocriticism "coheres more by virtue of a common political project than on the basis of shared theoretical and methodological assumptions, and the details of how this project should translate into the study of culture are continually subject to challenge and revision" (Heise, "Hitchhiker's Guide" 506). Instead of specific theoretical categorizations, therefore, ecocriticism is often divided chronologically, into first, second, and third "waves". Inevitably, there is a certain amount of disagreement as to when these waves start and end, as well as to the advisability of using the term "wave". Though the stages of

ecocriticism do correspond, generally speaking, to the stages of feminist criticism—the representation phase, the literary tradition phase, and the theoretical phase (Glotfelty, "Guided Tour"), Greta Gaard has noted that the appropriation of the metaphor also "erases feminist narratives of feminist theoretical and historical developments." ("Feminist Ecocriticism" 646). For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the term "first-wave" and "second-wave" but will avoid the term when describing the more recent developments in ecocriticism.

The first wave of ecocriticism was a reactionary one, to a certain degree, condemning the dissociative elements of post-structuralism: "Non-fictional nature writing, hitherto ignored or despised by the literary academy, was redeemed and redeployed to challenge what was seen as a biophobic, ecocidal Western culture" (Garrard 2007-2008). This desire to make stronger links between literature and the environment gave rise to "narrative scholarship", writing that situated the writer in a natural environment that related to the literary work in question and that was often described as "engagement" or "narratives of personal epiphany" (Gifford 19). Dana Phillips calls this "the ecocritic-as-Candide strategy" ("Hard Problems" 460) and critiques the frank theoretical naiveté. Lawrence Buell disagrees, calling them rather "thought experiments that defamiliarize landscapes in tacit suppression (if not downright reproach) of anthropomorphism" (Buell, *Future* 99). Polemics aside, however, these exercises of scholarly attachment were successful in reopening the discussion about the relationship between human and nonhuman.

First-wave ecocriticism can be divided into two major streams, although it would be somewhat anti-ecocritical to draw hard and fast lines. The first was an extension of interest towards scientific fields, intent on "[bridging] the gap between the humanities and the sciences by means of a literary theory obedient to conceptual models derived from life science" (Buell, "Emerging Trends" 91). The second is motivated by "a range of post-Heideggerian phenomenological theories" (Buell, "Emerging Trends" 89) and privileges the individual experience of the ecocritic in the world. Jonathan Bate, an important contributor to this stream, suggests an "imaginative entry" (*Song* 23) into the poetic work of others in order to better experience the truth of the earth.

Second-wave ecocriticism, which covers the decade from 1999 to 2009, is characterized by a movement towards both more socially and theoretically oriented practice, "far beyond the first wave's characteristic limitations of genre, geography, and historical epoch…partly influenced by a more complex grasp of the longer history of environmentalism itself" (Dodson 92-93). This is based on a reaction to the individual, experiential ethos of first-wave ecocriticism and possibly even to the effect of the broadening horizons, both in terms of subjects and works admitted to the ecocritical fold (Slovic & Adamson 8) that are commensurate with the increasing popularity of the approach.

This change is also marked by a greater concern about the way in which human social groups interact with the nonhuman and focuses on "marginalized minority peoples and communities both at home and abroad" (Buell, "Emerging Trends" 97). This

augmented social conscience comes from the field of environmental justice, which "increasingly influenced the field by drawing attention to social and racial inequalities in both access to natural resources and exposure to technological and ecological risk (Heise "Hitchhiker's Guide" 508). This particular orientation continues to inform and enrich ecocriticism.

The transition towards theory is somewhat more contentious. It also continues to change ecocriticism, but it has caused, and continues to cause, a great deal of debate. The theoretical shift is seen by some ecocritics as profoundly detrimental to the foundational spirit of an ecocriticism that embraces a "direct" contact with the natural world as well as concrete links between literary scholarship and activism. This, however, has been characterized as, at best, a continuation of a naïve return to thematic criticism—"simplistic contextual analyses of both literary and environmental texts" (Oppermann, "Theorizing" 104) —and at worst, an elitist, masculinist, ableist stance that looks down on anyone who isn't vegan and/or doesn't spend all their free time outdoors.

Perhaps the best-known voices in the pro-theory camp are those of Timothy Morton and Dana Phillips. Both have objected to what they call the "crude mimeticism" (Garrard, "Year's Work 2010" ref) of the "engagement" school of writing, and they attempt to disentangle "the theoretical imbroglio of ecocriticism." (Phillips 1999 584). Dana Phillips's 1999 article, "Ecocriticism, Literary Theory, and the Truth of Ecology" breaks down one of the most influential books in first-wave ecocriticism, Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination*, which is, itself, sympathetic to narrative scholarship, and calls for a more

rigorous examination of the positions taken by ecocritics. In so doing, Phillips confirms the need for theory in ecocriticism in order to engage with the ecological crisis beyond "preliminary, exploratory, accusatory, hortatory, and celebratory essays" (582). Buell, despite a desire to return to realism, is committing what is essentially Raymond Williams' escalator fallacy, "the perpetual retrospect to an 'organic' or 'natural' society" (Williams, *The Country and the City* 97). Phillips expands this definition to what he calls "some era in the past before the disruption of the human and natural worlds by a heedless agriculture, a runaway industrialism, the loss of faith, the discovery of relativity, the embrace of modernism, and the advent of the postmodern" (Phillips 598), that he says is both reactionary and unproductive.

Phillips also criticizes the naiveté of first-wave ecocritics more generally, pointing out several fallacies in the fabric of the movement. The most notable is the unity of "environment", the unspoken, unexamined standard in early ecocriticism. In his view, ecocritics are choosing to ignore: "an inconvenient fact: a considerable body of what has to be called "theory" must be surveyed, at the least, before one can speak sensibly about ecology" ("Ecocriticism" 581). He questions the validity of a system that does not acknowledge the chaos and randomness that comprises the nonhuman world.

In addition, Phillips takes issue with the impossibility of direct representation: "Boiled down to its essentials, ecocriticism's hardest problem is this: at whatever scale you take them, natural phenomena and environments do not lend themselves very well to the kinds of representation of which literary texts are capable." (Phillips, "Hard Problems"

463). Though Buell reproaches Phillips in several venues for not offering concrete solutions either in the 1999 article or in the 2013 article, he considers Phillips' identification of the ironies that are part of the ecocritical movement thought-provoking: "it is a stimulating corrective to simplistic mimeticist readings, and even more useful for its interlinked critiques of the embedded holistic assumptions in much ecological theory and of humanistic overkill in attempted deconstructions of science as cultural construct." ("Emerging Trends" 95). In short, Phillips' critique tempers the general acceptance of the difficult relationship between nonhuman and text that prevailed in second-wave ecocriticism.

While Phillips positions himself as critic, Morton has taken the role of a visionary figure or prophet, with all the controversy that entails. His two major works, *Ecology Without Nature* (2007) and its prequel, *The Ecological Thought* (2010) have been both influential and provocative, garnering mixed reviews and provoking polemic discussion. His work has been characterized, with reason, as brilliant but unstable; Greg Garrard calls *Ecology Without Nature* "unforgivably obscure, tendentious, unfair or even just inaccurate", but at the same time, he says that "*Ecology without Nature* is already beginning to reshape the landscape of ecocriticism, and, to a degree, deserves to" (2007-2008 12-13). Lawrence Buell, in a recent article for *Qui Parle*, agrees: "However much Morton and Phillips sometimes shoot from the hip, their books are provocative tours de force in the worthy as well as the equivocal sense: wit and critical sophistication offsetting whatever sententious excess" (96). Though critics such as Garrard and Buell find Morton's work occasionally derivative and sometimes even frankly incorrect, they agree that:

> It is difficult to overstate the impact of [*The Ecological Thought*], and its astoundingly dynamic and prolific author, on ecocriticism in only a few years. His virtual presence has graced almost every conference and symposium I have attended in that period, baffling and thrilling grad students with his ideas, and making almost anything else in the field seem parochial and pedestrian by comparison. Some admixture of awe, envy, excitement and annoyed confusion must be in every member of the audience (Garrard 2010 201).

Morton works with such "verve, intricacy, and panache" (Buell "Emerging Trends" 95-96) that his ideas go viral, to borrow a current term that Morton himself would likely appreciate.

Essentially, Timothy Morton deplores the aforementioned normative ecophilosophy that glorifies «the good old days when things meant what they said and said what they meant" ("Object" 163) and seeks to bring about a fracturing of a certain complacency in the ecocritical worldview. He puts forward the idea that nature as a term should be jettisoned, and suggests using the term "dark ecology" rather than simply "ecology". Dark ecology, he says, turns away from a place-based system of thinking and instead emphasizes the value of a fragmented, post-humanist worldview that acknowledges the chaos of the nonhuman world, as well as the complexity that is part of the human world. He is concerned with "intersectional approaches to understanding the linked oppression of 'nature,' non-dominant species, sexualities, and genders" (Gaard 651).

Theorizing ecocriticism has continued to be an issue in recent debates. In 2010-11, it was the subject of vehement arguments, most notably between Simon Estok and S. K. Robisch in ISLE, when actual violence was threatened (Robisch 708). However, though this encounter is still provoking echoes in the ecocritical community, most of the scholarly focus has been elsewhere. Lawrence Buell's projection, just before his retirement in 2011, of a new take on ecocriticism that is predominantly material and postcolonial ("Emerging Trends") has largely been substantiated, and current ecocriticism seems to be tending towards explorations of materiality and animality, as well as posthumanist thought (Garrard, 2010 15). There is some concern, from Phillips particularly, about the fracturing of ecocriticism into more firmly defined streams, but whether or not this fracturing will occur is still unclear, but it is certain that the theoretical plurality of ecocriticism is still a significant part of its appeal.

This dissertation is rooted in the philosophical tradition of ecocriticism. Starting from the later Heidegger essays that were part of the first wave of ecocriticism and continuing through Timothy Morton's exploration of his ideas and beyond, it seeks to contribute two things: first, a statement about the place of Martin Heidegger's ideas in current ecocritical thinking, particularly related to analysis of domestic space. Second, it proposes a theoretical model that connects Victorian experiences of domestic space and the nonhuman in a way that is "nondualistic, embodied, and relational. It must define human consciousness and action within an enormously complex, interdependent community of life on earth" (Westling, Forum 1105). I hope to create and explore new links between

ecocriticism's foundational works and Victorian documents in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of this model.

To return to the Victorian built environment as it is represented in the novels of the nineteenth century appears, at first, to return to a cloistered, artificial space. John Ruskin's prototypical "Home" [3] features prominently in Victorian fiction; hundreds of domestic novels seem to reflect an experience that explores a "process of domestication" (Fraiman, "Domestic" 170) into homes that are "well situated in attractive surroundings" (Gorham 9). Domestic space is thus hermetically sealed to all but a diluted, reified "Nature"; everything else must be excluded. This exclusion creates a fundamental dislocation between domestic space and the rest of the world. However, it is precisely this dislocation that makes an analysis in ecocritical terms so important. It raises the question of the way home is constructed in relation to place and to the nonhuman, and it also raises the question of what it means to inhabit not only a culturally constructed home space but also, and more importantly, what it means to inhabit the earth.

Of course, the rate of scientific discovery and thought in the Victorian period, which John Parham, perhaps the most influential Victorian ecocritic to date, says "shares a trajectory with the developing science of ecology" (259). In other words, a major concern of Victorian society was the changing relationship between human and nonhuman. The

[3] This formulation, with quotation marks and a capital H, is employed without irony by some nineteenth-century authors, including Moodie, to represent a perfect home, the one home. It also seems to represent the ideal in critical texts such as Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* and Diana C. Archibald's *Domesticity, Imperialism, and Emigration in the Victorian Novel*, but here, the quotation marks effectively express doubt about the authenticity of the home in question; it is representative of the Victorian uncertainty about the relationship between human and "Nature."

anxiety of this era of significant change, with dual aspects of destruction and reconstruction (Houghton 3), created a need for security and social order (Briggs 451). It is because the Victorian era was a period of transition between feudal and modern social structures (Houghton 1) that there is a fertile field for ecocriticism. This very modern instability is what is, at least in part, at the root of the development of ecocriticism: concern about the relationship between human and nonhuman as well as humankind's place in the world. Furthermore, the reforming zeal of the early Victorians included "a sincere commitment to fiction as a morally transforming force" (David 7). Narrative scholarship also had a strong moralizing element and made an attempt to rescue literary scholarship from a disconnect with the `real' world. And yet, since Victorian authors used the novel to discuss "so many things: provincial politics, ecclesiastical infighting, city squalor, repressed sexuality, making money, losing money, imperial adventure, angels in the house, frightening New Women, scientific challenges to established religious beliefs, the value and function of the aesthetic life in a materialistic society (to name a few)" (David 5), the model of narrative scholarship is insufficient.

Several of these Victorian concerns could be transmuted into a direct discussion about the nonhuman, despite the dilute Romanticism that rendered the diversity of the nonhuman world in nostalgic and moral terms. "Nature" was an object of regret for the population at large: "For most Victorians, 'Nature' remained above all a repository of feeling, a sanctuary they were all too eager to retain"(Knoepflmacher and Tennyson xxi). Also, though rurality was celebrated throughout the Victorian domestic novel, when the nonhuman is not the distant sublime (Levine 1977), it is a close, cosy, "domesticated"

nature, which is "romanticized and yet threateningly divorced from divine meaning and order" (Levine, "Realism" 204). "Nature", then, with its paradoxical role, is reified, a place of escape and a moral compass.

The urbanization of England[4] meant that "alterations in habitat" (David 5) were a significant source of concern, reflected in the Victorian novel as "the relationship between self and society" (Shires 61). It is unclear, to a certain extent, how nature fits into the picture because most critics of the Victorian novel have an intensely anthropocentric perspective that mirrors the realism they analyze: "realism, the dominant mode of representation and the dominant reading practice of the Victorian era, supposes a privileged epistemological point of view from which both knowledge and judgement can be truthfully and precisely issued to establish consensus among implied author, narrator, and reader" (Shires 63). This accords with the recent consensus by ecocritics that realism has been considered largely counterproductive in an analysis of the relationship between literature and environment. First-wave ecocriticism did mandate a return to realism (Buell *The Environmental Imagination*) but this was quickly refuted as "theoretically discredited" (Oppermann, 103), or "a creed outworn, a nineteenth-century aesthetic unsuited for the production and the understanding of art at the turn of the millennium [which has] retrograde and potentially contradictory terms [and produces] a middle-brow literature of nature informed only by middle-class values" (Phillips, "Ecocriticism" 597). However,

[4] Raymond Williams points out that "ideas of rural life, persisted with extraordinary power, so that even after the society was predominantly urban its literature, for a generation, was still predominantly rural" (*The Country and the City* 2).

there are aspects of realism, just as there are aspects of Romanticism, that can fuel an ecocritical discussion; most specifically, the relationship between self/humankind and nature, and, as such, the concern with subjectivity.

The Victorian domestic novel, focusing as it does on the "permeable and unstable" (Fraiman DN 169) middle class, is thus a fertile field for analysis. While Fraiman asserts that the domestic novel sought to establish this middle class, it is clear, by the process of elimination, that the middle class had to be established against something. It is this diffuse other, source of permeability and instability, which is a potential entry point for ecocritical analysis.

Until recently, first and even second wave ecocriticism would have disagreed; its focus was on literature that creates a mimetic representation of an untouched "Nature". In recent theory, though, a shift has taken place, and the analysis of purely nature writing has been replaced by a more theoretical discussion of human and nonhuman worlds and the interaction between them. This means that Victorian novels, especially those with the early Victorian concern about domestic, rural and urban spaces, for example, are already explicitly ecocritical, or what Lawrence Buell calls "environmentally oriented" (*The Environmental Imagination* 7). This perhaps finer distinction of what environmental writing really means is not simply a piece of self-serving justification, but rather an attempt to engage with the world around in a less binary, more holistic way in order to fulfil the original objective of ecocriticism, which is, generally speaking, to make a connection

between literary studies and the material world: “an earth-centered approach to literary studies” (Glotfelty and Fromm xviii).

Thus, for the Victorians in general, but for Gaskell and Moodie in particular, concerns like the locations, conditions and characteristics of human-nonhuman interaction are absolutely contemporary, as are issues that we, at the start of the twenty-first century, recognize as critical: industrialization, food security, and place attachment.

Place attachment, or the insistence on a close link between humans and one specific environment, is an attractive concept. Though Raymond Williams is a voice of caution in proto-ecocritical works, it has been a dominant paradigm since ecocriticism coalesced as a movement. However, both in early ecocriticism and in more recent iterations, such as bioregionalism, which predicates personal action to experience, record, and improve the environment in a chosen place, it is deeply flawed. At best, place attachment encourages a Heideggerian mindfulness, Jonathan Bate’s imaginative entry into a ‘world’, but its darker aspects include anthropocentrism and exclusion.

In brief, place attachment is frequently set upon an unquestioned and/or naive conception of place. Environment, as defined by both Heidegger and Dana Phillips, is unknowable: “if its every facet is known, then it cannot possibly be a natural environment, and it is just, for instance, a habitat or a landscape, though those are also neither mere things nor easy to know. Environmentally, that’s how it goes: complexity piles upon complexity all the way down.” (Phillips, “Hard Problems” 465). Furthermore, as Ursula Heise points out, a singular correspondance between humans and their space of origin is

profoundly exclusionary (2007 421), devaluing as it does those people who do not have the privilege of choosing their homes. Robert Dainotto says that "Place…is fundamentally a negation of history" (2), in that place is represented by historically triumphant groups and therefore can, to a certain extent, serve colonialism.

In Canada, the issues surrounding place attachment were (and are) absolutely related to colonialism, as the concerns about industrialization and nostalgia so important to Victorian literature in Britain were essentially unknown in Canada until the 1920s. Instead, in the mid-nineteenth-century, the process of erasing the previous residents of the continent and establishing "Home" was underway. Instead of middle-class suburbs and nostalgia, the nonhuman was a danger:

> To enter the United States is a matter of crossing an ocean; to enter Canada is a matter of being silently swallowed by an alien continent… One wonders if any other national consciousness has had so large an amount of the unknown, the unrealized, the humanly undigested, so built into it. (Frye, *Conclusion to the Literary History of Canada*, 217-220 [TBG])

The building-in of place did begin in the nineteenth century; Canada developed a literate population and a locally-produced literature (Gerson PT). Canadian authors were mainly emigrants from England or Scotland, but there were extensive concerns with the development of a Canadian literature (Gerson PT 15), both in order to distinguish it from English literature and to displace the oral traditions of the indigenous peoples in the pursuit

of a national character. Inevitably, because of the geographic reality of Canada, this character has been dependant on the relationship between human and nonhuman.

These concerns intensified after Confederation in 1867 and continued to the mid-twentieth century; Northrop Frye, in his conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada*, states that Canadian literature "records what the Canadian imagination has reacted to, and it tells us things about this environment that nothing else will tell us" (215). Frye's concerns about Canada's cultural history seem to be predicated on a lack of an "organic period" (219 as above) in which a culture can take root and define its own literary tradition, which explained Canada's

> fixation on its own past, its penchant for old-fashioned literary techniques, its preoccupation with the theme of strangled articulateness. It seems to me that Canadian sensibility has been profoundly disturbed, not so much by our famous problem of identity, as important as that is, as by a series of paradoxes in what confronts that identity. It is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?' (220).

Though Frye cautions that "the mystique of Canadianism…full of wilderness" (220) does not apply to the years before Confederation, his descriptions seem to prove the opposite. When he says "To feel 'Canadian' was to feel part of a no-man's-land with huge rivers, lakes, and islands that very few Canadians had ever seen" (220), he echoes Susanna Moodie's desire to see, to understand, and to belong, not just her fear of the unknown.

This unknown has a very different quality in England than it does in Canada, and it is for this reason that texts written and set both in England and outside it are an essential aspect of this study because, in the nineteenth century, degrees of displacement affected the perception of home space and, consequently, perception of the nonhuman. Elizabeth Gaskell's depiction of lost homes and the nonhuman after her move to Manchester and Susanna Moodie's laments of her lost "Home" and accounts of Canadian life have some common elements, but there are also some fundamental differences based at least in part on Moodie's experience in North America.

Thus, in terms of corpus, the scope of this analysis includes the majority of Moodie and Gaskell's works. However, there are certain limits that can be imposed without having a major impact on the study as a whole. Both Moodie and Gaskell were writers that consistently revisited, revised, and reused ideas, characters, and, in some cases, text.[5] Therefore, some earlier versions of works can be left out or glossed over, like Moodie's juvenilia and some of Gaskell's short stories[6].

Most critical work on Moodie is about her autobiographical work, specifically *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) and, to a lesser extent, *Flora Lyndsay* (1854). However, she wrote three novels (*Mark Hurdlestone*, 1853; *Geoffrey Moncton*, 1855; and *The World Before Them*, 1868) and several novellas ("Waiting For Dead Men's Shoes", "The Miss

[5] By which I mean sections of their novels or short stories, often large sections.
[6] Some aspects of Moodie's writing for children are important, as they contain echoes of patterns that appear in her later autobiographical works, notably her representation of England. Gaskell, on the other hand, did not really begin writing until she was in her late thirties, so there is no question of juvenalia.

Greens", and "Richard Redpath", published as *Matrimonial Speculations* in 1854) as well as numerous short sketches and tales.

The only really significant text of Gaskell's that is excluded is her biography of Charlotte Bronte. I do think it would be an interesting future project to look at the intersection of memory and landscape in Gaskell's biography and Bronte's work, but currently it is beyond the scope of this study. I will be using some of her extensive output of short fiction, as well as some longer works such as *Lois the Witch* (1859). I will also be looking at aspects of her six major novels: *Mary Barton* (1848), *Cranford* (1851-3), *Ruth* (1853), *North & South* (1854-5), *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), and *Wives & Daughters* (1864-65).

There is, generally speaking, a practice in ecocriticism of looking at author and work holistically, and, for both Moodie and Gaskell there is a significant overlap between the authors' experiences and their writing. Susanna Moodie's most famous work is of course the autobiographical *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852), as well as the very thinly fictionalized *Flora Lyndsay* (1854. I deal less with *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* (1853), as it is less interesting in terms of reaction to the environment in general and domestic space in particular. Both authors left quite a number of letters, and I use these as well when necessary, as the themes, concerns, and issues therein are often germane to their attitudes toward the nonhuman.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1, "Ecocriticism, Dwelling, Domesticity, and Home" draws connections between ecocriticism, theory, and home space,

creating a model of analysis that demonstrates the tension between human and nonhuman space. Chapter 2, "Places Presented as Perfect", analyzes the ideals that Moodie and Gaskell begin with and shows how they both revere and subvert traditional domesticity. Chapter 3, "The Hut, the Cottage, and the Nest", demonstrates Moodie and Gaskell's decentring of the domestic ideal and the presence of displacement; their heroines experience the strangeness that will help them to dwell. Finally, Chapter 4, "Colonization, Domesticity, and Animality", explores the difference between shelters in England and shelters in the so-called New World, and demonstrates that displacement is the key to *Dasein* and dwelling.

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: Ecocriticism, Dwelling, Domesticity, and Home

> "our only home (oikos) is language (logos)"
> –Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth*
>
> "How do we sift/shift place attachment from the language of nature/"Nature"?"
> –J. Hillis Miller, "Nature and the Linguistic Moment"
>
> "Landscape can become the metaphoric and literal furniture of a mind house"
> –Ellen E. Frank, "The Domestication of Nature"

Both Susanna Moodie and Elizabeth Gaskell were beset with concern about their own and humanity's, place in relation to the nonhuman and the concept of place attachment as an untenable ideal. Nevertheless, despite the relatively extensive critical interest in their work, there has not, so far, been any kind of extended ecocritical analysis of either author. In general, in criticism, the nonhuman is largely a backdrop and most literary criticism, even after over fifteen years of ecocriticism, is still predicated on an unquestioned concept of nature, if not "Nature." Asking ecocritically-based questions of Moodie and Gaskell's work should provide a new perception of women's writing and its relationship to the nonhuman. In this chapter, I will review the critical work on Susanna Moodie and Elizabeth Gaskell that is relevant to this study as well as explain how my theoretical framework is constructed.

Susanna Moodie

> "No single view encompasses what Susanna Moodie has to say and what she represents. Rather, she stands as a persistent and challenging enigma for readers old and new"
> –Michael Peterman, "Introduction" to *Roughing It in the Bush*

In the aftermath of the massive urbanization of the Industrial Revolution, the shift in relationships between human and nonhuman were very worrisome to middle-class Victorians, who were concerned about the separation between humankind and nature but unable to overcome it in a way that was productive (Shires). Like Moodie, the literary culture seemed to revel in what Lawrence Buell calls a "sentimental environmental determinism" (*Future* 66) and continue to celebrate the ideal English village and its bucolic surroundings despite the far-reaching changes in English social structure.

Susanna Moodie's writing about Canada is fraught with moments in which she both laments the loss of England and embraces, albeit self-consciously, her new country. Yet, despite her position as a central figure in Canadian literature, her words are representative of the Victorians in general, particularly the early Victorians. This duality has meant her critical status is variable; often, in recent criticism, she is considered in passing, often as a figure to be knocked down or debunked. Roy MacGregor, for example, in his 2013 introduction to Thomas Osborne's memoir, *The Reluctant Pioneer*, refers to Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* as "spiteful", and to Moodie as a 'reporter'. Her desire to prevent the English middle classes from coming to Canada, MacGregor says, was "spiteful", and that

> She had hoped to see British culture transplanted to this vast winter outpost and spent a lifetime trying to set herself and hapless husband, John, up as gentry. She ended up hating the country and the savage side of nature as she found it. (11)

The introduction goes on to reject Northrop Frye's garrison mentality as the conception of someone who was "terrified of nature" (11). Having disposed of two major figures in the Canadian canon as anti-nature, MacGregor is now free to hold his subject, Thomas Osborne, up as someone who faced his fears and did not dread nature.

While MacGregor's introduction embodies many things that have been problematic about certain aspects of ecocriticism (masculinism, ableism, a personal link to the landscape replacing a tenable theoretical structure), and is therefore perhaps not the most reliable source, this kind of attitude towards Moodie is fairly common. Even in the early years of her "reclamation"—the re-evaluation of her work by critics, and her subsequent analysis by feminist and postcolonial scholars—there is relatively little scholarly work, particularly book-length, devoted exclusively to her. Where such monographs exist, they focus almost exclusively on her autobiographical work. Only three literary monographs about Moodie have been written since 1977: Carol Shields' *Voice and Vision* (1977), a thematic analysis of Moodie's work; *The Work of Words* (1996), John Thurston's New Historicist analysis of Moodie's body of work; and *This Great Epoch of Our Lives: Susanna Moodie's Roughing It in the Bush* (1996), Michael Peterman's in-depth analysis of the work's reception, structure, and intent. Peterman has written extensively about Moodie, his most recent being a critical edition of *Roughing It in the Bush* in 2007.

It is true that much of Moodie's writing, though energetic, is formulaic, wordy, and deeply sentimental. However, the generalized lack of interest in her work is not apparently caused by this; according to Carol Shields, "Mrs. Moodie's real value lies neither in the quality of her writing nor in her position as national microcosm; it rests instead in her historic perspective and almost singular viewpoint" (Shields 2). This perspective is echoed over most Moodie criticism in the last forty-five years (Peterman, "Susanna Moodie"; Thurston). Though evaluative criticism is no longer done, most criticism of Susanna Moodie does involve a certain amount of value judgement, partly because of her uneasy role in the development of a Canadian ecological consciousness.

Canadian ecocriticism, therefore, is still coming to terms with her work, despite the "obviously fertile ground for ecocritical study" (Bentley). Most of the existing criticism is thematic, or deals with the nonhuman as peripheral in the course of analysis from a feminist, post-structuralist, or New Historicist point of view. In general, the majority of criticism is focused on place, identity, and nature, although the post-Atwood criticism that addresses nature is mainly either thematic or feminist-oriented. There have also been numerous bibliographical studies, especially in the late nineteen-eighties and early nineties but, as yet, no ecocritical work. This is probably at least in part because the thematic treatment of "Nature" in her work has reduced interest in analysis using an ecocriticism-specific theory.

Of course, the paradox of Moodie's inclusion, and indeed, foundational position, in the new Canadian canon of the nineteen-sixties is that she was still not actually considered

Canadian, but rather a dual, deeply conflicted citizen of England and Canada. During her lifetime, Moodie did identify as British, and, throughout the nineteenth century, was viewed, discussed, and criticized as such. It is only later, in the mid-twentieth century, during a Canadian quest for identity that surrounded the centenary and that included the emergence of Canadian literature as a literature in its own right, that Moodie was claimed as Canadian. Clearly representative of Canada's colonial past (and, arguably, colonial present in the sense that Canada, though developing a sense of nationhood, was, and technically still is, English), her writing was extensively analyzed and her voice reinterpreted many times by major Canadian writers such as Robertson Davies, Carol Shields, Elizabeth Hopkins, and, of course, Margaret Atwood (Peterman 1983 74).

Even then, though, the path to integration as a Canadian icon was not smooth. Northrop Frye refers to Moodie in 1954 as a "disgruntled outsider" ("Turning New Leaves" 160). Frye's designation of Moodie as an "imaginative foreigner" in the preface to *The Bush Garden* nearly twenty years later (ii) is not explicitly coded as negative, but it certainly implies Moodie's distance from the Canadian wilderness.

Margaret Atwood is Moodie's other significant early critic. She first addresses Susanna Moodie in her book of poetry, *The Journals of Susanna Moodie*, and later in her seminal book of criticism, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (1972). In the conclusion of *Survival*, Atwood assesses Moodie as woman broken into two, with the two parts in conflict with one another. With good reason (and despite much later criticism of *Survival*), this has remained a fundamental aspect of Moodie criticism:

> Mrs. Moodie is divided down the middle: she praises the Canadian landscape but accuses it of destroying her; she dislikes the people already in Canada but find in people her only refuge from the land itself; she preaches progress and the march of civilization while brooding elegiacally upon the destruction of the wilderness; she delivers optimistic sermons while showing herself to be fascinated with deaths, murders, the criminals in Kingston Penitentiary and the incurably insane in the Toronto lunatic asylum. (62)

This is followed by the statement that, by the end of *Roughing It*, "Susanna Moodie has finally turned herself inside out, and has become the spirit of the land she once hated" (64). This is combined with the Moodie character, as depicted in Atwood's poetic work, recognizing the ultimate necessity of adapting to new space. This point is so significant that the rest of this literature review is divided into criticism that either engages with and expands on Atwood's description of Moodie as divided, 'schizophrenic' or that that takes it as truth, and criticism that does not agree. Moodie criticism continues to be coloured by this description of her as displaced and deeply divided, the archetypal, placeless Canadian victim of nature (Atwood 49).

In a recent anthology about the relationship between Canadian land and Canadian women, Moodie continues to be portrayed as maladjusted; that is, when she is even

mentioned. In a major monograph[7], *This Elusive Land: Women and the Canadian Environment*, she is referred to only obliquely, the major writer who is hostile to the natural world:

> Catharine Parr Traill, often treated dismissively by literary scholars and historians, nevertheless provides an interesting example of a writer who confronts the experience of preserving feminine domestic life in a difficult situation without an associated hostility for the natural world. (Hessing 2)

> While, on the one hand, such writers as Susanna Moodie indicate that women's sense of 'homelessness' in the New World actually intensified their terror, others…clearly sought to create a dwelling in the wilderness by crafting a complex intimacy with the wild nature around them. (Hessing x)

The assumption here that terror is incompatible with ecological consciousness dovetails with Simon Estok's concept of ecophobia, defined as "an aversion towards nature (sometimes pathological), an aggravated form of anthropocentrism expressed variously as fear of, hatred of, or hostility towards nature" ("Ecocritical Reading" 78). An ecological consciousness that exists without an acknowledgement of ecophobia is an incomplete one, as the inherent anxiety of Heidegger's *Dasein*—to which this dissertation will return later—demonstrates. This argument, then, in a recent, feminist analysis of women's attachment to the land, could be read as falling on the side of unquestioned place attachment.

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[7] *TEL* was published in 2005 but remains a foundational document.

While this recent criticism based on Atwood's perception of Moodie's dual allegiance as something ultimately isn't an allegiance at all is a fascinating starting point, there are critics, notably Michael Peterman, that concede Moodie's attachment to Canada less grudgingly. He states in "This Great Epoch" that Moodie "was just as proud as having become a Canadian by experience" (17). Furthermore, he acknowledges the "definitive tension" (104) that animates her works; his designation of her as a "persistent and challenging enigma" ("Introduction" xvii) is both striking and influential, building on Atwood's "divided" Moodie to create a portrayal that is more sympathetic, although no more ecocritically aware, than quite recent work.

Peterman does see Moodie as having a complex relationship to the nonhuman in that she tries to reconcile her different opinions of the nonhuman world. He is one of the only critics to acknowledge her "growing comfort and ease of movement in the wilderness" (82), although he does not question the concept of wilderness in any way. However, there is a current of feminist analysis, pre-dating Peterman's work (but uncited by him) that can be linked with Peterman's statement that Moodie does reconcile herself with her new environment. These writers seek to explore Moodie's situation relative to her environment in more detail via feminist analysis; here, there is some questioning of the concept of nature.

The most important of these texts come from two different collections: the 1986 *A Mazing Space: Writing Canadian Women Writing*, edited by Smaro Kamboureli and Shirley Newman, and the Reappraisals volume *Re(dis)covering our Foremothers:*

Nineteenth-century Canadian Women Writers, published in 1990 and edited by Lorraine McMullen. Both have several articles devoted to Moodie, most notably Bina Freiwald's "'The tongue of woman': The Language of the Self in Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*", which shifts the focus away from Moodie's turbulent relationship with Canada and towards the language of motherhood. Freiwald leaves the question of nature aside and defines Moodie as someone who

> engages with the cultural myths of her particular historical moment, myths that define her relation to nature, to language, and to the self. For Moodie, to create is to write within and against a literary tradition that reinforces her otherness through a conflation of woman and nature and through an exclusive identification of the speaking subject as male. (169)

However, her focus really is largely on Moodie's motherhood and its function in Moodie's self-definition.

In the same collection, D.M.R. Bentley talks about the transatlantic crossing in his contribution to the collection; he says Moodie achieved "a form of Herculean heroism" (95), though he still casts her as "unwilling and unhappy" (98). His ultimate conclusion, however, is that "Although death and 'hopeless decay' are recurring spectres in *Roughing It in the Bush*, Moodie's character and ambition gave her no real option but to follow a path of heroic, masculine virtue for which, on the basis of mere physical strength, she was ill-equipped. As unpalatable as this choice was for Moodie at the time of her arrival in Canada, it resulted in due time in her painful but ultimately triumphant acquisition and

exercising of the strength and self-reliance that permitted her to become a female Crusoe, and, in effect, a feminine version of the Herculean hero. (115)

This is important because Bentley states that Moodie's Canadian integration wasn't entirely unsuccessful. However, his conclusions are ultimately problematic because he seems to be acknowledging her desire for dominance of the nonhuman world by casting her into a masculine mold instead re-forming his mold in a less gendered ideal. He does address this later on, saying that her "new sense of self and purpose" (118), though not recognized in the same way as that of men and explorers, came from "[inscribing] a part of themselves that endures, and, even as it does so, reveals something of the complex process of retention and modification, disintegration and reassembly, that must always have been an aspect of great migrations" (118).

Bentley echoes the words of Robert Pogue Harrison when he talks about the world in terms of periphery and centre: "Removal to British North America means, not the severing of communication with the mother culture and a consequent need to tell the stories again, but a movement from the centre to the periphery with a consequence that is characteristic of all minor (which is to say deterritorialized) literature: the need to explain life on the periphery to those at the centre" (Bentley 1990 119), and then states that Moodie, as with other women colonists, is doubly marginalized. This is especially important considering the marginality of the shelters that Moodie and her characters create for themselves, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

So far, there has been a trend towards an uncritical designation of nature in Moodie criticism, however, there are two relatively recent analyses of Moodie that question this designation and are thus directly relevant to this dissertation.

Heather Murray's 1986 article "Women and the Wilderness", which belongs to "the evolution of ecofeminist writings in the 1980s" (Hessing xiii), articulates some principles that could be considered ecocritical in the sense of suggesting "an alternative model for 'land' as it is construed in English-Canadian fiction (querying the common critical notions of 'nature/culture' and the 'garrison')" (74) as well as creating this model as inclusive for women writers. She suggests a progression, city/pseudo-wilderness/wilderness (76) to replace nature/culture divide, and defines pseudo-wilderness as an ambiguous space which "mediates between the human and nonhuman worlds" (75).

Murray then situates Susanna Moodie's backwoods experience in this pseudo-wilderness. As such, it is flexible: "a double allegiance, both to the city and to the surrounding countryside, and any individual orientation is then a matter of age, race, class, gender, or character" (Murray 76). "City", here, is also flexible: "The land continuum shifts throughout [*Roughing It*] with Moodie's removals and residencies, and her years there are characterized by an increasing understanding of the wilderness and numerous forays into it" (Murray 79). By the end of the novel, "the urban end of the axis shifts to Belleville [rather than England], and the continuum is contained within eastern Canada" (79). This migration of the centre point dovetails with Scott Hess's conception of "everyday nature", which "to break down dualistic conceptions of nature, since the everyday comes in a wide spectrum

of forms and practices, in which one person's wilderness is likely to be another's everyday nature, and vice versa" (Hess 103). Reading Moodie in this optic means scaling down the relatively rigid dualism that has been a significant part of her critical tradition and perhaps creating a more eco-positive assessment of her Canadian experience.

Helen Buss' article, "Women and the Garrison Mentality: Pioneer Women Autobiographers and their relation to the land" in the (Re)Discovering collection was written in direct response to Northrop Frye's assertions in the 1965 conclusion to the Literary History of Canada that early Canadian literature is imbued with a "garrison mentality" in which humans band together against a "huge, unthinking, menacing, and formidable physical setting" (830).

Buss argues that there is "a radical difference in the way women encounter the land" (126), and, specifically, that "women autobiographers…react to the strangeness of the Canadian landscape by merging their own identity, in some imaginative way, with the new land" (126). However, she anchors this merging (submerging?) in what can be read as "traditional" female outlets: "through a relationship with significant others and through some creative activity that discovers each woman's unique relationship with the land" (126). I think this is true in the sense that it does, as ecofeminism would insist, value women's contributions and the loci through which they make contact, and it's certainly supported by the text – consider the way Moodie situates her link with Reydon Hall, her childhood home in Sussex, in terms of sparking her infant creativity, and think about the ways in which what she considers the occasional beauty of her Canadian surroundings as

catalysts to her writing. However, this also ignores the more basic human forms of land interaction, those that could possibly go beyond gender; the encounter that causes a recognition of nonhuman entities as entities; there is a recollection of what Charity Christine Matthews states, that women, as settlers, recognize the agency of the nonhuman. However, Matthews represents this in terms of a combination of literary and scientific terminology, while I argue that the recognition goes beyond that.

The statement, however, that "the land inscribes itself on the women who encounter it in their writing" (132) is incredibly evocative, especially considering the importance of writing as a space of meeting. There is no assertion, here, that writing discovers the factual truth of something, but rather that writing is a process that permits an individual phenomenological experience. As with Susan Fraiman's shelter writing, which I will discuss shortly, it provides a safe space in which to meet entities that are both strange and familiar. At the same time, it's important that the idea of garrison be maintained, because though Buss holds it as antithetical to women's experience (and indeed the human experience) the idea of self-made protection does, to a certain extent, correspond with her refusal of garrison mentality. Once again, the ideal is to hold the ideas of protection from, and openness to, the nonhuman in tension in order to better understand the way in which the environment can be negotiated.

Susan Glickman has written about Moodie in several venues, and overall, her conception of Moodie's writing is that she is in a state of constant tension with her environment, but it is a productive tension. For example, in her 1998 article "The Waxing

and Waning of Susanna Moodie's 'Enthusiasm'.", Glickman writes "More than any other writer, Susanna Moodie has come to symbolize the repulsion from nature Canadians are alleged to feel, a repulsion she neither felt herself nor would have countenanced in others" (490). Furthermore, Moodie's "opinions are robustly inconsistent: a sentimentalist, she is a defender of the class system; an advocate of progress, she is nostalgic for primitive simplicity; a Romantic nature-worshiper, she is terrified of wild animals" (Glickman 506-507; Peterman 2007). In other words, "Moodie is not hiding the imperial discourse—she is wrestling with it" (Glickman 512; Peterman 2007). Thus, the disgust and irritation that Atwood would have Moodie feel give way to a more intellectual struggle, at least at first. By stating that "Nature was [Moodie's] chief *solace* in the midst of hunger, isolation, and uncertainty" (*Poetics* 60), Glickman confirms that Moodie appreciated the nonhuman world as much as she complained about it, a fact, she states, that many critics have ignored. Interestingly, Glickman shifts the blame for Moodie's divided attitude to the people that surround Moodie, giving her "less time for 'experience of the sublime'" (*Poetics* 63). The aforementioned sublimity of the landscape—in Glickman's perception, bodies of water in a landscape—affects Moodie's mood, but it does not take away from Moodie's despair or nostalgia.

Finally, the most recent in-depth analysis of Moodie's relation to the nonhuman world is a 2013 doctoral dissertation by Charity Christine Matthews. Matthews analyzes "the ways in which women writers were actively exploring shifting conceptions of the natural world as it developed alongside settlement" (3), a multifaceted, evolving history of women's engagement in Canada with the natural sciences and with the language of

naturalism" (12). She situates Moodie in company with Catharine Parr Traill and Anna Jameson (both writers who are often studied in conjunction with Moodie) as well as four others, Anne Langton, Mary Ann Shadd, Harriet Sheppard, Frances Stewart; these women, she posits, use scientific idiom to engage with the nonhuman world.

Matthews seems to be working within a paradigm of place attachment, stating that the Canadian environment is not the same as the British or American environment (12) and thus, that the women need to come to grips with it in some way that is different from the way they integrate themselves into their "Home" environment. Matthews' approach is predicated on "ecofeminism, autobiography genre theory, and a Foucauldian theory of natural history" (9) and she concludes that the authors she deals with, including Moodie (although interestingly, she considers Moodie to be 'lesser' than the others, particularly when compared with her sister Catharine Parr Traill) are "proto-ecological and proto-ecofeminist" (10). In addition, she concludes that "these women see nature as neither purely idyllic nor purely hostile. Instead, they approach the natural world from a more holistic perspective. Nature is a system within which human beings are an element rather than a controlling force" (200). This seems very ecocritical, but her conclusions are not.

Matthews does make a useful distinction between the aesthetic mode and the "desire for the actuality of the physical world, its materiality" (12) and states that the women function in both modes. However, she says that they go back and forth rather than hold these two modes in tension. The holding in tension that Matthews addresses is rather that between scientific terminology and literary form which, she argues, is how these women

writing about Canada "sought to understand nature and humans as interactive." (24). This is a very vague distinction and not necessarily useful in terms of the ecocritical orientation of this dissertation. Specifically, Matthews establishes Morton's "ecomimesis" as a counterpoint to the aesthetic and says that "The reader gets a glimpse of the environment rather than the person" (13). This, unfortunately, seems to be taking the idea of ecomimesis at face value; Morton means the term to be representative of the lies we as humans tell ourselves about our ability to represent the nonhuman. This is reinforced by her use of Foucault, whom she uses to argue that the structure of language is a fundamental way of informing our approach to the nonhuman, in that our interactions with that world must be organized and classified. The women, she says, believe in "the importance of careful observation and cataloguing flora and fauna while simultaneously emphasizing useful and practical knowledge" (16). In conclusion, then, while certain aspects of Matthews' dissertation are relevant to this one, her overall approach and conclusions continue to, by and large, treat the nonhuman as a unified object and as being entirely distinct from the human subject.

There are, then, three main points to be drawn from this overview of the literature on Susanna Moodie. First, that she has often been read as emblematic of both colonial oppression, by imposing her British view on North America and, more frequently, a divided culture, in her widely variable interactions with the people, places, and animals native to the Canadian landscape. Both readings, though enormously influential, have been based almost entirely on the paradigm of place attachment as the most 'authentic' form of human relationship to the nonhuman environment. Subsequently, that her role in recent

ecocritical analyses of Canadian women writers has been peripheral at best, in part because of a continuing insistence on the part of Moodie critics that place attachment as desirable. Finally, that, to a certain extent, the analysis of Moodie's work, especially the early analysis, is a proto-ecocriticism, and can as such form a basis for a more in-depth ecocritical analysis of Moodie's relationship with the nonhuman world.

Elizabeth Gaskell

> "A novelist like Elizabeth Gaskell needed a more reverential model, such as Wordsworth provided, to allow her to overcome her guilt about heeding the clamoring of her artistic instinct"
> –Donald Stone, *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction*

In terms of Elizabeth Gaskell's writing about the nonhuman, despite the vast quantity of criticism (in the order of ten times the Moodie criticism), there is perhaps less work that is directly related to nature and none at all on the nonhuman. Elizabeth Gaskell's writings were very popular during her lifetime but have not enjoyed continued popular status since her death. Forgotten or trivialized in early twentieth-century discussion of Victorian works, Gaskell only came back to prominence through the work of feminist scholars. Both Annette Hopkins' 1952 *Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Works* and Kathleen Tillotson's 1954 *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* as well as Wright's *Mrs. Gaskell: The Basis for Reassessment* (1965), contributed to her return to the canon of nineteenth-century authors. Aside from *The Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell's Life and Works*, by Anna Rubenius (1950), most criticism focused on her admissibility to the canon or to her "treatment of the power relations of industrial societies" (Flint 1995 60). This discussion overlapped with the rise of feminist criticism, and studies such as *Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction* (1976), *Communities of Women* (1978), and *A Literature of Their Own* (1982) examined the gender dynamics in Gaskell's novels.

Both feminist and gender studies have continued to be a major subject of Gaskell criticism since then, with work focused on women's roles (Foster), domestic space, and the

body. Since the 1990s this criticism has also been inflected with broader concerns about social themes such as work and woman as writer; Hilary M. Schor's *Scheherezade in the Marketplace* (1992) is perhaps the best known of these.

Nature and the nonhuman has been tangentially addressed in criticism of Gaskell's work, but is usually discussed thematically or as a foil for character. Fairly often, as in Patsy Stoneman's *Elizabeth Gaskell* (1987/2006) and Jenny Uglow's *A Habit of Stories* (1999), nature is presented as being analogous to the feminine. Interestingly, Raymond Williams, one of the precursors of ecocriticism, also wrote about Gaskell and nature (D'Albertis) and though at the time his focus was also on her treatment of industrial relations, *The Country and the City* (1973) prompted a spate of criticism that addressed the rural and the urban in her work, mostly theses and dissertations. Subsequently, work on place, and rural vs. urban space as well as the regional novel continued into the early eighties, largely in work by graduate students.

The little work done around Gaskell's relationship with the nonhuman often appears in her biographies and is heavily predicated on place attachment. The first biography of Elizabeth Gaskell was *Haunts, Homes, and Stories*, by Esther Alice Chadwick, originally published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Gaskell's birth, and subsequently updated in 1913[8]. Though the text is heavily interspersed with quotations from Gaskell's work, and though neither Alan Shelston nor Jenny Uglow, Gaskell's current biographers, cite her at

[8] Note that Gaskell did not wish to have her biography written at all, as she states in a letter written on June 4, 1865, not long before she died suddenly (Chapple & Pollard 761) .

any length (interesting considering Uglow and Chadwick follow a similar format in some respects), the text itself does make some potentially interesting links between the places Gaskell lived and was familiar with and the stories she wrote.

It is, in fact, Jenny Uglow's *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (1993, 2nd ed. 1999) that remains the definitive critical biography of Gaskell. This book stands at the confluence of biography and literary analysis and traces the links between Gaskell's work and her life, including the connections between place and literature. However, the point of view is strictly anthropocentric and Uglow doesn't question the idea of nature as a backdrop rather than an agent in its own right.

Kathleen Tillotson talks about the more diverse natural spaces in Gaskell's work, and though she is discussing the setting as simply functional in the narrative, she does raise the issue of place: she states that the most common setting for novels prior to the 1840s (she is likely referring to the "silver fork" novels of the early 1800s) was aristocratic homes, which were set "in a vacuum of locality" (89). Novels that discussed middle- and lower-class life, however, were set in "places distinctive in themselves and felt as part of a larger locality" (89). Tillotson connects Gaskell to the idea of locality in that she states that Gaskell always wrote about the familiar (her point of reference is that Disraeli, another social problem novelist, was a tourist). It's an interesting comparison because of course Gaskell did frequently write about what she knew, and, moreover, reuse what she had already written.

Raymond Williams, in *The Country and the City*, disagrees with Tillotson, he calls Gaskell an "observer, a reporter" (87) of lower-class life. However, strikingly, he singles out her depictions of human-nonhuman interaction as counterexample: "there is genuine imaginative re-creation in her accounts of the walk in Green Heys Fields, and of tea at the Bartons' house, and again, notably…where John Barton and his friend find the starving family in the cellar" (87). This implies that Gaskell is separate; as with MacGregor's assessment of Moodie, she is a journalist, having to step outside of her normal orbit to access the relationship between human and nonhuman. This idea of journalism is problematic because, though it echoes certain aspects of first-wave ecocriticism, it implies that Gaskell records rather than experiences, and thus sets herself apart from her environment.

This characterization of Gaskell as observer continues in what is called regional fiction. K.D.M. Snell defines this as "fiction that is set in a recognisable region, and which describes features distinguishing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of the culture of that area and its people. Fiction with a strong sense of local geography, topography or landscape is also covered by this definition" (1). This is a profoundly anthropocentric definition, putting the land second and the human first. However, her later discussion describes the verbal representation of the nonhuman as being vital to the knowledge of these regions, as "independently contributing to more diverse, literary and symbolic aesthetics of landscape" (10). This study also advocates for an interdisciplinary approach to regional fiction that approaches the ecocritical, potentially

useful when combined with the work of Angus Easson, perhaps the most significant of the Gaskell scholars when it comes to the relationship between human and nonhuman.

Easson focuses on all aspects of Gaskell's writing. Despite the early publication date of at least some of it (His *Elizabeth Gaskell* dates from 1979) there are some aspects that are still relevant to this dissertation. Foremost is his analysis of Gaskell as rejecting romance (73) particularly in *Mary Barton* but also in other works, as well as the fact that Gaskell writes about "the close attuning of physical objects to human beings" (75), which has something in common with the material turn of ecocriticism. He also questions the idea of place attachment, saying "responses lie not in one geographical area rather than another" (93). He also briefly addresses the complex temporality that Gaskell uses: "The action is momentary, fading as the memory of man, but the suffering partakes of the nature of infinity" (174); Gaskell writes, especially in Wives & Daughters, that "life is a flux" (190). According to Easson, Gaskell "is creating time and place" (187) rather than re-writing it, a significant conclusion that is worth further investigation in an ecocritical context.

Daniele Coriale's 2008 article, "Gaskell's Naturalist", deals with the way Gaskell deploys natural history in *Mary Barton*. For Coriale, participation in natural history activities is a sign of liberation from class constraints, a way of connecting amateurs to a potentially global community of scientists and fostering their knowledge of distant locales. At the same time, however, naturalist knowledge is shown to liberate only those who have access to the elaborate systems of classification that came to define natural history as science during the 1840s (347-348). On the other hand, Coriale questions the idea of an

interest in natural history; she characterizes it as actually obscuring place attachment. She calls it "the failure of Job [Legh]'s local vision. By focusing on the flora and fauna of distant locales, and by studying the objects he trades with Mr. Cheshire, Job avoids seeing what transpires in his own environment" (355). This also contributes to his isolation. What Coriale is really arguing, then, is the difference between place attachment and the "the alienating and exclusionary quality of classical nomenclature" (362), especially for working-class women, who are excluded from participating. Coriale doesn't discuss how women interact with the nonhuman, beyond her discussion of the pairing of Job and Alice, the wise-woman: "[Job's] formal (and phallic) knowledge of natural history distinguishes him from Alice, whose knowledge is far more practical, useful, and vernacularly oriented than his" (364). This statement brushes up against an aspect of ecofeminism that has generally been considered problematic: the emphasis on women's "instinctual" knowledge of the land. A statement like "By casting the characters of Alice Wilson and Margaret outside the republic of science, Gaskell is able to reframe working-class women as domestic figures" (365) situates women squarely with nature, and yet Coriale pairs it with this: "the novel reveals its ambivalence about—or perhaps outright hostility to—the necessity of learning Latin in order to participate in scientific discourses" (366). Furthermore, Coriale's article is, like most non-ecocritical literary criticism, anthropocentric: the nonhuman world is a playing field upon which humans can work out things between them, rather than an entity in its own right: "Through Mary Barton, then, Gaskell endorses the idea that novelists might combine the two naturalist epistemologies to encourage the development of cross-class sympathies. And like the novelist herself,

Gaskell's naturalist must learn to reconfigure his knowledge of natural history so that he may use it to mediate between the two worlds that had become alien to one another." (372). Natural history is a means rather than an end in Coriale's reading, and the nonhuman is not present.

Shirley Foster's 2009 article, "Space in Gaskell's Landscapes", while it addresses the idea of the relationship between the land and the characters as well as the role the land plays in Gaskell's works, is highly problematic in terms of ecocriticism. Foster discusses the "wealth of material in [Gaskell's] work dealing with the countryside, both as setting and as an important element in narrative development" and calls Gaskell's manner of describing them "arresting and original" (22). This is her thesis, and while the idea of Gaskell's approach to the nonhuman being original is in line with this study, Foster's lack of definition of "nature" as well as her focus on the nonhuman as a backdrop make this article surprisingly unproductive in terms of research dialogue. There is also a certain amount of value judgement in Foster's description of Gaskell's interaction with the nonhuman: Foster uses words such as "highly effective" (23), "emotional excitement" (23), etc. Furthermore, Foster writes that "Gaskell was clearly exhilarated as much as discomforted [sic] by her encounters with [wilderness] areas, her aesthetic ordering of such scenery is certainly linked to a desire to apprehend them and render them comprehensible" (23). As I will argue in subsequent chapters, Gaskell's representation of the nonhuman is much more about trying to show it as it is rather than representing it as something to be catalogued and understood.

Wendy Parkins' 2004 article, "Women, Mobility, and Modernity in Elizabeth Gaskell's North and South", addresses dislocations and their relation to, obviously, modernity, but the focus of her article is interesting in that she underscores the tension between varying perceptions of the same place: "the modern city is by turns grand and liberating or alienating and deathly; change is presented variously as organic or historical; the speed of modern life is exciting or sickening; mobility can either broaden or narrow the mind" (508). In addition, she presents "an ethical response to modernity[:]… to recognise that one is situated within processes of change" (513). There's an earlier article ("Elizabeth Gaskell in 'Cornhill' Country, by Marie E. Warmbold, published in 2000) that draws the same conclusion: Both Gaskell and Trollope "skillfully brought their readers back to 'simpler' times, but only Gaskell also brings them forward…showing a changing world moving forward to a future enriched by scientific knowledge" (148-149). Parkins, however, extends the argument, pointing out that the default position of a woman is to be "at one with her domestic and pastoral environment, and thus outside the processes of modernity" (510). This dissertation does not touch on modernity as such, but it does make a useful stand-in for the idea of exploding "nature" and reintegrating with the nonhuman. Parkins discusses the value of nostalgia as a way of "[retaining] a sense of connection to a location" (512). However, this also comes with, perforce, mobility, and the discussion of Margaret's mobility is an integral part of her text. As with Heather Murray's article on Susanna Moodie, the reimagining of place as having multiple and conflicting properties is a step towards a less essentialized analysis of the relationship between human and nonhuman.

Thus, in recent Gaskell scholarship there's a clear focus on home and the role it plays in critiquing and reinforcing gender politics, but the idea of the nonhuman is largely background. More specifically, that there are several texts that reject the distinction between public and private space, which is useful in a discussion of human and nonhuman; Johnston, for example calls "the so-called private sphere …the originary space of civil society" (87). Elizabeth Langland, in *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture,* notes that the Victorian perception of the house is that of as a closed-in space which had no influence on the politics of the time. This openness and/or influence of the house on politics, the permeability of social change, can be extended to the idea of the nonhuman.

In the case of both Moodie and Gaskell, there are studies that explore the natural history aspects of their writing, as well as studies that examine the way these authors use the landscape. What is lacking, however, are critical works that question generally accepted definitions of nature or the anthropocentric perspectives inherent in prior criticism. In addition, what we do not see (or see only very briefly in the case of Shelley Boyd's writing about Moodie and gardens), is domesticity, or rather, domestic space, as a place of encounter between human and nonhuman. The domestic space is sealed away rather than open. The other shared characteristic, which is rarer in criticism of Gaskell than in that of Moodie, is claiming that they do not use the "correct" literary techniques for their subject (especially "Nature"). For example, Brian J. Crick's article, "Mrs. Gaskell's *Ruth*: A Reconsideration" (1976) argues that the artistic limitations of *Ruth* are due to Gaskell's

appropriation of literary techniques that are "uncongenial" to her rather than "the flaws attributable to the author's reforming message" (86) as was previously claimed.

Gaskell's domesticity has made up a large component of readings of her fiction, both early readings which praised her and set her apart from other authors such as Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, while diminishing her as an artist by asserting that she wrote only about a circumscribed, familiar world but did it well (Cecil, etc). Later readings, which came in the wake of feminist reclamations of her work, did nonetheless emphasize the economic and political significance of domesticity. For Moodie, it has been the reverse; originally, both as she describes herself and as she is described by critics, she has few domestic skills. She does gain these skills over the course of her life. By and large, however, the criticism engages with this self-reported process by discussing it as a way of self-fashioning. In both cases, there is little engagement with the idea of the overlap between the human/domestic and the nonhuman.

In fact, Moodie and Gaskell's characters do encounter the nonhuman in a way that is much more open and nuanced than previously articulated in the scholarship. In their work, the relationship between home space and the nonhuman is, to a certain extent, subversive of the Victorian "Home"—that is, the closed, private space that is the domain of patriarchy and heteronormativity. In this dissertation, I will use Susan Fraiman's concept of shelter writing to address, in detail and with a focus on the human/nonhuman relationship, the authors' subversion of place attachment and cozy domesticity in favour of a surprisingly contemporary *Dasein*, a dislocated being. Shelter writing helps to re-evaluate

the way in which characters interact with the nonhuman in domestic space, with domestic space defined as a shelter that depends on the nonhuman for its identity.

Furthermore, in the work of these authors, the relationship between an individual or group of individuals and their place of origin (in this case domestic space and its immediate surroundings) is always fraught and problematic, despite place attachment, and, to a lesser extent, domesticity being presented as ideal but unattainable. Despite the problematic nature of place attachment, work on Gaskell and Moodie—Moodie particularly—casts displacement, that is, removal from the local, the original home place, as negative. However, my theoretical model suggests that the loss of this original "Home" is a in order for the construct of "Nature" to be exposed as artificial so that the nonhuman can take its place and that the Being of the nonhuman can be recognized in all its fragmented and impossible complexity.

Martin Heidegger and Ecocriticism

> "What is it that unsettles and thus terrifies? It shows itself and hides itself in the way in which everything presences, namely, in the fact that despite all conquest of distances the nearness of things remains absent."
> –Martin Heidegger, "The Thing"

Martin Heidegger's (1889-1976) best-known contribution to philosophy was his work in ontology, the study of being. He questioned the bases of metaphysical study in the early part of the twentieth century, focusing on redefining the idea of being as Being, the way humans *are* in the world. In *Being and Time* (1927), he deplores the fact that traditional metaphysics accepts the idea of human existence as a constant presence, and thus this idea had become fossilized, unquestioned since Plato and Aristotle. Heidegger felt that Being should once again become "*a thematic question of actual investigation*" (*Being* 1 sic).

This questioning became incredibly broad-ranging, not only in *Being and Time*, but in Heidegger's later philosophy. "The Turn", which took place after the publication of *Being and Time,* and was, broadly speaking, a change in Heidegger's focus from Being as *Dasein*, a mode of questioning, to Being as dwelling. Dwelling is a mode of human existence in which careful creation of things, especially, but not limited to, art, becomes a path to Being.

At first, however, Heidegger's ontology conceived of Being as a state that constantly needs to be redefined or questioned, which is consistent with the goals and ideals of ecocriticism. On several different levels, ecocriticism is "fraught with ontological

anxiety, for to ask what *is* nature is, in essence, to ask what is *is*?" (Claborn 377, sic). Ecocriticism asks not only what nature *is*, then, but also, regularly, what ecocriticism itself *is*. The "broad scope of inquiry" (Glotfelty xix) stipulated in the introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, itself a foundational text, gives rise to an uncertainty in terms of the direction and focus of study.

Heidegger's concept of dwelling provided an early direction for part of that focus. Dwelling, in this case, is not place-specific habitation, but rather a path of mindfulness; it emphasizes the importance of a meaningful nature that speaks to humans in a way that bypasses language (Foltz) and calls for a more contemplative way of thinking in order to overcome our alienation from the nonhuman entities with which (or with whom) we live. Heidegger recommends stepping, both literally and metaphorically, away from modern technology and towards dwelling.

While Heidegger had no concern about technology as such, he saw modern technology as discrete and dangerous to Being. For Heidegger, while technology prior to the Industrial Revolution allowed production as a mode of revealing and care, modern technology distanced humans from the work they did and thus reduced and qualified the agency of the nonhuman to something simply to be used by humans. He called this process en-framing (*Ge-stell*); en-framing is an attempt to organize the world and its being into categories of humankind's own creation, as a "standing-reserve" ("Question" 23). This standing-reserve includes such things as simple as viewing a herd of cows as simply meat on the hoof, for example, or as complex as various theories of language which view

language as a tool for humankind. That is, instead of allowing things to reveal themselves as they are, a revealing is imposed: the real is thus a standing-reserve, something to be put to use rather than respected as it *is*. Consequently, the unconcealment of entities is limited and can only be revealed as *Bestand*, or standing reserve. Rather than self-sufficient entities, we have a constantly available inventory.

To dwell, then, we must disassemble our perceptions of the non-human as simply resources and see them instead as entities in their own right. Entities must be conserved; that is, they must be cared for and used (though not used up) in a way that respects and frees their essence. This conservation leads to a saving of the earth in that metaphysical, technological principles of consumption are rejected and replaced by a more respectful, contemplative attitude towards entities and the world we live in; rather than lords of being, humans should be shepherds of being who dwell poetically on the earth, sustaining true awareness of the fullness of nature in the everyday world (Foltz).

The standard meaning of truth is correctness of representation. Heidegger seeks to redefine truth by going back to a lost and discontinued definition, *aletheia*. *Aletheia* has two meanings: the first, correspondence, is comparable to the current English definition. The second, however, is that of unconcealedness, which allows for art— which Heidegger defines as "truth setting itself to work" ("Origin" 39)—to show the being of entities without being mimetic. If art does this, it is poetry, *poesis*: something created out of matter.

Through poetry, humans dwell. Poetry refers to art and language, of course, specifically language, but can also include (without being limited to) carpentry, cooking,

architecture, and agriculture. It is not superficial aestheticizing, a flight about earthly things, but a way, perhaps *the* way, of coming into contact with things as they are. However, this contact is rarely complete; in fact, it cannot be complete, because the essence of these things is "scarcely a stable entity" (Fahmi 20). Instead of the all-powerful perception of the subject, human perspective is rezoned, as it were, to the margins of truth and knowing:

> There is much in being that man cannot master. There is but little that comes to be known. What is known remains inexact, what is mastered insecure. What is, is never of our making or even merely the product of our minds, as it might all too easily seem. When we contemplate this whole as one, then we apprehend, so it appears, all that is—though we grasp it crudely enough. ("Origin" 53)

This corresponds, then, to Heidegger's original definition of *Dasein* as questioning; there is a clearing which encircles all that is and inside which beings are both unconcealed and concealed. Heidegger states that things reveal themselves and conceal themselves at the same time, and the challenge humans face is to acknowledge this revelation and see it for what it is while refraining from imposing our own preconceptions on the concealed.

This recognition of humanity's limitations is what places humans in a state to produce the poetic image. This image, be it verbal or physical, should unconceal the Being of the entity in question, creating "visible incursions of the alien in the sight of the familiar" (101). These visible incursions—the phenomena—are a reminder that while we can

perceive aspects of the unknown if we look past our habitual points of perception, the noumena exists, and always will exist, beyond our reach. This consciousness of not-knowing creates a recognition of the presence and agency of the nonhuman, and it allows mortals to dwell humanely on the earth in their questioning.

First-wave ecocritical interpretations of dwelling have conceived of dwelling as the ideal human state. However, newer work on dwelling has, in aligning it more closely with *Dasein,* read it as much more uncertain: "unhomely, uncanny, vaguely anxious" (S. Clark 107). An unquestioned existence is anathema and "recedes behind the manifold ways in which dwelling is accomplished" ("Building" 148). Since "disturbances have the effect of exposing totalities of involvements and, therefore, worlds" (Wheeler), *Dasein* and dwelling, then, both *require* dislocation. Because it is conscious of itself, dwelling is less a whole integration into a lifeworld and more a relationship with other, nonhuman entities that is characterized by presence and recognition.

More specifically, dwelling is characterized by recognition of loss: "it is the knowledge that one has already lost whatever there is to lose and that life is therefore given, or for-given, gratuitously" (Harrison 231). Loss is at the heart of life, "what we begin with" (Harrison 231). For Heidegger, "precariousness is our authentic dwelling-place. A proper relationship to dwelling, therefore, is not the cosy pipe-and-slippers affair … but a continual questioning, opening, radical acceptance of ungroundedness and mortality" (S. Clark 104). We can no longer allow ourselves to be the centre of things, but rather inhabitants on the earth that are on the periphery of what is, and temporarily, at that;

dwelling is not hereditary once it has been acquired. It is a constant cycle: "mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*" (161). This underscores the essential tenuousness and marginality of the human position.

Deep ecology, rooted in this consciously unstable position is, as Lawrence Buell indicates, somewhat fraught, because, despite its philosophical importance, deep ecology has little praxis: "Considered as ontology or aesthetics first rather than as a recipe for ethics or practice, deep ecology looks more persuasive. As an ontology, deep ecology and ecocentrism more generally can provide a needful corrective to modern culture's underrepresentation of the degree to which humanness is ecocsystemically imbricated" (Buell *Future* 103). Heidegger, therefore, is a starting point rather than an end, with the mindful presence that dwelling requires. This can be accomplished by "refraining from all production, manipulation, and so on" (Heidegger, *Being* 61), recognizing the agency of the nonhuman entity, and leaving "something beforehand in its own nature, when we return it specifically to its being, when we 'free' it in the real sense of the word into a preserve of peace… *The fundamental character* [of dwelling] *is this sparing and preserving*" ("Building" 149, sic). In literature, sparing and preserving takes different forms, which this dissertation attempts to identify.

Heidegger's trajectory in ecocriticism is neither stable nor particularly illustrious; since the early 1990s, he has been embraced, avoided, reviled, and resurrected in turn. His influence has waned but never disappeared: both Heidegger's detractors (Garrard *Ecocriticism*, "Heidegger Nazism Ecocriticism"; Morton *Ecological Thought*) and his

"rehabilitators" (Claborn, T. Clark, S. Clark, Morton *Hyperobjects*) generally acknowledge this significant influence. With the posthumous publication of Heidegger's Black Notebooks, his philosophical journals, there has been a storm of discussion surrounding the explicit anti-Semitism they contain and, subsequently, the validity of his philosophical works. As Jonathan Ree states, "the best of what Heidegger wrote – indeed the best of philosophy in general – is not an injunction to agree with a proffered opinion, but a plea to all of us to make our thinking more thoughtful" (Ree). That said, there is no reason to excuse or dismiss Heidegger's anti-Semitism, even though it was largely theoretical. Judith Wolfe differentiates between his overall philosophy, and his anti-Semitic comments, though she does not deny links between the two:

> Heidegger's literary armchair approach is also his great weakness. The real danger of his comments about the Jews is not merely that they are racist but that they seem to hold out an abstract, poetic typology as a replacement for political awareness: by reducing the Jews to a poetic type, he becomes deaf to their practical plight. (Wolfe)

Heidegger's anti-Semitic thoughts, influential as they were, were certainly damaging. However, they do not erase the value of his other work: Heidegger is, Lawrence Buell states, a "key precursive figure for many environmental critics, though a somewhat embarrassing one (in light of his Nazism and the 'green' face of National Socialism), whose legacy must be carefully sifted if ecocentrism is not to be tarred by this brush" (*Future* 165). Part of this careful sifting is looking at how his work can be used positively.

On a philosophical level, the abstraction of his thoughts about Jews is similar to the abstraction that critics like Phillips and Morton have levelled at Heidegger and his early ecocritical adopters. Heidegger's abstraction enables new thought processes, but stops short of action. That, of course, is debatable, depending on how the term "action" is considered, but in the contemporary ecocritical context, when, for better or worse, the paradigm demands some material consequence, this is still an issue.

In the years before ecocriticism had coalesced into a movement, it was Robert Pogue Harrison's book *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1992) which applied Heidegger's concepts of clearing, en-framing, and dwelling to literary texts. Harrison's work continues to be relatively influential, particularly his interpretation of Heidegger's concept of *aletheia* - clearing as the space in which truth is present - in a literal but compelling manner: Harrison imagines the relationship between human and nonhuman through the relationship with the forest. He states that once humans became conscious that they were in a forest, that there was a horizon that divided their immediate location from the rest of the world (indeed, the existence of the rest of the world) the focus of Western civilization changed. He sets up a tension between clearing as locus of human activity, forest as external, and the boundary lines as being the place from which humans can truly be human. Thus, representations of the forests in the Western collective imagination as represented by cultural artifacts and production reflect humankind's concerns and anxieties about their behaviour.

Early ecocritical work also draws, to a certain extent, on Harrison's book, and the concepts of "dwelling" and of "standing reserve" were adopted as descriptors for ecological issues. Dwelling in particular became part of the ecocritical lexicon. In *The Ecocriticism Reader,* for example, Cynthia Deitering mentions Heidegger's idea of the "standing reserve" as a possible paradigm for current industrial society as represented in the contemporary novel: "what we call the Real is now represented not as the standing-reserve but as the already-used-up" (199). Dana Phillips, in the same anthology, also engages with the idea of the "standing-reserve" as developing the idea of technology as *logos*: a tool that uses human intellect to separate the human and the nonhuman (218). This early usage has contributed to the aforementioned material aspect of recent ecocriticism.

However, Heidegger's position is still insecure. His theories have been regularly criticized, sometimes in the spirit of exclusion, sometimes in the spirit of dialogue, and it is still uncertain as to whether or not his theories will be openly used.

Greg Garrard has been the ecocritic leading the charge against Heidegger, for various reasons. Though Garrard was a student of Jonathan Bate's, and published at least one article using Heideggerian methods[9], he has vigorously disassociated himself from the philosopher in several venues during ecocriticism's second wave. In both editions of Routledge's field-defining *Ecocriticism*, Garrard dismisses Heidegger's philosophy as "all too congruent with the strand in Nazi ideology that stressed the relationship of German blood and soil" (*Ecocriticism* 2004, 111-112).

[9] "Heidegger, Heaney, and the Problem of Dwelling." (1998)

While, as aforementioned, there are very real issues surrounding Heidegger's Nazism, it is erroneous to dismiss Heidegger's philosophy for that reason. Furthermore, Garrard himself gets tied up in his arguments. As he states in *Ecocriticism*, Heidegger's ideology is a "brutal imperial georgic" (2004 112). However, this line of thought remains inconclusive; Garrard is forced to admit, nearly in the same breath, that neither the philosophy nor certain applications of that philosophy are, in themselves, negative: "the virtues of nature conservation and organic farming are in no way compromised by their promotion by Nazis, and there is no sign in any major part of the modern environmental movement of fascist authoritarianism. Nevertheless, it is significant that environmentally oriented georgic ideology should have been so easily appropriated" (2004 112). And yet, there is no detailed critique of the problematic: Garrard can only vaguely conclude that "Heidegger is important to ecocritics because he set out to 'think dwelling', but in doing so became a nexus of georgic philosophy and the vast destruction wrought by German National Socialism" (2004 113) - a slippery slope argument, certainly.

Garrard was taken to task by Lawrence Buell for this vague demonization: "Yes, Heidegger's reverence for living-in-rustic-place-and-letting-Nature-be is inextricable from his *Heimat* ideology, but reverence for living in rustic place and letting nature be is not ipso facto fascist; the relation between the two is not intrinsic but historically contingent" (Buell *Future* 103). Despite this criticism, Garrard attempted to finish the excision of Heidegger's philosophy in his 2010 article "Heidegger Nazism Ecocriticism" (a play on Heidegger's essay "Building Dwelling Thinking"). Garrard's argument that *Dasein* is nothing more than a play on words, and that Heidegger without *Dasein* is only a criticism of Enlightenment

rationality that has been done so much better by others is weak at best. By stating the non-existence of *Dasein* (an idea that is, in itself, ironic), Garrard plays with multiple meanings of the verb "to be" to affirm that there is no "awesome, humble disclosure of what *is*" (260). This is unconvincing, based as his argument is on grammatical principles rather than philosophical ones. By so doing, he commits the same sophistry of which he accuses Heidegger. In short, Garrard demonstrates that he simply does not have the philosophical background necessary to interpret, much less expunge, Heidegger's influence. It is notable that Garrard has not mentioned Heidegger since that article appeared, despite thoughtful reactions to the continuing use of Heidegger in Ecocriticism from John Claborn, Timothy Clark, and Timothy Morton[10].

Furthermore, the attempted dissociation of Heidegger and ecocriticism is also problematic for reasons beyond the internal contradictions of Garrard's work. Anthony Lioi questions "the choice of Martin Heidegger as alpha dog of environmental philosophy. While undoubtedly important, the Heideggerian tradition stands alongside Emersonian pragmatism, the ecosophy of Arne Naess, Murray Bookchin's social ecology, ecofeminism, and Buddhist and indigenous philosophies as one of the fountainheads of contemporary environmental theory and praxis" (417). Garrard, by setting Heidegger up as an opponent of the principles of ecocriticism, has emphasized Heidegger's presence and importance. The philosophers Lioi enumerates have come to the fore in ecocriticism, however, and their use emphasizes the second, and most pressing, controversy related to Heidegger's work, a

[10] Richard Kerridge wrote the "Year's Work" summary for 2012, instead of Garrard: that was the first year since 2010 that Heidegger had been substantively mentioned.

"resistance to the mystical-holistic dimension of deep ecology …[and] even more significantly growing skepticism about the adequacy if not the inherent legitimacy of lines of analysis that privilege subjective perception/experience as against social context/human collectivities" (Buell, "Emerging Trends" 90). This question, I think, is a legitimate one, and one I will address as part of the Heideggerian aspect of this dissertation.

In the final chapter of *The Song of the Earth* (2002), perhaps "the high point to date" (Buell, "Emerging Trends" 90) of the use of Heideggerian concepts, Jonathan Bate seems to address the questions surrounding the perceived naïveté of a Heideggerian approach to ecocriticism. To Bate, the purpose of this approach is not to implement immediate change, but to address human consciousness. However, because Bate qualifies this approach as being pre-political (*Song* 40)[11], he seems to sidestep the whole question of Heidegger's "troubling humanistic elitism" (Westling "Ecopoetics" 237) and take refuge in ecopoetics that was essentially the equivalent of a passive environmentalism. Bate embraced Heidegger's post-Turn insistence on "language speaking man" (Wheeler), and his "imaginative entry" (23), but his more literal interpretation of the term "poetry" to mean literary work has led to a broader misunderstanding, in ecocriticism, that the insistence that poetry can save the earth essentially maintains the status quo of literary studies.

Louise Westling engages with that misunderstanding, stating that "Heidegger's confidence in poetry as giving access to full Being is indeed heartening in an era of

[11] John Parham states that this is "seemingly prompted by anxieties about Heidegger's Nazi affiliations" ("Poverty" 29).

diminishing respect for literature and the other arts" ("Ecopoetics" 236). However, she cites Heidegger's dwelling as being incompatible with genuine ecocritical praxis because it is only available to some humans, presumably those that are educated enough to be aware ("Ecopoetics" 237). Timothy Morton also critiques the Heideggerian approach as being "a refusal to engage the present moment" (qtd. in T.Clark 14). Rob Nixon, in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), builds on Val Plumwood's concept of "'shadow' places whose depleted soils and disrupted communities are bearing the true cost of the weekly shop" (Plumwood, qtd in Clark 2013) when he states that the intense focus on the individual is a profoundly and intransigently first-world perspective which does not address the gradual environmental degradation in the developing world.

A return to Heidegger's ontological starting point, the valuable displacement of Dasein, comes from various sources, John Claborn in particular. This return is also part of a more general return to European philosophers read and interpreted in an ecocritical context, particularly following the publication of *Ecocritical Theory: New Critical Approaches* (2011) edited by Kate Rigby and Axel Goodbody. In his 2011 response to Greg Garrard's "Heidegger Nazism Ecocriticism", Claborn states, as Timothy Clark and Lawrence Buell also do, that it is not necessarily Heidegger that is problematic in the context of ecocriticism. Rather, it is the way aspects of Heidegger's thought have been used and interpreted, as summarized above.

Claborn himself acknowledges the inextricable nature of Heidegger's involvement with ecocriticism, notably his influence on Harrison and Bate's work, as well as the

legitimate concern about potentially fascist leanings, but the focus of the essay proposes an alternative to the excision of Heidegger from the ecocritical canon: a reevaluation of what can be used in a broader-ranging way. Claborn's own interpretation is that "ecocriticism can still benefit from the young Heidegger of *Being and Time*, who asked the ontological question so forcefully" (Claborn 379) This seems to have borne fruit. The "fashionably-reviled" Heidegger (Hay) is being redeployed; there are three scholarly articles in the May 2013 issue of ISLE alone that use Heidegger in this increasingly popular way: a discussion of the link between self and production, and the resulting dwelling, for a certain value of dwelling.

Mustapha Fahmi, in his 2014 monograph Dwelling *in the Forest of Arden: An Ecological Reading of Shakespeare's As You Like It* reclaims the georgic aspect of Heidegger's arguments. Fahmi states that the georgic is a vehicle for dwelling because it is not a misinterpretation of nature, like the pastoral, but rather a celebration of "the farmer and his attunement to the natural order" (28). It is the nonhuman of the country rather than the nonhuman of the city, as the rise of English georgic poetry following the decentralization of power after the English revolution attests. In "As You Like It", Fahmi documents the way in which the forest of Arden, as a being in its own right, converts the play's characters from a pastoral view; by its very existence, Arden breaks down "The artificiality of pastoral convention" (43). The Duke Senior, and to a certain extent, Orlando, learn to approach the nonhuman on terms that are not based on anthropocentric ideals that are, tellingly, linked with love (In this dissertation, the ideals are linked with home, but the process is fairly similar). Instead, these characters learn to recognize trees and animals, as

well as the forest, as existing beyond their utility to humans. This recognition allows the characters to spare and preserve the earth, and thus, to dwell.

Timothy Morton, on the other hand, directly rejects the concept of dwelling in both *Ecology Without Nature* and *The Ecological Thought.* However, he does address ontological questions throughout his oeuvre, and his concepts are perhaps more closely linked to Heidegger than Morton would like to say (S.Clark). This is borne out by the current of thought running through *Hyperobjects*, which is frankly Heideggerian; Morton himself credits this to Graham Harman's part in extending the definition of *Dasein* to objects and animals as well as people, but in so doing, he re-acknowledges the Heidegger whose environmentalism he dismissed as "a sad, stunted bonsai version" (*Ecological* 27): "Harman… discovered a gigantic coral reef of sparkling things beneath the Heideggerian U-boat. The U-boat was already traveling at a profound ontological depth, and any serious attempt to break through in philosophy must traverse these depths, or risk being stuck in the cupcake aisle of the ontological supermarket" (14). This is characteristic Morton hyperbole, but he does make a memorable argument. It is important to note, however, that Morton is re-embracing *Dasein* rather than dwelling (or, perhaps more specifically, the first-wave interpretation of dwelling). The concepts he develops, from the broader "ecological thought" to the "strange stranger" and "the mesh", are based on both Heidegger and other interpreters of Heidegger. His "mesh" is oddly similar to what Arne Naess, the founder of deep ecology, called the "biospherical net" (qtd. in Buell, *Future* 102), as well as Heidegger's fourfold. Though there have been comments about Morton's "rebranding" of

concepts that have been explained by prior critics (Garrard, "Year's Work" 2011), his terms have become common ecocritical currency.

The ecological thought is Morton's primary way of thinking about nature. It challenges several of the more prevalent dictums of ecocriticism, proposing, for example, displacement over place, darkness over optimism, and a broader acceptance of sentience over the idea of humans in a dominant position in the world: "The ecological thought admits the notion of urgent environmental crisis—haunted as it always is by apocalypticism—while looking way beyond it" (Garrard, "Heidegger" 203). To give texture to this, Morton imagines what *is* as an infinity of separate entities joined together in a "mesh". This interconnectedness is both alien and intensely intimate, a contrast which gives rise to a "strange strangeness" when we realize that we can never know another entity completely. However, Morton postulates that perhaps this is what we need in order to be truly conscious of our position in the world: "humans must not act from a sense of irrational spontaneous connectedness. Instead…they must reflect rationally on their decentered place in the Universe and on their inability to account for this disorientation" (Morton, *Thought* 22). This meets up with Heidegger's conceptualization of self: "embedded in a mesh of interconnectedness in which everything looks strange" (S. Clark 107).

This reflection creates the need for something Morton calls "dark ecology." Dark ecology treats the concept of nature as both suspect and limiting, positing that nature, even in ecocriticism, is often treated as an aesthetic concept and becomes, under such treatment,

"reified [and] plastic" (Morton, *The Ecological Thought* 104). With Heidegger, Morton encourages us to "turn toward the being and think about it in regard to its being, but by means of this thinking at the same time let it rest upon itself in its very own being" (Heidegger, "Origin" 31). Instead, he proposes a refusal to idealize the object (Morton, *Ecology* 195) – this also applies to ecocritical theory, and therefore, prior theories are not so much refuted as held in tension with each other. The whole character of dark ecology, therefore, highlights the marginality, plurality, and contradiction of human existence.

This general revival and reinterpretation of Heidegger has been grafted on to the continuing ecocritical discussion of place and place attachment. Though first-wave ecocriticism was fervent in its defense of place as both ideal and essential, and though a focus on the local was an integral part of second-wave ecocriticism, the current trends in ecocriticism appear, so far, to be espousing a dual approach, one that recognizes the value of locality but also the value of a displacement that can be mediated by theory: "the world only becomes 'readable' when localised (empirical) knowledge is allied to theoretical paradigms and political awareness… one's own place needs to be supplemented, that is, by conceptual understanding" (Parham, "Poverty" 35). This suggestion encompasses the concerns of ecocriticism and provides a valuable methodological tool: by looking at place attachment and detachment, it is possible to form a more complete picture of the way in which people conceptualize place.

Such an inclusive approach also allows a personal link to place that does not consist entirely of "sentimental environmental determinism" (Buell, *Future* 66); rather, it allows a

less reified conception of place. As Timothy Morton points out, *"*Our notions of place are retroactive fantasy constructs determined precisely by the corrosive effects of modernity. Place was not lost, though we posit it as something we have lost. Even if place as an actually existing, rich set of relationships does not (yet) exist, place is part of our worldview *right now." (*Morton, *Ecology* 11, sic). Heidegger famously exalts the peasant hut, which is both a real place and a "retroactive fantasy construct", but at the same time, insists that displacement is fundamental to both *Dasein* and dwelling. This duality shows that he seeks to reconcile location and dislocation in the concept of Being.

However, it has been stated that Heidegger's dwelling, at certain points, is a "petit bourgeois concern with 'rootedness'… part of Heidegger's notorious period of allegiance to the Nazi party in the 1930s" (T. Clark 59) is an excellent starting point for the arguments of this study. This is not to say that Clark's and Buell's concerns about the way this hut is deployed as an example of belonging to the earth are unjustified. They are, especially in that they are indicative of "the eco-fascism latent in too hasty a rejection of enlightenment ideals of universal rationality in favour of the cultivating of a close, would-be *'authentic' relationship* to one's local place, traditions, and dialect" [emphasis added] (T. Clark 59). In other words, an unquestioned relationship is a dangerous one, in that it cuts off avenues of perception and thought.

I am embracing this starting point, then, because Heidegger's most controversial example of dwelling, the peasant's hut in the Black Forest, has a certain resonance in conjunction with both Susanna Moodie and Elizabeth Gaskell's attitudes and experiences.

Heidegger's theories of dwelling have been interpreted as both restrictive and profound; I would argue that they are both, carrying a nostalgia for a bygone Europe and opening the discussion towards a much broader interpretation of human essence. Similarly, Moodie and Gaskell either experience or document the dissolution of a Romantic vision of authentic "Nature" in relation to the nonhuman. This lays the groundwork for the transition of ecocritical focus from a Romantic interpretation of Heidegger to questions of a more nuanced, open interpretation of Being.

Though Heidegger may be in disfavour, his conceptualizations of the liminality of the human being and the role of the home space do remain fundamental to current ecological thought. The idea of home as a liminal space that is open to, and indeed part of the nonhuman world, is an argument put forth, at least in part, by Gaston Bachelard, Robert Pogue Harrison, and Susan Fraiman. Harrison's theory provides a way of looking at the situation of human home spaces in the forest, while Bachelard explores the poetics of the interior. Fraiman uses Bachelard as a starting point for a theory of shelter writing, a reclamation of domesticity that overlaps with the problem of domesticity in the nineteenth century.

Gaston Bachelard

> "La maison est un corps d'images qui donnent à l'homme des raisons ou des illusions de stabilité."
> –Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique De L'espace*

Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) was originally a scientist, and then an epistemologist of science; his career in literary criticism came later in life. It did overlap with his scientific work, however, though his "psychoanalysis of a most unusual sort" (Gilson vii) did cause some consternation amongst his colleagues. *The Poetics of Space* (1958), one of his last books, is a phenomenological analysis of home space and the way in which humans experience that space. Like Heidegger, Bachelard sets the individual poetic image, whether written or simply dreamed, at the centre of an experience of place.

Bachelard defines the house as "un corps d'images qui donnent à l'homme des raisons ou des illusions de la stabilite" (34). The house as a collection of unstable images—that is, memories and daydreams—and space, either distant or immediate, echoes the division between human and nonhuman, just as Harrison's clearings and forests do, but at the same time defines the home as fundamentally unstable.

Nevertheless, the house remains a space of protection that envelops its inhabitant without domination:

> il y a ici communauté de la force, concentration de deux courages, de deux résistances. Quel image de concentration d'être que cette maison qui se 'serre' contre son habitant, qui déviant la cellule d'un corps avec ses murs

> proches. Le refuge s'est contracté. Et avantage protecteur, il est devenu extérieurement plus fort. De refuge, il est devenu redoute. (57)

This unity effects the transformation of house from material object to humanized space (59), but a humanized space that requires the exterior in order to exist. Bachelard uses the term "indoor-outdoor dialectic" to describe this relationship. To Bachelard, separating interior and exterior "geometrically", that is, completely, is a "cancérisation géométrique du tissue linguistique" (192). Bachelard sees the relationship between human and house as something that is united, that forms a pairing that both resists and needs the outside world. In other words, the "storm makes sense of shelter… [it is these] vicissitudes that make the simplest of simple huts shine in strength of sheltering" (Gilson viii) as well as unifies the human and the built environment.

There is, though, a tension between Robert Pogue Harrison's statement that "We derive our shelter from the earth, not from the house that shuts it out" (Harrison 234) and Bachelard's indoor-outdoor dialectic, in which the house is an agent that actively resists the outside in order to protect its human inhabitants. Bachelard humanizes the house, underscoring its "resistance humaine" (56) and its "maternite" (57): "La maison prend les energies physiques et morales d'un corps humain" (57). This opposition is what Bachelard calls a rivalry with the natural world; the house is "un instrument à affronter le cosmos" (58). Paradoxically, he establishes this rivalry while extending the image of home as refuge to nonhuman home spaces like nests and shells because, despite the indoor-outdoor rivalry,

he does equate nature with all that is good; it remains a locus of virtue, of ideals. Consider this quotation about the lack of value in city houses. There is a

> manque de cosmicité de la maison des grandes villes. Les maisons n'y sont plus dans la nature. Les rapports de la demeure et de l'espace y deviennent factices. Tout y est machine et la vie intime y fuit de toute part ….Et la maison ne connaît pas les drames d'univers. Parfois le vent vient briser une tuile du toit pour tuer un passant dans la rue. Ce crime du toit ne vise que le passant attardé. L'éclair un instant met le feu dans les vitres de la fenêtre. Mais la maison ne tremble pas sous les coups du tonnerre. Elle ne tremble pas avec nous et par nous. (42-43)

Bachelard really does insist that a house only exists when it is in relationship with the nonhuman, but the nonhuman is defined fairly narrowly as "Nature", something outside over there. The city homes are still subject to the nonhuman, but it is a negative, brutal subjection, without the sympathy and interpenetrability of a freestanding house.

Furthermore, both the house and the hut dream are positioned at the centre of human experience: "la hutte est la solitude centré" (46). However, this does not necessarily mean that Bachelard sees the human as the centre of the universe; rather, the house/hut dreams are at the centre of human imagining: "Autour de cette solitude centrée rayonne un univers qui médite et qui prie, un univers hors de l'univers" (46). It is an essentially Romantic conceptualization of the nonhuman world, with one major difference: the human experience with "Nature" is mediated by, and, really, predicated on, the home.

This narrowness and insistence on individuality of Bachelard's theories has drawn criticism. The focus on a privileged Western viewpoint as being universal is problematic; as Joe Moran points out, Bachelard "has internalized…historically recent distinctions" (29) such as divided rooms, privacy, and gendered space. This unquestioned idea of home, then, available only to a certain class and culture, corresponds, to a certain extent, with the Victorian "Home", and therefore, as with Heidegger, though, that makes Bachelard a compelling resource for this study. Their similar ideas of instability and interaction between indoors and outdoors is a useful starting point for a discussion of the ways in which personally constructed home space is flawed and permeable.

Buell cites Bachelard as being influential in ecocriticism (*Future* 101) because, along with Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Arne Naess, he "[focuses] on life as experienced by prototypical humans rather than on environmental history or natural processes or social struggle" (Future 102). Jonathan Bate's use of Gaston Bachelard's phenomenological analysis of home spaces and natural spaces in *The Song of the Earth*, contributed significantly to this influence. Ultimately, Bachelard fits into the ecocritical mode that is "nondualistic, embodied, and relational" (Westling, "Forum" 1105). He is often paired with Heidegger, not only because of his focus on the poetic image, but because of his non-linear use of time and the insistence that writing and reading occur in a shared space.

However, though Gaston Bachelard has been used in ecocritically-oriented essays fairly consistently since ISLE's inception, it has usually been as a supplement to other

theorists. Since 2011, however, there have been two articles that use aspects of Bachelard's theory more extensively: Rachel Collins' article on Willa Cather's treatment of home space, personhood, and animality, in which she applies the concept of felicitious space as a condition of the human, and David Ward's use of the "poetic image as a real phenomenon" (324) in his analysis of spatial dialectics in Chinese poetry. In this dissertation, I will use the indoor-outdoor dialectic, the tension and overlap of human and nonhuman space, as a measure of the permeability of the home and thus the openness to the nonhuman environment.

Shelter Writing

Contemporary work on domestic space in ecocriticism is still in its beginning stages, though it is generally agreed that there is room in the field for that particular discussion. The debate on the integration of built space and nonhuman space is ongoing. My contribution to this debate is the suggestion that Susan Fraiman's theory of shelter writing, described below, is fundamentally ecological, incorporating and refuting as it does both Bachelardian and Heideggerian principles. Shelter writing also aligns in several crucial ways with Timothy Morton's ecological thought.

In defining the concept of shelter writing, Susan Fraiman attempts "an appreciative exploration of domestic order, stability, and ritual—especially from the perspective of those whose exilic status has deprived them of these very things" (350). Instead of houses and the actions that pertain to them as "inherently bourgeois and suspect" (350), shelter writing seeks to reclaim domesticity for any vulnerable or marginal person (344). This idea not

only echoes the most compelling elements of Heidegger's dwelling, uncertainty and awareness, but also explicitly incorporates Bachelard's ideas into a more inclusive version of the creation of a home.

The shelters in Fraiman's concept are Bachelard's "felicitous space" in the sense that they are both loving (in the sense of protective) and loved, but what Fraiman rejects is "a complacent sense of class pride and entitlement" (349). Fraiman takes the aspect of Bachelard's work in which "storm makes sense of shelter" (Stilgoe viii) and expands on it. Though, for shelter writing, the storm that threatens home space is one of social pressures rather than nonhuman forces, her concept of shelter writing contributes nonetheless two very significant aspects to this study.

First, Fraiman's reclamation of domesticity directly opposed to the "domesticity that kills" (398) is important both in the context of nineteenth-century fiction and ecocriticism. It redraws the lines of home space in an egalitarian, if perhaps somewhat anachronistic way, that allows a broader look at the nature of the home as a function of being human rather than a space of patriarchal confinement. Her conceptualization of home space does not mean forgetting that aspect that confines women to a subordinate, limited role, but it takes that as only part of a broader meaning of home.

This involves a greater materialism, both in the recognition of the physical nature of housekeeping (in a broader sense of creating and maintaining a home) and the tactile nature of the home space. The bodies of those that maintain the house are elided in Bachelard; he glorifies/celebrates "la civilisation de la cire" (74) without acknowledging the physical

actions of the (usually feminine) individuals that perform it. As Fraiman points out, he highlights this exclusion when he quotes Rilke as saying how much he enjoyed cleaning the house when his housekeeper was sick. Fraiman, on the other hand, acknowledges the labour that is necessary to maintain home space.

The second concept that helps define and guide this study is the juxtaposition of the finished interior and the shelter. The socially excluded shelter-builder is uncomfortable in a home space that is already constructed by others; these spaces need no additional work and can be, in consequence, confining, dangerous, or unwelcoming. The shelter space, as precarious as it is, is safer. The reason for this safety is an aspect of Fraiman's theory that remains largely unarticulated. As a metaphor for society, this increased safety could signify the exclusionary nature of social norms, but this is a fairly obvious comparison.

Subsequently, Fraiman's insistence on the dual creation of the home, by physical effort and the effort of writing, in a cyclical pattern, recalls Heidegger's "building". Mindful installation and manipulation of even seemingly frivolous objects (a china kitten, for example) is essential to the construction of a shelter and reinforces the tactile aspect of the home. Heidegger's insistence on "techne" a thoughtful construction of something that is recognized as it is used, as it takes space and performs functions in everyday life, applies to this principle; the finished interior is pre-existing and, as such, not a space in which humans can dwell. There is nothing in the finished interior to which vulnerable humans can attach themselves.

The creation of shelters, the obligation to create shelters is also cyclical, which recalls Heidegger's insistence that "man must ever learn to dwell" ("Building" 44). A shelter must not only be created and maintained through the physical involvement of the individual, but written as well. The repetitive, circular nature of homemaking contributes to the materiality of shelter writing (Fraiman 345), and the writing adds a Heideggerian dimension of seeking dwelling in the world from a vulnerable human position.

The Heideggerian aspect of Fraiman's theory turns both on the act of writing and on the joint acceptance of loss. Fraiman's space of shelter is

> [Often] small, rickety, rigged up. What [the] instances of shelter writing stage is… gratitude, relief, pride in ingenuity, and other feelings born of a sense of physical and social precariousness. They are, as we have seen, apt to occur in the context of shipwreck or some other traumatic exile; their descriptions of towels and tea sets are frequently just pages away from homelessness, social unrest, personal and political violence; and the comfort they represent is usually all too temporary. Likewise, the characters therein are marginal in one way or another. They are all, in a manner of speaking, survivors, and their relationship to beautiful, functional, and safe interiors is underwritten by terror and longing. (Fraiman 349)

To construct one's home as a shelter from the outside is both Bachelardian and Heideggerian, but Fraiman extends the definition of external threats beyond the nonhuman. In fact, her shelter protects the human from the human; the nonhuman, or at least the

inanimate, is more welcome. To a certain extent, this connects with Heidegger's conception of dwelling: "being able and called to recognise the infinite possibilities but also the terrible precariousness of existence, and to 'stand in the storm' of that exposure, rejecting the false security both of appetite-driven drifting and of socially dictated roles" (Wolfe). A more exactly Heideggerian characteristic, however, is that, in Fraiman, writing about the home-making processes is part of a way to counteract displacement and precariousness: "as soon as a man gives thought to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that calls mortals into their dwelling" (Heidegger 161). Shelter writing gives thought to homelessness by defining the precarious home both by embodied and linguistic experience; the physical labour of housekeeping is incomplete without the mental labour of writing to shore it up and bring it into existence (353).

Shelter writing also relies on the same type of fractured outside world as well as the deliberate holding in tension of essentialized concepts as the ecological thought. For Fraiman, "home and homelessness, interior and exterior, feminine and masculine, manual and mental labour, queer and straight do not oppose so much as encounter and inform one another. [Shelter writing is]…attuned to the instability as well as utility of its binary terms" (Fraiman 351). This sounds a great deal like Morton's exhortation at the end of *Ecology Without Nature*: "Instead of positing a nondualistic pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, we could hang out in what feels like dualism. This hanging out would be a more nondual approach….holding our mind open for the absolutely unknown that is to come" (Morton 205). Being in touch with the absolutely unknown through an experience of home space is a concept that is profoundly applicable to nineteenth-century literature. What I want to do is

re-think the way in which we read environment in Victorian fiction: it is less of a whole state, no matter how much influence Wordsworth had, and more of a series of fractured elements (Phillips). "Nature" is only part of the picture.

In Gaskell and Moodie's writing, home as shelter, which can only occur after loss, becomes inextricably intertwined with the nonhuman world, which is not simply a backdrop, or Other, but an agent in itself. In some cases, this interaction provides a template for some characters to acquire an agency of their own. These characters make the transition from finished interiors to shelters; they move from a strictly codified relationship between human and nonhuman to a more open, de-centred relationship that acknowledges the fragility of the human. Gaskell is seen as profoundly rooted in place, despite her displacement, while Moodie is constantly portrayed as uprooted, as dangerously detached from any kind of home space. My argument is that while both women have what we could call a contemporary ecological consciousness (i.e. a recognition of the nonhuman as having agency as well as the knowledge that humans are not the centre of the universe) Moodie, because of her greater displacement, has a radically ecological mindset.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: Places Presented as Perfect

> "Dear home! Why did I leave it? There is something pure and holy in the very air of home. See, papa! There is the church spire rising above the trees. The dear old elm trees! We shall have time to think here, to hope, to pray"
> –Susanna Moodie, *Mark Hurdlestone: Or, the Two Brothers*

> "Buildings, which in their very form call to mind the processes of Nature, do thus, clothed in part with vegetable garb, appear to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things"
> –William Wordsworth, *A Guide*

Loss and nostalgia are key aspects of Victorian interaction with place. In England, starting in the late eighteenth century, modern technology was available to alter land more significantly than ever. Moving, draining, and planting joined with industry to make drastic changes in the material form of the landscape. Middle-class Victorians had a very conflicted response to these alterations; though they believed in a teleology of progress, they also subscribed to "that very powerful myth of modern England in which the transition from a rural to an industrial society is seen as a kind of fall, the true cause and origin of our social suffering and disorder" (Williams, *Country* 97). Furthermore, as scientific knowledge increased and new natural phenomena were brought back by colonizers and explorers, there was a growing uncertainty about what constituted "Nature." This uncertainty, along with the continuing effects of industrialization, is expressed in John Ruskin's 1864 lecture, "Of Queen's Gardens,"[12] when, though he pronounces on "Home"

[12] This lecture was given in Manchester, though it is not clear from Gaskell's letters whether she attended or not.

as being a place of peace, he also states that "outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their lifeblood" (par. 78). Thus, though the middle-class ideal is of "Home" as a privileged space in which it might be possible "to mend the bridge between subject and object" (Morton 22) and be in harmony with the environment, there was also a certain awareness that the ideal and the perfect prelapsarian—meaning, in this case, unaltered— England it was based on was an impossibility to begin with.

Nonetheless, the ideal Victorian home space did require the presence of the nonhuman, but the nonhuman as "Nature": "Urban man's loss can be majestically counterbalanced with a landscape in stone and iron filigree, or modestly with home décor" (Frank 73). Ruskin's "little rose-covered wall", as the boundary between what is ideal and what is not, is the locus of tension between "Nature" and a nonhuman that appears to be both uncontrollable ("wild") and subject to the violence of the human race.

This tension is a major aspect of the work of Gaskell and Moodie on several levels. Both authors idealize "Home" space and the near-spiritual attachment to one's place of origin that appears to come with it. However, in rather short order, this ideal is either subverted, in the case of a perception of attachment to "Home" based on something false, or unattainable, existing in the past and thus inaccessible in the present. "Nature" is a constant presence, indoors and out, although the boundaries are usually as sharply delineated as Ruskin's.

These “Home”s are also, however, unreachable, either because the ideal is an illusion reinforced by distance or because it is held a source of power unavailable to the protagonist. Their ideals exist only in the past; they are Bachelard’s childhood home, which is vague, limitless, and exists only in the dreamer’s imagination. The characters’ conception of the nonhuman therefore, is similarly flawed; the authors’ work, like Shakespeare’s characters in Mustapha Fahmi’s Heideggerian interpretation of “As You Like It”, aims to have these characters’ ideals broken down and reconstructed in a paradigm that acknowledges the nonhuman as an entity with agency. One of the ways that Moodie and Gaskell accomplish this when describing home spaces is to cast “Nature”, the idealized nonhuman, as a site of virtue. However, it is the human-built structures and the way they are situated in relation to this construct that dictate whether humans can or cannot access this virtue: the physical placement of the building and whether or not they possesses a Bachelardian indoor-outdoor dialectic indicate whether or not the home space conforms to a questionable ideal or is a place where dwelling is possible. This serves to highlight the irretrievability of the ideal as well as to place the responsibility of accessing the Being of the nonhuman on the human, rather than on the nonhuman.

The house as dwelling space is largely determined by its doors and windows, as suggested by Udo Nattermann, who, in his discussion of the built environment in ecocriticism, draws on Slavoj Zizek’s concept of the architectural envelope, which, since it divides public and private, is an “interstitial space” and thus “automatically politically charged” (Zizek 2010, qtd. in Nattermann 113). Nattermann goes on to suggest that more specific boundary points such as windows and doors are “mundane boundaries….[which]

create particular spatial situations and ecological options that fundamentally impact the life-world of human beings" (113). Bodily experience and self-fashioning occur at these mundane boundaries, ideally at "the democratic space of the permeable border" (123) rather than at spaces that are fully open or closed.

Partly because the "Home"s in this chapter are not places in which it is possible to dwell, there are few interstitial spaces. Rather, there is a strict division between indoor and outdoor; the nonhuman is excluded in all but very codified and/or reified ways. This corresponds to what Ellen E. Frank states about the architecture of the period, that "the century closed doors and windows, settling the curious and fortunate inside a domestic landscape of artifice" (69). This artifice is, of course, what Susan Fraiman calls the finished interior, which, as mentioned in the theory chapter, is a contrast to shelters, which are less stable but, paradoxically, safer.

I will deal with the shelters in Chapter 3, but in this chapter, I will look at the nostalgia for "Home", juxtaposed with the awareness that the stability of "Home" is an illusion. The ideals that sustain this "Home", as shown by the finished interiors, are fundamentally dangerous for protagonists. To be a true shelter, an "interior is always pushing back against a threatening exterior" (Fraiman, "Shelter" 348), and these idealized homes rarely do so. Instead, without being permeable to the nonhuman, they often permit or even welcome threatening external elements, which Fraiman perceives as "a confluence of social pressures and dangers" ("Shelter" 348) for characters that are vulnerable, marginal, or both. For these characters, then, a "relationship to beautiful, functional, and

safe interiors is underwritten by terror and longing" (Fraiman, "Shelter" 349). Though they are objects of desire, with their ideal settings and their established domesticity, the homes to which the characters are attached are profoundly unsafe, whether they be country houses, cottages, whole villages, or the nonhuman world itself.

This chapter begins with a look at the way different classes of houses relate to the nonhuman world. "Big", or country houses, while "the most desirable dwelling to which a middle-class individual could aspire" (Gorham 9), are perhaps the most dangerous buildings for Moodie and Gaskell's protagonists, who do, at least at first, openly idealize these spaces. However, as finished interiors that are closed off from "Nature", the big houses are always, in the end, fundamentally unsound examples of the relationship between human and nonhuman.

Size, however, does not always indicate the security of a home. The smaller childhood "Home"s in both Gaskell's industrial novel *North and South*, and Moodie's thinly fictionalized works, *Rachel Wilde* and *Flora Lyndsay,* appear to be stable but are also hermetically sealed against the nonhuman and thus, no safe space. Reydon Hall, Moodie's childhood home, and the Helstone of Gaskell's protagonist Margaret Hale are presented as perfect dwelling places, but they are instead idealized yet unstable home spaces that prepare their residents to come to a greater understanding of the difference between "Nature" and the nonhuman. These accounts are also balanced with cautionary tales about the danger of clinging too closely to an ideal; Mr. Holbrook, in Gaskell's *Cranford*, and Brian the still-hunter in Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, idealize openly, and, as such, are entirely

without resort when their ideals are displaced or challenged. Smaller homes, though, are also sites in which domesticity kills: Gaskell's "The Moorland Cottage" and Moodie's *The World Before Them*, for example, stifle and choke their residents even as those residents seek to maintain domestic ideals and a liveable indoor-outdoor dialectic.

Finished Exterior, Finished Interior

Country houses in Moodie and Gaskell are likely to shut the nonhuman out, or depend, as aforementioned, on human interpretations of "Nature". Thus, the manmade garden and often-neglected grounds are an integral part of the homes in question; however, the original description of their interdependence often comprises the full extent of the movement between interior and exterior space. Moodie upholds this strict interior-exterior division, while Gaskell describes "Home" space that appears to conform to the give-and-take of Gaston Bachelard's indoor-outdoor dialectic. Furthermore, Gaskell's thresholds are more explicit, and the overlap suggests, but does not guarantee, a less conflicted relationship between human and nonhuman.

Susanna Moodie wrote *Roughing It in the Bush* in Canada, more than two decades after her departure from England. However, England is still "Home" for her, both the country itself and her childhood home, Reydon Hall, in Suffolk. It is her touchstone in Canada, when "Home" means a place that is distant, inaccessible, and unchangeable.

Like Heidegger's Black Forest hut, Reydon Hall is conflated with landscape. When Flora Lyndsay, the Moodie character in the eponymous book, is going to emigrate, she receives this homily from her mother:

> "Always hope for the best, Flora; it is my plan. I have found it true wisdom. Put on your bonnet, and take a ramble through the garden and meadows; it will refresh you after so many harassing thoughts. Your favourite trees are in full leaf, the hawthorn hedges in blossom, and the nightingales sing every evening in the wood-lane. You cannot feel miserable among such sights and sounds of beauty in this lovely month of May, or you are not the same Flora I ever knew you." … Flora put on her bonnet, and went forth to take a last look of home." (144; ch. 12)

Flora's home is outdoors, rather than in; though the home contains her mother, and mirrors the ideal that Moodie has already constructed for herself in *Flora Lyndsay,* discussed later in this chapter. Reydon Hall is the center of Flora's (and, to a certain extent, Moodie's) point of view; the outdoors—garden, meadows, hedges, and lanes—is her "Home": "The building was surrounded by fine gardens, and lawn-like meadows, and stood sheltered within a grove of noble old trees" (144; ch. 12). The trees shelter the house, which demonstrates that the home itself is in need of protecting. This could have been an indication of a genuine shelter, except that, as I show later on, there is no room for the Moodie character within the house. She cannot view home from the inside, because she is

shut out. As such, the actual home space she laments is on the lawns rather than in the house.

That Moodie sees her home as being outdoors is problematic in several ways. First, this conflation of human and nonhuman spaces is misleading in that the nonhuman in question is a manufactured and maintained "Nature." Moodie's place attachment is predicated on years of deeply rooted human activity, of place-ness that has been deliberately cultivated and constructed into "Nature". This is not to dismiss human-engineered or human-affected space as being inadmissible as nonhuman space, because to maintain that standard falls into the environmental purity trap of early ecocriticism. What it does show is that Moodie's conception of what home and nature/the nonhuman is is profoundly anthropocentric: "Home" includes human and nonhuman elements, but it must exist in a pleasing configuration and within a defined space; Moodie subscribes, at least at first, to Ruskin's sharp division between home and not-home, which is perhaps a reflection on the uncertainty of the nonhuman world that surrounds her in Canada.

In fact, to be "Home", a space must be not only bounded, but beautiful; the value Moodie assigns to the outdoor space surrounding Reydon Hall is also predicated on the season, specifically, the beauty of the season:

> "Home of my childhood! must I see you no more?" sobbed Flora. "Are you to become to-morrow a vision of the past? O that the glory of spring was not upon the earth! that I had to leave you amid winter's chilling gloom, and not in this lovely, blushing month of May! The emerald green of these

> meadows—the gay flush of these bright blossoms—the joyous song of these glad birds—breaks my heart!" (145; ch. 12)

Beauty as an essential component of "Nature" is of course part of the Wordsworthian/Ruskinian aesthetic, but also, to a certain extent, the early ecocritical perception of wilderness space as necessarily beautiful. However, this is ultimately a false perception; it is a limited definition of the nonhuman that disallows its Being.

Furthermore, it is a constant in Moodie's fiction that country houses are carefully set at the centre of a park and show that home space is bounded and centred within a built environment, and thus itself a built environment. This park and perimeter are also essential to noble houses in Moodie's fiction; they indicate the expanse of land invests the building with an apparent moral authority while still retaining the supremacy of the human. Both Heath Hall, in *The World Before Them* and Moncton Park in *Geoffrey Moncton* dominate the landscape:

> [M]ighty oak trees… flanked the entrance to the park…The carriage road to the Hall was a long gradual ascent, winding among picturesque clumps of stately forest trees, the old building crowning the height of the hill, a grand baronial edifice, built in the middle ages, whose massy walls and towers seemed to bid defiance to decay. (*TWBT* 239-40; ch IX).

> Those noble hills and vales; that bright-sweeping river; those towering woods, just bursting into verdure, and that princely mansion, rising proudly into the blue air. (*GM* 221; ch. 3)

In both cases, as with Reydon Hall, the description of the park and trees are more detailed than that of the building itself, and yet human construction is placed above the nonhuman as a pinnacle of achievement. In both descriptions, the home appears to provide the anchor point around which the landscape arranges itself, while "Nature" takes a subordinate role as boundary and setting.

In *Mark Hurdlestone*, Oak Hall is, on the surface, described elliptically: "From the time of the Norman Conquest [Hurdlestone] ancestors had inherited this tract of country; and as they were not famous for any particular talents or virtues, had passed into dust and oblivion in the vault of the old gothic church, which lifted its ivy-covered tower above the venerable oaks and yews that were coeval with its existence" (*MH* 77; ch. 1). The description separates the building ("Oak Hall") and the land ("its wide demesne"), but by emphasizing the presence of the trees alongside the built structures, Moodie reveals that "Nature" is a non-negotiable aspect of her ideal "Home" space. Unlike Reydon Hall, however, the trees are not more "Home" than the house, but only a signifier of position. The age of the trees authenticates and adds value to the human space, but the nonhuman itself does not signify as itself, only as an accessory.

The ideal interiors of the ideal country houses are carefully described in Moodie's fiction as fixed and perfect, abundant in markers of high cultural and intellectual status.

Apart from a single ray of sunlight, there are no incursions of the nonhuman, or even "Nature", inside. Moncton Hall's main room, for example, has "carved oak wainscoting and antique windows of stained glass" (*GM* 175; ch. 18), and is full of books : " 'Goldsmith's World,' 'Buffon's Natural History,' and the whole family of Encyclopedias, with their numerous prints" (*GM* 176; ch. 18). In describing Heath Hall, Moodie explicitly states the extent of the contrast between the beauty of Lord Wilton's library and the everyday world of Dorothy Chance, the protagonist:

> Was Dorothy dreaming—could she really be awake—when she first stepped into that lofty room, and gazed upon her magnificent surroundings—was she in fairy land—was that the every day sun, that was pouring a flood of wintry light upon gilded cornice and carved panel—upon inlaid tables, covered with miniature gems of art, collected at great expense from distant lands?….
>
> "Oh, what a beautiful place. It is too grand to be inhabited by people who have to work for their daily bread—who have to wear mean clothes, and soil their hands with disagreeable labour." (*TWBT* 255; vol. 1 ch. 10)

These are clearly Fraiman's "finished interiors" in which everything has its place, and this is emphasized by the description of these particular rooms by Moodie's protagonists. As is often the case in her fiction, the protagonists, while usually welcomed in the country house, are almost always middle- or working-class. As such, they are generally

shown to be closer to "Nature" and, in some cases described in chapters 3 and 4, the nonhuman than the inhabitants of the big houses, which gives the protagonists a certain moral superiority but which also makes the big houses dangerous. This is demonstrated, at least in part, by the way the protagonists enter the big houses: they come through codified entrances and, generally speaking, make the transition in stages, which emphasizes the hermetic division between indoors and outdoors.

Dorothy Chance's entrance to Heath Hall is made through the servant's gate: "A flight of broad stone steps led to the entrance, but Dorothy knew that that carved and ornamented door was never opened but to titled guests, and she stole round, unobserved, to the back of the house, and rang at the gate that led to the servants' hall" (*TWBT* 238-239; vol. 1 ch. 9). Inside, she must pass through an interview with the housekeeper before she is admitted further. Once she is actually on the threshold of the library, she steps in tentatively, and leaves the room in awe: "with a low reverence [Dorothy] glided out" (266; vol. 1 ch. 10).

Geoffrey Moncton's arrival at Moncton Hall is only slightly less complicated. Geoffrey approaches the big house surrounded by trees and then, suddenly, is in the hall:

> I turned up the broad avenue of oaks that led to the Hall….I sent up my card, which gained me instant admittance. I was shown into the library, which Harrison had so often described. A noble old room panelled to the ceiling, with carved oak now almost black with age. (220-221; ch. 3)

Both this example and the preceding one demonstrate the fairly geometric indoor-outdoor dialectic of the big House in Moodie's fiction. More precisely, in neither text is there an actual door; Dorothy Chance passes through the servant's gate but is never shown explicitly entering the house, and Geoffrey moves directly from the avenue to the entry. This omission takes away any point of permeability and reinforces the idea that big houses are, despite appearances, apart from the nonhuman. The aristocratic home space, because it is a precarious one, has to be protected and encircled and thus, shuts out the nonhuman. It is not a dwelling, but rather a fragile construction of "Home."

In Elizabeth Gaskell's work, by contrast, the big houses are explicitly intertwined with "Nature" and, to a certain extent, the nonhuman, but these places are not much more like shelters than Moodie's work. The difference between Gaskell's separation and Moodie's, though, is that Gaskell separates the character and the "Home" rather than the indoors and the outdoors. All big houses presented as "Home" spaces are seats of power, inaccessible to the protagonist, who is normally middle- or working-class, just as in Moodie's fiction; however, often this power is subverted. Gaskell's work, therefore, tends to produce fewer truly idealized homes and is, instead, a broader questioning of the possibility of ideal home space.

Perhaps the most idealized of her big houses is Hanbury Court, the main residence in her short story "My Lady Ludlow." Gaskell's overt criticism is confined to one or two comments about the old-fashioned attitudes and traditions of the titular character, Lady

Ludlow[13]. The rest of the description is a pattern of ideal space that is characteristic of many different types of home space in Gaskell's work. However, Hanbury Court exists in the narrator's far-distant past, and is, as such, unattainable.

The description of Hanbury Court is similar to the descriptions of big houses in Moodie's work. The individuality of the "Home" is related to the landscape, and the landscape is an intrinsic part of the Court itself, but still lesser: "The whole [Court] was set in a frame, as it were, by the more distant woodlands" ("MLL"; ch. 1). The Court is literally picturesque, but also dissociated from the world; not only is this house protected by distance, but it is enclosed both by woods and "waste" space:

> We had to quarter, as Randal called it, nearly all the way along the deep-rutted, miry lanes The pastures fell gradually down to the lower land, shut in on either side by rows of high elms, as if there had been a wide grand avenue here in former times. Down the grassy gorge we went, seeing the sunset sky at the end of the shadowed descent. Suddenly we came to a long flight of steps. …
>
> "Are we near the house?" said I, suddenly checked by the idea.
>
> "Down there, Miss," replied he, pointing with his whip to certain stacks of twisted chimneys rising out of a group of trees, in deep shadow against the

[13] This in itself is an interesting comment on Gaskell's use of nostalgia; she writes "My Lady Ludlow" in a *double optique* of loss and longing. It is told as being in the past of its narrator, Margaret Dawson, nested, if you will, into a situation that is in the past of the narrator of "Round the Sofa."

> crimson light, and which lay just beyond a great square lawn at the base of the steep slope of a hundred yards. ("MLL"; ch. 1)

This approach to the Court is frightening, even Gothic[14], which already subverts, to a certain extent, the ideal "Home". The kinship between the chimneys and the trees seems to indicate the importance of the relationship between human and nonhuman as well as an overlap between indoors and outdoors. However, as with Moodie's Oak Hall, the trees' role is only subordinate: they are there to indicate neglect and isolation. Their nonhuman-ness is important, but it is important only as a foil to show the strangeness of the place.

The overlap between indoors and outdoors is also present in the description of the house's architecture, which is exceptionally detailed compared to Gaskell and Moodie's other works:

> Hanbury Court is a vast red-brick house—at least, it is cased in part with red bricks; and the gate-house and walls about the place are of brick,—with stone facings at every corner, and door… At the back are the gables, and arched doorways, and stone mullions…But all this I did not see till afterwards. I hardly noticed, this first night, the great Virginian Creeper

[14] And, in fact, Gaskell uses very similar language to describe the approach to Furnivall Manor in "The Old Nurse's Tale", a story that contains numerous Gothic elements: "The road went up about two miles, and then we saw a great and stately house, with many trees close around it, so close that in some places their branches dragged against the walls when the wind blew; and some hung broken down; for no one seemed to take much charge of the place;—to lop the wood, or to keep the moss-covered carriage-way in order. Only in front of the house all was clear. The great oval drive was without a weed; and neither tree nor creeper was allowed to grow over the long, many-windowed front; at both sides of which a wing protected, which were each the ends of other side fronts; for the house, although it was so desolate, was even grander than I expected. Behind it rose the Fells; which seemed unenclosed and bare enough" (33).

> (said to have been the first planted in England by one of my lady's ancestors) that half covered the front of the house. ("MLL"; ch. 1)

The bricks, facings, and other features show that the house is a product of human endeavour, much more so than in any other of Gaskell's "ideal" homes. However, this is not what comes first to the protagonist: when she arrives, it is the Virginia creeper that catches her eye. It dominates the Hall and gives an impression of "Nature"'s power with its beauty. The creeper is an imported plant[15], and while there is perhaps room for discussion about an inverted colonization of English space by an American plant, the focus here is the weight and power of the creeper. Its apparent dominance is, though, only a symbol of the age and power of the Ludlow family rather than an entity in and of itself. It is an ideal, but an ideal of "Nature" rather than of the nonhuman.

Unlike Moodie, who generally segregates interior and exterior, Gaskell emphasizes the presence and importance of both doors and windows. Her idealized home-places have porous boundaries; they do not end at their walls, but are, or seem to be, open to the nonhuman world. At the same time, however, the aristocratic home remains a place of power; the opening to the human world is controlled by class standards that are much more rigid than those applied to the nonhuman world.

However, this impression of "Nature" as the guiding principle of Hanbury Hall is erroneous, despite its porosity; it is human culture entirely that is at work. The exterior

[15] The Virginia Creeper was brought to England in 1629 but is most commonly associated with eighteenth-century gardens (National Trust).

doors, like those of Heath Hall, are clearly segregated by class; the front, public entrance is for Lady Ludlow and her peers (few and far between), while the private back entrance is for everyone else. These doors are diametrically opposed: "To fancy the house, you must take a great square and halve it by a line: at one end of this line was the hall-door, or public entrance; at the opposite the private entrance from a terrace" (ch. 3). This tension between public and private is emphasized by the state of the doors; not only is the front door only rarely opened, but it is guarded by, nearly literally, ferocious beasts:

> the magnificent and fierce Hanbury wolf-hounds, which were extinct in every other part of the island, were kept chained in the front quadrangle, where they bayed through a great part of the day and night and were always ready with their deep, savage growl at the sight of every person and thing, excepting…my lady herself. …She had no fear of them; but she was a Hanbury born, and the tale went, that they and their kind knew all Hanburys instantly. (ch. 4)

These wolfhounds and their near-magical recognition of Lady Ludlow gives something of a mythological or fairy-tale effect to the representation of Hanbury Court, in keeping with the nostalgic tenor of "My Lady Ludlow", but it is also fairly telling representation of humanized nature/"Nature". Gaskell emphasizes the wildness of the dogs by using terms like "baying", "brutes", and "savage", and relating the legend that the dogs had, at least once, eaten a human child. The ability to dominate the wolfhounds, apparently

a representation of the dark, wild nonhuman, therefore, increases Lady Ludlow's status as positioned at the desirable crux between human and "Nature".

However, these animals are not actually dark or wild; Gaskell undermines their dangerous status by telling the story of Mr. Gray the clergyman, who, though he does not like the dogs, walks up to them and pats one dog "in the most friendly manner, the dog meanwhile looking pleased, and affably wagging his tail, just as if Mr. Gray had been a Hanbury. We were all very much puzzled by this, and to this day I have not been able to account for it" (ch. 4). Here, Gaskell is taking away from the idealized nature of Hanbury Court and its legend; the dogs, initially appearing as an embodiment of the Burkean sublime, are shown to be nothing more than a hollow representation of "Nature"'s ferocity. The wildness is a show, just as sublime "Nature" is.

In opposition with the public front door that is locked and guarded is the so-called "private" entrance at the back of the house, "what we should call the back door in a smaller house. …[where there was a] nail-studded terrace-door… open it stood, by my lady's orders, winter and summer, so that the snow often drifted into the back hall, and lay there in heaps when the weather was severe[16]" (ch. 4). This incursion of weather shows the extent of the interpenetration of spaces. This is the real strength of the house, allowing an opening for whatever might come, whether it be human or nonhuman.

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[16] Mr. Gray also contravenes the common law regarding this entrance as well: "I remember it was long before Mr. Gray could be made to understand that the great door was only open on state occasions, and even to the last he would as soon come in by that as the terrace entrance."

There is, in addition, a private entrance for Lady Ludlow alone:

> [I]f she were going into the garden from her own room, she had nothing to do but to pass through Mrs. Medlicott's apartment, out into the lesser hall, and then turning to the right as she passed on to the terrace, she could go down the flight of broad, shallow steps at the corner of the house into the lovely garden, with stretching, sweeping lawns, and gay flower-beds, and beautiful, bossy laurels, and other blooming or massy shrubs, with full-grown beeches, or larches feathering down to the ground a little farther off. (ch. 3)

Lady Ludlow's connection to "Nature" is emphasized by the door; she may not be the only human to use it, but she is the only one that matters. She embodies a connection to "Nature" and reinforces the permeability as well as the moral virtue of the house. In addition, her movement from inside to the outdoors balances the movement of the outdoors (weather, etc) in at the private door. This Bachelardian "interpenetration of indoor and outdoor spaces, interior and exterior ecologies" (Bate 155) is a consistent ideal in Gaskell.

The interiors of Hanbury Court, however, are finished ones; not only are they complete, they are highly polished, almost fossilized. The description of the room at the centre, Lady Ludlow's sitting room, shows this finished nature. There are objects covering every space, and these objects are old, inherited, and valuable, though, as in the case of the idols, their value is not immediately apparent:

> The side on which the fire-place stood was all panelled,—part of the old ornaments of the house, for there was an Indian paper with birds and beasts and insects on it, on all the other sides. …There was a thick carpet on the middle of the floor, which was made of small pieces of rare wood fitted into a pattern; the doors were opposite to each other, and were composed of two heavy tall wings, and opened in the middle, moving on brass grooves inserted into the floor—they would not have opened over a carpet. There were two windows reaching up nearly to the ceiling, but very narrow and with deep window-seats in the thickness of the wall. The room was full of scent, partly from the flowers outside, and partly from the great jars of pot-pourri inside. (ch. 3)

Once again, there is an incursion of "Nature"; the exterior and interior flowers combine to fill the interior space, the only space that doesn't have physical things in it. The wallpaper, with its exotic fauna, is another way of bringing a representation of the nonhuman into human space. Lady Ludlow's sitting room brings to mind Bachelard's nest, in which the inner space is created by the pressure of the inhabitant's body; in this room, it is the pressure of time as well as pride, will, and physical presence.

To an outsider, the narrator Margaret Dawson, the rooms are a series of increasingly tiny chambers, each with its own thoroughly codified, unchanging role. The progression of main character through the house, demonstrates this sort of retreat into smaller and smaller space:

> But there was no help for it; in I must go; past the grand-looking old gentleman holding the door open for me, on into the great hall on the right hand, into which the sun's last rays were sending in glorious red light,—the gentleman was now walking before me,—up a step on to the dais, as I afterwards learned that it was called,—then again to the left, through a series of sitting-rooms, opening one out of another, and all of them looking into a stately garden, glowing, even in the twilight, with the bloom of flowers. We went up four steps out of the last of these rooms, and then my guide lifted up a heavy silk curtain and I was in the presence of my Lady Ludlow." (ch. 1)

The nested quality of these rooms is combined with the same porosity as the exterior of the house: not only the windows facing the garden described above, but doors: "I do not think that there was a room which my lady occupied that had not two doors, and some of them had three or four" (ch. 3). It is a confusing warren for Margaret Dawson, but it retains the childhood home quality of both infinity and closeness[17]. However, it remains fundamentally unsafe, despite the presence of both "Nature" and the nonhuman; Margaret Dawson is only there as a pensioner, an observer, and though she moves through the rooms

[17] This gradual self-enclosure also extends to Lady Ludlow's church space: "'A very pretty young man, my dears,' said she, as we drove away. 'But I shall have my pew glazed all the same.' We did not know what she meant at the time; but the next Sunday but one we did. She had the curtains all round the grand old Hanbury family seat taken down, and, instead of them, there was glass up to the height of six or seven feet. We entered by a door, with a window in it that drew up or down just like what you see in carriages. This window was generally down, and then we could hear perfectly; but if Mr. Gray used the word 'Sabbath,' or spoke in favour of schooling and education, my lady stepped out of her corner, and drew up the window with a decided clang and clash." Elizabeth Gaskell,My Lady Ludlow, (London: Smith, Elder, & Co. , 1858).

she makes no impact on them. She comes there from no place, and when Lady Ludlow dies, she is homeless once again. Hanbury Court is fixed in time and makes no room for her; the ideal is empty, "Nature" or no. This hollowness of the Court's perfection is compounded by the situation of the narrator to the story; it is told at a further remove in both place and time: from a home in Edinburgh, many years later. For Margaret Dawson, the space, ideal though it is, is as inaccessible to her as the big houses of Moodie's fiction are to her protagonists.

Helstone, Village in a Tale

> "Margaret is not merely the mediating point of social disruptions and dislocations, she lives these disruptions"
> –Wendy Parkins, "Women, Mobility, and Modernity"

Perhaps the best-known example of loss of home in Elizabeth Gaskell's body of work is *North and South,* with its themes of displacement and discovery. Margaret, with her vocal love of her home village, demonstrates what appears to be a profound place attachment, but in fact, her link to her father's parsonage in the village of Helstone actually embodies the "intractable ambiguities" (Buell, *Future* 66) that ecocriticism finds so problematic. She is tied to the idea of the local, but it is a local that takes the form of the pastoral ideal: "constructed out of available cultural tropes rather than through any kind of

direct, unmediated observation of regional differences" (Parkins 509)[18]. Both before Margaret's return and after the family's move to the manufacturing town of Milton, Helstone always exists in the imaginary past. Margaret presents herself as the Romantic subject, Hegel's "beautiful soul" that both maintains and mourns a gap between itself and the object (Morton, *Ecology* 118). However, the object is not a real one. From the literary terms through which the reader first encounters it to its dissolution in the last chapters of the book, Helstone is an illusion, a mirage.

In fact, for Margaret, Helstone is a "Home": she is always dis-placed, having lived in London since the age of nine. However, when Margaret is in London, she insists on Helstone as "Home" and sees the gap between herself and Helstone as simply a physical one. The "constant assertion" of Helstone as the object is evident in her failed attempts to describe Helstone. She resents Henry Lennox's use of literary reference ("a village in a tale"(42; ch. 1)), but she herself must use one: "Helstone is like a village in a poem-in one of Tennyson's poems" (42; ch. 1) Interestingly, Gaskell uses, in "Farewell", a later chapter, a Tennyson poem as an epigraph describing the farewell to a childhood home. She finally gives up trying to close the gap, saying both "Oh, I can't describe my home. It is home, and I can't put its charm into words" and "But indeed, I cannot tell you about my own home. I don't quite think it is a thing to be talked about, unless you knew it" (43; ch. 1). Far from being a type of deep connectedness of the person who has never seen the need to describe

[18] The term "unmediated", of course, is quite problematic, especially in Heideggerian terms, but the essence of Parkins' comment remains: Margaret does not experience Helstone and its environment with any kind of regularity.

the land he or she experiences on a daily basis (Foltz), this speechlessness indicates, to a certain extent, a profound lack of knowledge on Margaret's part.

The ambivalence and unreality of Margaret's experience of Helstone is shown when she returns home at 18, "the place and the life she had longed for for years—at that time of all times for yearning and longing, just before the sharp senses lose their outline in sleep" (47; ch. 2). She is aware that Helstone has been only a part of her mental life (imagination), and the reality comes in upon her slowly: "Her eyes began to see, not visions of what had been [i.e. Helstone and its beauty], but the sight actually before her" (47; ch. 2). This shift from fantasy to reality is prophetic, foreshadowing Margaret's discovery that her poetic memories are inadequate, in the sense that this Romantic subject-object tension cannot be maintained once she is actually in place, as it were.

The same thing occurs when she returns on a visit several years later. After losing both her parents, and her illusions about the nature of place, she can actually describe the village, but that first encounter has nonetheless slipped back into idealization: "It hurt her to see the Helstone road so flooded in the sun-light, and every turn and every familiar tree so precisely the same in its summer glory as it had been in former years. Nature felt no change, and was ever young" (472; ch. 46). The inn at which she and Mr. Bell find herself is also an ideal space, with the nearly inevitable Gaskellian image of flowers crowding into the windows:

> The little casement window in Margaret's bed-chamber was almost filled up with rose and vine branches; but pushing them aside, and stretching a little

> out, she could see the tops of the parsonage chimneys above the trees; and distinguish many a well-known line through the leaves. (474; ch. 46)

The parsonage also has a second layer of nonhuman protection. It is "covered all over with tall trees, surrounded as if a nest" (56; ch. 3). It doesn't stand alone, but is one, at least at the start, with the forest, not a whole space, in the sense of a distinct physical entity; rather, it is protected place. However, this protection comes from the Romanticized forest that Margaret has invented, and thus it is insufficient protection. This uncertainty demonstrates Gaskell's Victorian anxiety vis-a-vis the "Nature", apparent at Margaret's return, which blurs the line between parsonage and forest as well:

> It was the latter part of July when Margaret returned home. The forest trees were all one dark, full, dusky green; the fern below them caught all the slanting sunbeams; the weather was sultry and broodingly still. Margaret used to tramp along by her father's side, crushing down the fern with a cruel glee, as she felt it yield under her light foot, and send up the fragrance peculiar to it,—out on the broad commons into the warm scented light, seeing multitudes of wild, free, living creatures, revelling in the sunshine, and the herbs and flowers it called forth. This life—at least these walks—realised all Margaret's anticipations. (48; ch. 2)

For the beautiful soul, to interact with "Nature" is to bow down to it as to an external authority (Morton, *Ecology* 16), and Margaret does, becoming a "sheer I", "a blank

space or a black hole, transcending all possible [subject] positions" (Morton, *Ecology* 100-01). When she is outside she deliberately dissolves her own physical boundaries. She blows with the wind and grass, for example, and becomes entirely absorbed in crushing ferns with her feet. This latter scene is a combination of dominance and reversion to childhood; this is not so much a respectful reintegration to a beloved place, but an attempt to go back to her childhood, to take up her immersion into "Nature."

It is perhaps for this that the parsonage is not mentioned until Margaret's readjustment has been made. It is at least a month after the return to Helstone that Gaskell describes Margaret's home life: "Her out-of-doors life was perfect. Her in-door life had its drawbacks" (48-49; ch. 2). This is the first mention of the place itself; there is no triumphant return to the house in which she spent the first half of her life.

The absence of a description of the home is due in part to the contrast between Margaret, who avoids the indoors in favour of the outdoors, and her mother, who "had accustomed herself too much to an in-doors life, seldom extending her walks beyond the church, the school, and the neighbouring cottages" (49; ch. 2). It is possible that Gaskell is attempting to draw a distinction between the old generation and the new, but this is still very suggestive. Margaret does not participate in the maintenance of the house; she is unaware, for example, of the basic domestic needs, "hundreds of things for the house" (46 Chapter 2) that her mother feels are necessary.

In fact, Helstone is, for Margaret, a finished interior. She does not really participate in the domestic maintenance at all. In fact, she is at a triple remove from it; her mother

directs Dixon, who executes the household work even though she considers herself to be Mrs. Hale's personal maid, and Dixon directs Sarah, the parlourmaid. Margaret doesn't even really move through the house; rather, it is Mr. Hale's movements and Henry Lennox's gaze that show the layout of the parsonage. Margaret's experience of the home, even a home that, like Hanbury Court, has a Bachelardian indoor-outdoor dialectic, is still of a divided interior and exterior- when she is home at all. In fact, Margaret's experience is Rousseauvian and Romantic (48; ch. 2). Margaret is childlike: "she was continually tempted off to go and see some individual friend—man,woman, or child—in some cottage in the green shade of the forest" (48; ch. 2). This individualized attention demonstrates that she is not performing the charitable tasks that are an extension of her mother's domestic duties, but rather going where her desire of the moment takes her.

Furthermore, the house itself is permeable, but only as described by characters other than Margaret. Her father, true to his precarious position as a Dissenter[19], is constantly seen on the borders between house and nonhuman world: at the gate, in the window, by the garden wall. Henry Lennox, the other person by whom the parsonage space is seen at the start of the novel, is also a marginal person, both through personal relationship (he is her cousin's husband's brother) and in terms of acceptability (he represents the more worldly aspects of London society). He plays a pivotal role in Margaret's experience of Helstone; not only is it through him that her associations with the place are articulated, but it is through him that the process of Margaret's acknowledged detachment from the place

[19] In this case, someone who does not accept the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, and must therefore leave the Anglican Church. Gaskell's family were, in fact, Dissenters.

begins; his visit is paradoxical in that not only does he propose to her, which marks the beginning of, not exactly her womanhood, but her sense of being a woman that is of an age "to be thought of in marriage" (60; ch. 4).

Henry Lennox, then, functions as a warning signal, as he "can warn the reader…about the fundamentally fictional and literary nature of Margaret's prejudices—of her picturesquely Tennysonian 'south,' but of her Miltonian 'north' as well" (Dainotto 81). In fact, Henry Lennox is the voice of ironic detachment throughout the novel, spending much of it "observing, with an interest that was slightly sarcastic" (45; ch. 1). He is the embodiment of the modern man, who not only questions her use of conventional language but the Romantic ideal as a whole. He is the worldly voice, concluding that the "smaller and shabbier" parsonage is unsuitable as a "back-ground and frame-work" (55; ch. 3) for Margaret. When he sketches her, however, the landscape is "a subordinate reference" (57; ch. 3), which consolidates Margaret's position as "beautiful soul"—an equal to "Nature"—and demonstrates that he does have a certain fallibility regarding these reified constructions, at least momentarily. He is, finally, converted to the south, to Helstone: "Just now I feel as if twenty years' hard study of law would be amply rewarded by one year of such an exquisite serene life as this" (60; ch. 3), allowing himself to be carried away by the Romantic ideal; it is unattainable for him through the standard entry. He also applies worldly judgement, namely that the parsonage is not a fitting place for Margaret. However, by the end, he holds the same opinions as Margaret does; that is, that Helstone itself is so perfect that it is an acceptable space for her.

However, the reconciliation between Margaret and Helstone, only slightly precedes Henry's conclusion that he and Margaret "will never be" (527; ch. 52). One of the indicators of this drastic separation is the intersection between the way Margaret perceives Helstone and her approach to the home space of the parsonage. Margaret's return, in which she describes herself in a very Heideggerian way as being "at hand" (47; ch. 2) for the comfort of her parents, is not quite what she expects. Her mother is distant and complaining, and her father is distracted or out. Her experience inside the parsonage is, as aforementioned, imperfect; though the doors and windows are often open, Margaret cannot take advantage of their permeability, and, in fact, the indoors has the effect of distancing her from outdoors. When she is inside during a rainy period, she regrets "her idle revelling in the beauty of the woodlands" (53; ch. 2) and resolves immediately to become more productive and begin drawing what she has seen.

This vacillation between processes of aestheticization, commodification, and dominance of "Nature" is an indicator of Margaret's alienation, as is her insistence that she belongs to Helstone: "The constant assertion that we are 'embedded' in a lifeworld is, paradoxically a symptom of drastic separation" (Morton, *Ecological* 8). She only becomes aware of this alienation, though, after she learns that she must leave Helstone for Milton-Northern. Suddenly, instead of seeing the locality of Helstone she has constructed for herself, she sees the infinite to which it belongs. Rather than location, she sees dis-location, Heidegger's "visible incursions of the alien in the sight of the familiar" ("Poetry" 101):

> She looked out upon the dark-gray lines of the church tower, square and straight in the centre of the view, cutting against the deep blue transparent

> depths beyond, into which she gazed, and felt that she might gaze for ever, seeing at every moment some farther distance, and yet no sign of God! It seemed to her at the moment, as if the earth was more utterly desolate…those never ending depths of space, in their still serenity, were more mocking to her than any material bounds could be. (76-77; ch. 5)

Suddenly seeing the unfamiliar in the familiar is Margaret's first contact with the "strange stranger." This is not the "sheer I"; there is neither blank space nor black hole, nor dissolved boundaries. Instead, there is her self, as well as *something* there that she has never seen. It is a crucial moment in the indoor-outdoor dialectic; more specifically, it is Margaret's first real experience of the permeable border between home and world.

Immediately following this experience of the vastness of the unknown, however, Margaret prays with her father; they "knelt by the window seat—he looking up, she bowed ... God was there, close around them" (77; ch. 5). This expansion and contraction of the idea of the divine, something that, until the moment of her father confesses his doubts, has been completely familiar to her, is an example of the paradoxical familiarity and alien-ness of Timothy Morton's "mesh".

The sinister quality of the mesh manifests itself on the day before the Hale family leaves Helstone for good. Margaret goes into the garden to say goodbye—an act which mirrors Moodie's leavetaking at Reydon Hall—but suddenly the familiarity of the garden becomes strangeness, then fear: "A small branch—it might be of rotten wood, or it might be broken by force—came heavily down in the nearest part of the forest; Margaret ran, swift as Camilla" (90; ch. 6). In French, this sudden, intense fear is called "la chienne",

which is very evocative of the feral, marginal familiarity of the mesh: "It's as if there is something else—someone else, even—but the more we look, the less sure we are. It's uncanny: there is something there and there isn't" (Morton, *Ecological* 53). In the garden, Margaret senses this uncanny for the first time, and her understanding comes to encompass the nonhuman world as dark and potentially menacing, something beyond the Romantic perfection she has heretofore projected on the Helstone parsonage.

In fact, it is only when the parsonage as Margaret's childhood home ceases to exist that Margaret is able to see the reality of the walls, rooms, windows, and doors. This pattern is repeated twice, once when they first depart, and once again when Margaret visits Helstone after her parents' deaths, and it is only during these processes of loss that she is able to describe the parsonage concretely.

In fact, it is Margaret's final visit to Helstone with Mr. Bell, after her parents' deaths, that is the second key instance of loss. The parsonage has been renovated, and thus her childhood home as she remembers it is gone; this affects her perception of the whole village: "Margaret sighed over the old picturesqueness, the old gloom, and the grassy wayside of former days" (482; ch. 46). When Margaret is forced to see Helstone as a physical place, the reality of it escapes her; it is only when she is dreaming it that it holds the qualities that she values. Thus, "Even for the inhabitant, there is no Helstone as it really is, there is the available cultural discourse of the village….Very early in the novel, then, an idea of home—as an assured sense of place in the modern world—is invoked which the

forthcoming dramatic changes will demonstrate is a precarious notion indeed"(Parkins 509).

Margaret's place attachment is Heideggerian in a sense; even in London she is there, at Helstone, in her mind, which Heidegger states can be comparable to being in a place: "In 'mere' knowledge about a context of the being of beings, in 'only' representing it, in 'solely' 'thinking' about it, I am no less outside in the world together with beings than I am when I *originally* grasp them." (*Being* 62). However, at first, Margaret believes Helstone to be as she perceives it. This is impossible, because her relationship with it is a subject-object one, with her at the centre. Only after she experiences the multiple unknown facets of Helstone's Being can she reconstruct the place in a way that attains Heidegger's "'mere' knowledge". This allows her to continue dreaming about it from elsewhere when she knows it to be an illusion, and thus participate in a dis-located awareness that approximates *Dasein*.

Reydon Hall, Southwold Cottage, and "Home"

As with Margaret Hale, Susanna Moodie and her avatars Flora Lyndsay and Rachel Wilde[20] have a vision of home that is idealized from afar. As with Margaret Hale's Helstone, it is both constructed according to a Romantic, subject-object ideal and completely lost to them. In Moodie's case, there is also a double remove; she is speaking of

[20] In this section, I am discussing only Moodie's thinly fictionalized autobiographical work.

her childhood home from a cabin in Canada, and she has thus lost both the home itself and her country. I will discuss the broader implications of Moodie's colonial location in Chapter 4; in this chapter, my focus is a reading of Moodie's description of English "Home", both Reydon Hall and Southwold Cottage, in a way that demonstrates their profound instability.

This separation is important, as recent critical discourse[21], in which Moodie has been recognized as having "adapted" to Canada in various ways, tends to address Moodie's "Home" in England as a monolith rather than differentiating between the different English spaces. In fact, Moodie's childhood home, Reydon Hall, and the cottage in Southwold that she and her husband rented after their marriage are very different spaces. Reydon Hall is the site of Moodie's construction of English "Home", while the Southwold cottage is a transition point between the Hall and Canada. As such, the dynamics between interior and exterior are strikingly different. As discussed earlier in the chapter, there is a fairly categorical separation between inside and outside at Reydon Hall. Nobody looks out of windows, and the only movement through doors is towards the outside, as with her fiction. This lack of permeability indicates a separation between human and nonhuman worlds that points to the reification of "Nature."

Furthermore, Reydon Hall is a finished interior, in which "Paintings and pianos, curtains and crucifixes… are always already in their places" (Fraiman, "Shelter" 349), as the few interior descriptions of the "well-furnished library" (100), or the "splendidly

[21] "Recent" in this case means in the last 20 years or so, since Michael Peterman's later work (*This Great Epoch of Our Lives*) and the publication of an anthology on early Canadian women's writing (*(Re)Discovering Our Foremothers*).

illustrated chest" (147) attest. The historical and cultural capital of the Hall is also established: "an old-fashioned house, large, rambling, picturesque, and cold [, it] had been built in the first year of good Queen Bess. The back part of the mansion appeared to have belonged to a period still more remote" (*FL* 154; ch. 12). The creation of the house is already in the past and Moodie cannot contribute to or maintain it, indoors and out; because of this, in no fictional version of the Hall is the Moodie figure safe or happy indoors. She is constrained by the division of space, what Fraiman calls "domesticity that can kill" ("Shelter" 396). There is public space, for example, the table in the kitchen, but it is insecure, controlled by adult authority figures. Private spaces, like the bedroom and the schoolroom, are hermetic spaces of confinement and punishment rather than the felicitious, intimate home space that Bachelard describes as ideal.

If, then, "the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace" (Bachelard 6), then Reydon Hall is not that felicitous house space. It's a pre-existing home, and that pre-existing home is not shelter: "the long standing residential edifices…are too much taken for granted….Paintings and pianos, curtains and crucifixes… are always already in their places" ("Shelter" 349). The "well-furnished library" (100), the "splendidly illustrated chest" (147) in Selina's room, even the beautiful gardens, demonstrate that everything has its place, and Rachel/Susanna Moodie is on the outside.

The Southwold cottage, a thinly fictionalized rendering of the home the Moodies rented in Southwold in 1831[22], is an inversion of this outdoor aesthetic; Flora refashions herself, in relation to the domestic space, as "angel in the home." She lovingly describes the confined, heavily gendered spaces that Fraiman sets up as opposing shelter writing: "Flora sighed, and wished herself safe at home, in her dear, snug, little parlour; the baby asleep in the cradle, and Lyndsay reading aloud to her as she worked, or playing on his flute" (96; ch. 14). Having achieved ownership, as it were, of this private space, she rarely leaves this room, travelling only on "walks to and from her mother's house" (35; ch. 7). Again and again, Flora is shown ensconced within and others moving in and out, reluctant to leave the enclosed space she has reclaimed. This contrast to her outdoor 'huts' at Reydon Hall indicates less a love of English "Nature," than a desire to perpetuate the hut dream from her own living room.

Flora's domestic activity is explicitly named, and glorified as "A thousand little domestic duties, too numerous and too trifling to dwell upon" (48; ch. 9), but in fact in the cottage it is limited to sewing and childcare. Moodie herself refers to domestic happiness several times in her letters (32,33; ch. 6), but to domestic management only once, and in that case it is "Sister Sarah was with me during my anxious moments [in childbirth] and has taken the management of the house ever since" (*Letters* 66), and only the least onerous aspects of those tasks; she has a nurse to change the baby and hang out the laundry, and she does not cook, although she does make "good coffee" (89; ch. 13). Flora is, according to

[22] Several references to it exist in Moodie's letters at that time. In one letter, Moodie describes the cottage as "a pleasant walk from Reydon" Susanna Moodie, *Letters of a Lifetime*, eds. Carl Ballstadt, Elizabeth Hopkins and Michael Peterman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) 62.; in another, she refers to it as "our little mansion" (Moodie, Letters of a Lifetime 62.

the landlord Captain Kitson, "nervous and delicate…. whole blessed day is wasted in reading and writing, and coddling up the baby" (15; ch. 3). Kitson's opinion is of dubious validity because of his ridiculous behaviour, but it does summarize the extent of Flora's household duties, and, while she does attempt to make the home, it is insufficient to maintain her shelter in the face of external pressure.

There is a movement towards shelter, however, in the role of Captain Lyndsay in the cottage. Flora refers to her husband as "the joy and sunshine of my little home" (*Letters* 64), then later in the same letter to Emma Bird, "my guardian Angel" (*Letters* 65), a clear borrowing of the "angel in the home" trope. He takes on duties such as childcare—he is the "the head-nurse" (26; ch. 5)—and cook: "Come, Flora," he cried, "…I am going to make some sandwiches for you, and you must be a good girl and eat them" (107; ch. 16). This gender inversion is typical of much of Moodie's later writing, but it is insufficient to make a shelter in this case: the external pressures are too great.

In fact, the Southwold cottage is described in several different terms that demonstrate completion: "a pretty cottage upon the sea-coast" (9; ch. 1), "ready-furnished lodgings" (10; ch. 2), "all ready furnished to your hand,—nothing to find of your own but plate and linen… The house, I say, is complete from the cellar to the garret" (15; ch. 2). At the same time, the house is marginal and penetrable; the Lyndsay's conversation about moving, which is held at night, in a closed room, is already known to their landlord, Captain Kitson: "where there are servants living in the house, and walls are thin—news travels fast" (14; ch. 2). They are also "beset" (69; ch.11) when they advertise for a servant

to go to Canada. At the end of their tenure at the cottage, the house is "a scene of bustle and confusion baffling description" (86; ch. 12). There are even animals in the house: "Strange dogs forced their way in after their masters, and fought and yelped in undisturbed pugnacity" (87; ch. 12); this presence of the unruly Other, both human and animal, foreshadows the permeability of the Moodies' Canadian homes.

The idyll, then, is predictably false. The cottage is slightly disembodied, there being no description of its situation in the landscape more precise than "on the sea-coast", and there is no particular description of the exterior, either. However, the location of the cottage shows that there is no protective perimeter, no liminal garden or farmyard as there is in Moodie's fictional cottages (described in Chapter 3). Instead, the cottage gives on to the Captain's aforementioned garden, which is a very unstable space. The instability is presented as a disrespect and/or misunderstanding of "Nature": "During the spring and summer months, the beds were dug up and remodelled, three or four times during the season, to suit the caprice of the owner, while the poor drooping flowers were ranged along the grass-plot to wither in the sun during the process…This he termed putting his borders into ship-shape" (17; ch. 3). There is a distinct contrast here between the "natural" feel expected of gardens at that time (Williams) and the man-made system, although, of course, both of them are artificial. This is underscored by the use of just one type of flower in the flowerbeds around the lawn (which, itself, is acceptable to Flora's sensibilities, a "pretty grass plot containing about an acre of ground, surrounded by tall poplar trees" (17; ch. 3)). The "innumerable quantities" (17; ch. 3) of the one flower, never varying, are a point of reference for Kitson's low class and bad taste.

This very conventional use of "Nature", as a marker of virtue and value, actually works as a marker of Moodie's decentred status. Though she is reflecting on the unworthiness of Captain Kitson to own the land and the house that goes with it, she is situated, unprotected by "Nature", on the margins of social acceptability. In all iterations of Moodie's autobiography or fictionalized autobiography, "Home", then, is both inextricably bound up in "Nature", and in the unreachable past.

The English "Home" space is presented as ideal, but it is both unstable and almost entirely closed, impermeable to the nonhuman world.[23] In "Rachel Wilde" Moodie discloses that her father is ruined because he is a "generous benefactor" (145) and must "reduce his comfortable establishment" (145), while in *Flora Lyndsay*, the discussion that begins in the comfortable parlour is about emigration. The space which Moodie or her avatar inhabits within Reydon Hall, and even the cottage at Southwold, is fragmented, diffuse, and insecure.

This insecurity is supported by the assessment of Reydon Hall written by James Ewing Ritchie. His description, from a visit after Moodie's father's death, is quite different from the finished interior written by Moodie in "Rachel Wilde" : "It must have been, now I come to think of it, a dismal old house, suggestive of rats and dampness and mould, that Reydon Hall, with its scantily furnished rooms and its unused attics and its empty barns and stables, with a general air of decay all over the place" (qtd. in *Letters of a Lifetime* 3-

[23] The sole exception is in "Rachel Wilde", when Rachel and Dorothea are awakened by "The first song of the birds" ("RW" 101), and there's a seamless transition between indoors and out.

4).There is a distinct contrast here with the finished interior that Moodie presents in "Rachel Wilde," as well as a much greater commonality with the Canadian homes. The Southwold cottage is a similarly equivocal, transitional space; it is a finished interior in Moodie's beloved England, but in its instability and penetrability, as well as the way in which Moodie situates Flora, her avatar, it foreshadows the Canadian homes.

In the works discussed above, then, idealized space exists almost exclusively in the past. Once the protagonist has let go of the home in question as ideal and accepted that the ideal is unattainable, though the value is not, the "Home" takes its place within that individual's ecological consciousness. In other words, there is room for an ideal home in the ecological thought; after all, there would be no dis-location without location, however uncertainly founded.

However, if this transition does not take place, there is danger; while both Margaret Hale and the Moodie character are able to reassemble their worldviews, not all characters manage to make the transition from idealization to ecological thought. Sometimes the ideal is too entrenched or the external pressure too strong to allow a reconciliation between location and dis-location. Clinging to a whole-cloth ideal, especially in Gaskell, is frankly dangerous.

For example, one of Gaskell's most compelling portraits of the cost of displacement is that of *Cranford*'s Mr. Holbrook. He is Miss Matty's former lover, Miss Matty having refused him when she was young. When they meet again in a dress shop, he invites both Miss Matty and the narrator to visit him at his home. This home is the centre of his life; he

has created a Georgic space—peaceful and rural—for himself in a "secluded and not impressive country" (73; ch. 4). He experiences his land through poetry, reciting poems while working, and walking long distances to buy new books. His living room exemplifies the indoor-outdoor dialectic, "looking into the orchard and covered over with dancing tree-shadows" and "strewn with books… poetry and wild, weird tales prevailing" (74; ch. 4). Books and light combine to bring the two spaces together, indicating Holbrook's one-ness with his surroundings.

In fact, Mr. Holbrook is not a Romantic, but rather a combination of farmer and educated man: the ideal Victorian dweller. He is wrapped up in his land, an embodiment of locality, but is not limited by its boundaries, instead reaching beyond it to learn more. He cares for his land, but does not seek to possess it:

> He strode along, either wholly forgetting my existence, or soothed into silence by his pipe—and yet it was not silence exactly. He walked before me, with a stooping gait, his hands clasped behind him; and, as some tree or cloud, or glimpse of distant upland pastures, struck him, he quoted poetry to himself, saying it out loud in a grand, sonorous voice. (76; ch. 4)

This is interaction rather than dominance, a dialogue with the earth rather than an imposition of meaning. Holbrook always remains conscious of his ignorance and is ready to learn from literature. His state at the start of the story is, essentially, Heidegger's poetic dwelling. When he reads a new Tennyson poem, he learns a new detail about his land:

"Black as ash-buds in March. And I've lived all my life in the country; more shame for me not to know. Black: they are jet black" (76; ch. 4). Rooted in his home place, he learns nonetheless from Tennyson; poetic language opens a space in which the world can reveal itself.

He is so rooted in his land, however, that when he travels away from it, it essentially kills him: "His journey to Paris was quite too much for him. His housekeeper says he has hardly ever been round his fields since, but just sits with his hands on his knees in the counting-house, not reading or anything, but only saying what a wonderful city Paris was" (80; ch. 4). In leaving his own home place, he loses not only his perspective, but his poetic language. He no longer reads or recites poetry, seeking to further understand his world but is, rather, limited to the repetition of the conventional "wonderful." He is displaced but cannot recover because the paradigm has shifted so far from what he knows. Holbrook's utter rootedness in his "Home" has left him closed off to any variation in the nonhuman world, and his wordlessness is Gaskell's most striking comment on the danger of inflexible place attachment.

Words—or rather, lack of words—are at the root of Susanna Moodie's portrait of the danger of overidentification with one geographic location. Moodie is, by and large, her own cautionary tale, but her portrayal of Brian, the still hunter, is another example of how a retreat into "Nature" can be dangerous. Brian is a complex portrait, complicated by gender, authorial voice, and colonial intent. His voice and experience does, however, echo

Gaskell's Mr. Holbrook; each figure belongs to a particular environment, but is also deeply conflicted about the intersection between the human home and the nonhuman outdoors.

Brian is much more comfortable in the woods than in human dwellings. He is something of a monstrous figure; some of his caretaking actions recall those of Frankenstein's creature, with Susanna Moodie and her husband cast in the role of the Rousseauvian cottage dwellers. He uses a clearly Romantic sensibility to describe and interact with "Nature", and the tension between his verbal and physical interaction with the environment is interesting largely due to the perceived limits between human and nonhuman as well as the interchange between these two states.

Brian is a hunter, reformed alcoholic, and failed suicide. He spends most of his time in the woods, hunting and exploring. He is supposed to be largely silent, but in fact he speaks quite often to the Moodie character, using a hyperbolic, elaborate language, close, if not identical to, the register that she herself values and uses. It is likely, therefore, that Brian is a locus of transference; perhaps he was a real person, but on paper he incorporates Moodie's desire to dwell. Brian is placed between worlds; he is able to go out into the woods beyond the clearing, which she, partly due to her duties and partly due to her fears, is not.

Brian is as calm and immobile as his role of "still-hunter" would suggest. He moves quietly; the limits between Moodie and Brian's physical selves are not fixed; he enters Moodie's small house without her noticing, and seems as at ease there as in the woods. And though he is always sad about the death of an animal, he is an efficient hunter. However, he

never actually brings meat to the Moodies' cabin; instead, he brings milk, or flowers, for Katie, their daughter. This idea of Brian as gatherer indicates an uncertainty about the idea of hunting to survive, an early stance of Moodie's, as well as creating a confusion around gender roles.

Moodie is the one that gives Brian language. Before their meeting he is, at least symbolically, mute; his suicide attempt was via throat-cutting. The language that he receives, in a manner of speaking, from Moodie gives him a dissonant voice. It is difficult to reconcile the "sour morose, queer chap" (*RI* 174) living in the woods and on the margins of the community with the man who makes the following speech about flowers:

> These are God's pictures…and the child, who is all nature, understands them in a minute. Is it not strange that these beautiful things are hid away in the wilderness, where no eyes but the birds of the air, and the wild beasts of the wood, and the insects that live upon them, ever see them? Does God provide, for the pleasure of such creatures, these flowers? (*RI* 180)

This fossilized language demonstrates one of the common charges criticism levels against Moodie; that she applies "corrupt language" (Shields) against the "new" wilderness of the New World.

Beyond the language, however, the idea that flowers exist only for the pleasure of humans points to a more utilitarian viewpoint about the nonhuman world, and a subsequent alienation. The language is a way for Moodie to mediate her experiences; the position of

requiring Nature to be beautiful is perhaps more problematic. Even taking into consideration Christopher Hitt's argument about the sublime as a mode of ecological thought, Brian remains apart from the world. To him, nature is noble and he is small within it, which corresponds with Heidegger's relocalisation of the human subject. Brian does not seize, and does not pretend to seize, the totality of Being. He also does not go beyond the noble and the sublime in his love and reverence for "Nature"; he disregards nonhuman entities that do not meet a sort of post-Romantic standard of sublimity, such as lichen, as his description of guiding a botanist into the woods demonstrates:

> the little man filled his black wallet with all sorts of rubbish, as if he wilfully shut his eyes to the beautiful flowers, and chose only to admire ugly, insignificant plants that everybody else passes by without noticing, and which, often as I had been in the woods, I never had observed before" (*RI* 190).

After this expedition, he continues to notice lichen, but never to value it as he would flowers or a stag.

Like Gaskell's Mr. Holbrook, Brian does not, ultimately, dwell, though he appears to at first; the displacement between ideal and real remains too deep, and he commits suicide. Mr. Holbrook's displacement and decline can be read as both a critique of modernity and a critique of place attachment. The fate of Brian is a more complex one; his Romantic leanings are clearly a type of ideal for Moodie, but at the same time out of sync

with the reality of the nonhuman. Ultimately, both men are part of the surrounding world in a way that becomes untenable; their place attachment is too strong to allow them to recalibrate their feelings towards the nonhuman.

However, it is important to emphasize that these are cases in which men encounter ideals. For women, the untenability of "Home" is usually more closely linked with their role within it. The idealized home is consistently associated with a constrained domesticity that is damaging in some way to those who experience it, first, because it espouses norms that are restrictive to women, and second, because it does not allow the presence of the nonhuman as itself rather than as a carrier of value and/or meaning. Because of this, the finished interior is dangerous and polarizing, both in terms of gender and in terms of human-nonhuman interaction.

Both Moodie and Gaskell portray domesticity as dangerous. Perhaps the most striking is the fate of Elinor in Moodie's *Mark Hurdlestone*:

> The wretched Elinor, shut out from all society, and denied every domestic comfort, was limited by her stingy partner to the awkward attendance of a parish girl, who, together with her mistress, he contrived to half starve; as he insisted on keeping the key of the pantry, and only allowed them a scanty meal twice during the twenty-four hours. (62; ch.4).

Here, enforced domesticity does kill. The house shrinks around Elinor as her husband blocks off a wing, and then another, and then the windows; the outdoors is

excluded and the indoor-outdoor dialectic destroyed. She ends up bereft of everything and allows herself to be slowly killed.

At the beginning of "The Moorland Cottage", Elizabeth Gaskell describes the cottage in question as being "neither cottage nor house, but something between the two in size. Nor yet is it a farm, though surrounded by living things. It is, or rather it was, at the time of which I speak, the dwelling of Mrs. Browne, the widow of the late curate of Combehurst" (ch. 1). This equivocation creates an ideal but undefined home space, a home space without limits. It is, outwardly, perfection; not only is it surrounded by nature, but the undefined aspect of the house makes it flexible, what Gaston Bachelard would call "une maison onirique" (41). And yet this childhood home is, as always, unstable.

Gaskell uses the second person perspective to bring the reader into the space, a "clearly Wordsworthian" opening (Pittock 19):

> If you take the turn to the left, after you pass the lyke-gate at Combehurst Church, you will come to the wooden bridge over the brook; keep along the field-path which mounts higher and higher, and, in half a mile or so, you will be in a breezy upland field, almost large enough to be called a down, where sheep pasture on the short, fine, elastic turf. You look down on Combehurst and its beautiful church-spire. After the field is crossed, you come to a common, richly colored with the golden gorse and the purple heather, which in summer-time send out their warm scents into the quiet air. The swelling waves of the upland make a near horizon against the sky; the

> line is only broken in one place by a small grove of Scotch firs, which always look black and shadowed even at mid-day, when all the rest of the landscape seems bathed in sunlight…. the path goes down a green abrupt descent; and in a basin, surrounded by the grassy hills, there stands a dwelling. (ch. 1)

And yet, this house, with its Bachelardian, nest-like characteristics, is no stable home at all to Maggie, the daughter of the house and protagonist of the story. Her mother's preference for Maggie's brother Edward reduces often reduces Maggie to servant status. She must be better than him in every way, a model of household competence and angelic behaviour, when she lives in this nest, and it is only by leaving it that she is liberated. In Gaskell's work, therefore, it is not enough to experience a perfect idealized domesticity in Nature without questioning.

While, in the diverse body of Moodie and Gaskell's writing, it would be impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the way in which stable home spaces are presented and treated, the example of "The Moorland Cottage" is representative of the definite patterns that emerge. The type of domestic space represented as "Home" is not as stable or as idyllic as it first appears, even though the movement between "Nature" and human space appears ideal.

Conclusions

> "Ainsi, une immense maison cosmique est en puissance dans tout rêve de maison. De son centre rayonnent les vents, et les mouettes sortent de ses fenêtres. Une maison si dynamique permet au poète d'habiter l'univers…l'univers vient habiter sa maison."
> –Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace*

In conclusion, both Moodie and Gaskell present their ideal "Home" as a place that is intertwined with "Nature". However, since "Nature" is not the nonhuman, no place attachment is ever "authentic", in the sense of early ecocriticism, but is rather either predicated on false conceptions of the local space in which it is found, or on false conceptions of the value of the domestic structure by which it operates.

Thus, their treatment of the domestic ideal as flawed constitutes a questioning of the centrality of the human as compared to the nonhuman. The importance of an opening on the world, a permeability, is paramount, but one common theme among the homes discussed in this chapter is that if a finished interior is permeable, it is not accessible to the protagonist. Therefore, the ability to dwell in this space is impossible, a conclusion which is furthered by the protagonists' lack of power in relation to this space.

Both Helstone and Reydon Hall demonstrate the irrevocably past nature of the place in relation to the characters' self; they are the model of Bachelard's indistinct childhood home; it has neither boundaries nor limits, but it is also vague in its particulars. It is oneirically real, but fundamentally unreal. Childhood homes are unsafe in Moodie, and in Gaskell they are ephemeral and vulnerable; in both cases, they are lost.

The way these lost homes are situated in the landscape is twofold. First, they are part of the landscape; they are described in relation to or as equal to the nonhuman elements around the actual building. What's more, these homes are almost always Bachelard's childhood home, in that they are vague and either blend in to the surrounding world or encompass it. In Moodie, functional interiors are not safe; the protagonist is confined to corner space, and there is an outward movement towards "Nature". In Gaskell, the tension related to functional interiors turns on either a lack of involvement or a lack of appreciation of that involvement; either way, her protagonists are marginalized as well. However, where in Moodie there is an outward movement, in Gaskell the most common movement of characters is towards windows and doors, the threshold for the indoor-outdoor dialectic.

"Nature" is present in every ideal; nearly every home in Gaskell and Moodie's work is described in connection with the trees, flowers, and gardens that surround them. However, though these figures of the home—the lost childhood home, and the 'spoiled', Edenic home—are dominant, the most idealized home is the one that has been left behind. The ideal home corresponds to Timothy Morton's designation of place as a "retroactive fantasy construct" (EWN 10). Both Gaskell and Moodie have a Romantic link to the past; Margaret is a Rousseauvian child, brought "all untamed from the forest to share the home, the play, and the lessons of her cousin Edith" (38 Ch.1), while Moodie locates her early motivation to both dream and produce artistic representations in "Nature". To a certain extent, then, the way Gaskell and Moodie's characters impose the Romantic ideal on nonhuman space, or human-nonhuman space, could be considered en-framing, but the power in this situation does not exactly lie in the hands of the author and/or protagonist.

Consequently, the safe home is venerated, but rare, and if it does exist it is usually damaged or abandoned in some way by the end of the narrative. More commonly, it is a part of the past, a space in which there is a naïve link between the human and the nonhuman. In a sense, the representation of these homes is that Harrison's Wordsworthian forest, in which "the simple word had the power to draw nearer to the inner life of nature" (Harrison 157), or Bachelard's childhood home, a flexible and enduring space of protection. The most idealized home is the one that has been left behind; a nostalgic view "cannot but evoke the condition it laments, and by the same token it cannot but present its lost paradise (or forests) as anything but imaginary, inaccessible, or unreal". They do indulge in nostalgia, Gaskell most notably in *Cranford* and *My Lady Ludlow*, Moodie more broadly, although it is more gentle than Raymond Williams would suggest. There is a yearning after the past, but no desire to make the present like it. (Harrison 156).

Since so much of both Moodie and Gaskell's work deals with dislocation, de-centering, and thus, dwelling, the focus of this chapter has been on exploring the depiction of homes that, while seemingly idealized, underscore and undermine the fundamental instability of what is human. In Moodie and Gaskell's work, "Home" and the associated "Nature" are concepts that are sites of intense personal conflict, as, despite the profound longing towards the perfection of these concepts, the characters are deeply uncomfortable within them.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: The Hut, The Cottage, and the Nest

> "I have read a great deal about love in a cottage, but I never saw it reduced to practice ; and I have no idea of sacrificing myself by making the experiment for the public good."
> –Susanna Moodie, "Waiting for Dead Men's Shoes"

> "few mid-Victorian Canadian commentators went as far as [Moodie] and none went further in allowing the novel to wander into the nether regions of human experience"
> –Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste*

> "Few minds ever showed less of base earth than Mrs Gaskell's"
> – The Editor, *Cornhill*

> "I gloried in what I ought to have considered my shame."
> –Mary Mathews in Susanna Moodie's *Mark Hurdlestone*

Loss is key to the idea of home because loss, when it means loss of place, is essentially ecological. It disrupts the subject's view of home space as being unified and/or ideal, and situates the site of dwelling as *Dasein* in all its uncertainty and unease. To maintain this dwelling, which is both literal and figurative, acts of location (shelter) and dislocation (recognition of the fundamental instability of the human condition) are required. The protagonists must maintain their shelter, by applying internal pressure and experiencing external pressure. However, this is a process that occurs over time and which has its roots in the formerly ideal home.

Gaskell and Moodie's protagonists incorporate the fallen ideal into their worldview, but they move towards *Dasein* through what Gaston Bachelard calls the hut dream. The hut dream subverts ideal homes by creating a permeable shelter that is more subject to external environmental pressure and, thus, perhaps ironically, more stable. For Bachelard, this hut is

a dream edifice, but Fraiman reinterprets it as being an actual home, a shelter. Both aspects exist in Gaskell and Moodie's work, a dream, but also as an actual house—in their case, usually a cottage or farmhouse—which either belongs to the protagonists or in which they come to be included. This space is more permeable, and must be produced, in the former case, or maintained in the latter. This active shelter-building forges a mindful link to place that is part of a dislocated *Dasein*.

A shelter, though, does not exist without external pressure; it is, as Fraiman has explained, a resort for those who have been disenfranchised, abandoned, or victims of some trauma. While the severity of Moodie and Gaskell's protagonists' traumas varies, they all must build their shelters while simultaneously experiencing, resisting, and, to a certain degree, absorbing external pressures. Sometimes this is personal persecution, as for Gaskell's Ruth or Moodie's Dorothy Chance, but sometimes it is also a wave of new experiences, as for Margaret Hale.

Often, these pressures are environmental, and here, I use the term 'environmental' to encompass aspects of the nonhuman that have traditionally fallen outside of the purview of "Nature". Contemporary ecocritical study has urged this revaluation, which encompasses the dirty, the ugly, and the morally questionable as well as the both the beautiful and the sublime. This is motivated both by a desire to democratize ecocriticism itself and a desire to be thoroughly representative. As such, dirt is fundamental to ecocriticism: "we should be finding ways to stick around with the sticky mess that we're in and that we are, making thinking dirtier, identifying with ugliness" (Morton, *Ecology* 188). This "thinking bigger"

that is such a large part of dark ecology is also applicable to the nineteenth century, going beyond Romantic isolation and considering, as Gaskell does, the filth in Victorian cities. It also considers, as Moodie does, the physicality of decay.

Unlike many of their contemporaries—particularly Margaret Oliphant, Charlotte Yonge, and Moodie's sister, Catharine Parr Traill—both Gaskell and Moodie wrote about subjects that were considered taboo at the time. Gaskell's *Ruth*, her second novel, is about a young seamstress who is seduced and abandoned, and Moodie's *Mark Hurdlestone*, a long, multi-stranded sensation novel that charts the downfall of a miser and the rise of his virtuous son both question the perfection of the home; in both novels, this questioning results in the dissolution and/or decay of not just the "Home", but any kind of human residence. It also re-situates the human center as definitively marginal.

Though it would be a mistake (as well as theoretically unsound) to focus solely on the depiction of female sexuality as the major example of 'dirt', I do so in the middle part of this chapter in order to show the extent to which this permits a complete breakdown of the home space. Both Moodie and Gaskell use the supposed perfection of the woman and her role as angel in the home as a conduit to discussions of subjects that would be even more taboo, such as sympathetic presentations of prostitution. From the tension, then, between internal and external pressure, the shelter emerges. It is distinct from the "Home" in that it is a shelter rather than a finished interior, with all that implies.

The Hut Dream

> "La chaumière est devenue un château fort du courage pour le solitaire qui doit y apprendre à vaincre le peur. Une telle demeure est educatrice"
> –Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique De L'espace*

The hut carries an enormous contextual baggage in ecocriticism; both Thoreau's return to basics in his hut in the Maine woods and Heidegger's controversial designation of the peasant hut in the Black Forest as the ideal dwelling has raised significant questions about the role of so-called "primitive" home spaces in ecocriticism. The hut is therefore symbolic of two guiding impulses fundamental to the development of ecocriticism: a retreat into the nonhuman world as a mode of both self-fashioning and reconnection and the idealization of the agricultural and local as a corrective to the industrial, globalized world. However, since ecocriticism has nuanced both aspects of this discourse, the place of the hut needs to be reevaluated. Bachelard's interpretation of the hut as emotional shelter, and Fraiman's proposal of a reclaimed domesticity as shelter are fundamental to an analysis of precarious space that illuminates the not-dualism present in Moodie and Gaskell's work.

The poetic image of the hut in Bachelard is an image of refuge, but refuge *elsewhere*: "dans la plupart de nos rêves de hutte, nous souhaitons vivre ailleurs, loin de la maison encombrée, loin des soucis citadins. Nous fuyons en pensée pour chercher un vrai refuge" (45-46). On the one hand, this articulates a problematic aspect of Bachelard's writing, in that he is clearly assuming, like Heidegger, that his audience is both educated and city-dwelling. On the other, its very concentration on this aspect of leaving the "real"

world behind makes it applicable to the nineteenth-century novel in general and Moodie and Gaskell's work in particular; as aforementioned, the emerging Victorian middle class was very concerned about its place in the world, and the hut, which could be seen as being situated in the idealized recent past, which is, of course, as Raymond Williams so famously states, always situated about fifty years prior to the current date (*Country* 32).

Furthermore, however, Bachelard says the hut is "un château fort du courage pour le solitaire qui doit y apprendre à vaincre le peur. Une telle demeure est éducatrice" (57). While Bachelard undoubtedly meant his hut to be similarly protective of the human as his conception of the house is, i.e. that the hut is an entirely human space and the denizen, whether physical or imaginary, can benefit from the hut's protection while encountering fear of whatever kind, there is another possible interpretation: that the hut represents a thinning of the barrier between human and nonhuman, and this liminality, this crux of familiar and unfamiliar, becomes a point in the world, an explicit expression of the mesh, at which the human being can encounter the strange stranger. Bachelard's language brings this association to life: "dans la maison même, dans la salle familiale, un rêveur de refuge rêve à la hutte, au nid, à des coins où il voudrait se blottir comme un animal en son trou" (45). The link between humanity and animality, sustained throughout *The Poetics of Space*, underscores the fundamentally liminal nature of the hut.

Susan Fraiman extends Bachelard's ideas about home when she talks about shelter writing, but doesn't specifically talk about the hut. The hut, however, does correspond to her definition of shelter, as not only is it "small, rickety, and rigged up" ("Shelter" 349), but

it is formed by the dreamer, or, to be more specific, the subject. This does, to a certain extent, come across as problematic in Bachelard proper, because, like Heidegger and the aspects of Heideggerian philosophy that are critiqued in contemporary ecocriticism, the dreamer is not necessarily physically present in the hut, wherever it is placed. When Fraiman takes over the idea of shelter, however, she marries the two, emphasizing both the importance of creating the hut and writing it.

Both Gaskell and Moodie's explicitly English hut dreams are initially nostalgic, but also representative of liminality and marginality. They are also spaces in which the protagonists encounter the nonhuman in ways that are unusual in their experience. However, while Gaskell's hut dreams are a prelude to greater understanding, Moodie's finish abortively.

In *North and South*, Margaret's Helstone is essentially a hut dream; when Margaret Hale is in London, the parsonage is a touchstone for her dreams of pastoral security. The concept of hut dream actually gives shape to the way Helstone is represented throughout the text; both before she returns and after she leaves, Margaret uses the idea of the parsonage as an ethical model (Dainotto 84): "The moment of crisis, when she is forced to come to terms with the rhetorical construction of her south, occurs when [she fantasizes] about a Utopic place" (Dainotto 83).Margaret misses Helstone from Milton: the direction card, the tea with Mr. Thornton: "She continued resolutely silent; yearning after the lovely haunts she had left far away in Hampshire, with a passionate longing" (123; ch. 10). Now it is genuinely in her past. It takes on a further imaginary, literary dimension when she uses it

to amuse Bessy (144; ch. 13). The dreamlike aspect underscores her habit of dreaming about Helstone as she falls asleep in London.

Thus, Helstone remains a space of memory for Margaret; for example, it's called to her mind in Milton when Mr. Thornton brings fruit and Mr. Hale retreats into his own boyhood memories; he tries to connect with Margaret by asking her if she remembers Helstone, which she does: "Did she not? Did she not remember every weather-stain on the old stone wall; the gray and yellow lichen that marked it like a map; the little crane's bill that grew in the crevices?…somehow, these careless words of her father's, touching on the remembrance of the sunny times of old, made her start up…" (277; ch. 27). This particular memory makes her cry, yet when she talks about Helstone to Frederick, it's all right (314; ch. 30). Mr Bell harks back to it as well, in "Not All a Dream" (468; ch. 45) which is a title that brings up the flimsiness of the form of Helstone. He dreams about his visit to Helstone: "Time and space were not, though all other things seemed real" (469; ch. 45). However, Margaret also comes to be associated with Helstone and its beneficial qualities, whether those qualities be Romantic or not. Bessy says that Margaret is "like a breath of country air, somehow. She freshens me up" (187; ch. 17). Consequently, the hut dream is extended to the people around her and connects her to the nonhuman world in a way that the idealized, but sealed-off Hall does not.

In Moodie's case, Reydon Hall is the place from which Moodie not only dreams the hut dream, but even goes so far as to build the hut itself, which indicates the insecurity of this place for her. Initially, her characters seek enclosed spaces to hide and to grow indoors;

for example, in “Rachel Wilde,” Rachel attempts to appropriate first “an old fashioned cupboard” (148) and then a “drawer of a sideboard” (149) to hide the stories she has written with her sister, but they are discovered, mocked, and destroyed. This failure of home space drives Moodie, to build and inhabit enclosed spaces even outdoors. Rachel and her siblings build “wigwams”, “rude structure[s], o’er canopied with forest trees” (145). To them, it is an escape: “they were shut up for part of the day in the school-room, to do as they pleased, so they were out of mischief; or they wandered over the estate, building huts in the plantations of established trees, and thatching them with moss” (145). These structures are the most secure spaces at Reydon Hall.

However, even the outdoors is dangerous if it has not been deliberately closed in by the hands of Rachel/Moodie or her sympathizers (her sister Dorothea (Catharine) or her younger brothers). At one point, Rachel and her younger siblings are putting on a play in what is described as an outdoor “scene”: “a beautiful meadow, which opened into the flower garden, and which said meadow, terminated in a deep romantic dell, planted with flowering shrubs and overhung on all sides by tall forest trees” (104). Right at the climax of “The Wood Demon”, Rachel’s eldest sister Lilla “issues from the house, and shocked…gives a cuff to one [actor], and a shake to another; and the poor wood demon, vanquished in the very moment of victory, returns weeping to the house” (104-105). The grounds are, as discussed in Chapter 2, an inextricable part of the house. As such, they are also essentially a functional interior, already established, within which Moodie’s memory allows her a very slender part.

This clear insecurity of "Home" is in direct contrast to Moodie's nostalgic descriptions. Via several avatars, Moodie continually attempts to dwell in poetry at Reydon, situating her impetus for literary creation, the root of her attempts, in the very space from which she is largely shut out:

> It was beneath the shade of these trees, and reposing upon the velvet-like sward at their feet, that Flora had first indulged in those delicious reveries—those lovely, ideal visions of beauty and perfection—which cover with a tissue of morning beams all the rugged highways of life. Silent bosom friends were those dear old trees! Every noble sentiment of her soul,—every fault that threw its baneful shadow on the sunlight of her mind,—had been fostered, or grown upon her, in those pastoral solitudes. Those trees had witnessed a thousand bursts of passionate eloquence,—a thousand gushes of bitter, heart-humbling tears. To them had been revealed all the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, which she could not confide to the sneering and unsympathising of her own sex. The solemn druidical groves were not more holy to their imaginative and mysterious worshippers, than were those old oaks to the young Flora. (*FL* 144-145; ch. 12)[24]

[24] A nearly identical passage occurs in *Roughing It*: "It was while reposing beneath those noble trees that I had first indulged in those delicious dreams which are a foretaste of the enjoyments of the spirit-land.In them the soul breathes forth its aspirations in a language unknown to common minds; and that language is *Poetry*. …In these beloved solitudes all the holy emotions that stir the human heart from its depths had been freely poured forth, and found a response in the harmonious voice of Nature, bearing aloft the choral song of earth to the throne of the Creator" (*RI* 49).

This incredibly florid passage is redolent of Wordsworthian "Nature" worship, and it is likely part of the reason that Moodie's critics have been so dismissive about her interaction with the nonhuman in Canada. Nonetheless, she incorporates this style in her attempt to make links with her new country, as demonstrated in Chapter 4.

The figure of the hut, then, is the figure which both exposes the untenability of the Romantic ideal, but also the figure through which characters begin to "dwell"; certain positive aspects of the Romantic ideal are retained. After all, romantic conceptualization of place was one of the starting points of ecocriticism, and while there are aspects that continue to influence ecocriticism, the influence has been mitigated by critical nuance: "The Romantic movement often represented a partial and limited challenge to dominant reductionist frameworks of experience and rationality, and we must take care that its dismissal is not used to delegitimate writing which gives us other ways of seeing" (Plumwood, "Journey" 18). The hut, which is what remains when the whole conception of "Nature" as perfect falls away, is small, permeable, and dangerously exposed, but retains value as close to the nonhuman world, a place from which both the beauty and the uncanny can be experienced, a starting point for shelter.

The Cottage

> "They were married, and, retiring to a pretty cottage upon the sea coast, confined their expenditure to their limited means, and were contented and happy"
> –Susanna Moodie, *Flora Lyndsay*

> "the humble abode that contained his earthly treasure"
> –Susanna Moodie, *Mark Hurdlestone: Or, the Two Brothers*

> "I would rather live in a cottage in England, upon brown bread and milk, than occupy a palace on the other side of the Atlantic."
> –Susanna Moodie, *Flora Lyndsay*

The cottage held an iconic role in Victorian popular imagination: "a blissful scene of a green valley in which was nestled a scattered group of thatch-roofed cottages, with lattice windows and winding paths lined with hollyhocks and roses" (Ford 29). This vision is, of course, highly idealized, and did not take into account the realities of cottage living. This caused what Ford[25] calls the "cottage controversy", in which writers and thinkers debated the cottage's moral, historical, and cultural value:

> Tennyson's association of the cottage with purity and innocence is as important to him as its beauty. This association, however, may not have been based on fact. It is sometimes asserted that virginity was a rare commodity among unmarried cottage-girls in Victorian times….Still, no factual investigation is required to recognize that Tennyson's usual assumption of the cottager's unspoiled innocence was an accepted pastoralism of long standing. The city streets are corrupt, the manor hall is corrupt, but not the cottage. (Ford 43)

[25] Ford also cites Bachelard, but really only uses the concept of cottage as a seemingly felicitous space.

I quote this because it summarizes the pastoral nature of the value of the cottage, but it is a pastoral which is opposed to "corruption" (meaning here, of course, female sexual purity). This makes the cottage a useful site for a deconstruction of ideals about "Nature" and the nonhuman, because, in Moodie and Gaskell's work, it is under pressure from things that are taboo, such as physicality, sexuality, dirt, and decay, but also from contemporary domestic ideals.

Elizabeth Gaskell, typically, places herself on the borderline of this controversy; she celebrates the beauty and value of the cottage, but does not shy away from describing the less savoury aspects of life there: drudgery, self-effacement, and sexual danger. In *North & South*, she addresses its nostalgic role directly: "Like many Victorians, Margaret Hale has to accept the fact that the seemingly changeless cottage way of life was doomed to be modified. She does not rejoice in the change, as Macaulay did, but she comes to live with it. And what sustains her, as many Victorians were sustained, is her recollection of cottage scenes that flash upon that inward eye that is the bliss of solitude" (Ford 45-46). Margaret reconstructs this ideal in her imagination, but the residents of other cottages, such as in "The Moorland Cottage" or "My Lady Ludlow", are far from it.

Margaret may celebrate the cottage way of life, but the titular character in "My Lady Ludlow", deplores it, using language like "rude mud houses" to describe them. Here, the cottage is an inferior space rather than a felicitous one, in which there is no distinction between rooms: "A man who hears prayers read in the cottage where he has just supped on bread and bacon, forgets the respect due to a church: he begins to think that one place is as

good as another, and, by-and-by, that one person is as good as another" (ch. 10). Lady Ludlow, of course, is an anachronism even in the time contemporary to the story, with her fossilized, heavily codified rooms, but her statement about place is revealing: there is a hierarchy of space, and these spaces that are nonspecific and undistinguished, without "Nature", do not uphold the appropriate cultural divisions.

It is important to note, however, that the cottage, for Gaskell, is something that is almost always viewed from the outside, a space for "other", i.e. the lower, classes, and set apart from the homes of the principal actors. For Moodie, on the other hand, who uses the cottage as a setting much more frequently than Gaskell, the cottage is a space that initially appears to be safe, but is in fact more dangerous than even the wilderness, particularly for young women.

Moodie usually holds the cottage in tension with the big house. In each of her novels, the cottage is at the edge of the park, physically placed within the bounds of "Nature" and a satellite of the big house. It itself is at the centre of a cleared space, its own "park", which creates a dialectic in humanized nonhuman space. The large park of the big house and the small garden of the cottage are interconnected but conflicting spheres, circles of protection and danger.

Contrary to the rarity of cottages in Gaskell's fiction, Moodie constantly creates cottages. In every one of her novels that is entirely fiction (all but *Flora Lyndsay,* and that cottage has already been discussed), the cottage, and the land immediately surrounding it, is a seemingly protected space that harbours a young woman. Formulaic as her later fiction is,

the pattern continually reverts to this double layer of apparent protection. In *Flora Lyndsay*, the Moodie figure lives in a cottage near a larger home and in several of her novels, most notably *Mark Hurdlestone* and *Geoffrey Moncton*, but also "Richard Redpath", it is the home space for the young female character. However, it is never a stable home; normally, it is the site of various dastardly deeds, usually perpetrated on the body of a young woman[26]. If this is the case, however, there is often a certain amount of gender-bending related to this character; she may have masculine characteristics, or dress as a man, a type of duality that falls under the purview of dark ecology. The liminal area between the cottage and either the public or the "natural" spaces that surround it is simultaneously the site of belonging for the women and the most dangerous place. In Gaskell's short story, "The Moorland Cottage", one of her few texts that shows life within a cottage, the dynamics are much the same, although in the end the shame does not fall on the young woman in question.

The situation of these young women in this small, idealized, insecure space demonstrates an aspect of Moodie's perception of the relationship between human and nonhuman. As in many of Moodie's texts, the interiors of the cottages are not the focus of the description. It is rather the situation of these cottages in time and space, particularly in relation to the Big House (often a locus of male power) as well as to the woods (a space that often is vague and threatening) as well as to public spaces such as roadways. In *Flora Lyndsay*, as aforementioned, the cottage has a view of the Big House belonging to the Kitsons while in fiction, Moodie's cottage is protected by a wall of natural origin. This wall

[26] There are instances of a young man being injured and seduced, in *Geoffrey Moncton* (which is a text with a certain amount of queer coding—another aspect of dark ecology—in itself).

functions relatively predictably as a narrative device; in terms of space and the nonhuman, it shows that though Moodie often divides human and nonhuman, it is the human that is more dangerous. There can be no shelter if the home/"Home" belongs to someone else.

Of course, in nearly every case, the cottages are taken, or rented, by an adult female relative of the young woman in question. These relatives are often staying in or returning to a place of origin. Mrs. Wildegrave, in *Mark Hurdlestone*, is returning to her childhood home after her husband was killed in the Jacobite rebellion. In Geoffrey Moncton, it is the evil Dinah that heads the household, (in this case the cottage is surrounded by "dark shrubbery" (209; ch. 2) and in "Richard Redpath" it is Marcella's equally evil mother. This is consistent with the situations of powerlessness in which the young women often find themselves; they are often driven out of these unstable homes and forced to find themselves shelter, normally without success. This also calls the idea of the validity of "origin", as the return is almost unilaterally unsuccessful and results in greater displacment, either via death, or, more commonly, through the instability of the home.

The case of Mary Mathews, a minor character in Moodie's novel *Mark Hurdlestone: Or, the Two Brothers* (1853), is one that exemplifies this pattern, and it is part of Moodie's work that embraces the taboo. Mary is born in her cottage, but as she is "a law to herself" (140; ch. 8) she is not confined to the cottage space. Mary is, in fact, a profoundly displaced character that dwells: she exists in tension with both human and nonhuman. She is profoundly Other, transgressing both gender and class definitions and

thus her marginalization is much more extreme than that of the Moodie character or of Gaskell's Ruth or Margaret Hale.

Mary is conventionally beautiful, but masculine: "a man in everything but her face and figure… Her masculine employments, and constantly associating with her father's work-people, had destroyed the woman in her heart. She thought like a man – spoke like a man – acted like a man" (140-41; ch. 8). She also adopts male habits, and is a "fair creature, who whistled to her dog, sang snatches of profane songs, and hallooed to the men in the same breath" (143; ch.8). However, this encourages rather than prevents her seduction by Geoffrey Hurdlestone, an event which, like Ruth's seduction, destroys Mary Mathews' already tenuous links with her home space. The description of this link reinforces the instability of the idealized English "Home" found in Moodie's autobiographical writing and is also an inversion of the maternity of the home that Bachelard proposes.

Mary's home is a cottage at the edge of a park, in this case, the park belonging to Algernon Hurdlestone, the father of Mary's seducer. As with most of Moodie's cottages, this space is comprised of a small cottage and a garden. The garden is screened from the road by bushes and has a gate at the back that opens on to a path leading to the great house.

Mary's relationship to the cottage is one of gender inversion. The inside of this cottage is an exclusively masculine place, dominated by her brother and father. As such, the description is quite thin; the only time the interior is described is towards the end of the novel, during Mathews senior's death scene. The important elements of the interior are furniture and the masculine physical presence: "The door of the cottage was open, to admit

the fresh air ; and in the door way, revealed by the solitary candle, which burnt upon the little table by the bed-side, stood the tall athletic figure of William Mathews" (*MH* 195-96; ch. 13). Mary's brother stands between her and the outside world, and this obstruction emphasizes the compartmentalized nature of the cottage. It is impermeable in the same way the tavern in which Gaskell's Ruth is caught at the critical point prior to her seduction:

> the square figure of the landlord standing at the open house-door, smoking his evening pipe, and looming large and distinct against the dark air and landscape beyond. Ruth remembered the cup of tea that she had drank; it must be paid for, and she had no money with her. She feared that he would not let her quit the house without paying….the outer door was still obstructed" (Gaskell *Ruth* 60).

Furthermore, while Mary is beside her father, it is William that performs the domestic duties when Godfrey arrives, lighting the candle, fixing the fire, and serving drinks (201; ch. 13). Mary is held within this framework; she cannot access the reality of the house, she cannot participate in the "civilization de la cire" (Bachelard 74), and the house has no permeability to speak of.

Once Mary is pregnant and homeless, she finds shelter and work in a low tavern. This indoor space is also a masculine one; it belongs to a local poacher, Old Strawberry, and is a gathering point for all the neighbourhood ruffians. Like the cottage, it is an enclosed space, with only two possible point of entry or exit: "The in-door

accommodations of the house consisted of two rooms below, and two attics above, and a long lean-to, which ran the whole length of the back of the building, forming an easy mode of egress, should need be, from the chamber windows above" (240-41; ch. 16).

The house seeks to resist the exterior, to exclude; the interior is also fragmented, divided and redivided: "The front rooms were divided into a sort of bar, which was separated from the kitchen by a high, old-fashioned stamped-leather screen …. The other room was of a more private nature" (240-41; ch. 16). It is not a comfortless space, but the comfort only exists for masculine patrons. Mary, confined to a miniscule attic room that is sordid and dark, does not have access. The darkness is consistent with her experiences here; in this room, her son is born and dies, and she realizes the villainy of her brother and her lover. Mary's self is also confined, en-framed. She is treated as a Heideggerian standing-reserve (*Bestand*), a source of work only: "Your time is mine; I have bought it" (243; ch. 16).

How, therefore, is it possible to talk about home, (not "Home"), for Mary? In fact, her home space, her place of origin, is situated in the garden and in the farmyard, before she is seduced. From there, it is clear that she is at ease in the outdoors in general, particularly public roadways and fields, both day and night.

Moodie casts this belonging in gender-normative language, for example, the "nature of her womanhood triumphed over the coarse rude habits to which her peculiar education had given birth" (140; ch. 8). Her place is amongst the nonhuman, but as a near-equal:

> There, among her flowers, with her splendid locks waving round her sunny brow, and singing as blithe as any bird, some rural ditty or ballad of the days gone by, she looked the simple, unaffected, lovely country girl. The traveller paused at the gate to listen to her song, to watch her at her work, and to beg a flower from her hand. (140; ch. 8)

She is also on display in this space: the garden is separated from the public road by a hawthorn hedge, and this "almost impenetrable screen" (140; ch. 8) is as liminal as Mary herself. The hedge is a limit, but one that is constantly trampled and transgressed. Mary is hemmed in, but visible and accessible. Her barrier doesn't protect her from dangerous forces such as the seducer Godfrey Hurdlestone, and what there is of her patriarchially-imposed femininity becomes denatured. Juliet Whitmore, the heroine of the story, states:

> For the last few weeks, a melancholy change has taken place in the poor girl's appearance, which gives me pain to witness. Her cheek has lost its bloom ; her step its elasticity ; her dress is neglected ; and the garden in which she worked and sang so merrily, and in which she took so much delight, is overrun with weeds. (149; ch. 9)

Pregnant with Hurdlestone's illegitimate child, Mary is ruined, and her garden is the symbol. While Mary does lose her liberty, her virginity, her place (however marginal), and, finally, her reason, she is ultimately able to dwell, however, in another garden. The garden of Old Strawberry's tavern, another liminal space, is where she is able to reconcile herself

to herself. This garden is situated between the little tavern and the wide world allows her to reclaim her self.

The tavern garden is the common ground between the two: "The flowerbeds were overgrown and choked with weeds—the fruit-trees barren from neglect and covered with moss" (312; ch. 21). After Mary loses her son, she escapes the masculine space of the tavern through the window and finds herself once more in a garden like the cottage garden she lost. Behind the hawthorn hedge, which is reminiscent of that same garden, she lies on the "lowly bed" (313; ch. 21), the moss that covers her child's grave.

According to Bachelard, the corner is the place where "l'on aime à se blottir, à se ramasser sur soi-même … c'est le germe d'une maison" (130). Brought lower than Ruth, even, having lost everything, Mary Mathews is still able to dwell in this unstable shelter: "the child of sin and sorrow found a place to weep, and poured out her full heart to the silent ear of night" (313; ch. 21).

Truly, though, the most striking moment in all of Moodie's fiction is the moment at which Mary has not yet reached her dwelling place. She wanders the streets, crying "I have no home! The world is my home! …No respectable person would now receive me into their house. There is the workhouse, to be sure. But I will die here, beneath the broad ceiling of heaven, before its accursed walls shall shut me in" (235-36). In Bachelard's rivalry "du dedans et du dehors" (54), Mary has lost everything. However, her contradictory statements are purely Heideggerian in nature; she is the embodiment of the ecological thought: no real

home is possible, but she dwells upon the earth, which, as Heidegger insists, is the only true shelter, though it comes at the price of complete loss.

Mary Mathews' experience of the annihilation of self is perhaps the most extreme example of dispossession in these works in terms of loss of "Home". Margaret Hale, in Gaskell's *North & South*, must embrace another kind of ecological ideal: dirt.

Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial novels deal with nearly every aspect of filth, trying as she does to expose the middle-class reader to the consequences of industrial society. Though John Barton's famous encounter with raw sewage in *Mary Barton* is perhaps the best-known representation of this—an aspect of the ecological thought that Timothy Morton considers essential: "It isn't *like* thinking about where your toilet waste goes, it *is* thinking about your toilet waste goes" (*Ecologica*l 9)—it is in *North and South* that Gaskell really demonstrates the importance of dirt.

Pollution interferes with what Margaret has previously presumed to be "Nature": "The thick yellow November fogs had come on; and the view of the plain in the valley, made by the sweeping bed of the river, was all shut out" (104; ch. 8). Pollution is, of course, the most obvious "dirt" in *North and South*. An "unparliamentary smoke", "a dead lead-coloured cloud" (96; ch. 7) hangs over Milton-Northern. Of course, London would likely have been extremely smoggy and polluted, but Margaret does not recognize that, beyond one reference to the smokiness of Harley Street (78; ch. 5). Margaret is conscious of physical reality of pollution; she is forced to see the result of industrialization, which produces the goods necessary for her civilized life. However, this is in some ways a

transitory issue; the smog in the air and the garbage in the streets affect Margaret, but she is able to integrate the ugliness into her worldview, and it does not remain a constant topic of concern for her as it does for Mrs. Hale, for example, or Mr. Bell.

Beyond pollution, however, "dirt" in *North and South* encompasses sexuality, disease, death, and grief. For Margaret, the "sticky mess" (Morton, *Ecology* 188)of Milton-Northern is the body; specifically, her own body and the ways in which she is present in it and from which she interacts with her environment. As a female "beautiful soul", she is an embodied physical entity only in very superficial, "safe" ways, for example, when she poses with the Indian shawls, or when she is bowing to nature at Helstone. In Milton-Northern, her body is suddenly no longer, to use an environmental term, a protected wilderness area, but part of an ecosystem. In London, she is viewed from afar, aestheticized, or admired, or commodified, or even courteously ignored, but in Milton Northern, she is treated as being living and accessible.

Timothy Morton has pointed out that there are significant similarities between cities and forests: "they have their own laws, their own movement" (*Ecological* 52). It is clear that the fear and darkness that Margaret feels in her encounter with the strange stranger in the forest at Helstone is mirrored in Milton-Northern. When Margaret learns to walk through the "long, dusky streets" (318; ch. 31), she is bumped and jostled by millworkers and tradesmen. They invade her personal space and comment upon Margaret's looks and her attractiveness; they pay her: "the not unusual compliment of wishing she was their sweetheart" (111; ch. 8). She is de-stabilized, and does not know how to react; in this

situation, the strange stranger is made flesh, and the uncanny is not so much in the presence or absence of something living, but in the presence or absence of entities Margaret can identify with.

It is interesting to note that she is able to extend recognition to "the wild creatures" (110; ch. 8) in the woods, and, also, with some of the Milton-Northern people. When Margaret meets Nicholas Higgins under these circumstances, she recognizes him as both strange stranger and familiar friend. It is through the "human interest" (111; ch.8) that he and his family afford that she starts putting down roots in Milton-Northern, but he also provides the profound melancholy and alienation that both mirror and oppose her own experience. When he reveals that he is an infidel, she recognizes the same feeling that she herself felt on the window seat at Helstone, and she is "shocked but not repelled; rather attracted and interested" (112; ch.8). She eventually is able to experience familiarity in the streets, largely because of Nicholas Higgins, but the strangeness is never entirely attenuated.

However, Margaret is able to hold these two things in tension with each other, and position herself physically and morally between them. On the day of the riots, when the rioters are yelling: "to call it not human is nothing—it was as the demoniac desire of some terrible wild beast" (232), Margaret is able to remain conscious of both their deep, violent suffering and their essential humanity, and with that, convince Thornton to recognize it as well. However, it is ultimately her physical body, and in fact her blood that accomplishes this task. The description is very explicit; a "heavier, slower plash than even tears, came the

drip of blood from her wound" (235; ch. 22) that convinces the rioters to leave, and she finds this public display of her more intimate physical self much more troubling than the admiration of her looks.

The streets are a catalyst, then; the physical consciousness they raise in Margaret leads her to understand first that she can be desired, and second, that she herself can desire. She retains a certain modesty, but makes significant progress in "thinking dirtier", if you will: when Henry Lennox proposes at the start of the novel, she is "guilty and ashamed" because she has "grown so much into a woman to be thought of in marriage" (60; ch. 4). Compare this to the "shame and trouble" (420; ch. 34) that she feels when Thornton first declares his love; she is much more aware of the possibilities of the body. In addition, she is much closer to the "beautiful shame" (530; ch. 52) that accompanies her acceptance of Thornton's passion at the end of the novel.

It would be dangerously reductive to claim that Gaskell's treatment of desire is concordant with the queerness inherent in dark ecology, but there certainly is a transgressive element in the intensity of desire in the relationship between Margaret and Thornton. In the same way, Margaret's experience with disease and death causes her to think about and sympathize with not only disability, but also human frailty. Her exposure is gradual; Bessy Higgins' illness and death is a relatively peaceful introduction to bodily suffering and human remains. Her mother's more violent illness, with its moans of pain, "great visible strides towards death" (305; ch. 30), and convulsions, brings less peace and a

more conscious connection of the body and the self. John Boucher's drowning, on the other hand, is an experience in horror:

> his glassy eyes, one half-open, [were] staring right upwards to the sky. Owing to the position in which he had been found lying, his face was swollen and discoloured; besides, his skin was stained by the water in the brook, which had been used for dyeing purposes. The fore part of his head was bald; but the hair grew thin and long behind, and every separate lock was a conduit for water" (368; ch.36).

The juxtaposition of the words "human" and "creature" is a striking one, and it's a motif that is repeated when Mr. Bell reproaches Thornton for describing Margaret as "a beautiful creature" (377). A juxtaposition of human/animal and natural/industrial dualities is hugely, horrifyingly representative of the ugly world in which Margaret finds herself, yet Margaret's first act is not to recoil, but to cover Boucher's face with her handkerchief, a compassionate gesture that demonstrates her identification with this ugliness.

In the end, Margaret's experience of the dirt of Milton, and her holding in tension of "Nature", "Home", and the strange stranger is rewarded. Her future home with Thornton will, we assume, be situated in an ecological consciousness and allow her to dwell there, though since it takes place offstage, after the conclusion of the novel, it is unconfirmed. In Gaskell's *Ruth*, however, Gaskell depicts a parsonage home that is both idealized and safe. Ruth, a seduced seamstress, comes to the Bensons' house after losing everything: her

apprenticeship, her virginity, her lover, and any conception of home. Ruth's seduction has made her losses total—much like Mary Mathews, the world is her home—and thus, she is in a position to live more fully and with a greater consciousness of her place in the world.

The Bensons—a Dissenting minister and his sister, as well as their maid Sally—offer her their home unconditionally, despite its financial instability; moreover, Ruth's presence increases this instability, as her presence is not only a further drain on their resources, but once her history as a fallen woman is discovered, Mr. Benson's salary is at risk. Yet despite these financial and social instabilities, the house remains whole.

The marginality and de-centredness of the Bensons' house is present on multiple levels: the country, the landscape, and town society. The town is obscured by smoke and located on the edge of a change in the land: "See! we are losing sight of the Welsh mountains. We have about eighteen miles of plain, and then we come to the moors and the rising ground, amidst which Eccleston lies" (132; ch. 12). However, this landscape is neither conventionally beautiful nor picturesque; its existence is even momentarily in doubt:

> A low grey cloud was the first sign of Eccleston; it was the smoke of the town hanging over the plain. Beyond the place where [Ruth] was expected to believe it existed, arose round, waving uplands; nothing to the fine outlines of the Welsh mountains, but still going up nearer to heaven than the rest of the flat world into which she had now entered. Rumbling stones, lamp-posts, a sudden stop, and they were in the town of Eccleston; and a strange, uncouth voice, on the dark side of the coach, was heard to say, 'Be ye there, measter?' (133-134; ch. 12)

Gaskell plays here on the uncanny with both the "strange, uncouth" voice and the description of the barely visible "flat world." Eccleston as Ruth sees it is decidedly dark, decidedly "Other"; it is far away from the centre of England and the centre of her life.

Even within marginal Eccleston, the house itself is marginal. It is built on a "little quiet street…. so quiet that their footsteps sounded like a loud disturbance" (134; ch. 12) and it is near the Dissenting chapel, the center point of the Bensons' community[27]. the chapel itself is de-centred relative to Eccleston:

The chapel was up a narrow street, or rather *cul-de-sac*, close by. It stood on the outskirts of the town, almost in fields. It was built about the time of Matthew and Philip Henry, when the Dissenters were afraid of attracting attention or observation, and hid their places of worship in obscure and out-of-the-way parts of the towns in which they were built. (150; ch. 14)

The chapel is a space that carries value because of its age, but also because of its interaction with the nonhuman:

> The chapel had a picturesque and old-world look, for luckily the congregation had been too poor to rebuild it, or new-face it, in George the

[27] It could also be argued argue that the Bradshaws' house is the centre of the community, because certainly Gaskell places Mr. Bradshaw at the "apex", but I'm not sure it's the veritable centre of the story, no matter how explicitly Gaskell states it ("Mr & Mrs Bradshaw were the centre pieces in Ruth's map" (143)). It's the social centre, which is in itself de-centred from the rest of the town's social life (as proven by the election, where Bradshaw supports a candidate that is opposed to the one that Eccleston usually returns, who is backed by the aristocracy of the place).

> Third's time. The staircases which led to the galleries were outside, at each end of the building, and the irregular roof and worn stone steps looked grey and stained by time and weather. The grassy hillocks, each with a little upright headstone, were shaded by a grand old wych-elm. A lilac-bush or two, a white rose-tree, and a few laburnums, all old and gnarled enough, were planted round the chapel yard; and the casement windows of the chapel were made of heavy-leaded, diamond-shaped panes, almost covered with ivy, producing a green gloom, not without its solemnity, within. (151-153; ch. 14)

Once again, the image of a building held to the ground by plants is used. Furthermore, the presence of the ivy which changes the view indicates an agency on the part of the vegetation; it is active in the transformation of the worship space.

The house itself, however offset from the chapel, is a place of presence and welcome: “A door flew open, and a lighted passage stood before them. As soon as they had entered, a stout, elderly servant emerged from behind the door, her face radiant with welcome” (134; ch. 12). It is the first light, and the first thing that Ruth sees clearly upon arrival in Eccleston.

The interior of the parsonage is a fluid space, what Gaston Bachelard would call a dream house. It is small, modest, “too homely and primitive to have bells” (147; ch. 14) which, in itself, is a commentary on the egalitarian structure of the house; Sally may be a

servant, but she holds both a financial (her wage savings) and moral advantage over the Bensons, particularly after they lie about Ruth's widowhood. It also sits between two extremes, as it were, the garden and the street. This reflects the dual public and private aspect of the house. As the Dissenting minister, Thurstan Benson is a figure of public scrutiny, an idea that is somewhat foreign to Ruth; she "did not understand the probable and possible questions which might be asked respecting any visitor at the minister's house" (149; ch. 14). At the same time, the house provides a secure space that shelters Ruth and her son Leonard from censure when the story of Leonard's illegitimate birth is known; nobody speaks unkindly to him when he enters the house and Sally's vigorous scrubbing hides his crying (346-347; ch. 37).

The house is structured in Bachelard's maternal way, providing corners and protective spaces. Gaskell describes the parsonage in detail, emphasizing these aspects of the home space:

> The little narrow passage was cleared, and Miss Benson took Ruth into the sitting-room. There were only two sitting-rooms on the ground-floor, one behind the other. Out of the back room the kitchen opened, and for this reason the back parlour was used as the family sitting-room; or else, being, with its garden aspect, so much the pleasanter of the two, both Sally and Miss Benson would have appropriated it for Mr. Benson's study. As it was, the front room, which looked to the street, was his room….To make amends for his having the least cheerful room on the ground-floor, he had the garden

> bedroom, while his sister slept over his study. There were two more rooms again over these, with sloping ceilings, though otherwise large and airy. The attic looking into the garden was the spare bedroom; while the front belonged to Sally. There was no room over the kitchen, which was, in fact, a supplement to the house. The sitting-room was called by the pretty, old-fashioned name of the parlour, while Mr Benson's room was styled the study. (135-136; ch. 13)

This description is a deliberate act of creation on Gaskell's part; she is building the house in which Ruth will find shelter. The distinction between this, shelter writing, and the finished interiors is the emptiness, in this case, of the rooms. The space is laid out, but the rooms themselves remain largely unfilled. Furthermore, Gaskell brings the process of home-making to the surface by emphasizing the choices made by Sally and Miss Benson; the rooms have been assigned by consensus, in a sense, or, in perhaps less extreme terms, by consideration; they are not codified according to rank and tradition. There is balance- one person faces the garden, one person faces the street; everyone, including Sally (for though she has the top street bedroom, her domain is the kitchen, right in the garden itself), has access to the garden, which is, in a sense, the heart of the house rather than an accessory to the house as it is in "My Lady Ludlow."

There is a contrast in the divisions of space; just as there are open spaces and open windows, there are spaces that are closed. The inner sanctum at the Benson parsonage is created, maintained and protected by women, and inhabited by men. In both cases, because

the homes are shelters, the study can be accessed by women as well; inner sanctums are not exclusionary but simply private. In the study, for example, "many a person coming for help—help of which giving money was the lowest kind—was admitted, and let forth by Mr Benson, unknown to any one else in the house" (135-136; ch. 13). The space allows for personal action as well as interpersonal interaction.

The class division in the Benson house also follows the model of private-but-accessible. There is a door between the kitchen and the parlour, but Sally opens it regularly, not always with a courteous knock: "Sally threw open the middle door with a bang" (138; ch. 13). Sally's domain is the kitchen, and it is her space, but it is available to the other members of the family: "Sally was most gracious as a hostess. She quite put on her company manners to receive Ruth in the kitchen….then they sat quietly down to their sewing by the bright kitchen fire" (192; ch. 38).

Ruth's bedroom, the garden bedroom, is also largely empty, but it has space in which Ruth can, literally, grow, which she does: "The white dimity bed, and the walls, stained green, had something of the colouring and purity of effect of a snowdrop; while the floor, rubbed with a mixture that turned it into a rich dark brown, suggested the idea of the garden-mould out of which the snowdrop grows" (137; ch. 13). This brings together the threads of Ruth's life, particularly considering the way in which the parsonage shares several characteristics with her childhood home, Milham Grange. The same flowers, jessamine and China roses, grow in the garden, along the walls, and in through the windows: "The window…was open, to let in the sweet morning air and streaming eastern

sunshine. The long jessamine sprays, with their white-scented stars, forced themselves almost into the room "(140). Once again, flowers coming in at windows and over doors represent the fluid boundary between human and nonhuman; the interpenetration between indoors and outdoors is a clear marker of an ideal home space in Gaskell's work.

The garden is, in fact, part of the house, and presented as part of the house. In this first excerpt, not only do flowers come inside, but scents as well:

> The little square garden beyond, with grey stone walls all round, was rich and mellow in its autumnal colouring, running from deep crimson hollyhocks up to amber and gold nasturtiums, and all toned down by the clear and delicate air. … the sun was drawing to himself the sweet incense of many flowers, and the parlour was scented with the odours of mignonette and stocks. (140; ch. 13)

In both cases, the house is entrenched in the earth, and the earth is folded around it. The sphere of protection, however, extends more to the human world around the Bensons' rather than the nonhuman world. This is a contrast to the idealized houses in Chapter 2, because there is room for Ruth in this space; she is not rejected or expulsed, but becomes part of the ecosystem there.

The protective, maternal qualities are both inherent to the Bensons' house and embodied by its inhabitants, but what is distinctive about this particular representation of the feminine "heart" of the house is that the virtue of the house, the "angel", as it were, is

not limited to one person. Each of the residents has qualities that create a positive interplay between human and nonhuman: "This household had many failings: they were but human, and, with all their loving desire to bring their lives into harmony with the will of God, they often erred and fell short; but, somehow, the very errors and faults of one individual served to call out higher excellences in another, and so they reacted upon each other, and the result of short discords was exceeding harmony and peace" (142; ch. 13). However, while Ruth's childhood home can only be experienced from the outside by a nearly adult Ruth, the Benson home can be wholly lived in. When Ruth arrives, sad, pregnant, and tired, she perceives the opening of the interior space, the chiaroscuro of the inter-room dynamic:

> Indeed, exquisite cleanliness seemed the very spirit of the household, for the door which was open to the kitchen showed a delicately-white and spotless floor …. From the place in which Ruth sat she could see all Sally's movements; and though she was not conscious of close or minute observation at the time …yet it was curious how faithfully that scene remained depicted in her memory in after years. The warm light filled every corner of the kitchen, in strong contrast to the faint illumination of the one candle in the parlour. (146; ch. 13)

Ruth is able to integrate herself into the household, first by observation, but also by actions, and in fact, requirements, and eventually is able to participate in maintaining the shelter:

> Ruth [was] busy washing the breakfast things; and they were done in so quiet and orderly a manner, that neither Miss Benson nor Sally, both particular enough, had any of their little fancies or prejudices annoyed. She seemed to have an instinctive knowledge of the exact period when her help was likely to become a hindrance, and withdrew from the busy kitchen just at the right time. (148; ch. 14)

This interplay between household members demonstrates the ideal harmony that exists in the house. Ruth fills the spaces, and contributes to the absolute cleanliness that makes it a space in which Ruth can dwell, Bachelard's "civilisation de la cire" (74). Each gesture, however, must be made deliberately, and this deliberation holds the house in a security of Being. Sally lectures Ruth on the importance of mindfulness: "everything may be done in a right way or a wrong ; the right way is to do it as well as we can, as in God`s sight ; the wrong is to do it in a self-seeking spirit, which either leads us to neglect it … or to give up too much time and thought to it both before and after the doing" (176; ch. 16). This consciousness of presence and attention is an important aspect of human habitation as it serves a function similar to that of Heidegger's poetry: it opens up the clearing (*aletheia*), a space in which things can appear as they actually are. However, this "civilisation de la cire" is somewhat problematic, Susan Fraiman points out, as it is both gendered and privileged. At the Bensons', Ruth inhabits a marginal space, a social chiaroscuro created by the religion and economic status of her hosts as well as the ambiguity of her personal circumstances.

The similarity between the marginal shelter of the Bensons' home and the Martins' parsonage in Moodie's *The World Before Them* is a striking one: both are maintained by individuals of both genders, both are set on the outskirts of their villages, and both are permeable to the outdoors.

The parsonage acts as a refuge for the protagonist Dorothy Chance when the farmhouse that she calls home manifests its profound insecurity. At first, the parsonage itself seems insecure as well. Mrs. Martin, the curate's wife, goes to see Lord Wilton of Heath Hall about a Sunday school at his request, and feels she must refuse it because her time is taken up with contributing to the family economy: "We are too poor, my lord, to keep a servant. I take care of my own children, and do the work of the house" (271; vol. 1 ch. 10).

In any case, the spectre of hunger and need is almost immediately eradicated by Lord Wilton, who, in offering payment for the Sunday school, instantly improves the Martins' lot: "Mrs. Martin felt the heavy load of poverty, that was crushing her to the earth, suddenly removed. Visions of peace and plenty, of warm clothing and sufficient food for her family, cheered and elevated her heart. When once alone in the park, she returned thanks to the Almighty for his goodness" (278; vol. 1 ch. 10). Once this hurdle has been removed, the parsonage becomes a space of refuge that even the serious illness of a resident child cannot damage. Mrs Rushmere, Dorothy's adoptive mother, begs Mrs. Martin to provide a home space for her daughter after she dies, and Dorothy sees it as a liberation to live there.

The way the parsonage is located in the landscape is both centred and decentred. It is, on the one hand, a "humble dwelling" (279; vol. 1 ch. 10) in an "isolated position" (1; vol. 2 ch. 1); on the other, with the church, the parsonage creates its own world:

> The cottage, in which the Martins resided, was a quaint-looking white-washed tenement, which opened into the burying-ground of the small Gothic church, within whose walls the prayers of many generations had been offered up…. [O]n the other side of the heath, [it] was approached by the same deep sandy lane, which ran in front of the farm, and round the base of the hill, commanding a fine view of the sea.
>
> A few old elms skirted the moss-covered stone-wall that surrounded the churchyard, adding much picturesque beauty to the lonely spot. (1-2; vol. 2 ch. 1).

The indoor-outdoor dialectic of this place is the most Bachelardian in Moodie's work; the connection of the parsonage door to the graveyard is an essential element of the parsonage's existence. The movement of the description from interior to exterior towards the outdoors, is much closer to "Nature" than any other house Moodie describes in her fiction. In this house, for example, the windows are permeable and lead to the outside: "The good man walked to the window, and looked abstractedly across his small garden plot for a few minutes" (71; vol. 2 ch. 4). This seems a very obvious statement, but instances of characters using the window to connect to the outside world are quite rare in Moodie's

other fiction. The curate may be abstracted, but his gaze still brings the humanized "Nature" of the garden into the reader's view.

Furthermore, the movement goes both ways: "the grand notes of the old hundredth floated forth upon the breeze, and became a living harmony, accompanied by Dorothy's delicious voice" (160; vol. 2 ch. 6). This is ultimately a fairly clichéd narrative device – it is the first contact between Dorothy and her future husband, Mr. Fitzmorris – but it does demonstrate the permeability of the house.

The movement from outdoors to indoors and back again is demonstrated upon Dorothy's advent as a permanent resident after Mrs. Rushmere's death. As Dorothy approaches the parsonage, she finds the inhabitants coming along the road to meet her and tell her about the changes in their home: "Their rabbits had multiplied, their pigeons had all accessions to their families. Harry had discovered that very morning a nest of young kittens in the stable belonging to Mrs. Prowler, the cat, and they were not to be killed or sent away, until dear Dolly had picked out the prettiest for little Arthur" (110; vol. 3 ch. 6). This quotation is very characteristic of Moodie's work and, arguably, her ecological consciousness in the way it juxtaposes sentimental convention with absolute practicality. The rabbits and pigeons do represent spring, fecundity, and a new beginning for Dorothy, but they are also an indicator of food stability. The use of the word "killed" regarding the kittens' potential futures shows a basic acceptance of life and death that is slightly out of place in the sentimental novel.

When the group arrives at the parsonage itself, they do not go directly inside, but rather do "the round of the garden, to look at all the flowers she had helped them in sowing and planting, and pointing out the prettiest blossoms, and gathering her a choise [sic] nosegay" (111-112; vol. 3 ch. 6). Only then do they go "gamboling before her into the house, wild with joy" (111-112; vol. 3 ch. 6). This concentric movement towards the centre of the house is continued when Dorothy is invited into the "sanctum sanctorum" (252) of the study to see Mr. Fitzmorris. The study is the centre of the house, for all intents and purposes, and it is an enclosed room that is only accessible controlled admittance. In this case, Mrs. Martin serves as a conduit between Dorothy and Mr. Fizmorris; it is her house and she embodies it, although not to the same degree Clarissa does at Millbank: "'I wonder if he is awake.' She gave a low rap at the door, and Dorothy's heart leaped to the sound of the gentle voice that bade them come in….At that moment the door opened, and Gerard received them with his usual frank kindness….He took her hand and led her into the room, making her sit down in the study chair while he drew his seat beside her" (111; vol. 3 ch. 6).

Once Dorothy is in the study chair, she has reached the true centre of the house. However, once this is has occurred, the dialectic reverses, and Mr. Fizmorris takes her outside again, this time to the wilder heath: "'Come and take a turn with me in the open air,' he said, suddenly returning to her side. 'The atmosphere of this place is close and stifling, the evening excessively warm. I can always think and speak more freely beneath the canopy of heaven'" (115; vol. 3 ch. 6). The reversal of the space from cosy and centred to stifling speaks perhaps more to Mr. Fitzmorris' emotional state –he is about to propose,

of course– than to any strict intention on Moodie's part. However, it does illustrate a certain tension that occurs, occasionally in her fiction and more often in her autobiographical writing, between the security of the indoors and the sublime outdoors.

Dorothy is not a resident member of the Martin family until the end of *The World Before Them*, but she does contribute to the creation of the study, and she does so in the presence of not only Mrs. Martin, but Mr. Martin as well. The inclusion of a man in the process supports the idea of the description of the parsonage as shelter writing; Fraiman underscores the importance of including all genders the process of creating shelter. Mr. Martin is not, perhaps, extremely helpful, but he does contribute:

> Dorothy was not long in retracing her steps to the parsonage. She found Mrs. Martin up to her eyes in business, taking up carpets, shifting furniture, and giving the house a thorough cleaning from top to bottom. The curate, who was generally very helpless on such occasions, and decidedly in everybody's way during these domestic ordeals, was busy stowing away books and papers out of the reach of mops and brooms.
>
> The women chatted and worked on merrily, and before the church bell tolled six, the south room was arranged entirely to their own satisfaction. The windows were draped in snowy white, the casements shone clear as the air, and tables, and chairs, and book-stands had received an extra polish from the indefatigable hands of Dorothy. (149-150; vol. 2 ch. 6)

The room has been made secure by the repetitive action of polishing, and is once again connected to the outdoors, this time by the work of the women's hands. The final touch of the sublime "Nature" comes with "a splendid bouquet of sweet spring blossoms, which Dorothy grouped with artistic taste, and left in the centre of the table. A beautiful object, which put the finishing touch to the exquisitely neat adornments of the small apartment" (152; vol. 2 ch. 6). The home's interior contains many of the same things that are valued in the finished interior of Heath Hall: books, particularly.

This finished aspect also underscores Dorothy's love of "Nature" and, therefore, virtue. Dorothy stopped "to peep into every volume as she dusted it. The Latin and Greek authors were quickly disposed of, and the huge tomes of divinity scarcely attracted any notice, but some fine works on botany and natural history chained her attention. The plates were so beautiful that, in spite of sundry implied remonstrances from Mrs. Martin, who was fidgety lest the vicar should arrive before all was completed, she could not resist the temptation of looking at them"(147-150; vol 2. ch. 6). The security of the parsonage, and, more particularly, the study, are, like the Benson's, created by the "civilisation de la cire." The study in particular is this way: "no one ever intruded but Mrs. Martin, and that only once-a-week, to dust the furniture and arrange [Mr. Fitzmorris'] books and papers" (251-252; vol. 2 ch. 9). The inside of the parsonage is not a finished interior; it is a flawed space that must be maintained and created by its inhabitants.

The Martins' parsonage is, despite its initial uncertain state, a stable home in the same way the Benson parsonage is; it is idealized, but idealized in a way that reflects a

broader ecological consciousness and awareness of a "darker" ecology. It does share certain elements with the country houses, particularly the presence of "Nature" and the value placed on cultural artifacts that denote high status, such as good books, but the inclusion of the creation of space, shelter, as Fraiman conceives it, makes it more stable.

Conclusions

The transfer from an unrealistic and idealized place attachment to a place detachment that is at the root of a larger ecological consciousness then, takes place through domestic space. In the loss of the homes there is a potential for rebuilding of which both Moodie and Gaskell take advantage. While hut dreams can indicate a nostalgic yearning, they also provide a necessary corrective to an unreasonably idealized "Nature." Smaller, although sometimes still idealized homes, are places by which the protagonists encounter the nonhuman.

The indoor-outdoor dialectic is also very important, as a home's permeability remains indicative of the external pressures on it as well as a key factor in shelter creation. Cottages, explicit huts, can be finished interiors, but they are more often Heideggerian spaces, shelters, formed in part by the physical and intellectual effort of their inhabitants. I have tried to sketch the importance of both internal and external pressures out by demonstrating that sexuality is a fundamental aspect of the ideal, in Gaskell and especially in Moodie, and that an experience of the "dark" things are part of the human experience and the nonhuman world. The security the dark things offer is questionable, on the one

hand, because not only are they always under threat, but they are the place from which the character encounters what is uncanny.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: Dwelling in Duality

> "A half-starved nursing mother, digging potatoes, has little occasion for transcendant communion with nature"
> –Susan Glickman, "The Waxing and Waning of Susanna Moodie's 'Enthusiasm'"
>
> "I never should dare to stir beyond the garden, for fear of being stung or devoured."
> –Susanna Moodie, *Flora Lyndsay*
>
> "You would not wish his life to be one summer's day. You dared not make it so, if you had the power. Teach him to bid a noble, Christian welcome to the trials which God sends—and this is one of them. *Teach him not to look on a life of struggle, and perhaps of disappointment and incompleteness,* as a sad and mournful end, but as the means permitted to the heroes and warriors in the army of Christ, by which to show their faithful following."
> –Elizabeth Gaskell, *Ruth*

In his Nobel acceptance speech, the Caribbean poet Derek Walcott compared his beloved home Antilles to a broken vase: "the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than the love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole….Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our b becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent."

Although it is certainly problematic to use Walcott's words to talk about the white colonial experience, the poetic image of the vase recreated certainly resonates with the theme of this chapter: it speaks to the attempt to create a whole from something that is irretrievably lost. This creation incorporates both new and old as well as the labour of the person who pieces the vase together. In other words, it describes an attempt to create shelter.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of colonial space in the discourse of displacement and ecological awareness of the nineteenth century. Domestic space in the "new" world differs, of course, from domestic space in England, not least because both the internal and external pressures are different. In the "new" world, pressures are those of survival; in the "old" world, pressures are much more variable.

Primarily at issue here, then, is how radical (transcontinental) displacement affects dwelling if dwelling is, even slightly, conditional to place attachment. This also raises the question of the value of the place of origin and how environment is defined, although the latter is perhaps beyond the purview of this particular study. I will confine myself, then, to the discussion of the way in which the creation of domestic space can be a means for individuals to experience their new environment and, as far as possible, incorporate it into their personal archipelago of place.

Emigration, was, in many respects, a marginal act, and this is apparent in its paradoxical representation. Though "The lands of the Empire were an idyllic retreat, an escape from debt or shame, or an opportunity for making a fortune" (Williams, *Country* 281), colonial space also "floats off-stage—an infectious morass somewhere" (Fraiman, "DN" 176). It is present and absent as well as marginalized and influential: "the paradox of settler societies [is] that they simultaneously resisted and accommodated the authority of an imperialist Europe" (Stasiulis & Yuval-Davis, qtd. in Myers 4). They also did influence domestic practices at home, but subtly: "each image of these New Worlds is like a ghost, sometimes…uneasy host" (Archibald 3). For emigrants, and those still in England, both

"Home" and "Nature" are called into question, existing in an uneasy duality: here and not here, inhabited and uninhabited, safe and dangerous, human and nonhuman.

The social and economic factors that encouraged people, largely working-class, to leave England are consistent with the concerns that fuelled the great Victorian novels. However, in both cases, while emigration regularly appears in these novels, its representation is, like the act itself, profoundly liminal: "In sub-plot after sub-plot, fictional emigrants disappear into or arrive from the colonies in ways that facilitate plot development but display a reticence on the part of novelists to represent the conditions of colonial life" (Myers 3). Representation fell, then, to those already in the colonies: "Of course, novels, travel narratives, and diaries produced by Canadian authors were often read in England. For example, Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) was "widely read"[28] (Archibald 25). The distinction between those who travelled to the colonies and those who lived there is clearly defined. This is in fact one of the reasons that I am comparing Gaskell and Moodie in this study. Because of this discrepancy, this invisibility of the emigrant in novels written in England (Myers), I wanted to see how the radical displacement of the author contributed to the representation of home space within the text, particularly in terms of domestic permeability, encounters with the "strange stranger" via the mesh, and, subsequently, a certain recognition of the agency of the nonhuman.

[28] It's interesting that Archibald is situating Moodie as a Canadian writer here because of course Moodie's primary place attachment seems to be England and so this designation is contrary to what she sets for herself, at least outwardly.

I do this in part to provide a new reading of Moodie, who, though she lived in Canada, often stands accused in criticism of ecophobia, of holding herself apart from the land, using language as a shield rather than a mediating device. In this chapter, Gaskell is something of a control group. In previous chapters, she has been at the margins with Moodie, in terms of subject matter and physical placement; now, in comparing the two authors, Gaskell is the centre and Moodie is at the margin.

Despite its near-erasure in novels, however, the public debate around domesticity in the New World was significant. The Victorian concern about hierarchy and social unity in an era of profound change meant that the colonial home was, with the English home, a vital place from which common social values could be disseminated. The colonial project was thus extended to women. However, this was not without risk. Though women were considered to have transformative power in the colonies, the effects could go both ways. Archibald argues that there is a "predictable and xenophobic pattern in most Victorian texts" (7) in which there is a sharp contrast between the English "angel-wife" and the New World woman, who lacked the civilizing qualities of the Englishwoman: "most women who are born abroad or who immigrate are susceptible to a sort of disease; something about the roughness of the land seems to make a Neo-European woman unfeminine"(9). This unfemininity can, however, be read as a move from domesticity that kills to a domesticity that saves; from closed-in, feminized form to shelter.

For Gaskell, perhaps in part because of her brother's disappearance in India, perhaps because of the swell of emigration that occurred during her childhood and young

adulthood, North America is a place that is both convenient, literarily speaking, and physically distant, and as such, ends up being a terror and a reward. Thus, though Gaskell demonstrated a Heideggerian openness in the prior chapter, she still treats home space in the colonies with a certain amount of conventionality; that is, it is absent or idealized. The one exception, the Salem home in *Lois the Witch*, shares characteristics with her closed-off English homes; on the one hand, it is ecophobic, shutting out the nonhuman. On the other, it demonstrates the viciousness of the human, exemplifying the balance that Gaskell always seeks in her themes.

Moodie, though a significant proportion of criticism suggests that she writes colonial home space as closed off and ecophobic, actually presents this space as shelter. Though she experiences the strange stranger outdoors as well, the Canadian homes are an essential meeting point in part because of the way in which they reverse the power dynamic at Reydon Hall. In Canada, Moodie is not in a marginal position on the fringes of the home space; she is at the centre. Instead of creeping into space created and protected by others, Moodie inhabits her own space, one that admits the nonhuman as agent.

In this chapter, I begin with a brief discussion of the colonial tropes that are present in the works of both authors, and follow it with a more detailed discussion of the specific colonies, ending with Canada.

The common tropes of colonial space are not consistently present in Gaskell and Moodie's writing, but the colonies do sometimes appear as "an idyllic retreat, an escape from debt or shame, or an opportunity for making a fortune."(Williams, *Country* 281). In

Moodie's fiction, emigration is inconsistently treated. In *Mark Hurdlestone* and *Geoffrey Moncton*, it is both a punishment and a reward, depending on the individual. In *Geoffrey Moncton*, for example, William Walters emigrates out of desperation, partly motivated by having done several dark deeds for Geoffrey's uncle. However, it does end well for him because he ends up prosperous (318; ch. 10). In *Matrimonial Speculations* (the fictional work that deals most with North America), it is a sensible, if sad alternative to life in England, which parallels Moodie's own experience. In Gaskell, it is both a threat, as in "The Moorland Cottage," and an adventure, in *Cranford* and *Wives and Daughters*.

However, it would be a mistake to classify all the colonies together; there's a very specific gradation of place-ness that emerges in the treatment of colonial environments. India, in particular, is a convenient location, a holding tank, for errant or absent characters. Ecocritically speaking, it is a standing-reserve. It is a no-place, a place that produces, whether goods or people, but does not exist as an independent environment.

Africa, another site with colonial baggage perhaps more weighty than that of Canada, serves as another convenient space for Gaskell, notably in *Wives and Daughters*. Abyssinia, Roger Hamley's destination, is a place of science and discovery, and as such hovers between being place and no-place. This is emphasized by Hamley's false fiancée, Cynthia Kirkpatrick, who, when asked for his whereabouts, says "Where? Oh, I did not look exactly-somewhere in Abyssinia—Huon. I can't read the word and it does not much signify, for it would give me no idea" (412; ch. 37). Molly Gibson, his true love, is much

less incurious, combining a loving desire for knowledge about his location with a certain amount of intellectual curiosity:

> Perhaps the details and references would make the letter dull and dry to some people, but not to her…what [else] had he to write about in that savage land, but his love, and his researches, and travels? There was no society, no gaiety, no new books to write about, no gossip in Abyssinian wilds. (412; ch. 37)

Though Molly is meant to represent the ideal woman, who combines a sterling character, a loving heart, and an active intellect, the colonial space of Africa functions only as a tool to show this. Gaskell does demonstrate a certain disdain for the superficial Cynthia; this disdain underscores the importance Gaskell placed in the progress of science. However, there is still no real recognition of Africa as having its own Being. The focus tends rather towards the distinction between femininity and domesticity on the one hand and masculinity and action on the other: "Nothing could seem further from the female world…than [Roger Hamley's] 'researches and travels.' Molly's interest in his 'pursuits' may be romantic, but his interest in them seems to give him access to a wilder realm of pure thought, a region that is 'savage,' other, closed to women and civilization" (Schor 196). Gaskell's Africa, then, is almost not a colony at all, but a *terra incognita*, strange and exciting and important, but no home.

Moodie's Africa—specifically, the Cape of Good Hope, or today's South Africa—is more homely, due likely to the time her husband spent there. Her two African stories, "The Vanquished Lion" and "The Broken Mirror", were published in 1832 and 1843 respectively[29], and both depict families losing their homes and resorting to emigration because they are "unable to maintain a genteel appearance in England" ("Lion" 32). The families do succeed, triumphing over different aspects of the new world, but there is, contrarily to Gaskell's work, a more specific focus on African territory as well as on domestic arrangements.

Establishing a successful domestic space at the Cape of Good Hope requires not only bravery and economic good sense but also loss of the English "Home"; in both stories, there is an extended description of the way in which the latter is taken apart, and Moodie emphasizes the emptiness of the home once its component parts have been removed. Furthermore, the home just prior to departure is indicative the state of the woman at the centre of the house. In "The Vanquished Lion", "the heavy traveling trunks alone occupied the floor of the once-splendid dining room" (33), while in "The Broken Mirror", the family is bereft of any remaining goods, except a rich carpet and, most importantly, the mirror referenced in the title, which reflects "soiled clothes and care-worn visages" (73), the only thing left in the house. In both cases the woman is selfish, clinging to appearances, to "Home", and to the now-impossible past: "a weak, erring woman, still too much in love

[29] The timing of these two stories is interesting; "The Vanquished Lion" was written the prior year (Thurston), during the time that Moodie—still Susanna Strickland at the time—was thinking of having to return to South Africa with her future husband. "The Broken Mirror", published in Canada's *The Literary Garland* shortly after the Moodies had left their bush farm, making likely it one of the first pieces Moodie sold.

with the world, and the world's paltry prejudices" ("Mirror" 72). However, she is ultimately redeemable and redeemed, and it is a son that provides the voice of reason and faith. That he is instrumental in his mother's redemption and, ultimately, the establishment of a home in Africa indicates that Moodie's conception of home space is consistent throughout her work in that masculine contributions, including, as discussed in Chapter 3, those that do not necessarily conform to rigid male roles.

The initial English domestic arrangements in "The Broken Mirror" do, however, have aspects of shelter. The mother, Mrs. Harden, does participate in the housekeeping, but only where her good furniture is concerned:

> These Lares, that, for eighteen years, she had been accustomed to regard with such silent homage; in the keeping of good order of which, she and her numerous Abigails had bestowed so many hours of time, which might have been better employed, in the rubbing and polishing, and which she justly considered had been objects of envy and admiration to her less wealthy neighbours. (72)

Though the spirit of housekeeping exists, then, it is flawed, based on a desire for appearances. This desire to keep a precious object is eventually productive; at the root of her redemption arc, the broken mirror eventually provides the wherewithal necessary for her son, Robert, to establish not only "a comfortable stone house…neatly furnished" (84) but also contribute to "the neat Presbyterian church, which formed a most picturesque addition to the lovely scenery of the pastoral valley" (85). However, it is both his resourcefulness and his kindness towards the native residents that actually concretizes the

house: he looks for the mirror to show his native friend his face, and in so doing creates a market for mirrors that brings the Harden family their wealth. The stone house is not, then, a shelter, but it has elements of shelter.

One of the reasons that shelter is absent is that Robert Harden's friendly, paternalistic contact with the native Caffres is the closest "The Broken Mirror" comes to an encounter with the strange stranger. The land itself is described in purely sublime terms. In this, then, Moodie avoids any kind of engagement with the nonhuman; she only shows "a beautiful, fertile valley" (81) and the only threat is the Hardens' miserly uncle. In "The Vanquished Lion", however, though the domestic arrangements are described only as a "little paradise" (40) and the home of a relative rather than a space belonging to the Fenwick family, the contact with the strange stranger occurs in that family's contact with both human and nonhuman beings.

It is in this text that Moodie's lifelong fear of "wild beasts" first shows itself. There are numerous references in her autobiographical work and her letters, and though, especially later on in her life, she is aware of its ultimately irrational nature, it persists. In fact, as she presents it, this fear is an indicator of contact with the strange stranger. Moodie is afraid of things that are indistinct or have no bodily form at all; when the object of her fear appears in front of her, she is able to confront it. In "The Vanquished Lion", the mother is an avatar for Moodie's own fears: discovering her child on the ground under a lion's paw, she has "no time for indulging in selfish fears" (41), but instead tries to save him. However, she doesn't just chase the lion away; rather, she makes contact with him. She

"continued to look the lion steadily in the face…with an expression of earnest and heart-rending supplication, as though he were endowed with human feelings, and could understand her silently eloquent appeal" (41). This is a consistent theme across Moodie's colonial writing, the attempt to communicate with nonhuman entities that is balanced between fear and respect in the face of their nonhumanness and a desire to project human characteristics on these animals. This, combined with her use of the sublime to describe the African landscape, shows that she is, at least, aware of its presence and its autonomy. Despite these aspects, however, Moodie does not really address Africa on equal terms.

In summary, Gaskell takes few risks with colonies that are not in North America, which bears out the claims in the early part of the chapter about the rarity of clearly described domestic arrangements and the marginality of colonial experience. Roger Hamley may well encounter the strange stranger in Africa, but only the faintest echo of it comes back, and the purpose of its return is to emphasize the perfection of Archibald's English angel-wife. Moodie's are more mixed: there are more specific descriptions of domestic arrangements, and they are carried out by some iteration of the angel-wife, exported from England with the colonists. It is the encounters with the strange strangers that set Moodie's texts apart; her willingness to ascribe an agency, with motives not clearly analogous to human motives, to nonhuman entities is an important aspect of her ecological consciousness. Neither author, however, treats Africa as place in the way that aspects of North America are treated as place, and, as such, there is a distinct absence of shelters.

Of the three most common emigration destinations (Australia, America, and Canada), Canada was often the preferred choice of genteel emigrants. The United States was outside British control, Australia still carried the taint of criminality, and, thus, "none seemed so able to reproduce English comforts, and thus English domesticity, as the Neo-Europe Canada [which]….came to be imagined as a preindustrial—even prelapsarian—Europe, with well-known plants and animals but without the well-remembered smokestacks and grinding machinery" (Archibald 37). It was also recommended by well-known figures, such as Carlyle: "Carlyle's proposals, against these 'practical men', are two: first, popular education; second, planned emigration. …It was, of course, the surplus working people who were to emigrate, under the leadership (literally) of unemployed intellectuals and half-pay officers" (Williams, *Culture* 81). [30] Emigrants, real or fictional, may thus have arrived in Canada with a set perception and a certain confidence that they were making the right choice.

Gaskell's depiction of Canada in both *Mary Barton* and *Cousin Phillis* certainly belongs to this tradition, but, as Diana C. Archibald discusses in depth in *Domesticity, Imperialism, and Emigration in the Victorian Novel*, the way Gaskell uses Canadian space is very much within the bounds of the common colonial tropes of the time. As such, it is more of a standing-reserve than a place for dwelling:

> [*Mary Barton* and *Cousin Phillis*] are rarely examined together; yet in many ways the second text can be seen as a revision of the first. While Canada

[30] This last is a precise, if unintended, description of the Moodies.

> appears only briefly in both, it plays a crucial role in each plot: in the first text, it provides an idyllic, though potentially evanescent home for the long-suffering hero and heroine; in the second, it disrupts an idealized pastoral home in England to reveal the impermanence of the ideals upon which that home was built. In each case, the sharp contrast between a sentimentalized agrarian ideal and the deleterious effects of the industrial revolution reveals the impossibility of constructing a permanent idealized home. (25-26)

This contrast comes to the aid of my arguments in Chapter 2; that is, that Gaskell presents home as temporary, flawed, or both. However, her parameters only extend to the borders of the England she knows. The sovereignty of Canadian space is immaterial to her arguments; her focus is England and anything else is viewed as a backdrop, or a convenient narrative annex, or, at most, a shadowy figure that aids her in her questioning of the ideal "Home" and "Nature."

However, Hilary Margo Schor, in *Scheherezade in the Marketplace*, does open out one avenue of ecological possibility.

> [Gaskell] tells us so little of life in Canada, that mythic place where class relationships will no longer exist. If happy marriages could not take place in the world of Manchester but had to occur in the new world, perhaps free, unlegislated space can exist only there as well. *And perhaps that space exists only outside the novel; to impose any narration may be to freeze it into something supervised and 'overlooked.'* It may, further, reduce the

> narrative to one of expertise, of 'political economy,' rather than 'truth.' Gaskell's novel does not promise a solution; it promises, rather, a changed heart. [emphasis added] (37)

It is possible, then, to read the absence of any kind of non-standard descriptor of domesticity or of environment as an unwillingness to venture beyond the conventional for fear of mislabelling an autonomous entity. If an author cannot speak truth, then perhaps leaving them unsaid is the better, more respectful choice. After all, Gaskell herself wrote, in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton: "I have no notion what America looks like, either in her cities or her country or, most of all mysterious, her forests" (qtd. in Shelston, *Brief Lives* 78). She is, then, a little like the farm-bound Holbrook: wordless beyond her own borders, though unlike him, she recognizes the existence of something living there.

There is a similar closed-ness in the idealized Canadian "Home" spaces. There are very few idealized "Home" spaces in Canada, predicated as Moodie's ideal is on distance and nostalgia, but the Canadian farmhouses she sees ascending the St. Lawrence River are subject to similar rhetoric as the English "Home" space. Just as Oak Hall, Moncton Park, and Heath Hall are incomplete without their grounds, so are the farms Moodies sees from a distance. In *Roughing It in the Bush*, for example, it is from the water: "The neat farm-houses looked to me, whose eyes had been so long accustomed to the watery waste, homes of beauty and happiness; and the splendid orchards, the trees at that season of the year being loaded with ripening fruit of all hues, were refreshing and delicious" (*RI* 37). As with

country houses, there is very little description of the buildings themselves; the focus is rather on the trees and the orchards surrounding, or linked to the farm space.

The only Canadian farmhouse (as opposed to bush cabins) in which Moodie resides is described at first simply as "a good, substantial log dwelling" (Moodie "Roughing It in the Bush" 85), and then in similar terms as the farms on the edge of the Saint Lawrence river: "the lovely valley in which our future home lay smiled peacefully upon us from amidst its fruitful orchards, still loaded which their rich, ripe fruit. 'What a pretty place it is!' thought I, for the first time feeling something like a local interest in the spot springing up in my heart" (*RI* 86)[31]. This indicates the beginning of Moodie's shift in allegiance (Murray) towards Canada rather than England, but it also demonstrates the continued division between what is "Home", and not-"Home". The cultivated landscape is unfamiliar compared to England, but the pattern of a house surrounded by human-altered land is not.

Canada from a distance: Cousin Phillis

> "She lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty…but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love"
> –Edward Holdsworth, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cousin Phillis*

Gaskell's 1854 novella, *Cousin Phillis*, is perhaps the most frankly idealized of her rural spaces, grounded as it is in her childhood memories of locality, as Hope Farm is

[31] In the case of the Canadian farmhouses, however, Moodie's ideal seems closely linked to food supply and less concerned with culturally significant objects and decorations, likely due at least in part to the Moodies' unstable food supply in the years 1832-1839. *Roughing It in the Bush* was published nearly fifteen years after their bush experience, but clearly the role of the nonhuman/"Nature" in supplying food remains significant to Moodie.

modeled on her own uncle's farm (Shelston, *Brief Lives* 84)[32]. However, Gaskell never lets her skepticism towards a reified "Nature" lapse, employing multiple narrative techniques to underscore the fragility and the distance of a perfect "Home". Most importantly, she places the onus of description on Paul Manning, a cousin of the actual residents and thus distancing the narrative from those who experience it. He is, in a way, a Henry Lennox, who is converted to the home space of a woman he is, however briefly and however against his own sense of what is proper, attracted to: his cousin Phillis.

Phillis, the only surviving child of Reverend and Mrs. Holman, grows to adulthood in a charmed circle, "a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms" (289). She is "assured—at least within the confines of the farm." (Shelston BL 83). Once there is an intrusion, in the shape of Paul's colleague Edward Holdsworth, Phillis learns what it is to love, and shortly afterwards, what it is to have a broken heart. Her emotional awakening destroys the peace of her family's rural life, and the end of the novella has her wishing to leave it for the first time, although she insists she will be able to come back and live as she has done before. To a certain extent, this is a reversal of the situation of *Cranford*'s Mr. Holbrook; one small event is enough to throw the entire place out of balance.

Nonetheless, the Holmans' Hope Farm is an ideal of equality and openness, which exists in part because the domestic space includes the farm; there is no sharp division between indoor and outdoor; every room admits some aspect of the nonhuman world; and

[32] Samuel Holland's farm, in Sandlebridge

every field has its shelter or building. There is also some overlap between genders in terms of tasks; both men and women contribute to the home, although not as equally as the Benson household.

What really idealizes Hope Farm is the link to scholarship; domestic and agricultural concerns are blended with intellectual and spiritual ones. Though Mrs. Holman has no scholarly interests, the other two residents do; the reverend writes sermons, but he also has a "prodigious big appetite" (239; part 1) for any kind of knowledge. Phillis is a scholar in her spare time (which tends to scandalize cousin Paul). The inclusion of intellectual pursuits enriches and informs the Holmans' contact with the nonhuman, but so does poetry. As Heidegger states, poetry is a way of unconcealing the truth; as with Mr. Holbrook and his ash-buds, the Reverend Holman uses literature of one kind or another to make an enduring contact with his land. He sings hymns with his labourers at the end of the day, standing in the field (232; part 1), and he quotes the classics both for farming advice ("Again no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice", speaking of the *Georgics* 296; part 4) and to affirm what he sees before him:

> At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy-evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.
>
> "It's wonderful," said he, "how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county -, England." (233; part 1)

However, the peace of Hope Farm is compromised by Holdsworth's marriage to Lucille Ventadour, a French-Canadian girl who ends up being is positioned as "a dangerous or even deadly form of exoticism that threatens to intrude on English domestic spaces" (Coriale 2008 354); she is the dreaded colonial woman (Archibald) who can corrupt English domesticity, all the more because she is French-Canadian. The Hope Farm space is no longer used in the same way; Phillis' childhood hut, "a great stack of wood in the orchard…built up against the back wall of the outbuildings…underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary…she had evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood" (283; part 3). This actual use of the hut rather than the hut dream shows the depths of the disturbance in Phillis' life. The ideal home is no longer a shelter; like Ruth, she must leave the ideal to contact the less pleasant aspects of human experience. As with Ruth's childhood home, the front door is never opened until the peace of the farm, i.e. Phillis' emotional peace, is compromised (272; part 3).

In *Cousin Phillis*, perfect home and perfect domesticity are endangered by what is foreign and new. Canada, and the domestic arrangements that are native to it, have ensnared one of England's own, along with the railway that brought Holdsworth to Hope Farm in the first place. These new spaces bring the strange stranger to Phillis' door, and while "Home" may still have been possible in Canada in 1848 when Gaskell wrote *Mary Barton*, by the time Cousin Phillis was published in 1864, the possibility had been significantly reduced.

Gaskell's concern about the strange stranger as they appear in the forests of North America is manifest in her treatment of Lois, in *Lois The Witch*. An orphan, she must leave her English parsonage for Massachusetts, "Crossing the sea from Old England to New England is a voyage from the 'normal' to a fearful psychic landscape" (Uglow 476). She is enormously afraid of the woods, this "forest of the unknown" (Uglow 477), in which there are not only dark trees, beasts, and wild Indians, but also her cousin Manasseh. Unstable and obsessive, he claims God has told him Lois must be his wife, and despite her many refusals, he continues to ask. This culminates in Lois being taken and killed for a witch, done to death by the mad things that live in the forest.

There are two main aspects here that are comparable with Susanna Moodie's experience, most notably the placement of the home and the quality of the home in relation to the forest. Though the Hickson's home is "a good, square, substantial wooden house, plastered over into a creamy white, perhaps as handsome a house as any in Salem", it is a house that is closed off. There are doors between every room, and everything is separated, compartmentalized, and secretive. Lois is essentially imprisoned, all the more so because the indoor-outdoor dialectic is also stifled. The Hickson home is a hothouse of the paranoia Gaskell attributes to humankind, not the nonhuman, and enclosure encourages the hysteria that costs Lois her life.

However, leaving the forest out of the equation, "This forest of the unknown with its rumours of human sacrifice is the home of racial and sexual terror, lair of the cunning 'double-headed snake' which lures white maidens to the tents of indian [sic] men, 'adjuring

faith and race forever'" (Uglow, *Habit* 477), would be to invalidate, to a certain extent, the results of this discussion, which, at the heart of things, is about the interaction between home space and nonhuman space.

Unlike Moodie's experience, the dangerous wild beasts of the Salem forest do exist, but they are largely, in fact, reflections of humankind. This is consistent not only with the time of the novel, 1691, when there were still regular attacks by First Nations peoples, but with the tenor of the story Gaskell is telling; that is, of a people made fanatical by faith. The nonhuman world surrounding them is interpreted, very often, as the devil's work:

> the white mist, coming nearer and nearer to the windows every evening in strange shapes, like phantoms,—all these, and many other circumstances, such as the distant fall of mighty trees in the mysterious forests girdling them round, the faint whoop and cry of some Indian seeking his camp, and unwittingly nearer to the white men's settlement than either he or they would have liked could they have chosen, the hungry yells of the wild beasts approaching the cattle-pens,—these were the things which made that winter life in Salem, in the memorable time of 1691-2, seem strange, and haunted, and terrific to many. (94; ch. 2)

As such, Gaskell appears to be not discounting the agency of the nonhuman world, but rather ascribing the hysteria of Salem to a human misinterpretation of the nonhuman world.

This is plausible in the case of Manasseh, who disappears regularly into the forest "with a daring which caused his mother to warn and reprove him" and his eyes have "a glittering touch of wilderness in them". He is certainly mad, and his madness is fuelled by his contact with the nonhuman: "The visions come thick upon me, and my sight grows clearer and clearer. Only this last night, camping out in the woods, I saw in my soul, between sleeping and waking."

Nattee, the Indian servant, is somewhat more problematic. She relates the stories of her people, in addition to making medicines that use forest ingredients, but, especially considering that the Indians, as Gaskell calls them, are part of the human rather than the nonhuman world, the description of Nattee is particularly compelling. She looks like a tree, being "of a greenish-brown colour, shrivelled up and bent with apparent age." This, combined with the way the natives use the forest as a base for their attacks, makes the border between human and nonhuman very questionable.

However, the "deep green forest" is also terrifying in and of itself:

> the dreary, dark wood, hemming in the cleared land on all sides,—the great wood with its perpetual movement of branch and bough, and its solemn wail, that came into the very streets of Salem when certain winds blew, bearing the sound of the pine-trees clear upon the ears that had leisure to listen. And from all accounts, this old forest, girdling round the settlement, was full of dreaded and mysterious beasts, and still more to be dreaded Indians, stealing in and out among the shadows, intent on bloody schemes

> against the Christian people; panther-streaked, shaven Indians, in league by their own confession, as well as by the popular belief, with evil powers. (81; ch. 2)

This encroachment of the forest space on the town space is very telling; it takes up not only physical space, but the air that the townspeople breathe. In addition, it significantly limits the movement of the women; they are largely confined to the home space. Lois goes out on errands only, and the daughters of the house are even less often outdoors. And yet the beasts themselves are present, yet not entirely corporeal; they are Schrödinger's beast, present and not present. This simultaneous presence and absence, the fact that the very land is both ancient and unstable (Uglow 476) is a manifestation of ecophobia, which is, essentially, at the core of this story, and also at the core of Susanna Moodie's interaction with the nonhuman in North America.

Moodie And North America

> "the Neo-European woman represents a rebel free to roam the wilderness. She prowls the margins"
> – Diana C. Archibald, *Domesticity, Imperialism, and Emigration in the Victorian Novel*.
>
> "Her [Susanna Moodie's] own personality expanded against the Canadian landscape and gradually deepened in perception."
> –Carol Shields, *Susanna Moodie: Voice and Vision*

Susanna Moodie did not write extensive fiction about her adopted country, but the one most striking piece is "The Well in the Wilderness", first published in the Moodies' own *Victoria Magazine* in 1847. It is the only story of Moodie's set in the United States. Like her African stories, it features a family (this time "stout yeomen" (87) rather than genteel people) driven to emigration by poverty; in their journey to eventual prosperity, they suffer innumerable hardships and losses. The climax of the story features a graphic description of the mother of the family being torn to death by a panther as she goes to the well, situated in the middle of a swampy waste, to get water for her feverish daughter. It is hard not to draw a parallel between the destruction of the female, maternal body by wild animals and the state in which Susanna Moodie finds herself; the "mangled remains…that crushed and defiled heap" (96), "the disfigured and mutilated body" (97) of Jane Steele can be connected not only to Lois' sticky end, but to Moodie's supposed disintegration in the forests of Ontario.

What happens to Lois, in *Lois the Witch*, is what critics seem to think happens, to a certain extent, to Susanna Moodie. She goes to a strange place, does not like it, and is destroyed, but in fact, Moodie learns to dwell, not in spite of the Canadian world that surrounds her, but because of it. It is perhaps for this reason that, despite the "obviously

fertile ground for ecocritical study" (Bentley 12), Canadian ecocriticism is still coming to terms with Moodie's work. Most of the existing criticism that touches on her relationship with the nonhuman is thematic; the rest deals with the nonhuman as peripheral. Furthermore, Moodie criticism continues to be coloured by Margaret Atwood's description of her as displaced and deeply divided, the archetypal, placeless Canadian victim of nature (49). In a recent anthology about the relationship between Canadian land and Canadian women, Moodie continues to be portrayed as maladjusted —that is, when Moodie is even mentioned. In one case, she is referred to only obliquely, in this case, of course, as the writer who is hostile to the natural world: "Catharine Parr Traill, often treated dismissively by literary scholars and historians, nevertheless provides an interesting example of a writer who confronts the experience of preserving feminine domestic life in a difficult situation without an associated hostility for the natural world." (Hessing 2): "While, on the one hand, such writers as Susanna Moodie indicate that women's sense of 'homelessness' in the New World actually intensified their terror, others…clearly sought to create a dwelling in the wilderness by crafting a complex intimacy with the wild nature around them" (Hessing x). The assumption here that terror is incompatible with ecological consciousness dovetails with Simon Estok's concept of ecophobia, defined as "an aversion towards nature (sometimes pathological), an aggravated form of anthropocentrism expressed variously as fear of, hatred of, or hostility towards nature" ("Reading" 78).

My objective in this section is to provide a reading of Moodie's work that addresses the tension, in ecocritical terms, between ecophobia and a slavish, Romantic devotion to the sublime that fuels her uneasy relationship with place and space. The site of this is, perhaps

somewhat counterintuitively, domestic space. This is partly because, while the discussion of humankind's place on the earth is at the root of ecocriticism, discussions of the material world and, more specifically, the built environment, are developing into a significant stream of ecocriticism (Buell; Garrard, "Ecocriticism"; Iovino & Oppermann). More importantly, Moodie's home spaces and their immediate vicinities are the points at which she encounters the nonhuman world. Finally, domestic space is also significant because it is so frequently this aspect of Moodie's writing that provides the foundation for an analysis rooted in essentialist thinking about the nonhuman world.

Christa Zeller Thomas's 2009 article "'I Had Never Seen Such a Shed Called a House Before': The Discourse of Home in Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush,*" is an excellent, and recent, example of this essentialism. Zeller calls *Roughing It* a "failed-homecoming plot" (106). Displaced by her emigration from an ideal England, which is her "source of security and fulfilment…the place best capable of nurturing and supporting her selfhood" (113), Moodie cannot reconstruct a home. She therefore makes husband and children the centre of home for herself, which fails: "marriage and motherhood doom Susanna Moodie to a lifetime of feeling out of place" (106). This is because, Zeller-Thomas asserts, Moodie was at one with the nonhuman world in England, and that "In Canada, the same intimate participation in Nature cannot be reproduced" (114). Thus, Moodie can only integrate into her native bioregion, and her subsequent non-integration into the Canadian environment is a catastrophic experience.

Zeller-Thomas seeks to redeem Moodie, to a certain extent, by redefining the terms of home-making, but, because of an unquestioning acceptance of the value of certain aspects of the nonhuman, continues to render Moodie as ecophobic and escapist. This analysis seems to lean to the Romantic, the feeling that "place as a substantial "thing" with clear boundaries" (Morton *Ecology* 170), rather than "an independent, definable object "over there" somewhere…. *Place* is caught up in a certain *question*. (Morton *Ecology* 170, author's italics). Moodie questions, constructs, deconstructs, and elides place through, in part, her "lasting discomfort with the notion of home in Canada" (Zeller-Thomas 106).

As a marginalized, peripheral human, Moodie[33] narrates the figure of home in the mode of "shelter writing", though all of Moodie's writing is shelter in a sense. A great deal of her writing was economically motivated, and so not only is she creating a shelter through the act of writing, but also through the remuneration she received. In the case of the actual homes, however, their permeability and the pressure on them shelter, but also endanger and expose, her. This emphasizes both human presumption and vulnerability, and opens discussion about Moodie's ecological consciousness and the way in which the Canadian experience of the nonhuman can be explored and theorized.

> There is in Moodie's presentation, moreover, more rapport with the natural world, more contact with the native people, and more interest in the lives of servants…she had to learn something of everything and to work

[33] I acknowledge that it is somewhat fraught to refer to the person, the narrative voice, and the character in *Roughing It* as "Moodie," but for simplicity I will do so. In cases where I am referring to a more fictionalized version of Moodie rather than an autobiographical "character," I will use either the name of the character or simply "the Moodie figure."

> exhaustingly [sic] at jobs that she would never have considered undertaking as a gentlewoman in England. Moreover, while in the bush she gave birth to four children and for the better part of two years had the sole management of the bush farm while her husband served stints in the Upper Canadian militia. (Peterman, "Susanna Moodie" 521)

In Canada, Moodie encounters "eternal forest" (*RI* 193) that is an ideal of wild landscape, and she inhabits it in relative solitude. However, despite her professed love of the forest, she does not find the equivalent of the outdoor hideaways she creates for herself in England. Instead, she finds herself in the middle of literal clearings in the bush, on the periphery of the civilized world. Her "hut dream" becomes a "hut reality," as it were, but it subverts the imagined security of the hut. Moodie's home life during her first years in Canada is decidedly unstable. She lives in four different Canadian homes in rural and backwoods Ontario between 1832 and 1839. Not one of them has any aspect of the finished interior; rather, each requires extensive work to become habitable. The first two homes correspond exactly to Fraiman's shelter definition of "small, rickety, [and] rigged-up" (349), the third is dirty and infested with mice and insects, and the fourth is literally unfinished. Moodie's gestures of home-making, both as acts of physical labour and acts of writing, are absolutely necessary in this situation. The ultimate failure of the physical home-making (that of the writing is arguable) does not negate the ultimate effect: Moodie, in giving thought to her homelessness, creates space for dwelling in Moodie's autobiographical writing; when the time comes for her family to move in, the farmhouse

that has previously been idealized is now an "Augean stable" (*RI* 109), and "more filthy than a pig-sty" (110). Though she and her servants are able to clean out the last tenants' dirt and add their own furniture, which gives "an air of comfort and cleanliness to a room which, only a few hours before had been a loathsome den of filth and impurity" (110), they find a skunk in the cupboard which destabilizes the beautiful space (highly improbable as cleaning a small house without smelling a skunk the very first thing may be) and drives Moodie and her servants outdoors. They are able to re-establish the cleanliness, and all seems well, but during their first night there is a plague of mice, followed by one of "bugs and large black ants." This points to a failure of the shelter writing trope and/or the complete instability of the nonhuman world.

The "miserable hut" in the vale (*RI* 61) is Moodie's first home in Canada, and she is profoundly discouraged at "the disappointing reality of the colony" (Thomas 108). The hut is situated in a "rocky upland clearing, partially covered with a second growth of timber, and surrounded on all sides by the dark forest" (*RI* 61). When Moodie arrives, the cabin has no door, and five cows are lying on the floor. Inside, the building is "dreary. Without, pouring rain; within, a fireless hearth; a room with but one window, and that containing only one whole pane of glass; not an article of furniture to be seen, save an old painted pine-wood cradle" (61). The space is open and empty, and the pressure of the outside, nonhuman world is evident.

Moodie finds the door and her husband installs it, which is the first, major division between public space and private space. Then, what follows is almost a montage of transformation as a shelter is erected by Moodie, her husband, and her servants:

> Our united efforts had effected a complete transformation in our uncouth dwelling. Sleeping-berths had been partitioned off for the men; shelves had been put up for the accommodation of books and crockery, a carpet covered the floor, and the chairs and tables we had brought from [Cobourg] gave an air of comfort to the place, which, on the first view of it, I deemed impossible. …The sun shone warm and bright, and the open door admitted a current of fresh air, which tempered the heat of the fire. (*RI* 64)

The creation of this home is a group affair, but for the creation of the next home, Moodie, like Bachelard, elides the bodies (Fraiman 347) that contribute to the construction of shelter—Bell, her servant, her husband, and their manservant, as well as herself—into one "I": "In a few hours I had my new abode more comfortably arranged than the old, although its dimensions were much smaller. The location was beautiful, and I was greatly consoled by this circumstance" (*RI* 90).

As this elision demonstrates, Moodie's participation in domestic creation and maintenance is, admittedly, a strongly class-inflected process. However, while the heavy work is, ideally, the province of servants, there are not always servants, or money to pay for them. Every task that John Monaghan, the Moodie's hired man, performs when he is acting for the absent female servant Bell—lighting fires, milking cows, taking care of the baby,

cooking dinner—Moodie performs as well (*Roughing It* 99-100). As in England, then, genders participate equally in the creation of the home space. This is actually a constant with Moodie once she leaves Reydon Hall; there are numerous male characters, such as Mr. Kitson, Jacob, John E. that take on domestic functions, and the latter two make regular contributions to the preservation of the home space in Canada. Thus, in Canada, despite Moodie's concern about class division of labour, there is fluidity in the actual performance of the shelter-maintaining physical gestures.

When Moodie steps back from these gestures, there are consequences that endanger the house space. In the newly-built log house in the bush, Moodie is supervising, rather than participating in, the construction, feeling complacent (*RI* 185); immediately after that, a neighbour nearly sets fire to the house, and the family is "nearly deprived of [their] home before [they] had taken up [their] abode in it" (185). These incidents emphasize the instability and permeability of the home space in Canada. The near-hermetic state of the English home does not apply; both human and nonhuman agents are able to enter Moodie's Canadian homes, not only through the doors and windows, but through the chimney, the roof, and various fissures and cracks in the structure itself. This "enclosure in whisperingly close dialogue with exposure" (Fraiman 352) is what brings Moodie into contact with her environment. The fragility of her shelter pushes her, as it were to encounter and negotiate boundaries with different manifestations of the nonhuman.

The importance of the elements as nonhuman agents should not be underestimated. Moodie carefully catalogues the weather and its relationship to her home. She and her

family suffer both extreme heat and extreme cold indoors, and even when she feels protected and safe there, exposure is imminent. One night in the dower house, for example:

> A sharp wind howled without, and drove the fine snow through the chinks in the door, almost to the hearth-stone, on which two immense blocks of maple shed forth a cheering glow, brightening the narrow window-panes, and making the blackened rafters ruddy with the heart-invigorating blaze. The toils of the day were over, the supper things cleared away, and the door closed for the night. (*RI* 97)

The snow serves to augment the feeling of protection; its presence demonstrates the general functionality of the house as well as Moodie's acceptance of the prevailing conditions. Bachelard states that the dialectic between indoor-outdoor is at its least challenging when there is snow, which "reduces the exterior to nothing….a simplified cosmos" (40).

Snow is, therefore, more a protection than a concern, unlike fire—the Moodie home burns down not once, but twice— but the permeability of Moodie's home space by people and animals is a much more pressing concern in *Roughing It*. As many critics have pointed out, she places a high value on her private space, as her search for enclosed spaces in her English life demonstrates, and in Canada, that boundary is not respected. However, what is interesting from an ecocritical point of view is the way Moodie draws, or, rather, doesn't draw, a distinction between human and nonhuman invaders. These categories overlap and intertwine; people are endowed with animal characteristics, animals are attributed human

ones, and the strangeness of their presence manifests in more ways than the simply physical. This marks, I think, willingness on Moodie's part to contact and accept other beings; she is open, through the cracks in her homes, to the unknown and the uncanny.

Conclusions

> "The traveller cannot love, since love is stasis and travel is motion. If he returns to what he loved in a landscape and stays there, he is no longer a traveller but in stasis and concentration, the lover of that particular part of earth, a native."
> –Derek Walcott, Nobel Acceptance Speech

Literature about emigration is profoundly transformative and is a fertile field for shelter writing. Emigration necessarily involves displacement, and may also involve disenfranchisement, persecution, and even shipwreck, the very conditions under which shelter writing is produced. However, as with the English "Home", when the authors use surface images, tropes, rather than genuine exploration, there is little to no possibility of dwelling. The choice of Canada, particularly, indicates the desire for a "broader set of possibilities" (Schor 37), for blank space, a designation erroneous because of both the human (First Nations) and nonhuman elements already there.

In colonial space the hut dream must become "real", in the sense that the characters live in small, so-called primitive spaces rather than dream about them from larger, ostensibly more secure homes. The hut, as discussed in Chapter 3, is the space which is most likely to become shelter because of the performance of domestic duties. Particularly in Moodie's autobiography, these are largely limited to the hut spaces that she is obligated to inhabit after her emigration.

In Gaskell's case, however, the house in Salem to which Lois must go is no hut dream; it may be maintained by scrupulous domestic labour, but there is no opening. In fact, even the widow Brown's house, though it is kept in a way that is more welcoming, is

not shelter, but Frye's garrison, in a way that Moodie's writing is not. Granted, Gaskell is writing about America, "land of savage cruelty" (Archibald 18) rather than Canada, but, as aforementioned, there was a certain amount of overlap between the two. Many references to Canada were portmanteaued into statements about "America" (24): "This ambiguity is sometimes intensified by the similarity of the descriptions of the land. For example, huge forests, prairies, and mountain ranges existed in both countries" (24-25). Furthermore, it's explicitly stated that Jem is employed in Toronto, but both he and the narrator refer to it as "America" (459; ch. 38).Thus, Gaskell's marginality, her balance, does not extend beyond the borders of England. Within her home country, she is able to pull together the disparate nature of human experience and, as such, express Heidegger's uneasy *Dasein*. Once she takes not-England as her subject, however, she can only leave blank spaces where the nonhuman could be.

Lois the Witch, Gaskell's sole story situated principally in North America, does, however, provides a counterpoint to Moodie's personal experience that highlights the value of embracing the dark and uncanny. Though there are common points between Lois' experience and Moodie's, particularly the idea of a dark, menacing forest filled with savages, Moodie's Canadian homes are an essential meeting point in part because of the way in which they reverse the power dynamic at Reydon Hall. In Canada, Moodie is not in a marginal position on the fringes of the home space; she is at the centre. Instead of creeping into space created and protected by others, Moodie inhabits her own space.

However, this doesn't prevent her from yearning for England, and in her continued presentation of England as the ideal, she anticipates what Raymond Williams describes as a trend of the 1880s: "a marked development of the idea of England as 'home', in that special sense in which 'home' is a memory and an ideal. Some of the images of this 'home' are central London….But many are of an idea of rural England: its green peace contrasted with the tropical or arid places of actual work; its sense of belonging, of community, idealised by contrast with the tensions of colonial rule and the isolated alien settlement" (*Country* 281). The tension between periphery and centre is thus both doubled and reversed, and, because of this, Moodie's experience of marginality is profoundly provincial.

Derek Walcott does not insist on unreserved love as a condition of native-ness, but rather presence. While Gaskell is the traveller, Moodie, in her presence, is the traveller who stays and thus, a native. As Rachel Wilde, as Flora Lyndsay, and as the "I" of *Roughing It in the Bush*, Susanna Moodie is often a survivor and always marginal. She is a de-centred, dis-placed subject, housed uncertainly on the earth, but this uncertainty is an arguably more nuanced and realistic portrait of how we as humans live and look at ourselves. Robert Pogue Harrison states that "a house is …defined not so much by its walls but by its windows, its doors, its porch, its porous openness to the earth" (234), because, he affirms, "the only true shelter on earth is the earth itself" (234). As Moodie's experience shows, any type of home is still precarious and uncertain. She is, in the words of Bachelard, "logé partout mais enferme nulle part" —"sheltered everywhere but enclosed nowhere" (29), and, because of this, she must remain in contact with the uncanny as well as the canny, and hold them both in tension.

Conclusions: Shelter, Homelessness and "Home"lessness

> "The provincial dweller knows that if you pull a rock from out of the ground and turn it upside down, you are likely to find on its underside a covert world of soil, roots, worms, and insects. A nonprovincial dweller either never suspects or else tends to forget such a thing, for the stones that make up his city have already been abstracted from the ground, wiped clean, and made to order. A province, in other words, is a place where stones have two sides."
> –Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests*

> "And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glowworm in the night cold grass may be the only fire at her foot: but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermilion, shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless."
> –John Ruskin, "Of Queen's Gardens"

Shelter writing comes from the provinces, from the edges of human habitation. These edges may be metaphorical, they may be literal, or they may be both. In any sense, shelter writing provides a space for the relationship between human and nonhuman. It is indicative of a movement between external and internal forces: decentred and profoundly vulnerable, but also inclusive and encompassing. As such, it stands in concert with current ecocritical trends in embracing a broad variety of human experience of the nonhuman.

In choosing Elizabeth Gaskell and Susanna Moodie, I have chosen authors that are themselves provincial, both metaphorically and physically. This marginality was emphasized by the physical locations of their lives, particularly after their marriages; Gaskell always lived on the edge of Manchester, between country and city, and Moodie, of course, moved to Canada. In this way, their life experience is situated in profoundly marginal space and, likely, key to their ecological consciousness. Their locations have undoubtedly contributed to their engagement with Harrison's covert world; their writing holds it in tension with that which has been wiped clean. Their domestic space is decentered, permeable, demonstrating a complex relationship with the nonhuman that is unusually focused on the de-centring of the human.

Specifically, much of Gaskell and Moodie's work has a great deal in common with sentimental or domestic novels, there is a thread of uncertainty that runs through them: there are precious few endings that conclude happily, but there are numerous texts in which the protagonist does not have any kind of stable home to which to go. Though there are many happy endings in both authors' works, the ultimate situation of the characters' homes is incredibly vague. Often, they are utopian in the sense that they are eu-topos, or no place.In Gaskell's *North and South*, for example, there's an aborted ending, in the sense that it finishes with a both a proposal and a note of uncertainty: Margaret and Thornton are in London, in Sholto and Edith's house rather than a space that belongs to them. On the one hand, it is critical for the novel to show that they have reached a compromise, but on the other, neither of them have a specific home space to return to; Margaret is essentially homeless and Thornton has nearly dissolved his establishment. *Roughing It in the Bush*, of course, concludes with the Moodies leaving their bush farm to go to Belleville, though they have no particular home there. Other novels conclude with nebulous homes, voyages, and explicitly stated homelessness.

Homelessness and shelter writing go hand-in-hand. Shelter writing mitigates the perceived inaction of Heidegger's deep ecology and the limited context of Bachelard's home with its inclusiveness and de-gendering; it also embraces dwelling, the indoor-outdoor dialectic, and, perhaps most potently, the role of writing in the sparing and preserving of both human and nonhuman space, home and world.

Both Gaskell and Moodie, the authors, wrote to preserve their homes as well as those of the characters they created. Gaskell began to write to shelter herself from grief after her son's death. Later, her writing became an act that allowed her to better maintain her self in the whirl of home duties that, while not a killing domesticity, would have stifled her had it been her sole occupation. Writing balanced the day-to-day work that she obliged herself to accomplish, and as such was a

building of her own personal dwelling. Moodie, on the other hand, wrote for frank survival; every story she produced in Canada went to shore up the crumbling edges of her bush home, to light and warm it and feed the children it sheltered. Furthermore, Moodie clings to a Heideggerian dwelling through poetry; the sublime that is present her descriptions is her attempt at revealing the truth, but so is her vivid, humourous description of the 'dirty' aspects of the nonhuman. The sublime may, at the start, be a form of en-framing, but Moodie does unconceal truth, at least for herself.

Gaskell and Moodie's writing is, without a doubt, shelter writing, depicting home spaces that are Heideggerian places in the sense of having a mutually recognized relationship with the nonhuman world. These home spaces are rife with interstitial space, which permits the interaction and relationships between human and nonhuman. It also operates in contiguous modes of displacement and situatedness: that is, their writing sometimes seeks to connect them (or their characters) to a place, and it sometimes seeks to distance, to dis-locate. The connection, place attachment, is held in tension with placelessness; both have value in situating human experience.

Both authors recognize the agency of the nonhuman, demonstrated by the continual permeability of conventionally human (notably conventionally feminized) spaces, and the situating of value in these permeable spaces rather than in the aforementioned constrained spaces as well as an embodiment of their female characters in the world, for better or for worse. "Home" is fundamentally unstable because of its stability and impermeability; it is a Heideggerian en-framing.

The vague, unquestioned "Home" cannot be ecological, then, just as an unquestioned "Nature" that posits a fundamental connection to the land cannot. Moodie and Gaskell, in their work, demonstrate that "Home" is an illusion; their sympathetic characters are more at home in marginal spaces, self-constructed shelters tempered with instability. The characters feel the terror and longing that is at the root of both shelter writing and ecological consciousness. Not only do Moodie and Gaskell's characters become aware of what Morton has called "strange strangeness",

but, by and large, they remain in its presence. For these characters, *Dasein* is, ultimately, uncanny, a tense coexistence between known and unknown.

This uncertainty, however, is not a negative conclusion. It is a statement of dwelling, in its most Heideggerian sense. *Dasein* is uneasy, uncomfortable, and impermanent, bolstered by the act of writing. Bachelard states, "It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality" (66), and that is what these characters--and these authors--do. Having encountered the world in its unfamiliar state, it becomes part of their worldview, and, though they have no home, the world is their home.

Directions for future study

From here, I see numerous potential possibilities for future research. Within the corpus, a closer look at wilderness space, reading beyond the house and its immediate periphery, or an analysis that is more closely tied to gender, would be illuminating. In addition, the sublime, which is an essential part of both Moodie and Gaskell's aesthetic response to the nonhuman, could be looked at in more depth. On the English side, an analysis of either Charlotte Bronte's works or George Eliot's in a similar vein; that is, the interaction between human and nonhuman and the role of domestic space, would be equally possible. In terms of Canadian writing, bridging the gap between Moodie and other writers of her time, particularly Mary O'Brien and Anna Jameson is also something that has not yet been done in great detail. What I would also like to do is look at Moodie in conjunction with contemporary Canadian authors, particularly Eden Robinson, a First Nations writer.

The place of indigeneity in ecocriticism is still being negotiated, and there is some interesting ground to be explored in terms of the overlap between land, displacement, and home space. Ultimately any kind of further ecocritical analysis of early Canadian literature, the Victorian novel, or both would be productive in terms of ecocriticism due to the rich textual field that could be used and to the continuing rarity of this kind of work.

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