

“IN THE GREATEST ABUNDANCE”: LIFE, GOVERNANCE AND
DISCOURSES OF CONSERVATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CANADA

A Thesis

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates the “discourse of conservation” as it is both articulated and critiqued in three texts written by women in the nineteenth century. A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West (1852), written by Mary Ann Shadd and addressed to a Black American audience, critiques romanticized discourses of nationalism and freedom, and reconfigures characterizations of Black emigrant populations in the period from destitute, naïve refugees to keen critical thinkers, successful merchants, and agents of national security. Burlington Bay Beach and Heights in History, an historical pamphlet written by Mary Rose Holden of the Onondaga Nation and published by the Niagara Historical Society in 1897, conceptualizes European history in a First-Nations frame— one that structurally contains the European presence within the borders of a formerly established, and presently enduring, Six Nations community. Her revisionist history situates First Nations people as valuable demonstrators of successful government. Catharine Parr Traill’s Stories of the Canadian Forest, Or, Little Mary and her Nurse, published in 1856, teaches (and implicitly questions) the complex social stratification of colonial Canada in various conversations between a nurse and her upper-class charge. These three texts provide a significant comparative example of how the discourses of conservation can be considered a locus for linguistic structures that work to cultivate access, even for disenfranchised individuals, to self-determination, political participation, and governance over land use.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Expansion.....	20
Scarcity and 1850s Ontario.....	26
Conservation and the Colonial Management of Identity.....	43
Conversion.....	46
Demarcated Spaces.....	80
Nostalgia.....	90
Conclusion.....	99

“Let us seize upon Africa, or some other, unappropriated territory while we may,” say others, “and establish our own governments.” But Africa has already been seized upon; the English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turks, have long since shared her out among themselves [. . .].

(Shadd 94)

So Mary Ann Shadd¹ calls to Black Americans, free and enslaved, in response to the American Fugitive Slave Law that coincided with propaganda to “export” slaves “back to Africa.” Here Shadd exposes two myths of the colonial expansionist campaign: the first, that there might still be such a thing as an “unappropriated territory,” and the second, if ever there were an “unappropriated territory,” that the seizure of such territory would be permanent. Africa has, by 1852, been seized upon again and again. To assume that any Black individual might believe that a portion could be available for former slaves to re-populate is to assume that the colonialist concepts of “homeland,” and “nostalgia” and “virgin” or “Edenic” “territory” are as successfully indoctrinated within Black consciousness as they are in the European. As Shadd insists her readers realize in the final chapter of her text, no “homeland” remains the same “homeland” after European expansion. In fact “homeland,” as a colonial construct, is not accessible to former slave populations in the same way it is to European settlers; nor is it as desirable. Certainly the term “seize” might introduce the availability of a most powerful colonial gesture to the hands of those disempowered.

¹ I use the name Mary Ann Shadd in favour of her married name Mary Ann Shadd Cary (which is the one sometimes used by other historians and critics) because when she wrote A Plea she was single and because Mary Ann Shadd is the name that Richard Almonte uses in the recent edition.

Here, however, presenting “seize” as propagandist rhetoric, Shadd undercuts any assumed success or sustainability associated with the concept of seizure.

Just as insistent to Shadd is the question of what exactly gets seized upon. Is this a seizure of land, of rights to self-government, or of Africa-as-commodity “shared out” among European nations facing mercantile bankruptcy? What (or who) is “appropriated territory”? What forms of governance and domination fall under Shadd’s use of the term “appropriate”? Consider the fact that the above emigration advice is written by a Black² woman in the interests of her community. When Shadd suggests that Canada is the best bet for fugitive slaves, “appropriated territory” does not require the elimination of populations in order for the appropriator to “establish government.” Also, Shadd advocates for rights to an establishment of government that does not focus on ownership or total control of the land as a prerequisite. In other words, Shadd argues for access rather than conquest. The initial goal is to “establish government,” not acquire landmasses for economic gain.

The above analysis of the passage from Shadd rehearses some of the critical issues at stake in contemporary colonial studies. Expansion, conquest, business, land, populations, emigration and language will be the key concepts addressed throughout this paper for the purposes of destabilizing seemingly static colonial discourses that occur in nineteenth-century Canadian literature. Yet what I hope is already being established here is a move away from what has become expected dialogues/destabilizations in colonial studies. This thesis is shaped around texts, like Shadd’s, that do not engage with the issue of colonial expansion in expected or

² Keep in mind that the signifier “Black” generalizes a diverse group of individuals. Shadd’s parents were both descendants of “a mixed race ancestry” (Almonte 11). They were both free and also both educated.

regularly debated ways in literary criticism and social theory of texts from the period. Often criticism of colonial literatures has tended to arise out of expansionist energies these literatures are of course meant to encourage. For example, Mary Louise Pratt's analysis of travel literatures in the "contact zone" consciously emphasizes how "expansionist energies were beginning to consolidate themselves." She consciously does not address, at least to any significant extent, "autoethnographies" or any literatures from the places conquered. Though she locates her texts as the transitional moment between maritime exploration and interior exploration, the key discourse of interest for her remains writing strategies that characterize expansion (Pratt 10). Similarly, in the context of recent globalization theory, essays by Fredric Jameson, David Harvey and Stuart Hall, for example, seem very insistently attached to studies of the expansion of European monoculture and capitalism. Postcolonial and globalization theories deconstruct much of the foundations of European domination and are therefore invaluable to colonial studies; yet, in such criticism certain tenets of colonialism can seem to become necessary for the apparatus of the argument rather than questioned and dismantled.

The attention to recovery of nineteenth-century texts arises from a general void in the field of nineteenth-century Canadian studies. After all, to my knowledge, no critical work thus far has been conducted on Mary Rose Holden, and very little on Mary Ann Shadd, but even criticism of texts by Canada's British immigrants is scarce. Anthologies such as Lorraine McMullen's Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers and Rita Kranidis' Imperial Objects look to British white settler women and their contributions to constructions/domestications of Canadian nationhood. Scholars of Canadian literatures will be familiar with the naturalist writings of Catharine Parr Traill and

Susanna Moodie who have been, in a sense, immortalized as early heroines of Upper Canada for their incredible survival skills in the back woods. Existing criticism of their works (when it extends beyond mother-of-nationhood iconography)³ most often will question these women's obsession with objectifying Nature. Such criticism, to my mind, misrepresents the situation of colonial Canada when it reifies a very static, white-centric concept of nineteenth-century Canada, one where the British immigrant is heroic and naive as if blundering about in the wilderness unaware, and therefore not possibly responsible for the systems of racism and environmental destruction implemented in national legislation and the social consciousness in that very crucial era of Canadian history. Too often Canada is excused from these charges because the popular consciousness is flooded with national mythologies of the nineteenth-century Ontario reality being muddy roads, the Upper Canada Rebellion, and the Underground Railroad. The three texts studied here substantiate the argument that governmental activities in Canada, whether at the level of the individual or the nation-state, managed resources and populations within a shrewd, complex and contested system of social stratification with the impetus to secure profits.

In his Introduction to the most recent edition of A Plea for Emigration, Richard Almonte calls for a "tradition of Black Canadian writing recovered" because books such as Shadd's must be recognized as "essential parts of Canadian literature and history" (33). To do so, however, requires a certain reevaluation of what kinds of questions Canadian critics are concerned with. Undertaking such work, Almonte found that

the process of editing Mary Shadd's A Plea for Emigration; Or Notes of Canada

³ See McMullen, Lorraine, Introduction, and Thomas, Shields, and Smith.

West contains an implicit argument which needs to be brought into the open [. . .]. Shadd's book is an important addition to the body of works known as Canadian literature. This statement raises a series of more or less vexing questions, such as how and where is it an important addition, and also, why must it be added? (25-26)

These questions might be considered deceptively simple. Almonte's call for more research into Black Canadian literary studies should not need to be so insistent, nor should it remain as isolated as it does in the current climate of Canadian literary studies. But what Almonte insists upon here is a sense of critical responsibility with regards to how we light upon, restore, recover, and include texts within a discipline fraught with control issues over the acquisition and use and shaping of knowledge.

For example, when literatures from the "colonized" are "recovered," there is a tendency to expect these texts to be entirely directed at resisting European male expansionist discourses. In the case of Black Canadian literature, Rinaldo Walcott critiques Canadian Studies scholars for whom "the mutually agreed upon mode of address of Blackness [. . .] is to be disruptive and to claim the site or space of marginality [. . .]" ("Who" 39). In other words, often European expansion and European domination remain the fulcrum of colonial studies when it either aims to uphold or aims to destabilize colonial orders of power. Walcott suggests "that we not only recover Shadd Cary to her place in the historical record (a number of Black feminist historians in Canada are doing that work) but also that we need to think about how her intellectual contributions might inform our contemporary discussions and dialogues" ("Who" 33). How do we, as literary critics, do the kind of recovery work necessary to recognize the plurality of voices writing and publishing in the

nineteenth century? The dialogue I am concerned with addresses the formation of identity categories where they intersect with the categorization of the “environment” into material resources and, subsequently, labour and labour relations. This project considers human identity when and where it has been split from that which is termed “environmental.” I do not want to engage in recovery for recovery’s sake, nor do I assume that these texts have been forgotten entirely, everywhere by everyone, just because they have not been the subject of essays written in scholarly journals; what I mean to recover here is less a text or a voice, and more the political awareness and economic strategy that was very present in several social spheres in a particular region of Canada in the nineteenth century. I also mean to recover a sense of responsibility and renewal within twentieth-century critics which they need to address nineteenth-century Canadian history.

The argument presented here is directed towards the new kind of critical questioning that must take place within Canadian literary studies, one that avoids romantic nationalist fervour and positivist ideologies, and addresses the continuities of all the populations inhabiting and speaking in this place now known as “Canada.” The three texts I have chosen to focus on are written by women who are socially positioned as “intermediaries.” By “intermediaries” I refer to people who were positioned in between dominant and subordinate groups and, therefore, were people who appear to have, to various degrees at different intervals, at once maintained and resisted the colonial enterprise.⁴ A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West (1852) by Mary Ann Shadd describes the living and working conditions and the degrees of racism present within Canada West at that time. Burlington Bay Beach and Heights In

⁴ My use of the term “intermediaries” is drawn from Marlene Nourbese Philip’s “intermediate persons” (“A Genealogy” 11).

History, a historical pamphlet written by Mary Rose Holden of the Onondaga Nation and published by the Niagara Historical Society in 1897, offers a history of this geographical locale that begins before the establishment of the Six Nations Confederacy. Finally, Catharine Parr Traill's Stories of the Canadian Forest, Or, Little Mary and Her Nurse, published in 1856, teaches (and implicitly questions) the complex social stratification of colonial Canada in various conversations between a nurse and her upper-class charge. As teachers, each of these authors has an investment in administering the relationship between her own community and the governmental bodies who, in nineteenth-century Canada especially, are legislating the particular living and working circumstances of these communities. Shadd, a critical thinker who already lives in Canada and who, with access to settlement information needed by fugitive slaves, must communicate this information in such a way that Canada remains a possible and positive potential settlement nation for the fugitive according both to her audience, and to the various populations within Canada and the terms of citizenship and land ownership within which they must reside. In a similar way, Holden occupies an in-between position as she speaks in the arena of a "Historical Society," but from this position questions and reconfigures the dominant tellings and heroes of history. Traill's function as an intermediary is particularly significant, since as a white woman of British descent she has a certain investment in maintaining some of the racial and class stratifications of the Canadas government. Her main character, the nurse/teacher Mrs. Frazer does teach Mary the hierarchies of social organizations and, in doing so, enables their perpetuation. Yet, Mrs. Frazer, as a serving-class woman, also has much at stake in dismantling at least some of the foundation of this oppressive structure, and, as I will argue, there are glimpses throughout her texts that

question the infallibility of identity categories in terms of race and sexuality, in addition to class.

These three texts are significant to this project because they problematize the discursive configurations of “nature,” resources, labour, and population at the very specific period of Ontario history when the nation of “Canada” was being formed (both in the social consciousness and on paper) in response to economic developments in Britain, the British colonies, and the United States. In particular, I am interested in how each text approaches the subject of populations (at once botanical, animal, national, familial) with a pointed attention to scarcity, and the way in which scarcity is (or often is not) articulated in political, commercial, and social arenas.

The following discussion of these texts reads for and through the ideology of “conservation.” Antithetical, in some instances, to the expansionist ideologies predominant in texts invoked by contemporary theory, conservation considers what happens when an awareness of geographical limits, and the staggering implications these limits impose, is present in the social consciousness and therefore texts of a certain historical moment. There is no denying that conservation ideology is explicit in the three very different texts discussed here, which makes the question of theory’s reluctance to see beyond expansionist tropes in nation-formation literatures, particularly those identified as “Canadian,” even more pressing.

The common contemporary concept of the term “conservation” evokes ecological connotations that are most relevant here. A critical analysis of nineteenth-century texts must include the epistemology of environmental discourses because land, nature, resources and labour were the single most important concerns to a nation consolidating upon agriculture-based capital, and therefore provided the medium for

representations and distinctions between what falls under the categories of “human” and “the environment.” Yet, as Richard Grove notes, there is a distinct absence of critical attention paid to the history of conservation:

the older and far more complex antecedents of contemporary conservationist attitudes and policies have quite simply been overlooked in the absence of any attempt to deal with the history of environmental concern on a truly global basis. In particular, and largely for quite understandable ideological reasons, very little account has ever been taken of the central significance of the colonial experience in the formation of western environmental attitudes and critiques.

(56)

Here, Grove is asking not just for some acknowledgement of conservation ideology before the twentieth century; he asks that there be a proper historical account of conservation ideology present in European history. What Grove suggests, most explicitly in the final sentence above, is the possibility of viewing ecological attitudes through the colonial trajectory of modern Western history, and vice versa. Grove’s proposed envisioning of history through a materialist lens of ecological practices has most recently been taken up in mainstream academic discourse. The language with which he and his colleagues speak, politicize and distrust history embraces poststructuralist social criticism. Their ambivalence towards the hegemony of the analytical procedures of environmental science together with a reliance on the textual analysis practised most often in the humanities and particularly in the field of literary/cultural studies, has just begun to realize some ground for much needed critical inquiry. While environmental practice has been considered political in mainstream thought since the 1940s (if we take the publication of The Sand County

Almanac as archival evidence of the spread of conservation awareness to the public), the recognizable stations of conservation debates and the configuration of environmental scientific knowledge as a whole have not before been politicized in the way implied by Grove's methods.

The usefulness of the term "conservation" lies in manipulating the parameters of the "ecological" and "environmental." A succinct definition of "conservation" is, simply, the management of the living world. An investigation of exactly how management operates, and how the "living world" is configured as the subject of such management also, inevitably, considers how power relations are situated and what hierarchy of values empowered groups impose upon living communities. This project proposes a specific, politicized definition of conservation derived from the economic and social history that follows.

Contemporary popular culture understands the "environmental debate," articulated in the most banal discourse, as "save the earth" vs. "destroy the earth." Of course arguments on both sides of the debate fall into the very kind of superficial positivism exposed by Michel Foucault. Recent criticism of this environmental debate looks at specific "solution" approaches in terms of their political and economic motivations. Conservation, at first glance, appears to be on the "save the earth" side of things, and therefore somehow constitutive of left-wing politics, but, as David Harvey notes, conservation ideology actually has roots in conservative capitalist politics interested in maintaining profits more than preserving any kind of ecosystem. At their philosophical conception, conservation and expansion are not entirely opposed. Each is an expression that describes certain techniques of managing, for example, soil, timber, and human populations. Put to practice, the forestry industry will employ

certain so-called conservation measures while harvesting new or re-planted expanses of timber. There is a certain compromise involved between expansion and conservation, an equation that is usually understood within oxymoronic catch-phrases like “sustainable development.”

The insistence on this ill-fated simultaneous conservation/expansion approach to environmental management is, as noted by Harvey and the Marxist ecologists, the result of capitalism’s refusal to acknowledge limitation. Capitalism, after all, is predicated on the never-ending accumulation of profit resulting from the never-ending production and consumption of goods. Therefore, capitalism is only enabled by a stubborn ignoring of limitation, both the limitation of available wealth and the limitation of resources. Yet capitalists maintain a certain fantasy of abundance, at least abundance available to some, and it is this fantasy of abundance that is ever-present in discourses of expansion, and, arguably, implicit within discourses of conservation as well.

The paradox of “sustainable development” of environmental discourse is similar to, created by, and evidence of capitalism’s obsession with accumulation. Nature, as explained by Enrique Dussel, under capitalism

runs out its fate of being consumed, destroyed, and, in addition, accumulating geometrically upon the earth its debris, until it jeopardizes the reproduction or survival of life itself. Life is the absolute condition of capital; its destruction destroys capital [. . .]. [Capitalism] confronts its first absolute limit: the death of life in its totality, through the indiscriminate use of an anti-ecological technology constituted progressively through the sole criterion of the quantitative management of the world-system in modernity: the increase in the

rate of profit. But capital cannot limit itself. In this lies the utmost danger for humanity. (19-20)

The kind of relation evoked by Dussel here—that between ecology, economy, and specifically the selectivity of limitation and accumulation, or, conservation and expansion—echoes Foucault's relation between the discourse of science and the interpretation of value.

What Foucault begins to explicate in his analysis of the emergence of the sciences are the economic, namely capitalist, motivations behind the construction of objective, positivist, scientific knowledge. He describes how new modes of articulation are means through which the living world is reduced to its wealth-procuring potential. In this context, to represent, articulate, and observe in the nineteenth century is to attribute a definable value to any organism. It becomes interesting, when studying the re-ordering of representation practices in the nineteenth century, to locate where and how language systematizes the entire world into economic dimensions. To Foucault, it seems that the nineteenth-century preoccupation with natural history and refining methods of classification occurred not in the name of science, but rather in a massive effort to articulate the world in the universal, calculable language of economics. At the root of representation, the

whole system of exchanges, the whole costly creation of values, is referred back to the unbalanced, radical, and primitive exchange established between the advances made by the landowner and the generosity of nature. This exchange alone is absolutely profitable, and it is from within this net profit that deductions of goods can be made to cover the costs necessitated by each exchange, and thus by the appearance of each new element of wealth. (Order

195)

The connection that Foucault notes here, between nature and the discourse of economics, enabled the spread of industrialization in nineteenth-century Canada.

Building from Harvey, Foucault, and Dussel, the working definition of conservation for this project is the organization of the living world within a limited space (this “space” can be considered geographical, textual, and psychological) in order to secure profit and power, in such a way that this profit/power seeking is masked by its own opaque utterance. Of course, also necessary to conservation ideology is the perpetual belief that the level of production within this limited space can be infinitely sustained. By resting upon the term “conservation,” this project does two things. It argues for a re-visioned and re-politicized definition of conservation and applies this definition to literary critique. Therefore, while interdisciplinary in its foundation, this work is necessarily literary. Borrowing from interpretative practices in the fields of ecology, history, and economics, I think, allows for a reading that subverts some of the critical boundaries realized in postcolonial studies. The analyses that follow demonstrate the little-researched fact that an awareness of limits and the realization of necessary conservation measures had a significant presence in the popular consciousness of nineteenth-century Canada West. What is perhaps most interesting, especially in light of this neglect of critical attention to conservation consciousness, is the fact that the reality of limited resources initiated shifts in the concept, manufacturing, distribution, and human consumption of these resources. Of course any shifts in the configuration of resources will directly cause shifts in the realm of the social. The shifting ellipsis between the ecological and the social is the space this paper investigates.

I want to take another look at the following passage from Shadd and offer an analysis that begins to read for conservation. “Let us seize upon Africa, or some other, unappropriated territory while we may,’ say others, ‘and establish our own governments.’ But Africa has already been seized upon; the English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turks, have long since shared her out among themselves” (Shadd 94). What Shadd locates here is perhaps the biggest fissure of all in the colonial project: the fact that colonial expansion as understood in the mid-nineteenth-century, and rehearsed in such propaganda quoted by Shadd above, must change its direction and momentum because “territory” is finite. The continent/conception of Africa has already changed shape, and certainly meaning, as it has been distributed among ruling European nations. Moreover, part of the reason fugitive slaves were being captured and deported (in the U.S. mostly, but in Canada as well) was because the agricultural economy based on slavery had reached its threshold. The surplus supply of produce and sugar in the metropole caused prices to decrease, making even the plantation an economic failure. Canada and the United States could no longer support their slave populations and rather than allow Black people to enter into the economy as free citizens, and therefore share resources as equal producers and consumers, they opted to save these resources for white European emigrants by eliminating a Black population. In other words both capitalism and land was limited, and the boundaries had been realized.⁵ Therefore while “solutions,” such as suggesting Black people move back to Africa, were offered, the language in which these solutions were advertized was based

⁵ The “boundaries” here can be considered not just as geographical boundaries, or the limit of available fuel for the population. Rather, the boundaries here exist around how much fuel/resources/land/integration the governing population was willing to share with all populations. Boundaries existed around who had access to what, and these boundaries were “realized” and challenged by all groups involved.

on old tropes of expansionist rhetoric. The shifts that Shadd makes in this rhetoric mark the anxiety of the constraints on expansion beginning to be felt, already being felt, and even being projected from plantation capitalists onto their (former) slave labourers.

The discussion here is only a cursory beginning to the project of locating conservation in a Canadian context. For several reasons it is also useful to point out that the crises facing mid-nineteenth-century individuals living in Canada are not very different from those in contemporary Canada. In this paper I hope to speak through the history and effects of ideologies and language structures from the nineteenth century to the present. In other words I mean to offer a “history of the present” that acknowledges a genealogy of Canadian national discourses, ecological discourses, and discourses of population and citizenship. After all, two of the most crucial concerns for social theorists today are questions of difference and the state of the environment. Both of these concerns were initiated by imperial expansion, yet rarely are their respective historical foundations located in the same moment and comparatively analyzed. I am interested in mid-nineteenth-century Canada as a moment when the deployment of categories to delineate both humans and the environment (and distinguish between the constructs of “human” and “environment”) was implemented in what becomes “Canada.” This thesis investigates how discourses of ecology and human-identity categories intersect at the moment in which they prescribe objective knowledge in nineteenth-century Canadian culture.

In the past five years, this type of analysis when conducted in the discipline of literary studies has acquired the name “ecocriticism.” Various factions of philosophical, economic, geographical and literary thinking have contributed to

ecocriticism, which also, when not distinctly “literary,” is often termed “social ecology.” Much of the pioneering work in the field has been conducted by Marxist critics interested in the economizing technology of natural history and the structures described by Marx and Engels.⁶ The link between “naturalism” and “materialism” is paradoxical, and therefore troublesome for ecologists and Marxists alike; much of the work, then, of critics— Ted Benton, for example— is to reconcile the fine points of each, motivated by the fact that Marx and Engels considered their philosophical position as both naturalist and materialist (Benton 53). Benton’s reconstructive work in his essay “Marxism and Natural Limits: An Ecological Critique and Reconstruction” in the New Left Review (1989) isolates some of the critical links between the two theories that, in his opinion, should direct further social-ecological inquiry (and have indeed directed theorists such as David Harvey). Under Benton’s assessment

ecology, considered strictly as one of the modern life-sciences, is the systematic study of the interrelations between populations of animals or plants and their organic and inorganic surroundings. Historical materialism presents itself precisely as an approach to the study of human societies in this perspective as, in other words, ecology applied to human populations. Historical materialism, without distortion, could now be represented as a specific field within ecology: the ecology of the human species. (54)

What is crucial to notice in this rather long segment is Benton’s re-articulation of ecology, his attention to how representation mediates that which is often reduced to “modern life-sciences” and in turn disqualified from cultural studies. Benton’s 1989

⁶ See Bennett; Williams, “Socialism”; Cosgrove; Kovel; Thrift. Much of this debate has been argued since 1988 in the pages of the journal Capitalism, Nature, Socialism.

essay is foundational in its discursive rendering of interdisciplinary critical thinking. Conservation, as an “ecology of human populations,” to borrow from Benton, has its own particularities, its own rules and its own nature. Conservation is one genre where we can read discursive arrangements of human and/or natural populations. Here I extend Benton’s assessment of social-ecology to include literary critical inquiry.

The editors of The Ecocriticism Reader claim that “ecocriticism is a way of making literary criticism more responsive to the global environment crisis” (Glotfelty xv). Their claim is contentious because it suggests that literary criticism did not have an investment in discourses of environmentalism before the current crisis, and it treats ecocriticism and the environmental crisis as both something homogeneous and something new.⁷ This paper recognizes that the “environmental crisis” has existed as long as “civilization” and the “human” have been considered separate from the “environment.” It also insists that ecocriticism can and should be employed in recognizing the particular historical specificities of the discursive constructions of “human,” “nature,” “animal,” and the “environment,” rather than maintaining them. After all, before ecocriticism was coined in the world of literary history, social geographers like Raymond Williams and David Harvey began branching into theories of signification and the realm of fiction to explore the relationship between representation, nature, and capital.⁸ While Harvey keeps his references to Foucault to

⁷ I hesitate to call my methodology “ecocriticism” though that term seems its best descriptor, because of the tendency for other proclaimed works of ecocriticism to make binary distinctions between, for example, Canada and the United States (Susie O’Brien’s “Nature’s Nation, National Natures? Reading Ecocriticism in a Canadian Context”) or suddenly to revert to celebrating literature that re-romanticizes constructions of nature, “to reveal how a work of literature renders the sound of the loon’s crying in spring, the taste of fresh wild fruits in summer [. . .]” (Wylynko 139).

⁸ Much of these early attempts drew from Raymond Williams’ Marxism in Literature (1977). In 1983 Nigel Thrift’s “Literature, the Production of Culture and the Politics of Place” in Antipode argued for the importance of literary critique in social-ecological thinking because “the literary

a minimum, and the Marxist ecologists by-pass Foucault entirely, my analysis builds very directly from Foucault's theories of discourse and its relation to systems of economic exchange. Foucault articulates the links between language, "nature," and economics most directly and most succinctly. Returning to Foucault in detail helps to establish the ideology of scarcity that is at the root of conservation awareness and initiatives, and also maintains an insistence on literary analysis—the continued awareness of representation, not only as a semiotic system, but also as a system of economic exchange.

This essay builds from the literary-criticism and discourse-analysis end of social-ecology—one that is suggested, but, to my knowledge, very rarely pursued. If we can apply the language of environmental management to textual moments not immediately recognizable as practising an explicit conservation strategy, we begin to see important matrices in the history of the governance of the social and the natural world(s). Literary theory, particularly the interlocking theories of discourse analysis, narrative theories, and theories of signification, are most useful in detailing how conservation operates, through locating tropes and narratives that characterize conservation discourses. Texts which employ conservation ideology, by way of these various tropes, narratives, and other articulations of conservation management emerging during the period of the consolidation of national capitalist economies and the large-scale harvesting of natural resources, are especially interesting because they make

signification of place is dialectically intertwined with the experience of place" (18). A far more recent example building on discourse theory as it has developed since Thrift's early essay is David Harvey's chapter "The Dialectics of Discourse" in his 1996 Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Place. In this chapter, Harvey rehearses the history of semiotic theory as well as the Marxist-rooted strategies of discourse analysis: "[t]his step is necessary to the overall argument because [of the] need to understand how the discursive construction of fundamental terms [. . .]—environment, nature, space-time, place and justice being key words—might operate in relation to the nondiscursive realities to which such terms supposedly allude" (78).

evident the impact that conservation ideology must have had on nation-state formation.

This thesis is organized into two sections. The first, and shorter section, comprises two chapters. The first of these chapters, “Expansion,” characterizes how I see the relationship between expansionist and conservationist discourses, and in particular, the usefulness of seeing these two categories as opposed. The next chapter, “Scarcity and 1850s Ontario,” argues for the importance of interpreting the socio-political climate of this particular decade through the awareness of scarcity in the social conscience of the period. The second half of the paper begins with a very short chapter entitled “Conservation and the Colonial Management of Identity” which considers the discussion of scarcity in relation to the construction of identity. Chapters four, five, and six conduct more specific readings of conservation through the three texts in question under the parameters of “conservation” and “scarcity” as established in the first half of the paper. The “Conversion” chapter looks more closely at how the texts consider supposedly conflicting economic systems of “scarcity” and “abundance,” and how these systems are employed to maintain divisions within and between the natural and human worlds. “Demarcated Spaces” considers boundary-making as a form of management—the management of peoples, resources (and people-as-resources)—fundamental to conservation practices at work in written texts as well as the physical world. The final chapter, “Nostalgia,” looks at how conservation ideology relies on nostalgic narratives often to solve, or, rather, to distract from, the very problem that surfaces throughout this paper, that is, the problem of representing the “living world,” of attaching an ordered discursive system to “life,” in a way that acknowledges “life’s” limits.

Expansion

Contemporary postcolonial theorists critique discourses of expansion, conquest, and mastery in their analyses of texts dealing with the colonial period. My argument is, in a sense, to redirect such analytical energies to what can be considered an opposite topic: limitation, or what in the resource-management sense becomes “conservation.” Postcolonial theorists, in their critique of expansion, conquest, and mastery, often maintain a sense of expansionist zeal within their analyses of the numerous modes of expansion, in all their particularities, as they occur in colonial texts (be they political documents, treaties, exploration journals, emigrant almanacs, company reports, settlement propaganda etc.). Perhaps it is safe to say that postcolonial theory has done its job of specifying technologies/enunciations of expansion. Still, I will briefly rehearse a couple of the major expansionist exposures proffered by postcolonial theorists as a way of opening up the larger discussion of what I propose are their “conservationist” counterparts.

Metaphors of conquest and mastery are rampant in colonial texts from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century (and we would be ignorant not to see them

still proliferating today). Raymond Williams makes the combined targets of such texts clear:

these attitudes of mastering and conquering had from the beginning been associated not just with mastering the earth, or natural substances, or making water do what you wanted, but with pushing other people around, with going wherever there were things which you wanted, and subjugating and conquering [. . .] [T]hey were a classic rationale of imperialism in just that expanding phase. They form the whole internal ethic of an expanding capitalism: to master nature, to conquer it, to shift it around to do what you want with it. (“Socialism” 45)

Discourses of mastery made use of newly invented linguistic containers in which to reduce and manage people and plants— be they units of capital, racial labels, or gendered symbolics.

Anne McClintock and Mary Louise Pratt are two of the more prominent postcolonial theorists who discuss various ways in which explorers’ narratives describe the conquered or journeyed-upon territory in terms of the female body. Pratt analyzes Alexander Humboldt’s feminized descriptions of the African environment as a discursive moment of combined patriarchal and imperial conquest. Humboldt, a foundational thinker and writer on climatology, is thanked in one of Canada’s first conservation documents by R.W. Phipps in 1883. Pratt’s exposure of Humboldt’s gendered constructions calls into question his conceptions of global climactic systems in his more “scientific” reports and the epistemological foundations of Canada’s own environmental practices. McClintock discusses Columbus’ description of the earth as a woman’s breast with his destination as the nipple, and notes the repetition in Henry

Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines, this time the global breast appearing on the surface of a map (McClintock 21). McClintock concludes "not only natural space but also historical time could be collected, assembled, and mapped onto a global science of the surface" (36).

Consider McClintock's reading, and the fact that Mary Ann Shadd gave lectures promoting her book, and promoting emigration to Canada West in general, "with a map of N. America before her" (Pennsylvania Freeman qtd. in Almonte 21). When maps signify as the colonial, male, imperialist reduction of environment, what are the implications of Shadd's holding a map "before her"? What is the spatial syntax of this scene? The map precedes the human body; in one sense it erases the Black female body. Shadd places herself behind the reduced, two-dimensional diagram which ineffectively describes the "place" or "nations" that comprise North America. But another reading of this scene, one that denies the erasure of her body, might imagine that her voice and her book presumably fill out what the map lacks. It is here that Shadd is an intermediary. Shadd supplants Columbus as the bearer of the map and the empowered inventor/communicator of geographic information. She is, after all, literally showing the way to Canada, likely the direction to various towns in southern Ontario where refugees can find work, land, and community.

At their premise, Shadd's, Humboldt's and Haggard's texts can be considered similar in their premises of exploration and their use of maps as images to solicit enough desire in their audiences to initiate a population movement. Yet, Shadd's text is far from a conquest and/or expansion narrative. Reading the text for its counter-expansionist advice is much more rewarding than attempting to make links between it and other emigration enthusiasts, be they Humboldt or Susanna Moodie. It is hardly

surprising that Shadd does not adopt imperialist conquest schemes; still, the following analysis elaborates upon what makes her text distinct from theirs. What is also interesting to consider, however, is how Shadd negotiates between the clichés of colonial conquest and the necessity of enervating a will in her audience to move and settle in a new land.

Shadd's descriptions, rather than opt for gendered metaphors, or the symbolics of colour, use quotations from sources such as Scobie's Canadian Almanac (1852) and Catechism of Information for Intended Emigrants of all Classes to Upper Canada.⁹ Not surprisingly she does not describe Canada in any fantastically eroticized or demonized way. Her text, of course, is very different from an explorer's text, especially since it describes a geographically near and settled land. But the image in which she presents herself to her audiences—the map before her depicting known and unknown territory—certainly mimics the explorer's role. Even compared to other 1852 emigration manuals, Shadd's descriptions of the land are relentlessly systematic and functional. Susanna Moodie's famous Roughing It In The Bush was published in the same year, and contains several romanticized poems and prose descriptions of the land, but she leaves the statistical information for her husband's chapter. Likely, the “myth of empty land” or the exaggerated obsession with the land's abundance, does not achieve any discursive purchase with Shadd's audience who were very much aware of the failures of conquest narratives, and the imperial conquest project as a whole. In the “Introductory Remarks” to A Plea for Emigration, Shadd, with striking directness, slices into the romanticization of Africa circulated by slaveholders and non-slaveholders alike: “[t]ropical Africa, the land of promise of the colonizationists,

⁹ Shadd does not give the date for this text in her Bibliography. As titled, it is not recorded in the CIHM files.

teeming as she is with the breath of pestilence, a burning sun and fearful maladies, bids them welcome; she feelingly invites to moral and physical death, under a voluntary escort of their most bitter enemies at home” (43). Here Shadd writes against imperial expansionist conquest discourse by exposing the romanticized “promise” of the “tropics,” including those of the “pro-slavery administration” and those of the “Colonization Society” who “in the garb of Christianity and Philanthropy” (43) are trying to convince Black people to “seize upon Africa.” For Shadd, the sought-after treasure is not the female nipple, but the calculable, legislated, right to work, land and independence. Furthermore, Shadd is keenly aware of how the information necessary to obtain these goals should be articulated. In these same Introductory Remarks, Shadd notes “the absence of condensed information accessible to all.” She believes “that more reliance would be placed upon a statement of facts obtained in the country, from reliable sources and from observation [. . .] [The book] contain[s] the result of much inquiry: matter obtained both from individuals and from documents and papers of unquestionable character in the Province” (44). Most impressive in the above statement is that Shadd does not make truth claims; her information is a “statement” of facts, made from “observations” and quotations from documents whose “unquestionable character” is unbiased in the sense that it is not necessarily in a position to benefit as directly as the pro-slavery administration or the Colonization Society from the exploitation of the Black refugees. When Shadd claims to present reliable information, she claims to present the practical information the refugee will need to settle in Canada. The first half of her text is predominantly lists of prices, crop yields, and meteorology. There is much to be read in this numerical information. First of all, Shadd repeatedly refers to her audience as “purchasers” (50) and to the

purchases they will inevitably be able to make. This is a distinct and liberatory shift of position for Black people: from the slave economy where they had no purchasing power, but were the objects bought and sold, to an economy where they are purchasers and therefore have potential influence on the market.

At first glance what is most noticeable in Shadd's pamphlet, especially for scholars of other nineteenth-century emigration manuals, is the distinct difference of its economical rationale and lack of romanticization. Nowhere does it reproduce a supposed moment of the sublime, by wasting words on descriptions such as "[t]he sunbeams, dancing through the thick, quivering foliage, fell in stars of gold, or long lines of dazzling brightness, upon the deep black waters, producing the most novel and beautiful effects," as does Moodie's famed and favoured text (30-31).

To conclude this short rehearsal of critical inquiry into the discourse of expansion I want to return to McClintock and note a moment when she complicates her discussion of expansionist texts by suggesting the conflicting instances of desire for abundance, and the anxiety of boundarylessness, present in male imperial discourses of conquest. McClintock describes how the "fantasy of conquest" in sixteenth-century exploration journals, is combined with a "dread of engulfment" (27). Pratt, in her discussion of planetary consciousness, alludes to the same kind of dual excess/limitation mentality. The tropes of expansion, if we take from McClintock, then, might be present alongside another set of tropes building from this anxiety of limits. These are what can be termed the tropes of conservation.

Scarcity and 1850s Ontario

I have suggested that conservation, while not synonymous with scarcity, can be found in textual moments where the anxious awareness of scarcity permeates. Traill's Stories of the Canadian Forest opens with attention to ecological scarcity, when Mrs. Frazer mentions "beavers" being "not so plentiful as they used to be" (10). Similarly, Shadd's opening description of British North America immediately demarcates geographical boundaries, and nowhere does Shadd postulate any sort of wooded scape that goes on ad infinitum. Rather, the sentence that follows the map-like description reads: "[t]his vast country includes within its limits some of the most beautiful lakes and rivers in the Western Continent." The tension between the words "vast" and "limits" in the same short sentence is intriguing—and provides evidence of an awareness of the competing ideologies at work in the social consciousness of Canada. Shadd will not allow her readers to be overcome with a sense of infinite land-mass availability. She points out that the north is climactically impossible for settlement, a notable observation since British settlers actually had hopes of a severe climate change in the sub-Arctic that would make the land farmable (Dunlap 75). Shadd spells out Canada's limits and in doing so, in her practical account, teaches that thinking along the lines of limits makes for a useful ontology for the refugee settler. Later in the text

she warns that “it is hardly possible to state the actual productiveness of the soil, as the attention has not been given to farming that the land admits;” therefore, while “it is irresistible that indigence and moderate competence must at no distant day give place to wealth, intelligence, and their concomitants” (52-53) the capacity for the soil is unknown.

It is important to situate this instance of an unknown “actual productiveness” in terms of the socio-economic situation of Canada West in the years between 1848 and Confederation in 1867. While the British North America Act was finally legislated in 1867, this final phase of state-consolidating initiatives had been taking place since the Union of the Canadas in 1848. There is a consensus amongst mainstream history texts (see Brown, Norrie and Owrarn, Kelley, and Bumsted) as well as texts that pay particular attention to social, and particularly race issues in Canadian history (see Gaffield, Friesen, Winks, Bolaria and Li, and Jaenen and Morgan), that locates economic development as the main directive behind the drive to Confederation. When the Canadas united in 1848, and were at the same time granted independence from Britain over “domestic affairs,” the greatest advantage—at least according to the governing bodies in British North America—was the freedom to establish trade/tariff agreements such as the Reciprocity Treaty established with the United States in 1854 (Bumsted 288). For some, the various steps toward Confederation within this twenty-year period aroused great nationalist sentiment; an article in the Montreal Pilot on April 6, 1850 described “a true Canadian feeling— a feeling of what might be termed Canadian nationality” (qtd. in Bumsted 326). But “national feeling” aside, the Union of the Canadas, leading to the Reciprocity Treaty, and eventually Confederation, encouraged merchants, entrepreneurs, and politicians [. . .] to continue the

process of reconceptualizing their economic orientation: from an imperial context, in which the British market was critical, to a context in which continental markets were dominant. Once turned from the traditional transatlantic economy to a continental one, Canada began to emphasize industrialization and the need for its own internal markets. (289)

With economic development at the forefront, productivity acquired new significance in this period; and, as the economic system was “reconceptualized,” so too was the population reconceptualized into productive labourers.

Is it possible, then, to read in the passage above, that uncertainty around growing capacity of the soil is not the only questionable, and possibly overestimated factor, but, more generally, that this passage might call attention to exactly what sorts of labour-intensive, resource-intensive “attention[s] to the soil” are required to maximize production? Or, more to the point, what exploitative attentions are becoming subsumed under the very celebrated concept of productivity? Also, as the channels of productivity became defined along with, and as part of, the nation-state with the various political/economic negotiations taking place at this time, which avenues/markets to success were cut off to certain populations? It is important to consider whose labour contributed to prosperity, as opposed to who ‘actually’ (to borrow the term from Shadd) experienced prosperity. When is productivity considered ‘actualized’? The conception of the various trade and political unions that formed “Canada,” involved not just assessments of the productivity of soil and other natural resources, but it depended also on the potential productivity of people. After all, the “reconceptualizing” of the emergent Canadian economy required the organization, not just of border-crossings and tariffs, but of a population of people

whose work and wages were hierarchically stratified in a way that promoted efficiency, and a population of resources that could be harnessed within the emergent industrial machine. As “productiveness” became especially meaningful and valuable with the consolidation of Canada, so too did the situation of scarcity that (and, arguably, not coincidentally) became impossible to ignore at this very same historic moment. When productivity became key, attention also had to be paid to the sudden scarcity of fuel and arable land available in the united Canadas. I want to consider government management of productivity, including the discursive management of productivity, in 1850s Ontario as one that is two-fold: in one sense it managed labour and resources that produced exportable goods, and in an opposite sense, it managed to disregard scarcity.

Scarcity, however, is difficult to ignore when “the study of the choices made under scarcity” is one way of defining what constitutes the discourse of modern economics. According to Foucault, the very beginning of economic activity in world history occurred when “men became too numerous to be able to subsist on the spontaneous fruits of the land” (Order 256). Here, Foucault situates the problem of a population expanding on limited land mass as the fundamental factor that once initiated, and now perpetuates, our economic circumstance. Foucault’s focus on population, especially when his primary locus of study is the nineteenth century, has specific relevance to Ontario’s economic history, whose population grew as much as 95.5% per year in the 1850s (Norrie and Owram 277). When Foucault further discusses the apparatus of economics, his attention to “scarcity” has specific definitions useful to understanding Ontario’s economic situation in the mid-nineteenth century. For Foucault, “[w]hat makes economics possible, and necessary, then, is a perpetual

and fundamental situation of scarcity: Confronted by a nature that in itself is inert and, save for one very small part, barren, man risks his life” (Order 256-57). This “perpetual and fundamental situation of scarcity” was especially realized in Ontario in the decade beginning in 1850. Though these decades roughly mark the end of late mercantilism and the beginning of the industrial revolution in Canada, agriculture is still, of course, Canada’s primary industry in this particular period.¹⁰ Agriculture and forestry were Canada’s two largest export industries producing a total of 92.1% of all exported goods (Norrie and Owram 206). As suppliers of food and fuel, these two industries were also responsible for providing the resources necessary to maintain Canada’s internal population. The push to confederation, though conceived in the popular consciousness as a politically defensive measure against the United States, was motivated primarily for economic reasons. The consolidation of the various colonies in what became Canada ensured free trade within the new nation, and allowed for the possibility of arranging trade tariffs with other countries. But perhaps even more significant, particularly to the questions of expansion and scarcity significant to this project, was the suddenly limited amount of land available in Ontario that motivated the newly consolidated push to the west. The major economic perception behind confederation “was that commercial prosperity and industrial success were linked to an expanding resource frontier” (Norrie and Owram 201).

In other words, expansion, not suprisingly, was the major directive behind the most significant political, economic, and, as a result, social activities in Canada in the

¹⁰ The labels attached to economic periods are always reductive. As Mary Louise Pratt notes: “[e]conomic historians sometimes call the years 1500-1800 the period of ‘primitive accumulation,’ when through slavery and state-protected monopolies, European bourgeoisies were able to accumulate the capital that launched the Industrial Revolution. One wonders indeed what was so primitive about this accumulation (as one wonders what is so advanced about advanced capitalism), but accumulation it was” (36).

nineteenth century. In the eyes of politicians, settlers, and business men, there was an abundance of raw materials and labour, with a scarcity of labourers. Yet the vision of an “abundant landscape” could only be subscribed to for so long, because, of course, the land mass was limited and resources were, in actuality, scarce. For readers of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill and other celebrated authors, the idea that there was a scarcity of, for example, wood for fuel in Canada, is ridiculous. In popular nineteenth-century Canadian literature forests were almost always represented as infinitely immense and impenetrable. The Illustrated History of Canada reports that “[p]ushing back the wilderness to create farms was a pragmatic imperative. The forest was an obstacle. In the short term it likely seemed implacable, but year by year it fell back before the settlers’ axe blades. And those engaged in this titanic struggle rarely counted the consequences of their advances as anything but success” (276).

To begin to understand how a scarcity of resources could be a reality for some settlers—enough to stall the manufacturing of raw materials and, in turn, export profits—we can turn not only to history texts but also to conservation documents in the period.

Recent studies of the history of conservation in the Western world, such as Richard Grove’s Green Imperialism (1995), David Evans’ A History of Nature Conservation In Britain (1992), and Thomas R. Dunlap’s Nature and the English Diaspora (1999) all provide examples of nineteenth-century conservation initiatives from England, India, the United States, Germany and Australia but report that mentions of conservation in Canada were either fleeting and/or entirely absent. Dunlap mentions that Canada had seen a

few, disconnected conservation initiatives in the early 1900’s, but it formed its

Commission on Conservation only in the wake of the White House conference,¹¹ which had recommended such action. The agency was the creation and tool of Clifford Sifton, minister of the interior from 1896 to 1905, who lobbied for it and headed it until he retired in 1921 (it was disbanded three years later). It showed, though, the limits of Canada's concern. (91)

Dunlap either is not aware of, or finds it significant, a discussion of conservation in the popular press dating as far back as the 1860s in periodicals such as Canada Farmer or government-commissioned reports concerning conservation such as "On the Importance of Economizing and Preserving our Forests" by William Saunders (1882) and "Report on the Necessity of Preserving and Replanting Forests" by R.W. Phipps (1883)—let alone the concerns, more general, perhaps, but just as significant, as articulated by Traill and Shadd from the early 1850s.

One of the major focuses in Grove's text is Britain's deforestation of India. His archival research into letters written by British "scientists" (they were mostly surgeons) as early as the late eighteenth century, insisting that British Parliament remove their blinkers from the metropole and recognize the few years left of forest to harvest, highlights a scarcity which would contribute to the economic jeopardy of the East India Company. In one sense it is no wonder that North America became a new site for Britain's forestry industry. Yet, one does wonder how the British government could have engaged once again in perhaps a prolonged, but inevitably doomed practice of land conquest. The rules and regulations of land grants in the nineteenth century gave settlers a maximum of five years to clear cut their farms. The result, of course, was that for the first few years there was a surplus supply of fuel, and after it was sold

¹¹ May 13-15, 1908.

there was none. Why did the British government not pay attention to selective cutting forestry techniques (borrowed without advice, direction, or approval by the surgeons acting independently of authority from England) from the Mogul Emperors in India? Why did they actually legislate deforestation? How does the promise of land (and therefore simultaneously a solution to a population crisis and a source of fast cash) distort political strategies away from the usual national goals such as maximized profits and long-term economic prosperity?

These questions remain puzzling. Can it be suggested that the romanticized narratives of conquest, of land mass, and of expanse, actually seduce governments into backward decision making?

The conservation documents by Saunders and Phipps seem to think so. They both open with a most interesting rehearsal of the “abundant land” narrative. Saunders captivates the imaginations of his audience when he opens his discussion by describing the gaze of the settler to whom forests appear

as obstacles to advancing civilization, to be removed as rapidly as possible, and with unwearied zeal and persistence in the use of axe and fire the encumbrances are soon disposed of. [. . .] [I]n his zeal to get rid of the trees the owner seldom reflects on the inestimable value of woods in providing shelter against storms, in equalizing temperature and moisture, and in purifying the atmosphere. (35)

However, he soon shifts his location to the Iberian peninsula which “resembled a vast garden, yielding grain and fruit in the greatest abundance” (36), and from there builds on tropes of abundance narratives.

Saunders ironically uses the language of expanse: he triggers unrealizable desire for what he actually refers to as the “land of milk and honey,” and in doing so reminds

readers of their complicity in the history of assault on the land, in order to “create a healthy sentiment in favour of preserving, with greater care, the remnants of the noble forest with which our country was once clothed” (37). If settlers do not pay attention to the few “remnants” of garments left, they will be naked and in a barren country. Saunders’ advice is to acknowledge responsibly the limits of Canada, rather than invent discourses of abundance; he calls upon settlers to take on the reality of economic exchange rather than a romantic myth of infinite resource availability. Though Saunders’ message is counter to the expansionist discourse, as with any ironic use of a trope the trope nevertheless continues to circulate.

By contrast Shadd persistently steers clear of the route of “milk and honey” descriptions. It is likely not the religious reference that Shadd, as a proud Christian, avoids, but rather the reminder of the exploitation her community has suffered under the romanticization of land masses and expansion. While Shadd’s manual is entitled “A Plea” and meant to convince her audience to leave the United States, even her rare attempts at the aesthetic image of the land end up positioned within a resource-based economic system: “[t]he general appearance of the Province is undulating, though there is much level country. Numerous and beautiful rivers, and smaller streams, run through the country in all directions, so that there is no lack of water power” (51). It is not “milk and honey” that Shadd’s streams flow with, but the potential for a harnessable power.

Phipps’ document is interesting because it explains how regional resource scarcity, such as complete deforestation in areas of south-central Ontario, causes farmers to pay for imported fuel, when selective cutting in the earlier settlement days could have minimized farming costs and therefore maximized productivity. He also

discusses how the distribution of labour in the family changes when there is no longer cutting to be done on the property, but, rather, some other source of work has to be found that secures ready cash to exchange for fuel. This would undoubtedly have made a shift in the distribution of labour within the family.

By contrast, however, in newly settled areas housewives did not have the market for their manufactured goods. Shadd discusses the specific example of the work in butter and cheese making where “from the circumstance of recent settlement, means of disposal, and abundance, matters in the housewife’s department are not generally so thoroughly conducted as in more populous and older settled countries, where a competition of taste and judgement, in managing these articles and arranging for the market, is freely indulged” (56). Here Shadd pays the kind of attention to the topic of women’s place within the economic structure of early Canada, specifically the system of manufacturing for sale outside the home, that is somewhat rare in histories of Canadian economics. Sherrie Inness discusses middle-class nineteenth-century British emigrant women like Anne Langton, who recognized the importance of their labour to the colonial project. Langton writes, “woman is a bit of a slave in this country,” and she also asserts that this intense work was not recognized by the state. “It is hardly surprising,” concludes Inness, “that Anne’s complaints were not addressed by male writers extolling the virtues of Canada; they wanted no dissenting voice to undermine their myth of a bountiful and blissful land” (191). That expansion discourses were gendered according to who experienced the benefits of surplus, and who could not afford a moment of idleness because of working towards procuring this surplus, is hardly surprising.

I also find the above section where Shadd discusses “housewife’s work”

interesting because of the limit it locates in women's ability to participate in their assigned market. Even though this is an example where Shadd emphasizes a situation of abundance, what she also describes is one where a scarcity of buyers is a factor. What Shadd does in this example is point out the crucial factor of regionality, of how tracts of land/economic communities are demarcated within settler Canada and how they are often isolated from each other. Therefore, whether or not the area called "Canada" might have vast amounts of forest land, as Dunlap claims throughout his text to support his assertion that the general population of Canada did not see the necessity for conservation, by the 1860s the most populated settled regions had no fuel, some had very little arable land, some had resources but had a scarcity of exchange mechanisms, and therefore the forming federal-government pressure to produce met with tension at every level of industry.

Attention to discourses of scarcity must involve looking to subjugated knowledges for direction. Locating discourses of conservation becomes a practice of locating moments of resistance for subordinate populations. The potential for resistance here has to do with the subordinate populations' ability to understand this state-created relationship between scarcity and abundance, and to argue, within and around this system, for access to a legitimate, secure position, one in which participation within economic exchange within a state-in-formation is possible.

Along with the significant Black and/or female populations,¹² the Native

¹² The First Report of the Secretary of the Board of Registration and Statistics on the Census of the Canadas of 1851 reports that the population of "Coloured Persons" was 2093, while the population of "Indians" was 3065 (xxi). These radically low numbers signify both the limited reach of the census, particularly to non-white communities, as well as the possibility that people who might identify themselves as "Black" or "Native" today did not find the category labels "Coloured Persons" or "Indian" suitable labels to mark their identity. Population statistics must always be read with suspicion. See footnote #15 on Robin Winks and the "count" of Black Canadians (some, he argues, state that the population of Blacks in Canada in the 1850s was as high

population had experienced the fatal forms of imperial “management” for centuries before 1850, and continued to do so via the rhetoric of treaty negotiation/coercion. In the most general sense this is my motive for including Mary Rose Holden’s Burlington Bay Beach and Heights In History in this project. Written in 1897 and published by the Niagara Historical Society, this document re-writes the history of Native peoples beginning from precolonial times. Each instalment in the timeline history of events at the Beach locates another moment when one group’s awareness of scarcity affects the land itself and the populations within. From the appearance on the page of truncated paragraphs devoted to activities of predominantly European people in the battles of the War of 1812 for example, framed at the beginning and the end by events in the history of only Native nations, Holden’s history can be seen as a practice of managing the different populations in the region, as if taking cue from the “The Mother of Nations,” according to her opening history of Six Nations government. Holden’s management here is very much one that can arise from this “intermediary” figure. She does not restrict the Six Nations population to an enclosed space, as various European-invented and enforced treaties had managed (and still do manage) Six Nations people. Her discursive rendering of this population resists European management, and promotes management from an “insider’s” perspective, a management that I will discuss later as “self-governance.”

George Thomas Kelley points out the mismanagement, or what he terms the “backwardness” of certain policies initiated by those who, seeking to facilitate this expansion in every possible form, neglected the reality of scarcity. In the decades leading up to confederation, both the government and the private sector recognized

as 60,000— p. 490).

that this necessary agricultural expansion could not take place without significant population growth. As a result, in 1852, a Bureau of Agriculture was established by the united Canadas government to supervise immigration and land settlement.

The need for population increase for labour purposes was nothing new in Canada. As Susanna Moodie recounts in Roughing It in the Bush, emigration is “a matter of necessity, not of choice” and “the only safe remedy for the evils arising out of an over-dense population” (xv;209). Sherrie Inness locates in Moodie’s statement “one of the key tenets of British imperialism: It is one’s duty to move to the colonies and further the state’s growth” (Inness 194). Immigration propaganda circulated through England in the form of lectures, pamphlets, property incentives and emigration manuals. This propaganda was a result of overpopulation and scarce resources in Britain, as much as underpopulation and a new cache of natural resources in the colonies. In 1834 Britain instigated the Poor Law Amendment Act which began the first systematic efforts to export English subjects to the colonies (Kranidis 2). In fact, perhaps in a sense of urgency to relieve England of its overpopulation problem, the descriptions of opportunities available in Canada were exaggerated in their claims of abundance. William Catermole’s 1831 lectures in Colchester and Ipswich, England praised “a general air of prosperity” that supposedly characterized Canada’s socio-economic climate (qtd. in Inness 190). George Heriot in his Travels Through the Canadas (1807) writes, “[e]very person in Canada may have within his power the means of acquiring a subsistence” (qtd. in Inness 191).

Aside from the fact that “every person” has a rather restricted definition in nineteenth-century Canada (and Shadd’s position arguing for the utility of specific terms of citizenship would insist upon upholding the presumed inclusion of Black

people in the term “every”), what is important to note here is that the colonies were a resource for the metropole in the management of population scarcity-surplus. As Rita Kranidis acknowledges, these “exchanges concerning emigration were ultimately deliberations about existing problems within England and served to initiate explicit discussions of gender’s relation to the empire” (3). What had changed in population management from the 1830s to the 1850s was that, in 1848, British North America had been given independence from Britain in governing domestic affairs. Therefore the establishment of the Bureau of Agriculture serves as evidence of a Canada, the newly self-governing quasi-state, both recognizing and acting upon its own population shortcomings in the resource/labour equation. Also, the 1850s population incentives are evidence of an emerging nation that was beginning to pressure its labourers into contributing to national capital; agricultural goals were no longer domestic sustainability, but rather the generation of surplus yield (Kelley 170). This surplus would no longer be exported to England; rather the funds received from the sale of exported goods could contribute to Canada’s own newly established gross national product.

The Bureau of Agriculture implemented a free-land-grant system in order to compete with incentives available to potential emigrants in Australia and the United States. Some historians conclude that between 1850 and 1867 the massive incoming labour population was successful in resolving the labour-shortage problem because of the relative self-sufficiency of existing family farms. However, pressure to produce a surplus yield, as detailed by Kelley, forced farmers to specialize, and therefore begin to dismantle the system that could support incoming workers. Shadd makes note of this shift in farming ideology to increase productivity: “[a]nother fact worth passing notice

is that a spirit of competition is active within their vicinity [Dawn settlement]. Efforts are now put forth to produce more to the acre” (69).

According to Kelley, the Bureau’s population-expansion policy could not be successful for several reasons. Most notably, the supply of land in Upper Canada, the primary agricultural region and the only one that could actually support immigrant labourers (Quebec had its own population surplus problem at the time, while the other colonies did not have nearly the arable land necessary for a comparably thriving agricultural industry) ran out. Much of the so-called potential farmland available in the 1850s was situated along the Pre-Cambrian shield that after deforestation was not useful for crop farming. The economic potential of agricultural production in Upper Canada had been over-anticipated; likewise, the pressure to import labourers was over-zealous. Canada failed this initial attempt at population management because of its ideological refusal to acknowledge the ever-present fact of resource scarcity.

As a result Canada experienced several demographic and economic shifts. Much of the population in the following decade emigrated to the United States. The ensuing lag in agricultural expansion would also immediately affect the growth of the industrial economy: “[a]ny limitation upon the agricultural sector’s development such as dwindling land supply could only serve to delay other industrial development in the latter days before Confederation” (Kelley 174). This is the climate of the early 1850s in Upper Canada, and the economic history behind what I hope to establish is an emerging awareness of the effect of scarcity as motivation towards conservation practices after this period. It is also important to note here that, likely because of a sort of romantic nationalist denial, this “mistake” is not recognized as such in the popular concept of 1850 Canada. Discourses of Canada’s geographic expanse during this period

proliferate in the twentieth century. Popular discourse and historical studies both stubbornly rehearse the description of Canada's "massive wilderness" in an inaccurate and irresponsible depiction of the demographic of nineteenth-century Canada.

This initial scarcity of population, followed by the immediate surplus of population, had different ramifications for people of different subject-positions located in nineteenth-century Canada. As a result of the second Fugitive Slave Act passed in the United States in 1850, approximately 50,000 fugitive slaves immigrated to Canada (Winks 176). Most expected to find work and affordable, if not free, land. But when agricultural labour was not available, other forms of what B. Singh Bolaria and Peter S. Li in their study, Racial Oppression in Canada, term "coerced" labour, became possible. Black labourers were forced into low-end jobs in what Anne McClintock refers to as a "reordering of black labour" (234)—one that refined rather than removed the allocation of slave status to black people. Since it already had been established that racial differences "made it easier to rationalize slavery," the more desirable agricultural and industrial jobs in 1850 could be reserved for the incoming white population without ethical quandary (Bolaria and Li 187). Instances of distribution of labour based on race had occurred in Canada during moments of surplus population. For example, the Nova Scotia government, in 1815, attempted to deport Black slaves to Trinidad in favour of "white labour" (Bolaria and Li 191). After 1850, new Black immigrants "found jobs, when they could, in road and railway constructions, they performed such tasks as shining shoes in Toronto or waiting tables in Niagara, they squatted, sharecropped or laboured on white-owned farms" (Bolaria and Li 192). Because of a lack of substantial work, the incoming fugitive slaves became a hot topic for the Black popular press at the time. Deployments of labour based on raced bodies

and occupations are not meant to be presented here as a consequence of economic scarcity due to the sudden population surplus of 1850s Ontario. Rather, the climate of scarcity, and attention to the enumeration of natural resources because of the agriculture-based economy, need to be theorized in order to begin a study of how raced populations sought to manage their own future demographics. In this project, as I hope to have demonstrated thus far, humans are considered a resource that needs management and preservation as much as forests. The conservation practices expressed in the Shadd, Holden, and Traill texts are applied to people as well as “nature.”

Conservation and the Colonial Management of Identity

“Sexuality, race, and conservation are words rarely heard in a single breath” write Suzana Sawyer and Arun Agrawal in their paper “Environmental Orientalisms” in the Spring 2000 issue of Cultural Critique, “[y]et sexuality and race—two constructs steeped in power relations—form pervasive undercurrents through what is commonly conceived of as a nonpolitical, neutral realm—environmental conservation” (71).

The nineteenth-century colonial world is a period when newly acquired universal identity category labels were deployed in various government procedures and documents that describe citizenship qualifications, the distribution of land grants, the gradations of labour and labour-values, and the prescriptions for the modern family. It is also a period when the “environmental crisis” was finally being acknowledged in popular and commercial consciousness, and eventually in houses of parliament. The fact that this ecological awareness occurred at the same time as major shifts in ontological conceptions of the world is significant. According to Grove, “from the late eighteenth century until at least as late as 1870, we find that colonial ‘ecologists’ experienced a measurable and real crisis (in terms of the speed of ecological change) that mirrored an equally real crisis of belief and chronology” (15). Conservation, as a

discourse beginning to be examined by Sawyer, Agrawal, and Grove, is an ideological mode of management, one that conveniently and necessarily masters people and the environment simultaneously. Their work highlights how the discourse of conservation in particular facilitates the ruling class's ability to manage, and in effect subordinate, the "colonized" populations and territories. If the working definition of conservation in this paper is the internal management of populations operating under the capitalist codifications of the living world, we need to look at where and how conservation ideology appears.

The first half of this paper elaborated upon a history of scarcity in 1850s Ontario that is largely de-emphasized, if mentioned at all, in historical discourse. It focussed on how the awareness of scarcity surfaced in texts read by the general public, and how these moments seem to settle around a tension between limited material conditions and expansionist fervour. Yet what remains to be investigated is the possibility of reading for conservation, of substantiating the unique approach of social-ecologists and applying their critical questions to three texts that investigate connections between the natural world and economic reform in popular discourse. Having established an awareness of both the scarcity of resources and the necessity to strategize within the economic limits, within each of the three texts, all evidence of what I term a conservation ideology, I will now turn to a more specific analysis of three technologies of conservation and how they operate within the texts in an attempt to respond to the following questions: How is conservation recognized in texts by women of colour? How does conservation become a lesson for a young child? What managing manoeuvres do these writers and their characters perform that are inspired by conservationist practices but not necessarily complicit with conservationist ideals?

How is the capitalist-imbued mainstream concept of conservation revised by writers who can also stand to benefit from alternative forms of resource management?

The first of these “technologies” is “conversion.” Conversion, when read for its metaphorical possibilities, involves the transformation of the living world into a system of signification that coincides with the economic system of exchange. The “Conversion” chapter looks at moments in Shadd’s and Traill’s texts that can be considered to employ “conversion,” as well as moments where they appear to be suspicious of conversion. The next two chapters build from the knowledge of the conversion chapter by offering readings of the symbolics and narrative patterns at work within conservation discourse. These chapters demonstrate specific ways in which the discourse of conservation can be manipulated by various speakers and writers. The first of these two shorter chapters discusses “demarcated spaces,” the creation and maintenance of which is an exercise in totalizing control of one population over others, often pretending a good-willed interest in “preservation.” The second of these shorter chapters looks at how the appeal to nostalgia in certain “conservation” texts dangerously misleads people with its insistence upon a false utopian history. Each chapter demonstrates an analysis of the relation between scarcity and abundance as a social moment that characterizes the invention of identity categories as well as the discourses that enable economic relations. Moreover, what remains at stake within this analysis is the maintenance and the manipulation of “life,” as it is invented by, and subject to, representation.

Conversion

Conservation, as it has been increasingly problematized and elaborated upon here, engages in the problem of production. The problem of production is the contradiction that is inherent within capitalism, and therefore also the economic basis from which Canada was formed, a contradiction that arises from the need for infinite accumulation in a situation of resource scarcity. The problem of production as the foundational circumstance of Canada becomes increasingly significant as I further explore Canada's economic and resource-governance history through texts that advocate methods of "self-governance." The connection between the so-called "prosperous" "first-world" "equitable" country "Canada," on the one hand, and the disaster of capitalist-based agricultural economics on the other, is one rarely considered and rarely applied to the extremely varied "living conditions" of all people in this nation-state. Denis Cosgrove insists on this ideological conflation of production and human condition: "for our understanding of culture to correspond with the evidence of practice we must return to the notion of a mode of production as a mode of life, incorporating the cultural within human production, bound in dialectical equality with the material production of goods" (Cosgrove 6). This chapter deals specifically with the way in which the discourse of conservation is a distinct method of

characterizing life: its availability, its distinct forms, its pathology, and ways it becomes containable. This “characterizing,” this putting into discourse of the “living world” in the ways listed here, involves various operations of conversion. I choose “conversion” because it speaks to a particular investigation of conservation that specifically considers both semiotic and economic systems. In this chapter I question how “life” is determined, as well as transformed or “converted,” in(to) systems of representation that are also systems of exchange. When considering such conversions (a sort of productive manufacturing in the realm of the linguistic, resource, social conversions) as transactions, what becomes interesting to note is the cost of the transfer, and the shifts in value of the participant factors. This concept of conversion remains necessarily murky at this point, yet as this chapter proceeds the possible configurations of conversion are investigated in an attempt to clarify the present murkiness. The predominant clarifying feature that arises is a distinction between “conversion” and “creation” economies, and the subsequent analysis considers how these two economies can be seen to test, resist, and reify each other as they coexist in each of the three texts in question.

Conversion, according to Mark Seltzer, is related to the “law of conservation” in physics that describes a transformation where matter is not created or destroyed but just changes shape (29). In other words conversion does not work on a capitalist economy with the necessity of accumulation of supply. But what sort of “conversion” economies exist? What is an example of a conversion economy? Is there always no differential residue left over from the conversion transaction? I am not interested in offering a tabulation of exchanges described in the nineteenth-century social reality of Canada; rather, I am interested in noting who claims conversion economies, who

critiques aspirations to conversion, who proclaims conversions by masking differences and where these differences become exposed.

Seltzer's conversion is taken from nineteenth-century theories of production, which he describes as "the opposition of conversion to the creation of forms" (30). For example, Thorstein Veblen, in his Theory of the Leisure Class (1899) contrasts "the effort to create a new thing" with "conspicuous consumption" which is "the conversion to his own ends of energies previously directed to some other end by another agent" (30). Furthermore, this conversion "coincides with a difference between the sexes" (qtd in Seltzer 30). Seltzer applies this economic philosophy that regards "conversion" (female) as opposite to "creation" (male) to his analysis of Frank Norris' The Octopus, a text which enunciates, according to Seltzer, "the desire to project an alternative to biological reproduction, to displace the threat posed by the 'women people' (the reduction of men to 'mere animalcules' in the process of procreation) and to devise a counter-mode of reproduction (the naturalist machine)" (30). What Seltzer identifies here is a particular narrative resulting from the anxiety of production that arises during a situation of resource scarcity. Women are read as bodies that "convert" when they gestate a baby (and here the problem of characterizing "life" that I am concerned with surfaces in Seltzer's analysis also). Of course, the female body's being read as self-contained and magically productive disregards the simple fact that any human body requires the consumption of resources—there is a certain cost to women's labour that is somehow disqualified here, or rather stigmatized as "conspicuous."

Who then, and for what reasons, decides what consumption is "conspicuous"? Why is the work of manufacturing a human a different sort of production? When women, or for that matter, any group of humans, are marked as "outside" what Marx

terms a “cooperating” system of production, they are actively disengaged from the “specific, determinate connections and relations” that characterize the labour community and render labour and labourers valuable (265).

This problem of articulating production, the problem of what terms of production get recognized and factored into definitions/values, one that Seltzer analyses as it occurs in the late nineteenth century, is, I argue, a subject of the three texts studied in this paper. I want to look at where conversion narratives are used, where they are questioned, and when the terms within a specific system of production are valued in different and often opposing ways. The nature of Seltzer’s investigation, one that exposes the constructed binary of conversion/capitalist economies and the way in which the difference in such reductive transactions was made easily invisible, is one that I think can be most usefully applied to an analysis of the texts by Shadd and Traill.

Why, then, is it necessary to emphasize discourses of conservation alongside discourses of expansion? And how does conversion contribute to the investigation of the discourse of conservation?

The economic realities of the time, particularly the pressure to shift from more subsistent agriculture farming to profit-driven large-scale resource harvesting and manufacturing (and the systematization of the population within this economic shift) fashions a particular discourse and ideology of the “human” and the “human condition.” The state of the social, and the articulation of (and by) the social body, depends on this relation between scarcity and abundance, and how this relation is articulated in historical moments characterized by particular economic motivations and particular resource bases.

Expansion relies on tropes of abundance. These tropes are what the early conservation documents expose and critique. Phipps, for example, describes the “hundreds and thousands-nay, there were millions of acres of magnificent maples, two feet-three-four feet through, their rugged trunks rising clear, separate, distinct, to the lofty arches of the forest, like the pillars of some great cathedral” (1). The expansionist rhetoric here actually speaks accumulation with awe— “thousands [. . .] nay [. . .] millions,” “two feet-three” etc— as if looking to something beyond, a distant, valorized, here even spiritual infinity. But conservation, and conversion as one example of conservation, rely on internal management, on the ability of language to be restrictively accountable and therefore apparently responsible; they function to hide the problem of production, the problem that even renewable resources have limits.

Conversion refers to both a narrative of a particular economic system, and also the act of interpreting bodies/matter into a unitary discourse that can be applied to any economic system. To operate conversions, which often includes operating different conversions through and against each other, has been both a method of maintaining power for dominant groups (as described by Seltzer) and a way of accessing power for non-dominant groups (as I focus on here). In analysing narratives of production from this period, according to Seltzer, “we must consider the ways in which difference itself may be produced and deployed as a strategy of control and as part of a more general economy of bodies and powers” (28). It is not necessarily conversion narratives themselves that I want to investigate, however. Rather, it is the suspicion of the binary of conversion/capitalism, the possible extremes of conversion, the apparent contradiction, and the impossibility of conversion, that is evident in these texts by Shadd, Holden, and Traill. These three authors pay a particular attention to exposing

conversion-economic arguments at the same time as they expose capitalist-economic arguments. I want to look at where these authors teach and test the mechanics of standardized economics. What is at stake, of course, is their own acknowledgement in these newly forming economic systems. Traill's Mrs. Frazer, as a serving class woman, Shadd, as a Black woman, and Holden, as a Native woman, are at risk of being absorbed into the uncounted, invisible work force within the new industrial-capitalist economy of Canada. Shadd, Holden, and Traill, all educated women, recognize the need to be aware of, and practised in, discourses of exchange and the interpretation of value. Their texts redefine the environment within which value is determined¹³ and therefore make possible the articulation of their value within a white, male-dominated, capitalist system, in order to be considered legitimate citizens and in order to have a voice in the new nation. They do this very work of testing for incongruencies in supposedly static structural exchanges, while at the same time not dismissing structural systems that can be useful to them if they continue to both manipulate them and be recognized within them. Their texts are at once investigations of discourse and investigations of exchange equations. This simultaneous representation and/as exchange is what makes conversion a necessary intermediate topic for the overall investigation of the discourse of conservation. Conservation initiatives arise out of a language that is responding to scarcity, and conversion is a function of this language. Perhaps part of the problem of articulating production is that this representational response to scarcity occurs through this medium of language that suffers from, and is subject to, scarcity. The situation of scarcity in the environment can be considered to

¹³ This builds from Saussure's concepts of how linguistic value is determined: "[t]he value of just any term is accordingly determined by its environment; it is impossible to fix even the value of the word signifying 'sun' without first considering its surroundings" (85).

be mirrored by the limitations of language and the fraught economics of discursive exchange.

As I move through specific moments of these texts, “conversion” is both located and enacted at different moments. Conversion is not a fixed point, but rather is recognizable as avenues through which we can consult the state of the social through a scarcity/abundance relation. What I hope to establish here are operations of conversion that must be understood and employed in order to realize more fully the parameters of the “demarcated space” and “nostalgia” that structure the analysis conducted in the two following chapters.

Discursive conversion, in the nineteenth century, became professionalized into the discipline of natural history. Conversion of the living world into language is a necessary factor in the implementation of conservation strategies and measures, but it is also in itself a conservation technique because it locates, determines within a boundary of a signifier, and therefore “manages” the living world. The transformative nature of the practice of naming, of classification, is very necessary to an exploration of the discourse of conservation because it demonstrates the constructed nature of the “human” management of the living world, the practice of demarcating (one that is present in the use of language) and the inherent reductiveness of marking/naming/labelling.

While Shadd’s text can be classified as an “emigration manual,” Holden’s text a “history” and Traill’s text “children’s literature,” all fall under the genre of “natural history.” These texts are “natural histories” not so much because of their content, but rather because of their “natural history” approach to articulating their position in

colonial Canada. Each of these authors specifically and self-consciously locates and employs the discourse of natural history because of the way its very deployment depends upon assumed authority and the posture of objective knowledge. Those who operate natural history's reductionist encoding of the world achieve the status of "experts" for their readers. To speak as a natural historian is to speak with authority. It is interesting how often criticism of Traill and Moodie proliferates a kind of amazement of these women's skills at scientific observation. It seems that from the nineteenth century to the present day, the question frequently at stake for their readers has to do with the degree of accuracy achieved by their observations and/or their emergence as "women" into subjecthood through following the order of scientific discourse.¹⁴

Michel Foucault would argue that any such assessment of natural historians' accuracy mistakes the significance of the practice of natural-history writing. According to Foucault, natural history is the process of characterizing the world in language, or, more specifically, in a hierarchy of names:

We must not see the constitution of natural history, with the empirical climate in which it develops, as an experiment forcing entry, willy-nilly, into a knowledge that was keeping watch on the truth of nature elsewhere; natural history—and this is why it appeared at precisely this moment—is the space opened up in representation by an analysis which is anticipating the possibility of naming; it is the possibility of seeing what one will be able to say, but what one could not say subsequently, or see at a distance, if things and words, distinct from one another, did not, from the very first, communicate in

¹⁴ See Marianne Ainley as one example of such evaluative criticism.

representation. (Order 130)

Writing in the discourse of natural history involved assuming the authority or expertise by which to characterize the world. In other words, “accuracy” is a necessary pretence of natural history, but the achievement of accuracy is necessarily impossible. The discipline is a process based on representation rather than empirical truth.

No wonder natural history finds its significance in the colonial era, since colonial expansion depends upon the practice of naming as well as fostering a collective investment in the belief of an inherent accuracy of the application of names. Natural history operated on the precondition of its accessibility that enabled differently stratified populations to access and practice naming, while at the same time (and through doing so) submitting to the power structures that allowed for naming to take place.

Traill’s Stories of the Canadian Forest (1856) is a “natural history” text in the most common sense since it continuously rehearses the practice of naming (offering even the Latin terms on occasion). More specifically it is a book meant for children, and therefore demonstrates through the example of Mary and her nurse Mrs. Frazer, icons of student and teacher, how to become acquainted with natural history. Readers will not only learn about the particular plants and animals Mrs. Frazer discusses, they will also learn how to ask questions, how science is interesting (Mary even loses interest in her doll because she is so excited about her informal lessons (115)) and, perhaps most significantly, how the natural world can be understood when it is communicated through controlled observation, hearsay, and books.

Mary is trained to learn via observation from the outset when Mrs. Frazer brings her the flying squirrel (which will sit in a cage for examination), and, later, a

painting. Here a different sort of conversion is presented that will remain a recurring theme throughout the text. This is the conversion from wild to tame. But the kind of conversion more interesting to investigate is the conversion from “living world” to “knowledge,” because throughout the text Mary does not need to leave Government House to become versed in the natural history of Canada. She learns from Mrs. Frazer, from books with painted pictures of plants and animals, from her own menagerie of caged animals, and from her own observations in the garden and the conservatory.

Mary’s style of learning is summed up in the phrase Mrs. Frazer borrows from King Solomon: “[t]he hearing ear, and the seeing eye, are two things that are never satisfied” (127). Here Mary— and readers— are taught the value of observation over other knowledge-producing sensory data. For Foucault, natural history is the form of a knowledge-initiating “contact area” (related to Pratt’s “contact zone”) between the seeing eye and the object rendered. The empirical gaze is trained into “seeing a few things systematically” which will “be given a name that everyone will understand” (Order 134). To Foucault, it seems that the nineteenth-century preoccupation with natural history and refining methods of classification occurred not in the name of science, but rather in a massive effort to articulate the world in the universal, calculable, language of economics:

All wealth is coinable; and it is by this means that it enters into circulation— in the same way that any natural being was characterizable, and could thereby find its place in a taxonomy; that any individual was nameable and could find its place in an articulated language; that any representation was signifiable and

could find its place, in order to be known, in a system of identities and differences. (175)

As Foucault weaves together currency, words, and natural beings as systematic, calculable relations, we begin to see more clearly how Mrs. Frazer's lesson in natural history is also one in economics. For Foucault the "whole system of exchanges, the whole costly creation of values, is referred back to the unbalanced, radical, and primitive exchange established between the advances made by the landowner and the generosity of nature" (Order 195). Yet "values" are not inscribed by "nature" itself, but by the interpretation, and usefulness of the valued item as it is located within its specific environment. Does Foucault, here, ask: who has the power to determine "values" and then "refer" (or defer) this power to determine value back to the abstract, divine "nature"? The problem Foucault deals with in this passage is this problem of articulating production. He problematizes the attribution of value-determination to a "nature" that, in itself, is a scarce commodity—and therefore has its own determined value. What is so "costly" in the "costly creation of values" is that difference which is left out of value-determination. Valuing is only expensive when it pretends to operate on a conversion economy, but, in fact, privileges certain values through the expenditure of others. Foucault here implicitly calls attention to that (and those) which/who are spent.

In Traill's text, King Solomon's words also warn that the quest for knowledge is never satisfiable. Knowledge is the one infinite factor; for the system to be perpetuated, the act of hearing/seeing and, in turn, differentiating, must never cease. Knowledge is the primary resource that maintains this highly productive industry: "[t]he systematizing of nature carries this image of accumulation to a totalized extreme,

and at the same time models the extractive, transformative character of industrial capitalism, and the ordering mechanisms that were beginning to shape urban mass society in Europe under bourgeois hegemony” (Pratt 36). Mrs. Frazer’s lessons are so important because they teach the moral implications of the deployment of knowledge within the system. As I will go on to elaborate, Stories of the Canadian Forest, then, provides us with a most useful example of how, within the historical implementation of this “system of identities and differences,” certain fissures become apparent in supposedly tight conversion economies.

Shadd implicitly exposes the incongruencies between the observation “Black” and the social status of “slave” by using the term “complexional variance” to discuss racializations based on appearance. When, in the discipline of natural history, it is the surface appearance of things that becomes the only basis from which knowledge is constructed, the way the body signifies will govern how that body is slotted into the economy. The natural-history knowledge system then supports the colonial enterprise where the division of class and labour is based on certain, often discursively constructed and exaggerated, physical features. Foucault notes how racism is made easily employable, in fact made almost necessary, by natural history: “everything that presents itself to our gaze is not utilizable: colours especially can scarcely serve as a foundation for useful comparisons. The area of visibility in which observation is able to assume its powers is thus only what is left after these exclusions: a visibility freed from all other sensory burdens and restricted, moreover, to black and white” (Order 133). Why does Foucault in this passage choose the particular reductive example of “black” and “white”? Undoubtedly, Foucault’s use of the terms means to illustrate more generally the reductivist nature of natural history and not to specifically alert

readers to the operations of racism and racialization. But Ann Laura Stoler also argues that Foucault's discourse theories are speaking directly to discourses of race. Stoler contends that "bringing the discursive anxieties and practical struggles over citizenship and national identities in the nineteenth century back more squarely within Foucault's frame, bourgeois identities in both metropole and colony emerge tacitly and emphatically coded by race" (Stoler 7). Foucault's "black" vs. "white" example of reductivism is most useful when read for its attention to racializing practices. Recognizing Foucault's work on discourse as including, and sometimes emphasizing, how discourses of racism operate is necessary for this project because of the way in which it includes the coding of human identity categories within the larger question of systematizing the world through observation-based articulation. Race factors most significantly into and through the processes that describe the conversions of image to language, to system, to economic exchange.

The irony with which Foucault must intend the term "freed" to be read here resonates closely with Shadd's suspicion of the term "free." Both are consciously critical of the drive to free, and, consequently, they teach within their texts the practice of reading "freedom" critically. A Plea for Emigration calls attention to the shortcomings of naming, particularly when insufficient categories allocated to human identities allow for unjust governance over human populations. Shadd's critique of exclusive ex-slave colonies forming in Canada West, particularly The Refugees' Home, is one that begs individuals to ask who benefits from the fugitive-slave population's acquiescence to external governing schemes. She continuously reminds people that any form of herding, even if its source be Black business men in Canada working from an apparently empathetic position and also for the so-called ethical good of the fugitive

populations, is suspect. Several fundamental concerns with settlement schemes invented by such figures seem to be the heart of the manual that claims to be a guide with a singular, overt politics—hatred of a racist slave-driving American megalomaniacal state. We can read these concerns in Shadd’s so-called “plea,” just as much as the obvious life-threatening reality of being a dark-skinned person in the United States after the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850.

One such concern has to do with the deployment of the term “free.” According to Shadd, it “is well known that the Fugitive Bill makes insecure every northern coloured man. Those free are alike at risk of being sent south” (71). While slaveholders on recapturing missions did not stop to consider the possibility of “free” status for Black people—in this sense the term “free” was meaningless—somehow Canadian settlement policies restricted opportunities to fugitive slaves only. For Black people the term “free” has a specific meaning that is overlooked when Henry Bibb, owner of the Refugees’ Home Society, only provides settlement opportunities for former slaves, a restriction that Shadd calls “the accident of nominal freedom” (71). The freedom that exists in name and connotation does not exist in experience when any Black person can be arrested. Shadd attributes the prejudice in such restrictions to the divisive effects of “the policy of slaveholders” which “has been to create a contempt for free people in the bosom of their slaves [. . .]” (71). The repetition and italicization of the term “free” emphasizes Shadd’s attention to the authority of terminology to categorize peoples, and thereby ground ineffective modes of governance of people. By questioning the term “free” she calls Black people to question for themselves what constitutes actual “freedom” and to understand that in order to acquire a “free” lifestyle one must, at times, play with the rhetoric, but never swallow it without

challenge.

The census of 1851 as discussed by Shadd also raises the issue of nominalism and human-category formation. Shadd advertizes Canada's supposed disregard for what she terms "complexional variance." The 1851 census, however, as noted by Almonte, included "Negro" as one of the twenty-eight choices under "national origin" (114).¹⁵ Shadd draws attention to the fact that, having the choice, most Black refugees chose "American" (76). What is, of course, important here is the fact that Black people were counted at all, and that they had the choice to term themselves. If Shadd is as aware of nominalism as I think she appears to be here, her discussion could be purposefully avoiding "Negro" as a choice, pointing out the strategic possibility of choosing a national origin that is not specifically raced. Or, rather, by choosing "American" or "Canadian," Black people will dispel presumptions of whiteness under national categories. This is one of Shadd's many lessons in freedom, a lesson in the freedom of discursive rendering.

Again quoting popular hearsay regarding the welfare of fugitive slaves, Shadd critiques the concepts of freedom that were circulating:

"We are free men" say they who advocate independent effort, "we as other subjects, are amenable to British laws; we wish to observe and appropriate

¹⁵ Robin Winks discusses the "frustratingly vague" terminology (and meanings contemporary historians can attach to the terminology) used in Canadian censuses: "[a]t no time was the national census clear as to what was meant by 'Negro.' When such a category was given as one of twenty-eight or more permissible areas of 'national origin' in the census returns, there was no Negro nation; and since respondents were asked to name their own national origin, many Negroes appeared under 'African' and 'West Indies,' while the American-born of fair skins in all probability listed what the questioners—after all—asked for but did not have in mind, by claiming the United States. For 'origin' was not related to birthplace by the Canadian census so much as to ethnic background; a Canadian of four generations whose great grandparents had immigrated from Scotland in the 1830s was expected to reply 'Scots.' Ultimately 'Negro' was dropped as a national origin, while being retained in questions relating to ethnic origin" (485).

ourselves, ourselves, whatever of good there is in the society around us, and by our individual efforts, to attain to a respectable position, as do the many foreigners who land on the Canadian shores, as poor in purse as we were; and we do not want agents to beg for us.” (72)

Shadd seems to support this statement, not because it offers any more genuine a use of the term “free” but because it objects to the regulation of fugitive colonies in favour of the utilization of “freedom” as it exists under British law. She seems to applaud the unromantic assessment that a free citizen is the individual subject to the letter of the law, not to the individual regulation of settlement agents working on a premium according to the prosperity of their appointed areas. Perhaps what she recognizes here is the permanence of British rule, and the necessity for each Black individual to work for “freedom” within these laws as opposed to the parental guidance of settlement officials. What she also recognizes is the discursive work the term “freedom” accomplishes. Throughout the text Shadd takes pointed jabs at different examples of what one could call “enlightenment propaganda” or perhaps a “discourse of liberation.” With phrases like “the never ending parade about freedom” (92), Shadd makes clear the fact that while “free” is a very specific term within a slave and/or Black American context, “freedom” has several manifestations none of which achieves the pinnacle of de-regulation that is often suggested by its use.

The irony of the “accident of nominal freedom” is that Bibb’s distinction is no “accident.” Rather, Henry Bibb finds that because the refugee-slave audience has had less access to education they are easily manipulable within his capitalist scheme. Bibb sells the land at prices marked up from the original government purchase price, making him and the RHS society rich (Shadd 112). Also, though he stands to make a profit in

the long-run, Bibb asks of his new tenants a down-payment upfront. One could argue that if Bibb were acting on an entirely humanitarian sentiment, he would not have included in Article 12 of the Constitution of the Refugee Home Society that “at least one-tenth of the purchase price of [the land] shall be paid by the actual settler before possession is given” (Shadd 73). To further threaten the possible squatters, Bibb includes in Article 4 of the By-Laws that “[n]o person shall be allowed to remove any timber from said land until they have first made payment thereon” (73). Given that the refugees arrive with nothing, usually in a weakened condition from their very risky journey, how does Bibb expect them to have ready cash to make a payment? Or, as Shadd sees it, these terms are more

than most fugitives just from slavery can comply with (as destitute women with families, old men, and single women), until after partial familiarity with their adopted country. This, say many coloured Canadians, begins not to benefit until a man has proven his ability to act without aid, and is fit for political equality by his own industry, that money will get for him at any time. (73)

The lesson in the manipulability of language for the purposes of restriction in official documents, and in a larger sense for the governance of peoples, is continued here. In a pedagogical fashion, and Shadd is a professional teacher, she quotes directly from the source, the Constitution of the Refugees’ Home Society, and then offers a reading of the segment quoted. Rather than employ her own rhetorical tools of persuasion, Shadd aims to “give such evidence as will substantiate her assertion[s]” (47). She also warns that “parties can be found who, taking advantage of the prevalent ignorance among the coloured population, administer the law in a way clearly prejudicial to the interests of the latter” (129).

How does “free” signify when Shadd exposes its use to cloud expensive value systems and make real-estate schemes into romantic-national-humanitarian projects? Bibb’s settlement project that claims to convert fugitives into settlers is in fact a system that factors out, as Shadd carefully names, “destitute women with families, old men, and single women.” Shadd was herself, at the time, a single woman and therefore had a personal stake in the de-valuing of her position.

Shadd, as we have seen, does not invest in any kind of romantic nationalism or total submission to language that resorts to any rootedness in empirical truths. There is a sense in her discourse, as noted by Walcott, that does not speak from “nationalistic yearning or desire” (“Who” 45). Shadd supplies information from a series of sources, most notably Scobie’s Canadian Almanac for 1852 and the Catechism of Information for Intended Emigrants of All Classes to Upper Canada, so that any questions readers have “may be answered by everyone for himself, after having properly weighed the [presented] facts” (50). This sentence is doubly charged; rather than simply claiming that she presents factual evidence, Shadd insists on the responsibility on the part of her readers to participate by “weighing” that which she presents. “Weighing” is not simply a synonym for reasoning: as Shadd’s term for discursive interpretation, weighing highlights the economic character of representation itself as described by Foucault in several passages cited here, and, again, the intense significance of values ascribed to different variables. One could argue that Shadd’s “free” individual is one who can, in fact, “weigh,” or attach a value to the socio-economic variables that will contribute to the resolution in his or her decision-making processes.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile to note that, as the teacher of critical thinking and economic discourse, Shadd does not present herself as free of biases; she is not the

comprehensive authority to be taken at “face value.” Shadd offers lessons in reading and assessing information as she also presents useful, in fact life-saving knowledge. Knowledge is not a commodity that can accumulate for Shadd as it does seem to be, at times, for Traill. Rather than a catalogue of variables, Shadd presents knowledge as the ability to value and calculate these variables. Discourse, for Shadd, becomes a two-fold system of management, one that characterizes an emerging citizenship of Black Canadians, and one that self-reflexively teaches the tools of critical thinking necessary for self-governance.

Shadd’s lesson in economics resonates both with Marx’s discussion of labour-value and Saussure’s discussion of determining linguistic value. As an emigration manual that describes the environmental, political, and economic living conditions for Black people in Canada West, A Plea establishes a new environment within which meaning/value is determined. This is a distinct difference from work by Traill, for whom the “environment” is taken for granted, and meaning can be determined without working to establish the parameters behind its value-inscription.

It is remarkable that, in order to learn and participate in the linguistic conversions known as “natural history,” Mary does not have to leave Government House. Through her creation of this strangely interior narrative Traill could be considered to comment on the absolute detachment natural history has from the “natural world.” As the narrative of Mary and Mrs. Frazer continues, it seems that Traill does not take particular knowledge-determining environments for granted. She also appears to make efforts similar to, though perhaps less insistent than Shadd’s, to teach the importance of analysing the interpretation of value, and to acknowledge distinctions made between conversion exchanges and creation exchanges.

Mrs. Frazer invests highly in the authority of the representational from which to acquire knowledge of the natural world. Mary does not leave the house except to go into the garden, which becomes like a public-school laboratory, and also to go on sleigh-rides where she practices her skills of observation: “I like sleighing very much over the white snow. The trees look so pretty, as if they were covered with white flowers, and the ground sparkled just like mamma’s diamonds” (29). Here Mary converts the natural world into something of aesthetic and monetary value—but her conversion is not entirely successful: she has still much to learn at this early stage of her education. The natural historian, as Mrs. Frazer will teach, substitutes a particular system of words for organisms, words that have a standardized and easily understood place in the hierarchy of the ecological world. Diamonds are far too valuable to compare to snow, and may even be “priceless,” as they are worth too much to be integrated into most economies in Upper Canada at the time.

Mary is, after all, a very privileged child and must learn how her environment leads her to attach value to items like “snow” that might be meaningless to a majority of the population. Or, perhaps the substitution of diamonds for snow is not exactly meaningless, but too expensive; the equation will not be read as a conversion, and therefore the costly differential of the practice of naming will be dangerously exposed.

Mrs. Frazer gives explicit lessons in class consciousness, wherein Mary is alerted to the fact that she is “not exposed to the same trials as poor emigrants” (205). But here, as I draw attention to Mrs. Frazer’s assessment of privilege, and the privilege of obtaining knowledge, I also want to consider how her access to the discourse of natural history, as a person of the serving class, notes its egalitarian availability, at least to some degree, in its acquisition and usage. Natural history puts the living world into a

specific kind of economy, one that circulates within any literate class. Mrs. Frazer's use of natural history is not exactly emancipatory, however, because as long as she teaches Mary the hierarchical categorization of class as well as effective methods of relieving stress on this system (in teaching Mary to be good and kind to the poor), she participates in supporting this very hierarchical class structure. Mrs. Frazer is an interesting character to study because of her particular "intermediate" place within the social sphere of colonial Canada. As a white, educated woman with a wage, she has a certain degree of "freedom" and certain access to power through shaping knowledge that perhaps her employers do not share; however, as a serving-class woman her options for changing her living conditions are, of course, limited.

I borrow the term "intermediate" from Marlene Nourbese Philip as a way to call attention to Mrs. Frazer's complicated 'in between' social position. Philip takes the term "intermediate" from a definition of "genealogy," where the "intermediate persons" are in charge of "enumeration," and in charge of "speaking in a certain manner" ("A Genealogy" 11). Philip's "intermediate" person is often a mixed-race person who is silenced because of his or her position; they are the people 'caught in the middle.' But, for Philip these intermediate people who are so often overlooked in histories of colonial states are useful to retrieve because of their access to, and use of, language. For Philip, only "when we understand language and its role in a colonial society can we understand the role of writing and the writer in such a society" ("The Absence" 42-43). Mrs. Frazer does not entirely fit the description of Philip's "intermediary" because, as a white woman, she experiences certain privileges of her supposedly homogeneous and superior race. But Mrs. Frazer, to some degree, can be considered an intermediate character because, as will be seen, she has lived the life of

two differently classed women. Also, Mrs. Frazer has a very specific place in the genealogy of social structure, and a specific role in maintaining and subverting this structure. As a teacher she is in charge of structuring the consciousness of the next generation of peoples, and, likewise, responsible for educating this next generation in their use of language. I also want to keep close at hand Philip's attention to the "enumerations" by people such as Mrs. Frazer and their consequent contribution to the genealogy of oppression and racism within Canada. Not only is Philip's attention to the economics of discourse useful to this project, but so is her acknowledgement of such "intermediate" people as subject to, and participating in, the colonial enterprise and, specifically, the valued categorization of peoples.

As an intermediate person, is Mrs. Frazer's pedagogy, and specifically her use of language, resistant to the colonial campaign? Does one read Mrs. Frazer as "less" resistant than others writing at the time? If so, less political than who? If anything, Philip's attention to the intermediate figure offers a new approach from which to assess Mrs. Frazer as a participant character in colonial governance. Perhaps she does not resist the continuation of oppression in colonial Canada. Still, noticing the degree to which she actually can be considered to participate at all in colonial governance, and therefore become a character worthy of study in colonial criticism is what I attempt to initiate here. The following analysis recognizes where I think it is necessary to locate moments of resistance in Mrs. Frazer's teachings, because the incongruencies that surface, though perhaps not intentionally resistant or subversive in any way, highlight how someone of an intermediate social position might be unable to actually participate entirely in a dutiful perpetuation of the colonial campaign, and, furthermore, that locating these incongruencies is a valuable critical exercise. The analysis that follows

circles around instances where Mrs. Frazer's teachings establish what linguistic processes are considered valuable, and how this value is determined.

Mary learns to value stories of natural science over "silly" stories (157). When she proposes to return Mrs. Frazer's many gifts of storytelling with one of her own (eyes "beaming with intelligence") Mrs. Frazer disappoints her by asking if it will be "Little Red Riding Hood" or "Old Mother Hubbard." Mary responds "[t]hose are too silly for me even to tell a baby" (157). Mary's tale acquires authentic status because it originates from a Major Pickford who took her "on his knee" to tell it to her the previous evening (158). This genealogy of her story differs from one Mrs. Frazer passes on about otters from Old Jacob Snow-storm, a Native man, which she presents as a story to be "laughed at" (33). Mrs. Frazer mimics Snow-storm's speech so that "Mary was very much amused at the comical way in which the old Indian talked" (35). Mrs. Frazer's lesson is one in the hierarchical classification of peoples as much as it is about otters and beavers. The knowledge the Native people have of their ecological environment is made comical and unimportant, even while the European settlers depend on this knowledge for their survival.

Mary's story from Major Pickford opens with a "gentleman [who] was very fond of Indians, and used to pass a great deal of his time with them, and talk to them in their own language" who rescues a "poor little Indian boy" lost in the woods (158-59). Mrs. Frazer comments on her approval of the gentleman's generosity, and also about the subject matter of the story, saying she is "glad to hear more about the Indian boy" (159). Mary responds: "[n]urse, there is not a great deal more about the Indian boy but I forgot to tell you that the gentleman had often said how much he should like to have a young beaver to make a pet of" (159). What are we to make of this strange

inclusion, one which approves of the man's behaviour towards Native peoples, but also quickly erases the story of the boy in favour of the beaver? Why does Mary, very much the novice storyteller, open with what Mrs. Frazer perceived as the main subject but which was in fact hardly part of the plot at all? Clearly there is not room in Traill's text for an inclusion of Native identity. Clearly, as well, there is a proper way to tell a story and a proper narrative trajectory to follow. Mrs. Frazer, however, by asking for more information about the Native boy, signals the value and interest in his character. The story turns out to follow the taming of a beaver that all at once becomes wild again and tears the "gentleman's" house apart—another allegory no doubt about the fixity of species to their place in the natural world. But as the story does begin with the retrieval of a lost Native boy, critical attention to the colonial situation's influence on natural-history narrativization, evident even through the unpractised voice of a young girl, can not be avoided. While Mrs. Frazer teaches that "[o]ur Heavenly Father has fitted all creatures for the state in which he has placed them" (104), her stories often call the assigned "states" into question. She is apparently uneasy about the social stratification of people in nineteenth-century Canada, particularly women, Natives, and working-class people. This socio-ecological moment is not so easily converted into the orders of natural history.

In a very curious end to this narrative, Major Pickford makes a "naughty" joke about animals being intoxicated which Mrs. Frazer finds "not quite proper" (163). Readers are now asked to question the authenticity of Major Pickford's storytelling. Traill seems to generate distrust in authority figures like Major Pickford which is similar to Shadd's questioning of information from certain self-invested officials. Both Shadd and Traill, while operating very much within the discourse of natural history,

do not subscribe to the collective/consensus nature of the use of this standardized system of order and representation. Instead, they invest certain populations within the social sphere—and it is the women and teachers most often, not those already at the top of the social ladder—with the intelligence and capability of critical thinking and communication of information.

Truill and Shadd both deal with the complicated particularities regarding how raced and classed populations register in the nineteenth-century Canadian social world. As a way of convincing her audience that Canada is not the same kind of racist nation as the United States, Shadd writes “there is an aristocracy of birth, not of skin” (88), which in some sense can be read as a necessary warning of the old-world class system much upheld in 1852 Canada West. The gap between language and “nature” as the relation that makes natural history possible is the same gap where meaning-making becomes accessible to white women and women of colour in nineteenth-century colonial Canada. When these women, as intermediate persons, use tropes of conservation in their texts they do so conscious of how each functions to construct “place” and “land” and entitlement to “belonging.” Also, each is conscious of how economic narratives factor into ascribing value to these often-romanticized variables. “Place,” “land” and entitlement to “belonging” are all environmental conditions that are valued. Also, in a different, but related way, “place,” “land” and entitlement to “belonging” characterize the situation that determines the valuation of humans and labour, and, in turn, determines how the living conditions of humans are factored into labour-value.

As Mary’s lesson in class-consciousness continues, she is reminded of the kind of exchange at work in her particular economic reality. Here is the full speech Mrs.

Frazer gives Mary: “You are not exposed to the same trials and dangers as the children of poor emigrants: therefore, you must be very grateful to God, and do all you can to serve and please Him; and when you are able, be kind and good to those who are not as well off as you are” (205). When we follow this speech from Mrs. Frazer through, we become aware of the obligations of privilege. Rather than a system of regulated production and consumption, Mary’s world is one of unstandardized giving and receiving, where the exchange is not guaranteed to be accountable, and, in turn, reciprocal in any way. Mary experiences abundance most of the time, a condition that is luck-based rather than merit-based, and one over which she has no control. Mary’s economic existence is dependent; much like Foucault’s farmer’s, it is “the unbalanced, radical, and primitive exchange” whereby Mary’s profits are never entirely predictable (Order 195). The word “primitive” is key here. Of course Mary and her family are in no way “primitive” people, but the civilized vs. savage dichotomy at the base of the term aligns different types of economies into a progressive, evolutionary system. In the nineteenth century “evolution” and “progress” are key words in the social consciousness, and one can imagine how they contribute to improving energies: i.e. a population working for “improvement” will inherently also continually maximize profit for the nation’s wealthy. The key is that all citizens must consider themselves working together for the common good. Shadd is critical of those whose contribution comes in the form of a sympathetic donation of practically valueless goods onto those they deem “less privileged,” because their contribution can be wasteful rather than maximized. She is particularly critical of charitable donations to the fugitives: “if it is really a benevolent act to send old almanacs, old novels, and all manner of obsolete books to them, what good purpose was accomplished, or even what sort of vanity was

gratified, by emptying useless contents of old libraries on destitute fugitives?” (67). Shadd exposes how seeming uni-directional donations actually operate within a system of exchange because the giver receives a sense of gratification (67). Even charity, Shadd advocates, needs to operate on the basis of supply and demand; “why not give,” she asks, “when gifts are needed, of that which is useful?” (67).

The tension between these two systems—call them “abundance” vs. “regulated exchange”—is a significant lesson Traill teaches through the discourse of natural history in this text. On the one hand Mrs. Frazer speaks of “God’s abundance” (193) and “God’s boundless store” (13) which would make sense to Mary’s world experience. Yet, in the “History of a Squirrel Family” story, which I understand to be an explicit allegory for the human economic condition because in it the animals talk, the moral is to work hard and save because abundance is dangerous and also temporary. Mary’s world is one of constant excess, which she becomes conscious of mid-way through the book when she thanks Mrs. Frazer for her several gifts and exclaims “I am too happy” (123). The use of “too” here denotes the possibility of having “too much,” and the excess noted here foreshadows the possibility that this “too much” comes because of someone else’s loss.

While Mrs. Frazer insists on the economics of labour and exchange, one that believes prosperity comes in exchange for hard work, she critiques the conditions upon which this so-called equitable exchange does not hold up, namely along the lines of gender and class. Mrs. Frazer is herself an example of this, having lost her status as farmer’s wife when her husband died. Her narrative then is conservationist in two senses: in its insistence upon relying on a more continuous circuit of exchange (rather than a gift-from-God scenario) and therefore one of self-control and self-sufficiency;

and in its exposure of the impossibility of this continuous circuit when the impetus to strive for profit finds some women adorned with diamonds and others demoted to servitude. Not only is the narrative of the squirrel family an allegory, but the narrative of the natural world is an allegory for how people are governed.

By accessing the language of natural history these marginalized women can be considered to have “reconstructed a new language—one rooted in place,” which Marlene Nourbese Philip argues is the most crucially necessary decolonizing action for Canadian women writers of colour (65). Shadd and Traill can be considered alongside nineteenth-century Canadian authors who Susie O’Brien argues are aware of “language as language” (O’Brien 31). As women, they represent the procreative and nurturing gender of humanity so commended and valuable to national regulation in nineteenth-century Canada. In a world increasingly engaged in promoting increased production among its citizens, these women critique the dominant discourses of economics in order to generate a place for their communities within the colonial-ordered nation-state.

If conservation is the management of living organisms, of populations and resources, then language is the definitive management practice that is accessible and available to everyone and therefore becomes a tool of governance, and especially self-governance. I refer to “self-governance” here to acknowledge, in some sense, how each of these texts advocates for subordinated groups to have some say over managing themselves—obviously in Shadd’s case it is Black people, in Holden’s case Native people, and in Traill’s case, it is servant-class women. But more than speak to the management of a group, each of these texts speaks to the individual. After all, each is aware of the colonial powers that will always “govern” (in one sense) the people

because these “colonial powers” have access to resources and a voice in the legislature. Therefore each text advocates for the individual’s ability to make personal decisions in the face of official rules and regulations.

Throughout Stories of the Canadian Forest, Mary, a child with little power, learns how to make decisions for herself that acknowledge and work with the constraints around her. When Mrs. Frazer returns worn out from the death bed of her brother, it is Mary who dismisses her from her day’s work and in so doing grows from a “kind little girl” to a “true lady” (117). At the end of the text when Mary’s family leaves to return to England and Mrs Frazer “is to go too, mamma says so” (288), Mrs. Frazer quits, though she is a poor woman with no other means of employment, in order to be nearer to her son. We are left with no doubt that Mrs. Frazer will leave a final impression on Mary. But as readers we are also left with an unsettling lasting impression of Mrs. Frazer. While Mrs. Frazer behaves, throughout the book, as a placid servant with very little context of her own (except for her absence to bury her brother), in the last few pages we find that Mrs. Frazer “had not always been a poor woman, but had once been a respectable farmer’s wife, though her husband’s death had reduced her to a state of servitude; and she had earned money enough by her own exertions to educate her son, and this was how she came to be Mary’s nurse” (239-40). Here Traill’s trick is to call readers on our belief in a common nurse’s knowledge of natural history.¹⁶ Through all of Mary’s persistent questions regarding the family organizations of forest creatures, from their names to the nature of their daily habits and strategies of survival, why were questions not asked of Mrs. Frazer? Traill makes the important leap here from the stratifications the natural historian can easily attach

¹⁶ Mrs. Frazer is Mary’s nurse only. Mary also has a governess who does the “official” teaching.

to the visible, living world of “nature” to the social registers of Canadian culture. This particular text of Traill’s, virtually forgotten in literary criticism, is so significant, in my mind, to those parsing out the particularities of natural-history making, because it suddenly recapitulates the division between “human” and “environment.” In so doing it speaks to Harvey’s call for “a better appreciation of such processes— of the social and political dialectics of space, place, and environment” (36).

The book closes with Mrs. Frazer being handed a government deed to land. Presumably Mrs. Frazer will now be able to use her expertise upon her own land rather than on the Governor’s children: “[i]t was with many blessings that Mrs. Frazer took leave of the family which had been so kind to her; and, above all, of her beloved charge, little Mary” (240). The deed is given so soon after the reader learns of Mrs. Frazer’s unjust condition, it is difficult to feel so abruptly joyful for her sudden emancipation. It is particularly difficult to let go of the meaning of those lessons Mrs. Frazer has taught in exchange for money and security throughout the text. While in one sense each segment is a lesson in a new Canadian animal or plant, it is also a lesson in understanding the systematization of the natural world. The most deliberately told example is the allegory of the squirrel children who— after one loses her life to greed and the belief in the possibility of unlimited abundance of resources— finally devote their lives to an equitable exchange of work and consumption. At the end of this tale Mrs. Frazer is very clear on its pedagogical purpose: “in all ages people have written little tales called fables, in which they make birds and beasts speak as if they were men and women, it being an easy method of conveying instruction” (100). The reader is made only too aware that the allegorical meaning applies to the entire book of stories and to human beings, not simply to animals. After all, Mary’s world is confined to

Government House and the garden. Her life lessons, including lessons in self-government, must come from Mrs. Frazer, the informant from the outside world who is capable of phrasing lessons into the useful teaching tool of the narrative.

Shadd's text also encourages the self-government of the individual. She critiques those who live under the management of "bad land agents" in the settlements (70) and insists fugitives buy land directly from the government and integrate with the white population. She also advocates work rather than "allowing agents to beg for us" (72), applauds the "[Black people's] capacity for self-government" and also celebrates what she calls "the constitution of English society, in which people are not obliged to think as others do. There is more independent thought and free expression than among Americans" (86). The most important reason for her advocacy of "free thought" is to encourage her audience not to jump to conclusions of racism, or to presume the possibility of racism and therefore to side with "exclusiveness" (64) that "tends to perpetuate ignorance" (62). Shadd is wary of fugitives bringing with them ideas of segregation which oppressed them in the United States. She is careful in her discussion of the situation, acknowledging that "the recollection of innumerable wrongs makes the desire for payment in like coin the necessity of some men's natures" (97), but she also warns of the systems of violence and hatred that can become internalized in the memory of a population and that can also deter feelings of entitlement to and capability of self-governance. This is her charge against the Canadian African Church in whose "bosom are nurtured the long-standing and rankling prejudices, and hatred against whites, without exception, that had their origin in American oppression, and that should have been left in the country in which they originated. 'Tis that species of animosity that is not bounded by geographical lines, nor suffers discrimination" (62).

Shadd's lessons in self-government could be read as conservative, especially considering the kind of racism that was committed against Black people upon their arrival in Canada (see Bolaria and Li). She is stern in her lesson of individual self-regulation but she makes "these remarks with no intention to shield white men from merited blame" (129).

Shadd never makes claims of total liberation; in fact she laments that Black people "may look in vain for prosperity" (97). Canada, as Walcott notes, is presented as one possible "choice" ("Who" 94) which Shadd favours because "there seems to be no safe alternative left but to be satisfied with that government now existing that is most reliable and most powerful" (94). Shadd's most important lesson in self-governance is convincing her audience of their capability to choose, in fact to make a wise and educated choice, between the options she presents.

This chapter has not dealt so much with Mary Rose Holden; however, Holden's text is another that must be read through its attention to the issue and power potential of self-governance. This will be taken up later in the paper, as self-governance becomes a sub-theme within conservation awareness and/or the overall attention to the codification of labour and resources within "the system of identities and differences."

Leaving this chapter on the topic of self-governance emphasizes another kind of conversion. When Shadd and Traill use language to expose the potential reductiveness of language, they resist the discursive conversion of humans into systems of standardization, which define and reduce humans into stratifications of labourers with various limitations on purchasing power. What the examples from Shadd and Traill offer is the description of a society where both conversion and creation economies

exist, and, in fact, could be said to thrive off of each other. Whether either economy is determined “primitive” or “conspicuous” or “mature,” it seems that, in the resource-based capitalist economic system of nineteenth-century Canada, both conversion and creation economies were present, but each was valued in different ways by different people. The attention paid to this economic dialectic by intermediate figures such as Shadd and Traill questions the impetus to label such economies “primitive,” “conspicuous” and “mature.” This awareness of coexisting economies allows the authors a certain leverage as they negotiate around discourses of economics and populations management that rely on the binaries of conservation/expansion, and/or “primitive” vs. “mature” economies. It seems that, as part of this larger discussion, Shadd and Traill ask: Who does the work of accounting within discourses of exchange? What is their personal investment, and what values do they privilege? The various articulations of the problem of production, including the various human investments evident (or hidden) in this dialogue (or, rather, what becomes a dialogue when the intermediate figures are recognized as part of the discussion) are the subject at hand for both Shadd and Traill. It is this attending to the conversion side of discourse where they locate potential for resistance and/or participation.

Conversion, as it is applied to systems of representation, especially the discipline of natural history, is also utilized to put restrictions on categories, to standardize signification and encourage interpretive practices that serve the capitalist economy’s preoccupation with accumulation, exploitation of resources, asymmetrical distribution of profit, and waste. In other words, conversion is exposed as a form of discourse that does not actually function to initiate measures that might restore and/or sustain any population. Conversion, as one manifestation of the discourse of

conservation, might be antithetical to expansionist narratives, but neither resists colonial conquest; rather, they are deployed as oppositional discourses that serve a common goal: to condition a colonial constituency. It is Shadd's and Trail's attention to the conversion economy in addition to creation economy—an attention that takes into consideration the problem of production—that makes their texts sophisticated and, I think, powerfully subversive of the colonial campaign.

Demarcated Spaces

It appears wise to examine, in particular the metaphors and images used by Europeans to characterize, identify and organize their perceptions of nature at the expanding colonial periphery. When we do this, two symbolic (or even totemic) forms seem to have proved central to the task of giving a meaning and an epistemology to the natural world and to western interactions with it. These were the physical or textual garden and the island.

(Grove 13)

In chapter one I looked at how both Shadd and Traill immediately outline the boundaries of their topic territories. Also I proposed that Mary Ann Shadd does the important work of acknowledging the demarcated spaces that exist within Canada which are the cause for the scarcity of, for example, wood fuel, in one area, while there might be a surplus of forests and a scarcity of loggers and lumber mills in another. If we entertain the metaphorical possibilities of what can count as a demarcated space, or an act of defining a certain enclosed, sustained locale, several marked spaces soon become apparent in these texts. The invention of these spaces signals the quintessential

conservationist agenda—to establish the area in which production is to be self-sustained. Obviously the “conservation area” is the prime example of such an activity, and its close cousin the “national park” demonstrates how such demarcated areas become very important symbols for national identity. Much of the conversion activity going on in the previous chapter worked from a kind of marked territory as well. Government House, for example, provides Mary with a limited and extremely enclosed space, yet one with an almost unlimited capacity for stories and knowledge regarding the natural history of Canada. Further, systems of language are the medium of “identities and differences,” and so enunciative moment is always an act of demarcating; certain differentiations within the house occur and are marked by differences in the use of language. In the very private space of Mary’s nursery, stories have a predictable safety about them, but in the larger house visitors can be “naughty” in their choice of rhetoric. We can also think of the printed page as one limited spatial area. This demarcated page, when extended to the book, becomes for Foucault, linking discourse with the garden, “the herbarium of living structures” (Order 135). The deed that Mrs Frazer receives is an official document that (with its own spatial and discursive limitations) demarcates the physical tract of land she is to inhabit.

What takes place in the garden, the “herbarium/book,” the conservation area and the national park? Education is certainly a primary activity; the three texts discussed in this paper are more explicitly pedagogical than others. Experimentation also occurs, and it is important to keep in mind that the most crucial aspect of the experiment are the controls placed on all but one variable factor. Another example of demarcated spaces occurred earlier in this paper when discussing the history of 1850s Ontario and how the motions of Confederation relied upon establishing the necessary

economic boundaries, trade tariffs and border management. Through its practices of experimentation, regulation, and education, the demarcated space celebrates the power of the nation and ensures its good will to protect, nurture, and take care of its populations.

Shadd's text builds on this connection between national security (here meaning security for citizens) and specific geographic locales. For Shadd "[Great Britain's] dependencies form a secure home for the American slave, and the disgraced free man" (94). Since Shadd has already problematized the term "free," one wonders here why she problematizes the word "secure" by the use of italics that both on the page and in the reader's mind destabilizes a word that, in fact, means (often financial) stability. Before the nation was even fully formed the narrative of national security was recognized and accessed by the people, and the demand for the nation's responsibility was being articulated—and insisted upon—by one of its new immigrant communities.

Shadd knew the tricks of nationalist rhetoric: that it offers protection in exchange for production, and she used it for the benefit of the refugees. The text ends, after Shadd has briefly evaluated Mexico, Africa, The British West Indies, and South America as possible zones for emigration, with a somewhat utopian settlement scheme for "Vancouver's Island." In an interesting erasure of England, Ireland, Manhattan, and Montreal, Shadd claims that Vancouver Island will "be the first island in importance on the globe" (98). Shadd needs to put her readers into a "global" consciousness here because, as she predicts, the island will not make a major agricultural contribution, but, rather, will be the locus for trade from Asia to the West (98). Then, in what can be read as an amusing critique of Orientalist discourse Shadd continues: "the western continent, and particularly the northern part, say 'wise men of

the east,' must eventually leave the eastern far in the distance (a fact that should not be lost sight of by coloured men), and that over the Pacific will the trade with eastern nations be prosecuted" (98). Because, as she explains, the island at the time has a population of only twenty thousand, she proposes a major settlement of fugitives to manage this potential trade. Shadd is remarkably visionary because she side-steps the usual "come to Canada to get your own scrap of land" propaganda directed at European immigrants who can be naively persuaded to try the farming life, and suggests a life of merchandizing and multi-national business for the incoming fugitives. The plan has benefits for England as well because "the purely American sympathy for kith and kin only, would experience unmistakable obstacles to its free exercise, in the event of a contemplated annexation of that delightful Western country" (99). According to Shadd, the Black people will act as agents of national security because the United States will not be interested in a land populated by "slaves" or "ethnic Others." Shadd turns the tenuous term "security" around and around, where fugitives can both gain from it, and also actually enact it while becoming "merchant princes of the world" (99).

Within this vision of Vancouver Island, its physicality promoting a safe space for fugitives and a potential for prosperity that does not include slaving to the land for agricultural investment, Shadd makes use of certain tenets characteristic of nationalist ideology (and associated with national parks): education, experimentation, and most of all, regulation. But the most significant information communicated by her account of the island is the vision that the former fugitive population will now be "merchant princes of the world." Rather than encourage investment in the erratic economy based on agriculture, Shadd's fugitives become the merchant class. The ground barely

touched upon by Traill's text (that in so many ways concentrates on class consciousness) is now peopled. Shadd not only identifies the emergence of the middle class within Canada, she shrewdly acknowledges the power potential of a middle-class existence within a capitalist import/export economy. The concept of "merchant prince" is no longer an oxymoron; in a capitalist economy any individual, supposedly, can not only accumulate enough money to be of the aristocracy, but also to dictate much of social welfare through his or her influence over the conditions of trade and the economy. The emerging middle-class business executive proves that land is no longer a signifier of wealth or power as it is in the aristocracy. Yet, as Shadd knows only too well, land to occupy, land which is attached to a nation, land that produces the raw materials, is still such a necessary component to this new middle-class existence. In some ways she seems content to simply leave that agricultural sector to Ontario and the newly explored Prairies. This rather complicated shift from aristocratic-agricultural state control to a labour-production-profit state control that occurs with extended trade and the colonial era in general, and in particular in Canada in the period marked by Shadd here, is also that which gives rise to conservation ideology. The discourse of conservation attempts to both articulate and mask the shifting character of land-value in colonial economies.

Shadd does seem to suggest that this new population would experience a certain freedom from simply being so distant from the Ontario-based federal government—all the more necessary to acquire the sense and ability for self-governance. The "merchant prince," if read through Foucault's essay "Governmentality," marks a shift in the systems of governmental control that take place with the emergence of the middle class. While at one time it was the duty of the prince to demonstrate appropriate

behaviour for his subjects, and in turn it was the duty of each subject to demonstrate appropriate behaviour to the prince, the middle-class emerges as a population demonstrating appropriate behaviour for each other, what Foucault refers to as “the art of government” (“Governmentality” 87). Each middle-class individual acts in some sense as the Prince demonstrating his or her behaviour to the rest of the population. In such a situation it is difficult for the outsider-looking-in to identify the locus of power. There is no longer a “master” figure as found in a kingdom or a plantation—both of which are very directly land-based economic scenarios that perhaps only too closely resemble farming settler communities in Ontario. Shadd, then, makes keen use of this ambiguous referent of power.

It is possible to read the conflation of “merchant” and “prince” as somewhat similar to the reconciliation of “sustainable” and “development” within discourses of conservation. Both describe an operation of governmentality, and both mark the point at which the governing body’s dependence on the productivity of land is masked by the invention of a new managerial system that distances the population from the land. Foucault exposes what the discourse of conservation often hides, the fact that “what government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of complex composed of men and things. [. . .] [M]en in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc.” (“Governmentality” 93). Shadd, whose text offers a lesson in resource economics that recognizes this “imbrication of men and things,” begins by the very necessary action of demarcating one particular piece of land. Vancouver’s Island is necessary to make the insistent argument for the right and ability and desire of the fugitive population to join

the middle-class.

Mary Rose Holden's history also offers a very specific lesson in self-governance that can be explored in terms of the demarcated space. Holden's text is an account of the history of Burlington Bay Beach and Heights, which in itself is a form demarcating the boundaries of her subject and at the same time calling attention to the act of making boundaries. Burlington Bay Beach, situated on Lake Ontario, marks the border between Canada and the United States, and this physical marker is what characterizes Holden's history, much of which describes battles in the War of 1812.

What I want to focus on most, however, in terms of demarcated spaces, is the shape of Holden's text. It opens with a couple of narratives of events occurring in the area before European contact. This description goes on for a few pages detailing the structure of Six Nations government for the benefit, no doubt, of a predominantly white audience. The larger middle section offers very little information about any Native populations, instead focussing on events in European-dominated communities in the Burlington Bay area through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is the concluding section of the paper where Holden takes a sudden philosophical turn that is difficult to decipher but deliberate in its reference to the "preface" and the Six Nations as "rightful owners of the land":

The life preface to our National epic poems is unique on the page of history. The heroes of classic days were conquestors whose lives seem recorded in the life blood of other nations. Ambition at the head of invincible hosts invaded a country foreign or neighbouring, subduing or exterminating the rightful owners of the land, winning rule and supremacy by means of war and all its terrible consequences to both conqueror and conquered. (21)

Here, Holden makes clear that the record of “civilization” in “new” world nation-states is also a record of barbarism. The paper, which offered little analysis of the history it tells up to this point, suddenly forces readers to question what constitutes “heroism,” what counts as “National epic,” and who considers what days “classic.” Here, at the end of her narrative, she explicitly acknowledges that she provides a “preface” that is “unique” to common histories of Upper Canada. By referring to “the page of history” she makes clear to her readers the representational aspect of the medium in which history is communicated. Here she signals to readers the uses of the page/the text, as at once a potential access point of power and a site of containment. In 1897, Holden stresses for her Niagara Historical Society audience a necessary suspicion towards the constructedness of history. Holden’s territory and comment on the processes of demarcating this territory is the process of history-telling.

The structure of Holden’s text, then, encloses the European population in an effective demonstration of discursive containment: the history of Europeans in “Upper Canada” is surrounded by reminders of Six Nations’ “ownership” of the land. The text differs from Shadd’s, which for very specific reasons populates the enclosed space, Vancouver’s Island, with fugitives. If Holden’s textual enclosure is motivated by the same containing initiatives that gave rise to the invention of national parks, then the subject of study, the subject to be regulated and experimented upon, is both the European population and European history. It is the Native population, here the authority, which occupies the border and also performs the monitoring of the European presence. After all, in a natural reserve the site of real interest and energy and activity is the border, where the human population takes up arms to survey and protect the supposed stillness and sanctity inside. The border population, through

defining and regulating itself, also creates the interior. There are apparent parallels between the natural preserve and the First Nations reserve: both are exercises of colonial control over populations in the name of conservation. Through the narrative structure of Burlington Bay, Holden places the Europeans in a reserve context.

Holden's discursively rendered European presence is fractured into short, under-developed paragraphs. The Europeans also appear in constant and somewhat disorganized battling factions. They are a population which does not appear to have the discipline nor a sense of governmental reasoning to resolve conflict with any method other than war. Holden, however, describes the Six Nations' comparatively very sophisticated system of government that secures peace by way of a "Neutral Confederacy" governed by a woman. Juxtaposed against their Six Nations framing population, the Europeans appear barbarous.

Holden also does not provide any history of the Europeans before their warring presence within North America. Rather, this group appears haphazard and uncultured when compared to the Six Nations population, whom we are encouraged to know through the narrative of the creation of the Pipe of Peace "which they were to smoke together as a pledge to live in unity and peace as brethren of one family" (4). Holden goes on to describe how the cities with the European names "Detroit" and "Buffalo" were "military strongholds and residences of the warriors of the Neutral Confederacy" (4). In other words, the history that is recognizable as "European," especially to a European audience, is pre-populated by the Six Nations people, the "rightful owners of the land" (21). The framing devices used by Holden make a textual demarcated space that at once supplants European entitlement to, and foundational history within, Burlington Bay Beach. Holden operates against initiatives of what

Timothy Luke terms “nationalizing more land for state managerialists to supervise” by re-appropriating land demarcations and interior populations (Luke 2). What Luke exposes in his discussions of the invention of the national park is the conquest-oriented desire for control over lands under the guise of creating environmentally friendly “public lands.” Holden reverses the (p)reserve tool of containment most commonly understood to be exercised by European authority for the supposed parental betterment of the less capable endangered species.

Holden, Shadd, and Traill call attention to the acts of demarcating spaces that, under a protocol of protection, reinforce the distinction of authorities that allows for the configuration of “protectors” and “protected.” Linking the physically marked boundaries of the natural world with the various social boundaries experienced by these authors and/or their communities helps to locate the experience of humans in nineteenth-century Canada as they are expressed in terms of their productive “environments.” How people come to understand themselves as participating populations of a nation that is marked out onto a geographical demarcated landscape is complicated through this very practice of articulating identity in terms of the demarcations of the “living world.” It is not just the configuration of the spaces themselves that is interesting, but the vision of how “freely” and actively these bodies live within these spaces, and what various spaces become useful to specific boundary-makers. These three authors trouble, through their appropriation of the demarcated space, the predominant, yet curious investment in a system of governance where people are divided such that one group can actively confine another, yet at the same time expect the subjugated group to consequently behave within that allocated space.

Nostalgia

The life preface to our National epic poems is unique on the page of history. The heroes of classic days were conquerors whose lives seem recorded in the life blood of other nations. Ambition at the head of invincible hosts invaded a country foreign or neighbouring, subduing or exterminating the rightful owners of the land, winning rule and supremacy by means of war and all its terrible consequences to both conqueror and conquered.

(Holden 21)

I want to revisit this passage by focussing on Holden's use of the term "life" and her attention to the managerial representation of living organisms. Holden echoes both Shadd and Traill in the sense that her use of the term "life" calls attention to the representation of the living world and the nature of economic systems that are too often willing to misinterpret the value of land resources. As a "life preface" the introductory pages of Holden's text do insist upon the "fertility" of the Burlington Bay Beach area during the period of the Neutral Confederacy where "[g]ame abounded and fruits of every description flourished in open air" (4-5). But the "preface" Holden

refers to is ambiguously something other than just the initial section of her history. Holden's "preface" is the abundant land-resource that prefaces the industrialized colonial world, and is also forever residual within the industrialized world. Holden uses the textual terminology of "preface" to engage readers by evoking the romantic European ideal of foundationalism while at the same time critiquing the fictiveness of that ideal. The land of abundance, for Holden, is clearly a metaphor for, if not the Biblical Garden of Eden narrative, then a genesis narrative that shares several similarities with Eden. Here the "genesis" in the Eden/genesis narrative is the articulation of the Euro-Christian understanding of the transition from abundance to a scarcity-based economy.

Holden's narrative revives several moments of the Eden narrative. Her land of abundance and fertility falls when the ruling "Mother of Nations" violates the rights of office when she orders two Seneca warriors to be killed because they have killed her lover. The way in which Holden describes this and following events makes clear to readers how, similar to Eve's in the Christian story, the decision of one woman now dictates society's general opinion of all women: "the cries and wailing of women filled the land, and now the glory and prominence given to the women of old Canada would be lost forever. Woman would henceforth be degraded, and in her humiliation walk with humbleness of spirit and downcast eyes" (5). Shame is the undesirable consequence learned here, as it is, of course, in the Garden of Eden. But the shame in the Garden of Eden narrative comes with the sudden scarcity of resources; this scarcity is the ultimate, lasting, material aspect of the consequence. The Garden of Eden narrative can be considered a conservation narrative because it warns against accumulation—of knowledge, sexual awareness, and power. In nineteenth-century

Canada the temptation for “growth” paradoxically involved an increase in population and manufacturing that overextended the land’s offerings. In other words, the subject addressed by the Eden narrative, as Holden explains, is simultaneously social, ecological and economic: “[i]n circumstances like these, the great heroes are the generals and soldiers of both victors and vanquished. In Upper Canada the hero roll tells the immortal tale of new life, not that of destruction and death, and the genesis of a nature springing into existence at the sound of the axe which first broke the silence of primeval forests” (21). What does this hero’s “tale” look like? In one sense Holden’s history can be considered a parody of it. She terms it a “genesis” story, one that begins with abundance and, after some sort of conquest, finds itself embedded within the contradictions of capitalist economy. The “genesis” is situated in a complicated loop as the “immortal tale” told by the “hero” of Upper Canada. The hero here is set aside from a battle and becomes one who tells a “tale”—a specific genesis tale of “a nature springing into existence at the sound of the axe which first broke the silence of primeval forests.” In order to acquire “hero” status one must invent, and tell convincingly, the story that acknowledges, but at the same time overcomes in its persuasive telling, the contradiction between a nature that is always-already producing, and one where this production is dependent upon human management and harvesting practices. This hero is the leader who celebrates the new economy, the economy, as described by Foucault, that begins with scarcity.

Most important to note here is how the “immortal tale” appeals to the nostalgic. The narrative is one of cause and effect; from this time of scarcity, we look back to a time of abundance, and subsequently analyze where humanity went wrong. Parita Mukta and David Hardiman note how colonialist-flavoured, nostalgic narrative

construction

takes the form of a glorification of a peasant lifestyle which has been threatened and undermined by the advances of capitalism. For others, Arcadia is located in the distant past. Often, it is believed that evidence relating to this way of life can be traced in a remnant form among contemporary “tribal” peoples [. . .]. For others, it existed at a time when the “female principle” was valued [. . .]. In yet other constructions, such a way of life was seen to have flourished [. . .] in the “Orient” or “East.” (Mukta and Hardiman 113)

However executed, the nostalgic narrative is primarily used in the grand narrative of capitalist “progress” which inherently involves the question of ecological management. In doing so it locates and maintains outsider groups such as “females” and “tribal peoples.” What Mukta and Hardiman also note is that the nostalgic narrative involves foundationalist thinking, which just at face value is troubled by the fact that this nostalgic conservation narrative, this “before all was well/now the environment is ruined” has repeated and repeated itself so often. Consider its overlapping occurrences within the history of British resource management where we can locate one point in the early nineteenth century when an East India Company scientist comes to the realization that the Indian forests of plenty are in fact not plentiful enough, while at the same time another British governmental official pontificates on the abundance of Canadian forests. Meanwhile Britain itself has been almost completely deforested for centuries. Given such a history, how the conservation narrative that appeals to days of old maintains any sense of integrity and any public attention is surprising.

The typical narrative shape of the conservation documents written in Canada in the nineteenth century draws heavily on the nostalgic (and likely is not much different

than conservation documents written in the twentieth century and, no doubt, elsewhere throughout European history). Conservation awareness continues to take the shape of Mrs. Frazer's observation of the beaver: things are "not as plentiful as they used to be." What's missing from such explicit acknowledgements, but, I argue, is present somewhere in each of the three texts discussed here, is the recognition that it is not the beaver (or trees or birds or people) who have disappeared of their own accord, nor is their disappearance the doing of a God-like supernatural figure; instead the noted scarcity is the direct result of changes in the ecosystem as a whole. The contemporary environmentalists who often argue on the basis of the human vs. environment boundary, a "look what we are doing to the land!!!" tactic—rather than something that sounds like "our movements within the eco-system are causing a decline in its ability to provide the resources to sustain our being"—inherit their deductive reasoning from their nineteenth-century counterparts.

The discourse of conservation throughout history is guilty of oversimplifying ecology and of upholding the binaries that enable environmental destruction. I have already begun to discuss the conservation reports by Saunders and Phipps, and in particular their iterations of God's abundance, which becomes a reminder of not just any nostalgic narrative but a nostalgic appeal to the Garden of Eden. When Saunders crafts his remembrance-of-things-past tropes of abundance, the pinnacle is his Iberian peninsula which "resembled a vast garden, yielding grain and fruit in the greatest abundance" (36). Here, he explicitly reminds readers of the Garden of Eden metaphor, the Original lesson in ecological economics. Saunders then continues in this document with the following passage that focuses on the Eastern deforestation discussed by Grove, but by including it I want to note the coercive, almost poetic presence of

language that is absent from the documents Grove cites and from his own analysis:

When the Jews first settled in Palestine it was a proverbially fertile country, a land flowing with milk and honey, and favoured with a pleasant climate. Then the mountain ranges of the country were densely covered with forests, in which the stately cedar of Lebanon held a prominent place. The gradually increasing population of Palestine enjoyed comfort and abundance during many centuries, but a gradual devastation of the forests, which was finally completed by their enemies, produced a wonderful change. (36)

Saunders' description of the "wonderful change" catalogues the ecological ruin of the Holy Land where the "hills of Galilee, once rich in pasturing grounds for large herd of cattle, are now sterile" (36). How could a good Christian audience not be moved by the suggestion of infertility in the birthplace of Jesus?

The poetic style of writing Saunders uses here, including the heavy-handed resorting to the "land of milk and honey," is quite remarkable. Saunders' report is written for the government, an audience that is likely more easily convinced by fancy rhetoric than by numerical data. This is Phipps' reasoning as well: nostalgia sets the tone for his grand introductory remarks on the vastness of the forest land. Imagine government officials with the emotional and spiritual resolve to engage with such rhetoric, those who might actually take action with a fictional, romanticized vision as their sole reason. Theirs is the same imagination, likely, that found itself capable of harvesting forests without considering future material implications.

Or can another possible reading be that the nostalgic tone of Saunders' report, especially, offers just enough literary gloss to distract governments from discussing the numbers and constraints that were endangering the forests and future profit from the

forests? How seriously did nostalgia function as another “mask” for the capitalist roots of conservation?

Both Phipps’ and Saunders’ use of nostalgia employs what Homi Bhabha terms the “causal logic” that, in this case appears to question governing strategies, but in fact functions to reinforce the sanctity of the British empire (141). Each assumes British (reading the newly formed united Canadas government as very much a satellite to the British) government’s ultimate control over land-resources through their “representation of nation as a temporal process” (Bhabha 142). In other words, Phipps and Saunders write Canada into the already-rehearsed narrative of British occupation, taking in stride the penetrative control people specifically of British origin have over Canada’s natural world. These documents, addressing a current Canada and an enduring past of British imperial history, express a “double-time” that will become characteristic of the conservation narrative (Bhabha 144; see also Anderson 192). Here, the conservation narrative is one such articulation of colonial nationalism where the “new” communities “imagine themselves as communities parallel and comparable to those in Europe” and in doing so “safeguard their continuing parallelism” (Anderson 192, 191).

The appeal to nostalgia (or an “imagined nostalgia,” for lack of a better word, since the writers and their audiences have not likely actually experienced this past) so common in discourses of conservation is dangerous because it does not responsibly acknowledge that the era appealed to seems so distant in the past, and primarily fictional, that it becomes entirely unattainable. For example, the belief in the existence of an Eden-like land generates an explorative energy—one that, as Richard Grove discusses, often has conquest consequences (Grove 3-5). Holden signals her awareness

of the appeal to nostalgia not only through rehearsing an Eden narrative but in her comment on the textuality of history; her preface illustrates how “history is deployed to establish what is possible for humanity, or appealed to as a proof that a way of life which once existed before can— if we so will it— be realized again” (Mukta and Hardiman 113).

Contrary to such nostalgic tendencies, Holden collapses any hope of the return of Six Nations government. This hopelessness is not, however, because of any single woman’s actions, but rather because of the conquest of the various European colonizers. There is no redemption for the destructive ecological practices— those involving the land and the people— conducted by the European rulers. The importance of Holden’s text with regards to the operations of certain conservationist discourses is that it does not allow for an easy alignment with nostalgic Orientalist then/now, us/them, savage/civilized binaries. After all, in Holden’s account the Six Nations pre-contact history is not innocent. Upper Canada was no Eden when the Europeans arrived, though in their ignorance of land-use strategies by existing populations within “Canada,” Phipps and Saunders and the emigration propaganda published in Britain described it as such.

Holden’s text is written significantly later than the two others discussed here, and therefore does not coincide with the same particular moment of scarcity within Ontario and the resulting constraints experienced by different populations. The reason that I include it in this project is that Holden, to a large extent, is doing the same kind of work at tackling the uses of history in ecological as well as social debates. Her attention to the versatility of language and the written page casts suspicion on history and the teller of history. Nostalgia, after all, has been evoked to maintain “outsider”

and “insider” relationships. For example, the uses of nostalgia, Walcott suggests, place the location of a home for a particular population in the hands of Holden’s “heroic” teller of history (“A Tough” 38-39). Walcott’s warning that this nostalgia is “too easy” resonates with Mary Ann Shadd’s warning in the very first passage discussed in this essay: “‘Let us seize upon Africa, or some other, unappropriated territory while we may,’ say others, ‘and establish our own governments.’ But Africa has already been seized upon; the English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turks, have long since shared her out among themselves” (Shadd 94). Africa is no “homeland” and to believe in the nostalgia upon which this ridiculous suggestion depends is to resort to resistant naivete. Nostalgia depends upon the memory of another place in another time, and the stubborn belief that this other place is locked in that time.

Holden’s text is suspicious of history and of appeals to nostalgia, but at the same time it contends that it is crucial to consider history. While Holden advises that we be critical of each history’s origins and the biases behind its construction, it is necessary to historicize every geographic region. Rather, as Mukta and Hardiman would have it, it is necessary to analyze the “deployment of history” upon the landscape.

When we begin to ask the question of what place nostalgia has in eliciting Edenic reverberations for stories of environmental preservation, what ends up being considered, of course, is the believability of nostalgia. Nostalgia works on a social psyche susceptible to narrative tropes of home, of history, of origin, of plenty.

Conclusion

The argument presented here engages partially with current theoretical debates regarding “place.” The systems of representation addressed and explored here—the reconceptualization of life and labour into exchange economics initiated by capitalism—articulate current discussions of place. Holden’s, Traill’s and Shadd’s texts all focus on an elaboration of “placeness” with references to places otherwise known as Burlington Bay Beach, Upper Canada, and Canada West. What they disavow in constructions and articulations of each particular place is a romanticizing of place involving mythic or religious or social or economic senses of entitlement, and the concomitant valorization of immanent geographical meaning. Arun Mukerjee comments on the erasures of people of colour within the predominant (white) Canadian conceptualization of place that is Canada: “whether they be by Northrop Frye or Margaret Atwood or by those in Ottawa, [these] suggest that we have one national outlook and one cultural theme” and “they assume that colour does not really matter” (69). Recovering texts such as Shadd’s and Holden’s is obviously important in correcting these racist visions of historic Canada. Each of their texts offers a particularized history of communities of colour residing for generations in specific “Canadian” locales.

“Place” can be considered a point of entry into social-ecology inquiry; it is a territory where the social and the ecological intersect within postcolonial and globalization concerns. Nigel Thrift, who could be considered a pioneering social-geographer, argued as early as 1983 that fiction is an ideal site upon which to conduct a materialist analysis of the human/environment dichotomy and the creation of “culture” where “[t]he literary meaning of the experience of place and the literary experience of that meaning of place are both part of an active process of cultural creation and destruction [. . .]. They are all moments in a historically cumulative spiral of signification” (12). More recently David Harvey offered the following materialist-based analysis of the “placeness” of social-ecology, where place is

constituted as fixed capital embedded in the land and configurations of organized social relations, institutions, etc. on the land. New territorial divisions of labour and concentrations of people and labour power, new resource extraction activities and markets form. The geographical landscape which results is not evenly developed but strongly differentiated. “Difference” and “otherness” are produced in space through the simple logic of uneven capital investment, a proliferating geographical division of labour, an increasing segmentation of reproductive activities and the rise of spatially ordered (often segregated) social distinctions [. . .]. (295)

Harvey’s and Thrift’s work is to enunciate the intersection between capitalist economies and the ordering of peoples. But in a distinct shift away from their analysis, what I hope to have added into the discussion is the question of who has the ability to argue within the discourses of environmental regulation. What are possible readings for the configurations of the environment in the West that depend so highly upon the

perpetuation of the colonial enterprise?

I want to open out this paper with a gesture to theorists who take up “place” to describe experiences with, and strategies of, identity, self-determination, sovereignty, and self-governance. Shadd, Holden, and Traill, and others who have somehow had to come to terms with the rule of “Canada’s” various governments have struggled with the above, and have often done so in terms of place. It seems that re-articulating and re-politicizing “place” and/or the position of the “environment” leads to questions of self-governance, particularly the questioning of self-governance. Within Canadian history in particular, though it is the same in every conquered region, “place,” “land,” and “governance” are inseparable. Patricia Monture-Angus discusses the importance of acknowledging the different perspectives on the issue of self-governance, particularly when considering various meanings and uses of the word in a Native context within Canada. Monture-Angus stresses the necessity of understanding what the terms have come to signify: “from this history [. . .] the Aboriginal sense of relationship with land and territory arises. My sense of self-determination (or sovereignty) arises from understanding these relationships” (35). When articulating distinctions between self-determination, self-governance, and sovereignty, what I think is most significant is the way in which she, and the people she cites, do question the activity and the employment of self-governance, and how “self-governance,” and her preferred term “sovereignty,” come to mean in Native and European governing concepts. Marlene Nourbese Philip writes with a similar kind of questioning, where place is the focus: “[a] certain location in time and space where historical, social, cultural and geographical forces coalesce and/or collide to produce the individual is how I define place. Land—possession, ownership, rejection, abandonment or merely recognition

and acknowledgement of it— plays a significant part in the configuration of these forces” (Philip 57). I am interested in evoking the same sort of perspective that Philip does here, where “land” comes into focus as a subject, as significant subject matter, and as it does so its signification and “recognition,” according to Philip, are called into question. If what Harvey terms the “logic” of capitalism leaves out certain “human” factors in the interpretation of value, and this same “logic” is what reduces and/or characterizes the “living” aspect of living bodies to suit the industrial machine, how do we re-order our thinking in ways that resist standardized signification? How do we recognize people and the environment as they capsize the colonial/capital campaign rather than simply as they fuel the campaign?

I do not want to offer an analysis of these nineteenth-century “conservation” texts in such a way as to presume a “this-is-where-it-all-began” narration. I hope, however, to present a logic that operates under circumstances that are both similar to and different from those that enunciate the debates surrounding environmental and population management today.

This project grew out of my interest with the form and content of nineteenth-century periodicals, especially Mary Ann Shadd’s The Provincial Freeman and Henry Bibb’s The Voice of the Fugitive. These newspapers, written primarily for a former slave readership, have a particular discursive investment in articulating and assessing a “free state” and the configuration of the “free individual.” As an archive of a specifically mid-nineteenth-century Ontario record and often critical debate regarding the African-Canadian presence in Canada, they provide the kind of evidence which George Elliot Clarke argues needs to be more thoroughly uncovered in the pursuit of a “modal blackness” (“Contesting” 43).

When reading the newspapers, however, from the perspective of an urban Ontarian at the beginning of the 21st century, I found organization of the articles made very little sense to me. The logic that put the various fragments together seemed entirely haphazard to me. Yet in these very pages writers argued for the importance of voice, of being published, and the technical-management aspects of editing. Mary Ann Shadd, herself, operated the Provincial Freeman under a male pseudonym, and had to retire soon after she decided to “come out” as female. Yet before she did so, she urged women to pursue their right to become editors, and in doing so she noted the importance of compiling, arranging and circulating information that goes along with the importance of the act of writing itself.

After I spent some time reading nineteenth-century periodicals, my academically fashioned reading practices recognized a recurrence of just three major subject areas covered in these newspapers— politics, agriculture, and family issues. This three-part focus creates for both contemporary readers searching through archives and the nineteenth-century intended audience, the significant popular concerns of the region in this period. But how do I, an early 21st-century reader, come to recognize these categories as the categories “politics,” “agriculture,” and “family”?

For a time they seemed quite distinct from one another; looking back, however, I can see that the newspapers, like the three primary texts discussed in this paper along with the official conservation documents, seemed focussed on the predominant trope of “life” in an “emergent” (and what was, in some cases, insisted to be a “virgin”) land and a “nascent state.” While early in my readings I found each article easy to classify, it was my own living reading practices that projected an order onto writing that described life, the state of life, the maintenance of life, the potential

of life, and the value of life. These papers, arranged within a context that is simultaneously similar to and different from my own, have a discursive logic to them that is likewise similar to and different from my own. It is in the variances here that I see potential for allowing the necessary conversions in the way “life” is characterized and ordered today. This is the situation and analytical strategy Foucault demonstrates in The Order of Things, particularly when he isolates “Life, Labour, Language” as the “quasitranscendentals” describing what was once “natural history, analysis of wealth, and general grammar,” and have since emerged as “philology, biology, and political economy” (Order 250, 252). By his own nominalist history, Foucault substitutes the sets of three signifiers in order to illustrate the epistemological relatedness between these latter three objective disciplines. He also questions the relatedness, or apparent distinctness, between the three terms within the set. “Life, Labour, Language” reads not only as a title, but as a progression of concepts, modes of articulation, and systems of ordering.

The attention to the construction of discourse in relation to land and resources leads to the following questions. Who benefits from conservation? What type of texts do we look to when we read for conservation awareness and, especially, conservation awareness in different historical periods? When do we consider “land” or “nature” topical in social debates and academic departments? When do we expect “scientific knowledge” and when do we actually recognize its occurrence and its assumed authority? Who has the authority to address this “environment”?

Foucault’s discussion in his “Life, Labour, Language” chapter is relevant here not just as a lesson in discourse analysis; but as a lesson on the history of the articulation of “life.” Mary Ann Shadd, Catharine Parr Trill, and Mary Rose Holden

present similar questioning strategies in their texts in the way that they take up and use, but repeatedly and self-consciously re-configure conservation motifs and classificatory language. They provide a significant comparative example of how the discourses of conservation can be considered a locus for linguistic structures that work to cultivate access, even for disenfranchised individuals, to self-determination, political participation, and governance over land use.

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