

GOTHIC NEGOTIATIONS OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NEW ZEALAND FARM IN SETTLER LITERATURE

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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT	3
INTRODUCTION	4
1. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS	10
NEW ZEALAND'S ARCADIAN MYTH	10
PASTORAL	14
CO-CONSTITUTION	15
WILDERNESS	17
ECOPHOBIA AND THE ECOGOTHIC	20
2. ESTABLISHING THE BOUNDARIES: <i>THE HEART OF THE BUSH</i>	24
ROMANCE AND REMONSTRATION - THE DESIRE FOR HYBRIDITY AND AUTONOMY	25
THE BOWER'S BORDERS	27
BEYOND THE BOWER	29
ARCADIA ON THE FARM	30
DISHARMONY AND RESTRICTION	31
DEATH AND VIOLENCE ON THE FARM	32
RESOLUTION IN THE COLLAPSE OF BOUNDARIES	33
CONCLUSION	35
3. INSTABILITY	37
UNSTABLE TIME: "ON AWE"	37
UNSTABLE SPACE AND SELF: "THE DWELLINGS OF OUR DEAD"	40
CORRUPTIVE INSTABILITY: <i>THE TOLL OF THE BUSH</i>	43
CONCLUSION	51
4. EXPANSION	52
THE EMBODIED BUSH: "THE PASSING OF THE FOREST"	53
HAUNTING AND EMPATHY: "THE LAST OF THE FOREST"	57
ARCADIA FROM THE ASHES: "BURNT BUSH"	61
THE SETTLER "RE-CREATOR": "A BUSH SECTION"	66
CONCLUSION	71
5. ROT	72
ROT THEORY	73
ROT AND AGENCY IN THE BUSH	75
THE SANITISED FARM: "THE Paddock" AND "PIPI ON THE PROWL"	76
CRUMBLING BOUNDARIES: "THE WHARE"	81
CONCLUSION	86
CONCLUSION	89
WORKS CITED	93

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ways the Gothic, as an aesthetic mode, is used to manage the spatial and conceptual boundaries of the farm in New Zealand settler literature, predominantly from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. I argue that settler literature frequently uses the Gothic mode's capacity to communicate instability to problematise the boundaries of the New Zealand farm in ways that challenge the ecophobic binaries that uphold New Zealand's Arcadian myth.

The Theoretical Underpinnings section outlines New Zealand's Arcadian myth, and the critical framework I use to consider how the Gothic management of boundaries interacts with it. I articulate the Arcadian myth surrounding the farm as partly constructed by binaries rooted in an ecophobic, Eurocentric opposition between wilderness and 'civilisation'.

The second section, Establishing the Boundaries, examines how Edith Searle Grossman's *The Heart of the Bush* (1910) proposes an Arcadian balance of nature and culture, only to undermine it in a feminist critique of the restrictiveness of New Zealand settler society through the Gothic corruption of idyllic spaces. *The Heart of the Bush* is a foundational demonstration of the centrality of the wilderness/civilisation binary in representing the farm and native bush, and its use in a Gothic critique of the Arcadian myth.

The third section, Instability, explores how Gothic instability is a powerful rhetorical tool for exploring the physical, historical, and cultural dynamics of the spaces of the farm and the bush. Gothic instability frequently undermines conceptions of the Arcadian farm and the wild bush in various ways to express settler anxiety about the security of pastoral progress.

The fourth section, Expansion, demonstrates the use of the Gothic to threaten the Arcadian myth by elevating the contradiction of pastoral expansion's means and ends: productivity and destruction. I examine how Gothic representations of destruction of the bush, and the waste and emptiness that follows, exploit the spatial and temporal dynamics of the transitional phase of pastoral expansion to question its ethics and success.

The fifth section, Rot, explores how Gothic depictions of decay evoke interconnections and processes that disturb the spatial and conceptual binaries that uphold the Arcadian. Decay's embodiment of cyclicity and interconnection undermine Arcadian notions of improvement, human exceptionalism and the ontological separation between nature and culture, human and non-human. Depictions of rot on the farm juxtapose Arcadian logic and its constituent binaries against a reality of slipping, slimy, unstable boundaries.

Introduction

The New Zealand farm, in both agricultural and literary terms, is constructed through spatial and conceptual boundaries. These boundaries are unstable, are open to reconstruction, and require management. New Zealand settler writing from the 1890's to the 1920's, a period also known as the Maoriland¹ period, frequently deploys the Gothic to represent challenges to the farm's boundaries. This thesis utilises an ecoGothic lens to examine how this writing embodies challenges to the New Zealand Arcadian myth and the ecophobic binaries that constitute that myth.

Recently, anticipating my need for an introduction anecdote, fortune and disaster struck to deliver a first-hand reminder of the centrality of the management of boundaries on the farm. On a small section bordering a grazing paddock in Kaitangata, my partner and I had planted a small selection of native plants and fenced them off with plastic mesh supported by pigtail standards and 50x50mm wooden stakes. A neighbour informed me that, after a month of dissuading the sheep, the rampart succumbed to their voracious determination. They had eaten everything, including a poisonous ngaio tree. At the time of writing, the sheep are fine, but if we had planted more ngaio, we could have killed 10 pregnant ewes and a ram in the prime of his life. I am not alone. Earlier this year, a farmer's large scale reforestation efforts were severely damaged by a herd of cows that took advantage of some neglected fencing (McCarthy). While the scale of the incidents differs, both involve a failure to manage the spatial boundaries of the farm. Nature reveals its indifference to the values driving our attempts to control it as soon as the artificial boundaries put in place falter. These incidents demonstrate the discordant values associated with different sides of the boundary of the farm. The sheep did not care for my ambitions of re-introducing native plants any more than they cared about the invisible line dividing the rurally zoned paddock from the residential section. At the same time, my choice of plant could have impacted the farmer's goal of productivity. Nor did the cows distinguish between the carbohydrates intended for them and those intended to sequester carbon and feed native birds.

Stories of the contested boundaries of the farm frequently play out in the media. The productivity of the farm is frequently pitted against the value of native ecosystems. The long-

¹ I have decided to follow the convention that Jane Stafford and Mark Williams use in *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, and not macronise 'Maoriland'. This avoids anachronism and emphasises the term as a Pākehā term implicated in the marginalisation of Māori (Stafford and Williams 17). Similarly, I have not added or removed macrons in quoting writers or critics.

term value of wetland restoration, or native bush preservation, conflicts with short term financial gain (Green; Williams). However, articles also cover farmers who embrace a departure from the status quo, reimagining the farm's place in the wider environment by increasing biodiversity or re-establishing wetland areas to mediate the farm and the waterways (Gullery). The boundary of the New Zealand farm, in literal, symbolic and figurative terms, is shifting. In this thesis, the notion of the farm boundary is a way to consider the spatial and conceptual binaries that construct the farm in literature, and to examine the conceptual and ideological discourses embedded in the Gothic representation of these spatial dynamics.

The persistent oppositional framing in contemporary discourse of the boundary between farm and bush, and between the interests of productivity and environment, demonstrates traces of the Arcadian myth. In this myth, the farm is a synecdoche for a vision of New Zealand as a productive pastoral paradise, and the native bush is the wild 'other' to the civilised farm. Representations of the farm necessarily engage with this myth. In this thesis, I consider Gothic management of the boundaries of the New Zealand farm in settler writing, foregrounding the boundary between the farm and the bush². Settler writers use the Gothic's capacity to blur and destabilise spatial and conceptual boundaries in a way that challenges the binaries that define the Arcadian myth.

In the Arcadian myth, the spatial boundary between farm and bush is accompanied by a complex of conceptual binaries reflecting the opposition between Eurocentric conceptions of civilisation and wilderness: including Pākehā/Māori, good/evil, bounded/unbounded, controllable/uncontrollable and ordered/disordered, and productive/unproductive. The Arcadian myth's privileging of binary constituents aligned with civilisation is ecophobic in that it is rooted in a fear of loss of control to nature, and a belief that certain forms of nature and natural processes are hostile to civilisation. These binaries privilege manifestations of nature that are amenable to a Eurocentric conception of productivity, and congruent with a view of (European) human exceptionalism. They discriminate against manifestations of nature that threaten these cornerstone notions. This helps to justify the notion of improvement upon wilderness, and the extreme measures taken to control and shape nature. This is also inevitably bound up with justifying colonisation more broadly and measures to control Māori (although examining these broader connections in detail is beyond the scope of this thesis).

² I use the term 'bush' throughout this thesis to refer to native bush.

Settler writers in the Maoriland period frequently use the Gothic to imagine the failures of the boundaries and binaries that constitute the farm and the Arcadian myth. I consider these ‘Gothic challenges’ to the Arcadian myth. These can ultimately be used to critique or affirm the Arcadian myth and its constituent binaries. Some Gothic challenges to the Arcadian question the underlying concepts that justify its vision of land use and its story of settler nationhood. Some affirm antipathy towards the bush or justify the imperative of pastoral and economic progress. Whether Gothic challenges to the Arcadian are resolved or unresolved, the Gothic facilitates illuminating destabilisations of the Arcadian myth’s conceptions of space and time and its ecophobic binaries.

I use an ecoGothic critical lens to demonstrate the ways in which the Gothic management of boundaries has been a unique tool for interrogating the conceptual and spatial binaries of the farm in New Zealand settler literature. I treat the Gothic as a flexible aesthetic mode that emphasises fear, death, darkness and uncertainty, and has a fluid and evolving range of stylistic conventions and thematic concerns. I leave aside the question of the Gothic as a genre. Considering the Gothic as a mode not only avoids the thorny genre problem, but also suits the New Zealand literary context, where the Gothic is often diffuse, rearing its head in particular moments to punctuate texts.

The Theoretical Underpinnings section outlines New Zealand’s Arcadian myth, and the critical framework I use to consider how the Gothic management of boundaries interacts with it. I will demonstrate the Arcadian myth through Thomas Bracken’s poem “The Colonist” (1890) and William Pember Reeves’ “A Colonist in his Garden” (1906), and by referring to critics’ articulations of it. I use Terry Gifford’s work to contextualise New Zealand’s Arcadian myth within the pastoral literary tradition and illuminate its peculiarities. I draw upon critical conceptions of wilderness to consider the conceptual ambiguity of the categories of nature and wilderness, which some writers capitalise upon to reveal the incongruity of the Arcadian’s opposition towards the bush. I also draw upon articulations of ecophobia to frame the Arcadian myth surrounding the farm as partly constructed by binaries rooted in an ecophobic, Eurocentric opposition between wilderness and civilisation. Finally, I outline the ecoGothic lens that guides my critical approach.

The second section, Establishing the Boundaries, examines how Edith Searle Grossman’s *The Heart of the Bush* (1910) proposes an Arcadian balance of nature and culture, only to undermine it in a feminist critique of the restrictiveness of New Zealand settler society. *The Heart of the Bush* demonstrates the complications of the co-constitution of the farm and bush by exploring the bush’s own Arcadian potential and its tension with the

wilderness/civilisation binary. The female protagonist's search for autonomy and a marriage of mutual compromise is linked to her fraught search for Arcadian spaces with a balance between nature and culture. Grossman uses the Gothic to problematise the boundaries of these spaces, corrupting Arcadia with wilderness. The novel is a foundational demonstration of Gothic engagement with spaces of the farm and the bush, and their metonymical and synecdochical function as projections of settler society. Grossman demonstrates the Gothic mobilisation of the ecophobic attitude towards wilderness in a critique of the Arcadian myth.

The third section, *Instability*, explores how Gothic instability is a powerful rhetorical tool for exploring the physical, historical, and cultural dynamics of the spaces of the farm and the bush. The Gothic trope of instability finds diverse application in representing the farm and the bush in New Zealand settler literature, undermining conceptions of the Arcadian and the wild in various ways to express settler anxiety about the security of pastoral progress. In Dora Wilcox's "Onawe" (1905), the Gothic destabilising of time is used to undermine notions of an eternal and stable Arcadia by envisioning the revival of a savage past that troubles the peaceful pastoral present. Arthur Henry Adams' "The Dwellings of our Dead" (1899) invokes a Gothic threat to selfhood as the human/non-human binary collapses in unbounded and uncontrolled environments. Adams links the instability of settler identity and nationhood to the unstable and uncultivated spaces of early settlement. I conclude this section by demonstrating the radical instability that characterises the frontier boundary between the bush and the farm in William Satchell's *The Toll of the Bush* (1905). This instability challenges many of the conceptual binaries associated with the bush/farm dichotomy in a vision of the corrupting, regressive force of the bush.

The fourth section, *Expansion*, demonstrates the use of the Gothic to threaten the Arcadian by elevating the contradiction of pastoral expansion's means and ends: productivity and destruction. The destruction and transformation of the native landscape is a vital aspect of the farm in New Zealand that troubles its Arcadian image. In the wake of deforestation, the bush is sometimes sympathetically reframed as nature rather than wilderness, problematising the farm's origin. I examine how Gothic representations of destruction of the bush, and the waste and emptiness that follow, exploit the spatial and temporal dynamics of the transitional phase of pastoral expansion to question its ethics and success. I demonstrate how the Gothic imagery of bodily mutilation in "The Passing of the Forest" (1898) disrupts the human/non-human binary and problematises the nature/culture binary to convey settlers' tenuous relationship with the land they have transformed. I then show how Wilcox's "The Last of the Forest" (1906) uses ghostly prosopopoeia in a perspective shift to deliver a gloomy vision of

emptiness that implicitly undermines the notion of productivity and crafts an opportunity for empathic engagement with environment. I also consider Blanche Baughan's "Burnt Bush" (1908) and "A Bush Section" (1908), which evoke and resolve Gothic scenes of the land being transformed to ultimately affirm pastoral progress and deflect settler guilt and anxiety over the farm's past and future. "Burnt Bush" problematises the dead remnants of the bush on an emerging farm before ultimately affirming the Arcadian promise of life. "A Bush Section" destabilises the past/present binary and Gothicises the inertia of pastoral transformation to question the guarantee of progress, before asserting the human capacity for mastery over nature.

The fifth section, Rot, explores how Gothic depictions of decay evoke interconnections and processes that disturb the spatial and conceptual binaries that uphold the Arcadian. Decay's embodiment of cyclicity and interconnection undermine Arcadian notions of improvement, human exceptionalism and the ontological separation between nature and culture. Depictions of rot on the farm juxtapose Arcadian logic and its constituent binaries against a reality of slipping, slimy, unstable boundaries. I demonstrate the association of rot with excessive, uncontrollable and dangerous vegetation in Satchell's *The Toll of the Bush*. I examine Blanche Baughan's verse drama, "The Paddock" (1908), and how its affirmation of settler progress and productivity is troubled by cycles of life and death. I then show how in Baughan's "Pipi on the Prowl" (1912), rot is also used to dehumanise and demonise Māori and exclude them from the productive space of the farm. I analyse how H.L. Twisleton's "The Whare" (1895) brings rot onto the farm and into the homestead to confront the fear of impermanence and the fragility of progress. The Gothic power of rot on the farm depends on settlers' oppositional and controlling view of nature, which makes it a productive anti-Arcadian image. Finally, I depart from the focus on Maoriland settler writing with a reading of Apirana Taylor's "The Womb" (1979). Taylor undermines settlers' Arcadian assumptions of exceptionalism by asserting the continuing mana of the land and exploiting settler fears of impermanence and subjugation to nature's cycles. The Gothic representation of rot challenges the physical and ideological binaries and boundaries that uphold the Arcadian.

The Arcadian myth's construction of the farm in New Zealand depends upon the ecophobic management of wilderness. The imperative of a stable separation between wilderness and civilisation is central to the Arcadian farm. The bush as a manifestation of wilderness is frequently constructed as antithetical to the Arcadian and its associated productivity and control. Many Gothic depictions of the farm utilise this ecophobic

opposition between wilderness and civilisation (and its related binaries) to express challenges to the Arcadian myth, either to critique that myth or affirm it. I do not claim that Maoriland writers are necessarily engaged in a conscious, ecologically motivated use of the Gothic to critique the Arcadian myth. Rather, I argue Maoriland texts frequently use the Gothic to evoke ideas that implicitly challenge the Arcadian myth and its conception of the farm. Further, I argue that an ecoGothic critical approach reveals how the Gothic is used to variously reveal, challenge or reinforce the ecophobic binaries that construct the Arcadian myth.

1. Theoretical Underpinnings

In this section, I will outline key terms and critical concepts. I will introduce the concept of New Zealand's Arcadian myth, demonstrating it through Thomas Bracken's "The Colonist", William Pember Reeves' "A Colonist in his Garden", and drawing on critical articulations of it. I will contextualise this Arcadian myth in wider pastoral literature with reference to Terry Gifford's work in *Pastoral* (2019). I will introduce Kylie Crane's concept of "co-constitution" to frame how the farm and the bush are constructed in relation to each other in settler writing. I will then draw upon critical approaches to wilderness to help consider the implications of the Arcadian exclusion and depiction of the bush in light of the conceptual slipperiness of the categories of wilderness and nature. I will explain the concept of ecophobia and how it can characterise the binaries that construct Arcadia. Finally, I will explain the ecoGothic approach that will guide my analysis and outline its capacity to focus how the Gothic evokes ecophobia to challenge the boundaries of the farm.

New Zealand's Arcadian Myth

Arcadia was a region in ancient Greece, in the Peloponnese, and a central location in Greek mythology (Hard 543). Yazdani and Lozanovska explain, "The economy of Arcadia was largely pastoral, and known for its streams and springs, its forests, and its fine sheep" (8). Virgil's representation Arcadia in *Eclogues* established Arcadia as "the generic name for the location of all pastoral retreats" (Gifford 19). These locations of "pastoral retreats" are idyllic spaces at the centre of the pastoral literary tradition. This is the origin of the more general use of the term 'Arcadian' to describe idyllic conceptions of the farm. The concept of New Zealand's Arcadian myth captures the way idyllic conceptions of the farm are integrated into a unifying settler narrative, through settler literature and wider culture.

Thomas Bracken's "The Colonist" describes a pastoral paradise in New Zealand and contrasts it with its "savage" beginnings (line 32). The poem begins with a scene of nature smiling upon the farm:

MORN'S crimson banner floats across the East,
And bounteous Nature spreads her harvest feast;
The eye of day is peeping o'er the plain,
His silv'ry glances kiss the golden grain;
Sweet flowers, awaking from their dewy dreams,

Look up and smile beneath his warming beams;
The sparkling creek laughs brightly 'neath his rays,
And woos the lambkins with its babbling lays (1-8).

Nature's blessing ensures prosperous growth of "grain" and "lambkins". The productivity of the farm is returned to later and contrasted with a mischaracterisation of Māori food systems as primitive and unproductive:

The hunter now no longer plies his trade,
O'er hill and mountain, and through dell and glade
Abundance revels in the earth's embrace (39-41).

Bracken links the pastoral transformation of wilderness to the spread of the British Empire: "Here, in the wilderness, with plough and spade, / An empire's firm foundation he has laid" (67-68). It is also a Christian paradise where:

The hardy tiller of the fruitful soil
Collects his youthful family, and tells
Of spiritland, where great Jehovah dwells (14-16).

There is a connection between the scene and immortality in the Christian afterlife as the family's faith promises "Immortal chaplets of celestial leaves" (24). The pastoral scene is contrasted with a pre-colonial past, characterised by savagery and an excess of nature:

How changed the scene! a few short years have flown
Since Nature ruled this vale supreme, alone,
Wrapped in a robe of dreamy, dull repose,
Save when the savage war-cry shrill arose,
And rival tribes, like tigers when enraged,
In senseless and ferocious strife engaged.
No more the hills behold the brutal fray,
With spotless sceptre Peace holds sov'reign sway
The rural music of the busy farm
Has ta'en the place of discord's wild alarm (29-38).

Nature before the tiller's toil had sole power, its productivity was untapped as it lay in "dull repose". It is also seemingly connected with the supposed savagery of Māori, who are presented as animalistic and "senseless" and apparently in need of cultivation themselves. This contrasts with the peaceful colonists who "came not with swords and spears" (technically true – they came with guns) (55). The "Nature" that once "ruled" and was without the improvement of the civilised settler is presented as a place of "discord" and unproductivity – a different "Nature" to that in the opening lines. Nature requires the work of settler hands and control to become the harmonious entity suited to Arcadian productivity. The savage wild and savage people are consigned to the past. Bracken finally defends pastoral progress and criticises sentimentalism or guilt towards Māori or the past environment:

Ye dupes, who plead the fierce barbarian's cause,
Throw sickly sentiment aside, and pause
In contemplation o'er this lovely scene,
Contrasting what it is with what 't has been,
And then confess that knowledge must advance,
And break the yoke of slavish ignorance—
Civilization's ensign be unfurled,
And truth enlighten a regen'rate world (73-80).

Though peace and harmony are trumpeted, there is an anxious defence of New Zealand's settler history. The boundaries of the farm are being drawn. The farm of the Arcadian myth is civilised, Pākehā, productive, of the future, and replete with harmonious and yet controlled nature. It stands in contrasts with a settler vision of an uncultivated past of wild, unbalanced nature and savage Māori.

"The Colonist" embodies many of the features outlined by Julian Kuzma, who describes the "dominant set of attitudes" present in the representation of the New Zealand landscape in settler literature from 1890-1925, a period in which there was "exceptionally ruthless and rapid transformation of the New Zealand landscape" (451):

First, the primary attitude to the New Zealand landscape is that of a challenge, to be responsibly transformed into the pastoral paradise. [...] Second, this process of transformation is associated with evolution – a creative anthropocentric version of Darwinism and often also with the development of the British Empire. Third, this process has its cost – the loss of the

pristine beauty of the bush (debated against aesthetic and romantic attitudes), the difficult, culturally rough transitional stages of a frontier society, the human 'toll' and the destruction of Maori culture. Fourth, the result will justify the cost – 'the better Britain of the Southern Seas'. Fifth, the emergent New Zealand identity is a result of this process (459).

This vision of landscape encapsulates New Zealand's Arcadian myth, a narrative that places the farm at the centre of New Zealand settler identity and instils it with fundamental cultural values. This myth is articulated by Margot Schwass, though she calls it "the progressivist colonial myth" (20):

New Zealand was "God's Own Country", a prosperous pastoral paradise built by pioneers who had tamed the bush, subdued the natives with a firm yet kind hand, and formed themselves into a decent, fair, egalitarian outpost of Britain (20).

Both Kuzma and Schwass emphasise the moral righteousness imbedded in the Arcadian myth. The end would justify the means; the end, after all, is paradise, and a productive paradise at that. James Belich suggests:

Arcadia emphasised natural abundance, individual virtue and the rural life. Its ideal inhabitant was the sturdy yeoman, living self-sufficiently and independently with his family on his own farm (444).

This "ideal inhabitant" cultivated the nation's "steady, farm-led growth" by "[being] the cutting edge of progress in the hinterland, breaking in difficult country, particularly the bush, and bringing it into production" (534, 585). Kuzma explains that, though it was "dominant", this myth is not the only story of landscape in the literature: "along with the assertions of progress, there is ample material on negative environmental effects, such as overstocking and rabbit infestation" (455).

The values of progress, productivity and control underpin an oppositional stance to the bush. The boundary between the farm and the bush reflects an opposition ingrained in European thought between civilisation and wilderness. This opposition has a paradoxical relationship with the Arcadian, which is heightened in the New Zealand Arcadian myth by the stark reality of deforestation.

The melding of settlers' opposition to the bush with a nationalist conviction is demonstrated by William Pember Reeves' "A Colonist in his Garden". Reeves describes the experience of those who "Fight Nature for a home" (line 62):

Now, when the fight is o'er, what man,
What wrestler, who in manhood's span
Hath won so stern a fall,
Who, matched against the desert's power,
Hath made the wilderness to flower,
Can turn, forsaking all? (63-68).

The speaker, counting himself among these men, declares "Here I am rooted", affirming a connection forged in the "fight" to transform wilderness to a home (57). As in "The Colonist", the native environment's unproductivity is emphasised:

'No colour!' On the silent waste,
In pigments not to be effaced,
We paint the hues of life (Reeves 78-80).

The oppositional relationship with the bush is registered in some Gothic challenges to the Arcadian farm, where it is not as easily folded into the national story. An understanding of the context of pastoral literature that gives us the Arcadian archetype, and of the concept of co-constitution, helps to frame the consequences the oppositional underpinning of New Zealand's Arcadian myth.

Pastoral

Though the texts I discuss are not pastoral texts in their literary form (arguably with the exception of "The Paddock" and *The Heart of The Bush*), depictions of the farm necessarily invoke the pastoral literary tradition and its various Arcadias. The farm of New Zealand's Arcadian myth has unique relationships with both wilderness and civilisation that distinguish it among conceptions of Arcadia. New Zealand's Arcadia is more overtly oppositional towards wilderness, it is more prescriptive than corrective and is more amenable to the value of progress. Terry Gifford describes pastoral literature as involving various "Constructions of Arcadia": pastoral idylls that present an urban readership with visions of rural life and values

that facilitate a critique of urban modernity (14-46). These “rural values” and exemplary aspects of Arcadias include harmonious relationships between human and nature, simplicity, opposition to greed, and “an idealisation of stability that provides an implicit criticism of turbulent city affairs” (Gifford 19, 20, 21, 22, 45). Gifford notes how this obscures and idealises the lived, environmental, and economic realities of farming (33). Gifford argues that the well-functioning pastoral depends upon a delicate awareness of its artifice:

It is essential to pastoral that the reader is conscious of this construct so that she or he can see what the writer is doing within the device. (. . .) The opposite would be to believe that the pastoral vision is reality (24).

When the artifice collapses into Arcadian realism, Gifford claims it is “dangerously open to exploitation by a culture that might prefer to hide reality in the myth of Arcadia” (24). Gifford identifies a tradition of “anti-pastoral” texts that operate as “corrective[s]” either to Arcadian realism or to the values or cultural functions of other pastoral texts (122). New Zealand’s Arcadia is envisioned as a more direct and archetypical synecdoche for an agrarian settler society, rather than a corrective escape for an urban society. Arcadia is a template for the vision of New Zealand as one great farm. Traditional pastorals are critiques of the ills of modern civilisation, and often wary of civilisation’s relentless striving for progress, whereas the New Zealand farm is the vehicle for civilising the land and driving progress (Gifford 42). Traditional pastorals often look backwards to a past framed as idyllic, but New Zealand’s Arcadian myth is forward-looking (Gifford 17). The New Zealand Arcadian is uniquely caught between discourses of improvement and the foreknowledge of progress’ costs and civilisation’s faults. The Gothic is frequently used in an anti-pastoral³ function, to consider what realities are hidden in the Arcadian myth.

Co-constitution

The concept of “co-constitution”, as described by Kylie Crane, helps to frame the consequences of the opposition between farm and bush for the Arcadian myth:

The boundaries between civilization and wilderness, particularly as constituted in processes of colonization, are maintained in order to buttress those spaces that are considered

³ The texts I am considering would not necessarily fit within Gifford’s conception of anti-pastoral texts. For Gifford, anti-pastoral texts require “engagement with the pastoral convention” (122).

civilization. Such boundaries, not only discursive or imaginative but also manifested in the form of fences, in demarcating the wilderness *intrude* on this wilderness through their very presence. Or, in other words, the boundary is an area of co-constitution rather than a line of division (15).

Because of this dynamic, what exactly the bush as a natural space constitutes, is fundamental to the conception of the farm. The farm boundary defines the farm through inclusions and exclusions, and the qualities of the excluded wilderness inform the nature of the farm.

However, wilderness is not a discrete or merely descriptive category, but a “complex cultural construction” (Cronon 17). This is reflected in the unstable and contradictory representations of the bush by settler writers. This instability and the conceptual diversity of wilderness make the bush a productive and versatile ‘other’ to the farm; itself a “complex cultural construction”. Terry Gifford explains that in some conceptions of Arcadia, “culture is contiguous with nature” (21). However, Gifford also identifies the pastoral’s “ambivalence towards raw nature”, or wilderness, and its relation to the fear of an innate wildness in humans (50-51).

Thus, the ecological destruction underpinning farming is a challenge to the Arcadian myth; if the bush is perceived as natural, then the farm that destroys it cannot be harmonious with nature. Moreover, the farm’s boundary with the bush conceived as ‘natural’ does not “buttress” the farm, because the farm as a civilised space depends upon its opposite. The binaries that construct Arcadia must fall either side of the fence. However, if the bush has the negative characteristics of wilderness, then its destruction can be reconciled with an exalted view of nature and with the Arcadian. It is clear that the Arcadian myth depends upon both the civilisation/wilderness binary and the wilderness/nature binary. The farm’s Arcadian credentials shift in relation to the representation of the bush and are rarely stable. Settler writers respond to this paradoxical dynamic in a variety of often paradoxical ways. Jane Stafford describes the “play with the schematics of landscape description – of primeval forest, burnt bush, or productive paddocks” and its role in developing “a suite of literary languages” to understand place, and the place of settlers in it:

The lush hyperbole of the Victorian touristic fairyland; the ‘stuck, and prickled, and spiked’ discomfort of clearance and settlement; the uneasy inhabitation of a carefully structured present counterpointed and at times undercut and made unstable by nostalgia for an appropriated past (67).

The bush is simultaneously mourned and maligned, imbued with mystical personhood and reduced to an inconvenience of geography. The farm is sometimes the blatant destroyer of the bush, the harmonious bucolic backdrop of domestic paradise, or the site of broken domesticity, failed settlement and violent masculinity.

Kylie Crane characterises the co-constitution of civilisation and wilderness as “one of the central paradoxes of wilderness” (49):

[I]t cannot be entirely separated from civilization—and, conversely, civilization can never be entirely free of wilderness. Consequently, large spaces become necessary in order to ensure that no “contamination” takes place (49-50).

The instability of wilderness and civilisation’s relationship of co-constitution, and the risk of “contamination”, contextualise the imperative of physical and conceptual boundary management. As on real farms, nature in Arcadia is highly managed. There is a tension between harmonious unity with nature, and the control over nature that is necessary to achieve Arcadia. The farm is not only bounded at its exterior but also internally ordered; governed by the structures of boundaries. Wilderness is boundaryless and excluded from the farm for fear of contamination, and the natural elements on the farm are kept within their designated boundaries.

Settler depictions of the bush engage with Eurocentric conceptions of wilderness. An understanding of the cultural baggage and slipperiness of these conceptions of wilderness helps to consider the different permutations of the bush in settler writing and the complex relationship between Arcadia and the wilderness.

Wilderness

Despite pretences of categorical clarity, European ways of understanding and representing settler spaces are thorny, entangled and shifting; categories bleed into each other and change depending upon context. Wilderness is exemplary of this. The concept of the wilderness has accrued meanings from its etymological roots, Christian theology and the Romantic tradition.

Greg Garrard states, “The word ‘wilderness’ derives from the Anglo-Saxon ‘wilddeoren’, where ‘deoren’ or beasts existed beyond the boundaries of cultivation” and claims that “To designate a place apart from, and opposed to, human culture depends upon a set of distinctions that must be based upon a mainly agricultural economy” (67). This

suggests the deep roots of the opposition between wilderness and agricultural productivity, a dynamic central to the Arcadian myth. Wilderness is sometimes opposed to both nature and civilisation, but even these oppositions are not straightforward. Gregory McNamee describes the nature/wilderness opposition:

If we use both “wild” and “natural” as generally approving adjectives, the former always has a sense of the uncontrolled and potentially dangerous: On its face, wild honey sounds more adventurous than all-natural yogurt, a wild river more problematic than an orchard (223).

Additionally, McNamee argues,

Nature and civilization are not exactly binaries, though. Neither are nature and the wild. Think of it as a Renaissance Italian would: The garden, construct of both nature and nurture, of civilization and the raw ingredients of the world, emerged from wildness only through our labors (223).

This speaks to Crane’s concept of “co-constitution” and her insistence on the “interdependence” and “sense of a connection between dualisms” (49, 53). It is important to note the Eurocentric assumptions behind classifications of wilderness. Crane describes its representation as “civilisation’s other”: “a spatial manifestation, a space that is marked by its natural qualities and that is conceived in terms that oppose it to civilization” (49). Often, wilderness implies the absence not only of human environmental shaping, but also of humans themselves. Crane points to the dynamic of this construction of “placing indigenous presences and practices under erasure” (18). The opposition of wilderness to culture also implies that lifeways whose relation to nature does not involve radical transformation and cultivation of environments, are themselves uncultured or culturally deficient. Equally problematic are romantic tropes of Indigenous unity with wilderness, such as the ‘noble savage’. Here, the Indigenous relationship with the wild is associated with inherent or cultural wildness or animalism. This notion is apparent in some depictions of Māori in Maoriland writing.

Both William Cronon and Garrard locate early conceptions of wilderness in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Cronon names “waste” as the “nearest synonym” of wilderness in a usage that preceded and overlapped with the Romantic period’s conception of the wilderness (8). Wilderness then was ““deserted,” “savage,” “desolate,” “barren”” (Cronon 8). As an

example, Cronon points to the wilderness that surrounds and contrasts with Eden in *Paradise Lost*, when Satan approaches:

So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
As with a rural mound, the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild
Access denied; and overhead up-grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A silvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend,
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung,
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighboring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue (Book four, lines 131-148).

Eden's Arcadian is likened to a "rural mound" and its Arcadian resonances are clear from its description and its relationship with wilderness. Gifford describes Eden as "the original Arcadia of Christian culture" (34). This prelapsarian association is sometimes reflected in an Arcadian uneasiness with death. The Garden, productive and welcoming, with "goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit" contrasts with the unproductive, impenetrable and threatening wild. There is a natural boundary in the "steep wilderness", which "Access denied" and also something constructed, albeit divinely: a "verdurous wall", between the wilderness and Eden. The natural border's insufficiency speaks to the imperative of separation between wilderness and cultivation. Interestingly, the wilderness of the "thicket", though "grotesque", protects Eden from Satan. Just as the farm depends upon the boundary with wilderness for its self-conception, Eden is protected both by and from the wilderness.

The sublime in the Romantic tradition encapsulates an ambivalence towards the wilderness; however, it is also the root of a more simplistic view of the wild. Cronon

describes the early Romantic sublime as portraying “the wilderness as a landscape where the supernatural lay just beneath the surface” and where, as in the wilderness of Christ’s temptation, “one might meet devils and run the risk of losing one’s soul (. . .) but one might also meet God” (10-11). He locates in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, a landscape like that encountered by “Old Testament prophets”, in which were to be found “more awe and dismay than joy or pleasure” (11). Garrard too describes the “ambivalence of the Judaeo-Christian tradition towards wilderness” (70).

Cronon describes the shift over the 19th century to emphasising the intrinsic value of the wilderness, which was by then invaluable precisely because it was civilisation’s other, and an antidote to its pitfalls. However, for Cronon, this valuing eventually accompanied a reconstruction, which “tamed” and imposed order upon the wilderness and “domesticated” the sublime (12). Cronon describes with some dismay this dilution of the sublime and the removal of any theological or conceptual dialectic opposition in the wilderness (10-12). Eventually, as Cronon has it, towards the end of the 19th century, “the sublime wilderness had ceased to be a place of satanic temptation and become instead a sacred temple” (13). Cronon describes how wilderness “was now frequently likened to Eden itself” (9). Paradoxically, wild spaces can be framed as Arcadia.

Settler depictions of the bush manifest all these different constructions of wilderness. The bush can be unambiguously bad, unambiguously good, or ambivalent; often shifting between these poles within texts. Recurring features of the bush portrayed negatively include its mysteriousness, an attribution of agency, rot, excessive growth, violence, unproductiveness, uncontrollability, perilousness, primitiveness, and its relation to Māori. Positive representations emphasise harmony, fertility, birdlife, serenity, amenity to people, sacredness, and Europeanness. Wilderness’ complex resonances mean that it resists the binary imposition that the Arcadian requires. The Arcadian depends not only upon the civilisation/wilderness binary, but also on the nature/wilderness binary. However, these binaries are conceptually entangled. This is a vulnerability that the Gothic explores.

Ecophobia and the EcoGothic

As I have outlined, the New Zealand farm has a synecdochical function in the Arcadian myth. This myth embodies values that construct the farm through conceptual binaries. This myth engages with a complex pastoral tradition and complex conceptions of wilderness. The Arcadian myth’s constituent binaries and opposition to the bush implicate a range of

ecophobic dynamics. Simon Estok suggests that ecocriticism itself can be focussed under the project of examining “ecophobia”, and that the ecoGothic constitutes a particular facet of this project (“Ecocriticism” 211; “Theorising” 48). Estok and other critics characterise ecophobia as a fear of nature grounded in a need for control and anxiety about humanity’s interconnection with nature. Estok asserts,

Unpredictable and uncontrolled nonhuman agency is troubling. The ecophobic loathes the unpredictable. Ecophobia emanates from anxieties about control. The prospect of a loss of control—the perceived threat to human agency by nonhuman nature—is at its core ecophobic (“Theorising” 44).

Keetley and Silvis characterise this fear of the lack of control as central to both ecophobia and the Gothic:

[A]t the broadest level, the ecogothic inevitably intersects with ecophobia, not only because ecophobic representations of nature will be infused, like the gothic, with fear and dread but also because ecophobia is born out of the failure of humans to control their lives and their world. And control, or the lack thereof, is central to the gothic (3).

David Del Principe defines ecophobia as “fears stemming from humans’ precarious relationship with all that is nonhuman” (2). He identifies its origin in “humans’ reluctance to come to terms with their nonhuman ancestry and the common, biological origin of all life” (2). The interconnectedness of life runs counter to ideas of (European) human exceptionalism and the conceptual binary between human/non-human.

Ecophobia is rooted in this fearful human exceptionalism that insists on an essential separation of the human subject from nature, and encourages and depends upon control over nature. Both of these aspects are intertwined in the fear of nature’s reclamation of human spaces and human works. Estok suggests, “The thought of being taken over by nature is horror, and this imagined threat is potentially ubiquitous” (46).

The binaries that construct the Arcadian farm, including civilisation/wilderness, present/past, progress/regression, male/female, Pākehā/Māori, productivity/waste, human/non-human, and controlled/uncontrollable, are often ecophobic; dependent upon a fear of wilderness because of its threat to settler control. They also justify settler colonial efforts to achieve control over nature, or to subdue wilderness and subjugate the interests of

the environment and of Māori to the interests of productivity for settler society. The binaries also help to shape the ecophobic narrative of the Arcadian myth: a righteous conversion of a savage, wild past, into a productive, civilised future. Settler writers' Gothic challenges to these binaries exploit and reveal their ecophobic potential.

Though some critics such as Estok articulate the ecoGothic as a form or mode of writing, in this thesis I will follow Bryan McMillan in treating it as a critical lens (McMillan 5-6). The ecoGothic provides a lens for understanding how the Gothic engages with ecophobia. It is also suited to the analysis of boundaries and binaries. Alder and Bavidge argue, "Gothic is good at boundary transgressing; it is not afraid to batter at borders that are normally left unassailed" (Alder and Bavidge 239). Critics also emphasise the ethical implications of ecoGothic criticism and its capacity to subvert, challenge and reorient perspectives. Alder and Bavidge argue there is an ethical dimension to the Gothic transgression of boundaries:

[The Gothic] is open to mixtures or situations that are unsettling or uncomfortable or hard to admit but won't go away, and capable of embracing what's 'bad' without having to insist on reinstating the 'good'. In its variety of forms, ecogothic has the capacity to not only enact, bolster, and critique the damaging structures and subjectivities associated with our modernity but also to transgress or subvert them for more progressive ecological ends (239).

Terry Gifford's articulation of the ecoGothic suggests the confrontation of disconcerting truths about nature: "It could be argued that ecogothic deals in misunderstandings, disrespect and downright fear of the realism of natural forces" (148).

Thus, the Gothic can aesthetically and ideologically subvert prevailing ecological thought. The capacity of the Gothic to engage with ecophobia by transgressing boundaries, evoking problematic conceptual "mixtures", and confronting the frightening "realism of natural forces", is the focal point of the ecoGothic lens that guides my critical approach in this thesis. These characteristics of the Gothic suggest its suitability for engaging with ecophobic binaries. An ecoGothic lens helps to show how the Gothic management of the boundaries of the farm in New Zealand settler literature exploits the ecophobic underpinnings of the Arcadian myth. This is done by destabilising the binaries that flow from the central opposition between civilisation and wilderness, farm and bush.

Through this thesis, I aim to demonstrate that an ecoGothic approach is a productive one, which reveals the intricacies of how New Zealand's Arcadian myth and its conception of the farm are critiqued or affirmed through the Gothic.

2. Establishing the Boundaries: *The Heart of the Bush*

In *The Heart of the Bush*, Edith Searle Grossman displays an acute awareness of the Arcadian implications of the farm and its complicated boundary with the bush. She uses the Gothic to capitalise on the ecophobic fear of wilderness corrupting Arcadian spaces in a feminist critique of settler society. The novel is a foundational example of the Gothic corruption of the Arcadian myth as a form of critique. It demonstrates how writers were attendant to the resonance of the conceptual boundaries of the farm and bush even as the physical boundaries were being established.

The novel follows Adelaide, who returns from schooling in England, where she lived with aristocratic relatives, to the family farm in Canterbury, New Zealand. She falls in love with her childhood sweetheart, Dennis, the rough diamond farm manager, rejecting the refined and wealthy Horace Brandon. Enchanted by the natural world, and disenchanted by the disapproving and restrictive social world, Adelaide seeks refuge in the bush and the mountains that surround the farm, determined to eschew “art”, or culture, for “nature”, a stance embodied by her choice of Dennis over Horace. This dichotomy is consistently undermined as Adelaide reveals her desire for an Arcadian balance between both nature and culture, where she can reject society’s oppressiveness, yet enjoy its comforts and cultural products. Adelaide, wanting a marriage on her own terms, struggles with her physically and socially lonely place in the world and Dennis’ absorption in the farm. Adelaide’s experiences of her surroundings consistently shatter her illusions of freedom as she is forced to compromise, confronting the limitations of landscape, marriage and rural isolation. Stafford and Williams describe Adelaide’s “Arcadia derived from the feminist and progressive politics of the 1890s and 1900s” (199). Stafford and Williams identify Adelaide’s construction of a “hybridized world, a mix of the local and the European” (179) as essential to the spatial representation of this Arcadia. This desire for hybridity extends to Adelaide’s Arcadian conceptions of both the bush and the farm. Thus, boundaries and hybrid liminal spaces, are essential to the novel, and it is their instability that complicates Adelaide’s situation.

Grossman constructs extremely complex representations of the cultivated spaces of the farm and the orchard, the wild spaces of the bush and the mountains, and the boundaries between these spaces. The bush manifests variously as a harmonious bower or an impenetrable, mystical and dangerous jungle, while the farm oscillates between pastoral paradise in easy relationship with the bush, and a place of violence and isolation, restricted by

a hostile, impenetrable bush. Grossman's representations of the bush shift between the Edenic, the sublime and the Gothic. The corruption of idyllic imaginations of the bush and the farm also involves the intrusion of death and violence into those spaces. The representation of place often darkens when boundaries, physical and social become impassable or forbidding. Moreover, the consequences of transgressing those forbidding boundaries represent Adelaide's plight as a woman wanting greater freedom. Adelaide's idealisations of space show her trying to construct a reality and way of being that meets her desires; one that does not exist in settler society. The Gothic corruption of Adelaide's Arcadian visions of space is central in depicting her pained search for autonomy and a harmonious marriage based on equality.

Romance and Remonstrance - The Desire for Hybridity and Autonomy

The novel's thematic concern is the balance of "art" and "nature". This reflects the Arcadian aspiration of contiguity between culture and nature. In *The Heart of the Bush*, nature and art form a complicated dialectic. Adelaide claims to favour nature over art, but is consistently shown to want a balance of the two in her physical surroundings, herself, Dennis, and their relationship. Adelaide desires a married life of frequent immersion in nature and freedom from the demands and restrictions of settler culture and modern economics. Adelaide's vision of a balance between art and nature is associated with the harmonious relationship between bush and farm. This depends on a vision of the bush as nature, rather than wilderness. Thus, the boundary between farm and bush is a central space for representing Adelaide's prospects of autonomy and a marriage of mutual compromise. Grossman capitalises on the instability of the nature/wilderness binary to problematise Adelaide's search for hybridity.

Adelaide's primary social transgression is her rejection of the high society that is her birth right, for the unrefined, simple life on the farm. She is also remonstrated with for being a wilful wife, with Evelyn Brandon stating: "You want a husband you can rule over, instead of obeying as a wife ought to do. It is not right. You like having your own way, Ailie" (122). However, Adelaide's willingness to compromise is consistently demonstrated, even as she finds it difficult. This desire for hybridity has a spatial correlate in the sliprail and fence dividing bush and the farm, which is a central place at several moments in their relationship. It is here, at the boundary between bush and farm, that the lovers negotiate and establish their relationship, envisioning a hybrid melding of "art" and "nature" (92). Although Adelaide delights in some of Dennis' "barbarous" qualities, she wants him to be more cultured (92).

Dennis agrees: "I'll be as tame as an uncultured and ungentlemanly boor can be expected to be, if you'll drop the drawing-room manners, and remember we are here together in the bush" (92). This hybridity is encapsulated as "the marriage of the leisured and the labouring class, of art and nature, of civilisation and barbarism" (227). However, the boundary between cultivated spaces and the bush also problematises Adelaide's desire for a harmonious marriage of equals.

Gardens and orchards are crucial spaces in the novel. When Evelyn is admonishing Adelaide, they are in an apple orchard. The associations with the Garden of Eden are clear, as "Reprobation (...) excited in [Adelaide's] mind an abnormal consciousness of sin" (121, 122). Evelyn comments on the contrast between these spaces: "that mass of pink and white blossom" and the "dark bush in the shadow of the hill for a back-ground" (122). There is an implication that in Adelaide's choice of Dennis over Horace, she has chosen exile in the bush over the conventional and acceptable space of the orchard. Perhaps signifying her departure from this particular Eden, Adelaide "looked around at the cloud of apple blossom and picked a spray"; plucking, if not a forbidden fruit, then a forbidden flower (123). Here, Adelaide's vision of hybridity between the qualities of bush and farm is juxtaposed with a vision of incongruity and opposition.

Adelaide's father presents the farm's isolation and its boundary with the bush as a threat to Adelaide's life. He warns her of the material hardship of "a lonely, lonely life on this bush farm" with Dennis (111). Protesting that Brandon cannot give her "love and sincerity and happiness", Adelaide insists that she is fit for life in the bush: "I do enjoy art, Dad, and everything artistic, but I enjoy nature more." (111). Her father replies: "You won't have much time for what you mean by nature, my child. Look at Emmeline. She never gets beyond the gate more than once or twice a year" (111). This signals Adelaide's idealisation of the bush as nature and presages the restriction she will face. Adelaide's father blames the isolation and harsh environment for her mother's death in childbirth, implying they are also the cause of his previous wife's death (112). It is a stark warning: "You know that cemetery on the hill above the township? Half the older graves are the graves of young mothers and their infants" (113). Adelaide states "in her most plaintive bird-notes" that she welcomes such a fate, if it will bring her happiness (114). As it turns out, Mr Borlasse's predictions of isolation, restriction and death are more or less true.

At first it seems the bush might provide the hybridity that Adelaide desires. However, this is ultimately undermined as she and Dennis journey to the source of the river that runs through the farm on their honeymoon, and the bush is corrupted with wilderness.

The Bower's Borders

Adelaide's positive experiences of the bush involve Edenic conceptions of nature, with natural spaces represented as orderly and resembling human artifacts. When she first returns to the bush after coming home from England, she experiences the bush as both art and nature: "The bush rose up before them on the high opposite bank, not so much like a wall as like rising galleries of green living shapes,—primeval, beckoning, calling" (12). These Arcadian visions of the bush encapsulate Adelaide's hope for hybridity, compromise and autonomy. On her honeymoon, Adelaide finds Arcadia in the bush in the form of a picturesque bower. However, the Arcadian bush's boundaries are paradoxically both too restricting, and, ultimately, vulnerable to the bush's wild manifestations.

On their honeymoon, Adelaide and Dennis travel through the bush to the source of the Wainoni river, "into the very heart of [Dennis'] kingdom, where there was no Society and no Art and no Civilisation, only Nature" (157). After riding into "Eden", they enter a bower in the bush that Adelaide names her "Bower of Bliss", after book II Canto XII of Edmund Spenser's "The Faerie Queene" (1590) (165). Adelaide's bower and her experience of the bush invokes the Arcadian principle of harmony, an Edenic freedom from death, and the necessity of boundaries. However, the bower also comes to be a restrictive place and the necessary permeability of the hybrid space is subtly problematised, presaging later crises. Although Adelaide is still claiming to reject art for nature, her experience of the bush again invokes human structures, with "a grand corridor of forest, where straight columns of rimu and matai rose a thousand feet in the air" (166). The Arcadian principle of harmony defines Adelaide and Dennis' observations of the bush and its interactions:

The mountains communed with the bush and sent down the breath of their winds into its heart, and the bush stirred and gave up its secrets to the spirits of the mountains, in the whispering of dark leaves and the trembling of slight ferns and the falling of little waters (142).

There is an implication that they are part of this space, in communion with nature, witness to its "secrets".

Adelaide's "bowery glade" is also productive, "gemmed with berries of transparent ruby and dark purple amethyst", and welcoming, with "soft with delicate ferns" (166). This

contrasts with the “inpenetrable bush” (166). Wilderness and its dangers are excluded from the bower, reinforcing the ecophobic management of boundaries in idyllic spaces:

There were no serpents in that Eden, no devouring beast, and nothing that tears or destroys the life of man. Adelaide got green fans of tree ferns fresh each day and set them at the corners of the tent. She hung trailing lycopodium from the ridge-pole, and strewed the floor thick with moss and little white stars of manuka. Then she called the tent her Bower of Bliss (173).

Dennis’ interaction with the space is more practical: “Dennis hewed down a young tree and made props and a ridge-pole, and set up a tent taut and trim and pegged it down stoutly” (168). There is a stark contrast between the natural architectural extravagance of the bush, and the pragmatism and simplicity of what Dennis constructs of it. The contrast between their interactions with the bush extends to their ease of movement in it.

Adelaide’s sculpted bower is a place where she is restricted, while Dennis comes and goes freely to bring back the comforts of civilisation, such as milk (173). The awkwardness and contradiction highlight the tension of Adelaide’s bush Arcadia as a hybrid and curated space. Adelaide is scared to get sunburnt and thus “sedulously sought the shades of bush or hill or tent from early morning until the sun was low” (174). The “blueflaked marsh” is Adelaide’s “Alpine garden”, the only place apart from her bower that she dwells in, and it too has a sense of restrictiveness: “she could only sit on the edge of it and lean over from a rock to look at the flowers and the flakes of blue water in amongst them” (175). This sense of restriction escalates and follows Adelaide to the farm.

Another aspect of Adelaide’s honeymoon that follows Adelaide to the farm is the corruption of the bush by death. Adelaide’s bower is free from death:

Here there were snow-white lilies and daisies much larger and purer than any that grow in lower regions; no worm or fly crept over them, and they bloomed as if they did not know decay (175).

However, outside the boundaries of the bower, Adelaide’s elevated conception of the bush is challenged. In this way, Adelaide’s allusion to Spenser’s “Bowre of Bliss” is more accurate than she realises. Spenser’s bower does “know decay” and contains many of the conceptual problems Adelaide faces. Like Adelaide’s bower, Spenser’s is a curated enclosure, a place

that “natures worke by art can imitate” (line 4). The bower is enclosed by a fence “As well their entred guestes to keep within, / As those unruly beasts to keep without (11-12). Wilderness is kept out, but the space is vulnerable; the fence “but weake and thin” (13). This encapsulates the paradox of the boundary management of hybrid spaces. Playing upon the association of a bower as a woman’s bedroom, Spenser describes a “Virgin rose” blossoming before she “fades and falls away” (58, 63). The speaker warns too of the “decay” of the virgin rose, advising “Gather therefore the Rose, whilst yet is prime” (66, 69). This resonates with the frequent association between Adelaide and flowers and with her tragic stillbirth.

Beyond the Bower

Once Adelaide leaves her bower, her Arcadian conception of the bush is corrupted, presaging the corruption of the Arcadian when she returns to the farm. Grossman invokes the slipperiness of the nature/wilderness binary as the bush beyond the bower is characterised by impassability, danger and death, in the form of rot. When Adelaide insists on going further up the river to the glacier that feeds it, Dennis reminds her of the danger of the wilderness and the difficulty of her moving through it: “Can you walk through virgin bush or wade up the stream?” (188). Adelaide insists: ““That is what I wanted.” Adelaide gave him a sudden quivering glance between light and shadow. “To see your world, dear, to share your life”” (188). The contrast of the wild bush with the curated bower is clear as they enter “the jungle of thorny lawyer and rotting branch and trunk and bog and rotten bark that looked so fair above” (189). The intrusion of death, in the form of rot, into Adelaide’s vision of the bush anticipates her realisation about the death and violence that occurs on the farm. The disjunction between Adelaide’s conception of the bush and its reality is captured when she “ran into a tree thinking it a shadow” and confronts the reality that “nature itself has illusions” (189-190). The rot is not confined to nature, also corrupting manmade structures: the “landing place” and the Tohunga’s “weather board house prematurely old, round which the bracken grew tall and rank” (190). The house also has the semblance of a garden taken over by nature: “a rose tree, crusted with hoary moss”, echoing Spenser’s image (190). In Adelaide’s room, “grass had sprung up in the rotten flooring” (190). Wild animals also intrude on the house: “a large bird, startled by the sound of human footsteps, fluttered and whirred past, then flew through the window” (191). The house is a Gothic inversion of the bower; rather than nature turned to an ordered, fruitful, and hospitable dwelling, the house is being taken back by the wild. As it rots, its boundaries collapse. This reflects Crane’s

articulation of the risk of contamination at the boundary between civilisation and wilderness. This presages the bush's besieging of Adelaide's house on the farm, which is itself "too far into the mountains" (280).

The terrifying pinnacle of Adelaide's experience of the wild is her fall into a crevasse. Adelaide's path to the glacier is only possible because "Dennis toiled at the track, while Adelaide sat in the shade and admired him" (196). When they arrive at the glacier, Adelaide once again finds herself restricted as Dennis goes off to conquer a nearby mountain (199). Adelaide experiences the sublime:

She had come into her husband's world, and, somehow, it did not seem quite meant for her. She was in the presence of nature, absolute and supreme. It was beautiful, but it was terrible (204).

Adelaide experiences the "barren stones" as "an oppression" and bemoans its lack of life: "not a tuft of grass in sight, not one tree grew among the stones" (205). Left alone, growing restless and feeling lonely in "the grim blackness of rocks, and most of all in the colourless grey desolation that dominates these great stony moraines of Maoriland", Adelaide wanders off and falls into a crevasse, the culmination of her restriction (201, 206). While in the crevasse, Adelaide experiences "an extraordinary resignation" in the face of "immensity of the forces in that waste of nature" (209). Adelaide's epiphany in the "perfect light" of the alps, after she and Dennis "emerged from their stony sepulchre" is that "The Alps were nothing, they themselves were all in all" (221-224). Their marriage as a harmonious unity becomes Adelaide's idea of a bower of bliss. However, the poetics of space continue to tell the struggle of achieving this.

Arcadia on the Farm

Adelaide's excursion beyond the boundaries of her restrictive bower and into the wilderness nearly proves fatal. The hope of an Arcadia on the farm that mixes art and nature is kept alive, and the hybrid space around Adelaide and Dennis' house is essential to this hope.

Early in the novel, the proximity of the family homestead to the bush is a positive attribute. Adelaide states that "it was so sweet of her father and [Dennis] not to destroy the bush around the house" (Grossman 29-30). Adelaide wakes with "the Bush (...) waking all around her" and a fantail visiting her at her window (26). The Bush is subtly anthropomorphised, dressing in a "nightdress of white mists" (26). Just as the bush is

imagined to dress itself like a person, Adelaide dresses like the bush with “a silver belt (...) she stuck some bush blossoms in” (27). This unity of nature and art, of bush and farm, encapsulates Adelaide’s Arcadia. Adelaide and Dennis’ house is later built right at the farm’s boundary “on the western slope between the bush and the cleared paddocks” (136). The rest of their honeymoon involves Dennis cultivating their orchard under Adelaide’s instruction: “working out her poems into tangible realities” to construct a hybrid space. The bush is infused into the house as “Adelaide trained native clematis round her veranda posts, and, not to waste any time, she began training Dennis too” (228).

However, before long, the boundary between bush and farm becomes forbidding and threatening.

Disharmony and Restriction

As Adelaide’s vision of a marriage of compromise arises and the blending of art and nature begins to collapse, the harmonious boundary between farm and bush is problematised. The farm is signalled early as a male space and it increasingly keeps Dennis and Adelaide apart. As Dennis works towards establishing a refrigeration plant, to keep up with the “pastoral revolution” and serve the interests of the district, he is frequently absent, and when he returns to Adelaide, absent in mind (282). Adelaide does not initially understand either what Dennis is doing: “inwardly uncertain whether "refrigerating plants" were animal, vegetable or mineral”, or that he is doing it partly to be able to take her on a trip back to England (242). Dennis does not understand that what Adelaide wants is a slightly more civilised Dennis, and much more time with him to enjoy nature. There is a disunity between them, and it manifests in Adelaide experiencing the environment as restrictive and disjointed. Her relationship to the trees changes:

She ceased to take a pleasure in the murmuring of the Bush trees, and had a fancy they were exulting over her and saying, "You hear us now, don't you? You've nothing else to hear" (249).

In this context of isolation, Adelaide becomes pregnant, ill and is “expected to die” (251). The sense of enclosure and entrapment by the bush boundary becomes essential to the portrayal of loneliness and isolation. As Adelaide “lay in bed, in the silence and the solitude”, “The Bush trees became more and more unfriendly and insistent, crying, "You hear us now! You hear us now!"” (260). Her sense of her surroundings darkens to the extent that she

imagines each rain drop to be “saying something cruel” (260). In this Gothicised representation of Adelaide’s experience of environment, the bush has become wild and animated. The juxtaposition of the bush is no longer a complementary addition to the farm, but a symbol of both the disunity of her marriage and the maddening isolation it causes her.

Adelaide wastes away in heartbroken solitude and “All those who saw her began to say she would go, as her mother had done” (285). Adelaide “tried to console herself with the old consecrated cant (. . .) that a woman's place is in her home and a man's in the world” (285). This defeated concession of separation is a direct contrast with Adelaide’s Arcadian vision of a shared, hybrid space for herself and Dennis. The masculine and pragmatic space of the farm and its imperative of economic progress are at the centre of their marital disunity and Adelaide’s Gothic experience of space.

Death and Violence on the Farm

The pragmatic relationship to nature on the farm is a source of displeasure for Adelaide that she even avoids thinking about, preferring a more Arcadian vision:

As she did not examine the prosaic details of pastoral toil, she found a poetry in the thought of his peasant ancestry, and of his own open-air life spent in the culture of the earth and the tending of animals (229).

This demonstrates that Adelaide’s penchant for idealism extends to both bush and farm. Just as Adelaide’s Arcadian conception of the bush is corrupted by death, Adelaide is disillusioned of her Arcadian hopes for the farm when she discovers the grisly reality of Dennis’ work.

There are moments when Adelaide finds Dennis’ “extraordinary mixture of savage anger and of kindness” almost thrilling (210). When Adelaide is in the crevasse, she recalls an incident where Dennis “turned savage” and killed a kea that attacked a lamb, before putting the lamb out of its misery (210). Earlier, Adelaide thinks of Dennis’ “passionate” nature “with a slight tremor” after he strikes his horse, though “he apologised: “Yes, I forgot myself that time. Steady, lass, steady. There, I won't do it again.”” (85). Adelaide is told a cautionary tale of domestic violence by Evelyn: “Beryl Thornton married a publican, and he used to beat her and throw razors and things about” (87). Later we read how, when Dennis was a boy, Adelaide’s father “thrashed him without mercy” for riding an unbroken horse (253). However, none of this prepares Adelaide for the revelation that Dennis regularly

slaughters animals on the farm. Adelaide's illusions of the Arcadian farm crumble when Dennis returns home covered in blood:

"The blood of the sheep?" she said, "I don't understand."

"I've been killing, that's all," he answered shortly.

"Killing?" she repeated slowly.

"Yes, killing—cutting a sheep's throat," he said impatiently (266).

Dennis reminds Adelaide he is not "sat on a hill with a crook all day", stating "It wouldn't pay to keep sheep that way in New Zealand. I think there ought to be a Colonial version of the New Testament, it's misleading about shepherds" (266-267). Here, Grossman highlights the incongruity between classical pastoral constructions and colonial reality. Adelaide is intensely interested in Dennis' killing and feels "a spiritual loneliness and chill" (269). The culmination is Dennis' untroubled remembrance of killing the sheep dog they both played with as children: "He told her with a rugged and savage sincerity that crushed the girl's flower-like grace beneath it" (269-270).

Adelaide's stillbirth is the ultimate corruption of the fertility of Arcadia. It is not until the pregnant Adelaide is near death that Dennis finally turns down business commitments to stay with her (297). Dennis notices Adelaide's "face was ethereal and white, as if she were already in the mists and twilight of the unseen world" (291). She is now in the ultimate boundary between life and death. Her condition worsens:

Adelaide was floating in a thin, wild, windy air with no hold on earth, a region sounding with stifled cries and voices, now cold with deadly chills and now tearing her young flesh with fierce electric flames. Her dead father was drawing her over towards death, and her spirit longed to go to him and to rest (294-295).

Even after Adelaide's return from "the borderland of death" Dennis returns to his overworking ways (302). Adelaide despairs that "It is beginning all over again," and that she "cannot keep [Dennis] from the Frozen Meat Trade" (308).

Resolution in the Collapse of Boundaries

Finally, the resolution comes in the form of a storm that dissolves physical and personal boundaries and allows for the re-establishment of a marriage on Adelaide's terms in a hybrid

space of her own creation. Again, the sliprails are central as Dennis considers their relationship and the mixture of bush and farm:

He sat on the brae by the sliprails and looked first at his home against the Western hills, and then at the creek and the tree ferns. Here, after ten years' exile from her arms, he had gathered his love to himself again (298).

There, Dennis has a vision of Adelaide's funeral and a "ghostly procession" following her coffin, before seemingly summoning the storm himself:

[H]e cried without a sound to the strength of the mountains, and the dark heaven above, and to whatsoever power made and shaped them, to give back to him the body and the soul of his wife, safe and released from torment.

The sky grew black and a sudden storm swept across the earth (298-299).

The dominant imagery of the storm is of spatial boundaries collapsing: "A great tempest swept the hills and the valleys, and the snows came down from the mountains and turned green life into one white universal death" (313). The sense of the mixing and blending of spaces continues, its imagery like the melting of a landscape painting:

the tyrannous blasts and wild rains of the South West followed hard upon their tracks and bored through the white mass, then muddying it with soil from the hills, whirled it in dissolving fragments down all the water courses and the hollows (313).

Finally, the river floods the farmland as "the strength of man was mocked and the toil of his hands was laid low" (313-314). After the storm the farm is strewn with death and the previously defined spaces collapse into "mud and slush" (317):

Orchard and garden and the wide circle of paddocks and hills were mud and slush and on the Flat and in the higher levels of the river bed were stranded branches and rotten logs, and the carcasses of drowned sheep and cattle, tangled in grass and weeds (317).

Dennis initially despairs, "his silence [...] a dead wall of obstruction" (318). Imploring Dennis to stay with her, "Adelaide had made such a desperate attempt to break down the barrier" (325). She reminds him of the sacrifice of her isolation and loneliness and asks:

Haven't I any claim at all—not to a share in the profits—but to a share in my husband—in you, you, yourself, your thoughts, your time, your interests, all that I gave you up of mine?" (327).

Dennis promises "I'll never shut myself away from you again" (328). As Adelaide thanks Dennis, Grossman encapsulates the hybridity and unity Adelaide desires:

Adelaide slipped down from the couch and knelt on the floor by him, clasping his knee in an abandon that had something passionate and primitive, and yet was civilised and restrained by grace and prettiness (329).

Their happy ending involves the free enjoyment of the "wooded gullies and up the mountains" as they return to "the immortal childhood of nature", indifferent to the bemusement of others (331-332). Their relationship is also one of equality: "Mrs. MacDiarmid could make Mr. MacDiarmid do anything "whatever," and (. . .) he could always make her" (332).

As Adelaide and Dennis "explored the hills around", the former threat of the wild is glaringly absent; this is artistic licence from Grossman, but also a demonstration that mobility, autonomy, marital equality and unity are the fundamental concerns of the novel, rather than realistic commitment to the true character of the bush or the farm (332). Wilderness is ultimately a conceptual tool for boundary making and breaking in this novel. Nonetheless, this use of the bush and the farm is deeply revealing, drawing on the necessity of boundary management in Arcadian spaces and the threat of the wild to them.

Conclusion

The Heart of the Bush demonstrates the complex spatial dynamics of Arcadian conceptions of the farm and the bush and the fraught co-constitution of those spaces. Grossman imagines Arcadian possibilities of the farm and the bush through a feminist lens, and challenges them through Gothic incursions of the forces of wilderness that disrupt the harmonious balance of hybrid spaces. The problematisation of space couples with the novel's interrogation of the place of women in settler pastoral society. The Arcadian conception of a hybrid space blending nature and culture is tied to a feminist vision of marital compromise and female autonomy. The novel demonstrates the perilous balance of nature and culture in the New

Zealand Arcadian myth, revealing its dependence upon conceptual boundary management and its antipathy towards wilderness. Grossman capitalises upon the instability of the nature/wilderness binary in representing the various manifestations of the bush, demonstrating the complexity of the Arcadian myth's use of the bush as its wild other. The fear of the wilderness is mobilised as its forces corrupt the Arcadian potential of Adelaide's vision of both bush and farm. Adelaide experiences the corruption of her Arcadian views of the bush and the farm through death, violence, and maddening isolation and restriction. Using boundary spaces to represent the tensions in the hybridity of Arcadian formations of both the bush and the farm, Grossman examines the difficulty of a woman's desire for more autonomy and marital compromise in settler society. Thus, in *The Heart of the Bush*, Grossman uses the Gothic to capitalise on the duplicity of the bush and the ecophobic attitude towards wilderness, problematising Arcadian spaces and boundaries in a feminist critique of settler society.

3. Instability

In this section, I will demonstrate settler writers' use of the Gothic to destabilise boundaries of the farm, and how this destabilisation engages with the ecophobic binaries constituting the Arcadian myth. I will analyse how Dora Wilcox's "Onawe" destabilises the temporal boundaries of the farm through the Gothic mechanics of haunting, to unsettle the wild past and express settler anxiety over the pastoral future. I will then show how Arthur Henry Adams' "The Dwellings of our Dead" demonstrates the settler fear of unstable, unbounded spaces, associating those spaces with a Gothic vision of unstable sense of self and nationhood. Finally, I analyse the radical instability of the frontier boundary between farm and bush in William Satchell's *The Toll of the Bush*, where the corrupting instability and regressive force of the bush are Gothic threats to progress and to the conceptual binaries underpinning the Arcadian myth. Unlike Grossman, Satchell ultimately uses instability in a paradoxical effort to affirm settler pastoral progress. The farm is presented as an ordered space of progress under threat, to be protected from the bush. It is an example of boundaries being destabilised only to be rigidified; however, the Gothic instability raises problems for the Arcadian myth that undermine Satchell's affirmation of it.

Unstable Time: "Onawe"

In "Onawe", the farm's boundary is not with a wild bush, but a past seen as wild. As demonstrated in "The Colonist", the Arcadian myth depends upon the banishment of the wild to the past. Wilcox uses the Gothic temporality of haunting to destabilise the paired binary of savage past and civilised present to evoke fear of the transience of the pastoral epoch and the fragility of settlement. This is combined with an image of an unstable boundary: a crumbling pā fortress that takes the place of the farm fence. This image suggests both the incongruity of the farm in New Zealand and its vulnerability. Wilcox undermines the Arcadian "idealisation of stability" that Gifford identifies (20). In 1832, The Ōnawe pā was taken by Ngāti Toa chief, Te Rauparaha, after a bloody battle against the Ngāi Tahu occupants (Tau 6). Wilcox plays with the history of the setting to invoke the fear of incomplete or tenuous settlement. Through reference to this history, the temporal dynamics of haunting, rhetorical effects and peculiarly New Zealand imagery, Wilcox imagines the threat of a violent past haunting the peaceful present, embodied by a pastoral scene. The poem also reveals a racist component of

the ecophobic stance towards wilderness, as Māori are aligned with a past environment constructed as threatening and violent.

The poem begins with Arcadian scenes of the present:

Peaceful it is: the long light glows and glistens

On English grass;

Sweet are the sounds upon the ear that listens;— (lines 1-3).

The metonymic association of settlers and settlement with grass and the pastoral system is developed throughout the poem and expresses the centrality of people's relationship with the land to their way of life. The designation of "English grass" subtly suggests a non-European poetic voice or perspective, an element that intensifies throughout the poem. The alliteration and consonance lengthen the first line, affording it a lulling, leisurely repetitiveness and evoking stability. The harmony of the natural environment is captured by the enjambment between the first and second stanza, creating a sense of spatial interconnection: "The winds that pass / Rustle the tussock, the birds are calling" (4-5). The peacefulness of the environment is characterised by this harmony and the animated but subdued surrounding ocean environment: birds are "calling", the sea "murmurs", the tides are "lazy", and the sounds are "sweet" (5, 7, 11, 3).

The poem returns to the pastoral scene with a subtle sense of threat:

All undisturbed the Pakeha's herds are creeping

Along the hill;

On lazy tides the Pakeha's sails are sleeping,

And all is still (13-16).

The conditional implication of "undisturbed" carries a subtle threat. The sense of a Māori voice, observing and remonstrating the Arcadian complacency, undermines the imagery of peaceful stillness. The sense of threat escalates as the past breaks through the scene:

Here once the mighty Atua had his dwelling

In mystery,

And hence weird sounds were heard at midnight, swelling

Across the sea (17-20).

Here, Wilcox contrasts a clamorous, frightening, mysterious Māori environment with the peaceful quietude of the present. This imagining of an alienating environment expresses settler anxiety over the fact that Māori have a longer history on the land than settlers.

The poem recalls the Ōnawe battle where “once the Haka sounded; and din of battle / Shook the grey crags” and the violence “Startled the shags” (17-18, 20). The natural world is disturbed by the battle, portraying the Māori environment as a violent past, in contrast with the gentle and harmonious pastoral landscape with its English herds. The Māori relationship with the land is portrayed as elevated, dynamic and violent; a chaotic contrast to the pastoral imagery. The sixth stanza mixes the violent past and the peaceful present:

And now with peace upon this isthmus narrow,
With Maori blood
Once red!—these heaps of stones,—a greenstone arrow
Rough-hewn and rude! (21-24).

The repetition of “once” in stanzas four to six is insistent, almost incantatory, reviving the blood soaked past, which now stands aside and contextualises the present. The lineation also embodies this temporal confusion with “And now” and “Once” both beginning lines and heightening the sense of incongruity and paradox. The “heaps of stones” are the ruined pā, a distinctively Māori substitute for the classic ruined Gothic castle. In the final stanza, the pā’s fortifications become a substitute for the farm fence.

The seventh stanza portrays haunting absence rather than peace. The hills are “lonely”, and the absence of Māori is associated with a haunting presence in the environment: “No sight, no sound! The weird wild wailing only / Of gull instead” (25, 27-28). The “weird sounds” that were heard in the time of the “mighty Atua” now corrupt the pastoral scene, as the wild past punctuates the temporal boundaries of Arcadia. The natural environment of the present is now threatening rather than subdued.

In penultimate stanza, the threat of the Māori past becomes more definite as the speaker asks:

Come not the Rangatira hither roaming
As once of yore,
To dance a Ghostly Haka in the gloaming,

And feast once more? (29-32).

The rhetorical question mimics settler anxiety over the unearthing of the violent past. In the final stanza, the voice becomes definitively Māori as it warns and haunts settlers:

Tene koe Pakeha! within this fortification
Grows English grass—
Tena koe! Subtle conqueror of a nation
Doomed, doomed to pass! (33-36).

The border of the farm is imagined as the ruined fortifications of the pā. Making this the boundary of the farm portrays an image of both incongruity and vulnerability. The “fortress” from another time and people simultaneously symbolises the borders of time that the poem erodes, the vulnerability and transience of settlement, and the incongruity of the Arcadian in the New Zealand natural and cultural environment. The cultural juxtaposition is as important as the juxtaposition that emerges between wild environment and farm, its incongruity evoking displacement and dispossession of both Māori and Pākehā.

“Onawe” forms an unsettling response to Arcadian assertions of resolved conquest, political and environmental, such as those found in “The Colonist”. Wilcox’s use of haunting to destabilise the division between past and present not only disrupts Arcadian harmony, but also historicises the farm. This invites settlers to confront their history as “subtle conqueror”, the “creeping” herd, for now “undisturbed”. However, Wilcox’s Gothic also utilises the racist ecophobic binary of Pākehā/Māori, along with her destabilisation of the wilderness/civilisation and past/present binaries. The final image of the ruined fortress as the boundary of a farm encapsulates the incongruity of the Arcadian, in light of a history that includes the displacement of another people and entails the vulnerability of settlement itself. The farm’s temporal boundaries are eroded, from an ahistorical eternal Arcadia, to a place with a connection to a troubling past and uncertain future.

Unstable Space and Self: “The Dwellings of our Dead”

Kylie Crane discusses the link between the “process of cultivation, of becoming enclosed, and of consequently becoming civilization” (46). In “The Dwellings of our Dead”, Arthur Henry Adams demonstrates an anxious awareness of this association as he problematises the incompleteness of settlement through the image of unmarked graves in the undefined,

unbounded and uncultivated spaces of early settlement. These spaces, including the bush and fledgling farms, are presented as unstable ground for settlement and become images that call for a consolidation of nationhood linked to pastoral expansion. Adams finds a Gothic resonance in the ecophobic binary of bounded/unbounded. In the unmarked graves, untethered to any form of European culture or cultivation, the dead are reclaimed by nature, anonymised and lost to time. This Gothic envisioning of the threat of uncultivated space to selfhood evokes the collapse of the human/non-human binary.

The poem begins with a profoundly un-Arcadian vision of environment:

They lie unwatched, in waste and vacant places,
In sombre bush or wind-swept tussock spaces,
Where seldom human tread
And never human trace is—
The dwellings of our dead! (Lines 1-5).

The speaker bemoans the lack of “human trace” or human presence in the “waste” spaces where dead settlers lie. Lack of cultivation, and European culture in these environments is associated with a sense of instability. Rather than the recognisable cultural significations of death such as “incense reeling” or the “chant of choir or sob of organ peeling”, there are only empty natural environments that anonymise the dead and echo their anguish over a lack of identity (11, 12). The speaker lists a range of places where the dead lie: the “quiet bush” where a “maddened” tūi “Shouts incoherently”; a “gully” where the native plants “mourn and murmur” in a “pageantry of woe”; the “common trench” resulting from warring between settler and Māori, where the settler “thought to tame the tameless” and “won their barren crown” (21-33).

Though settlers have begun to cultivate the “barren”, “waste” spaces, the nascent farms, “unfenced” and “margeless”, offer only a “Glint” of “greener grasses” (8, 16, 20, 19). The “drifting flock”, appearing only “far in misty masses”, adds to the sense of being untethered and ungrounded (17, 18). On these undefined plains are “forgotten graves” which “have yielded / Earth to free earth again” (9-10). There is a fear of disappearing into an unfamiliar, undefined environment, embodying an ecophobic vision of the threat of uncontrolled, unbounded wilderness to the human subject. In this space, the boundary between human and non-human is threatened.

The “nameless” dead, “forgotten graves” and unsanctified return of people as “Earth to free earth”, create a sense of anxiety over personal identity that is linked to a need for national identity (34, 10, 33). Adams portrays a Gothic image of the dead in a state of restless, haunting disquiet:

But in their sleep, like troubled children turning,
A dream of mother-country in them burning,
They whisper their despair,
And one vague, voiceless yearning
Burdens the pausing air ... (36-40).

The “one vague” voice of the dead, adds to the impression of the loss of identity. As the dead are given voice, there is a sense of a vacuum of time that adds to the notion of a lack of history:

“ Unchanging here the drab year onward presses;
No Spring comes trysting here with new-loosed tresses ,
And never may the years
Win Autumn's sweet caresses —
Her leaves that fall like tears (41-45).

This voice of the dead yearns for “the voice of him who preaches / And the deep organ's call”, and also for a tomb with “cool, grey, lichen wall” (47-48, 50). This yearning for aged European structures conveys the desire for signs of ownership and settler history in the land.

The poem’s resolution begins when possession overcomes instability. The speaker states “But they are ours”, affirming a connection to the nameless dead (51). The speaker also resolves the alienating wild spaces by claiming the bush: “And till all Time shall cease / Our brooding bush shall fold them” (53-54). The resolution implies that achieving nationhood will finally honour the dead, who share in the ownership of place:

They lie in splendour lone—
The nation of their making
Their everlasting throne! (58-60).

The way Adams uses space in his evocation and resolution of settler anxiety demonstrates the significance of the farm as a signal of stable ownership, culture and possession. Adams crafts a Gothic vision of the uncultivated land as a vacuum of identity, threatening selfhood by destabilising the human/non-human binary. The Arcadian farm is an ordered and bounded space, a manifestation of ownership and control over the land and an antidote to the disordered, anonymising and unfamiliar bush. Unlike in “Onawe”, the problem is not a suppressed history, but a lack of settler history. The poem yearns for defined, ordered spaces with the signs of human work and history recognisable to settlers. The Gothicised anxiety over inchoate spaces that thwart individual and national identity demonstrates another facet of the ecophobic binaries underlying the Arcadian myth’s construction of bush and the farm and its drive for progress and control.

Corruptive Instability: *The Toll of the Bush*

William Satchell’s *The Toll of the Bush* uses Gothic instability to problematise the physical frontier of pastoral settlement and the boundary between bush and farm, and to negotiate doubt about pastoral progress. The poetic opposition of light and dark communicates the instability of the boundary between the bush and farm, as the progress of pastoral settlement is threatened by proximity to the corrupting, ancient bush. The novel is set in the Hokianga, in the fictional pastoral settlement Wairangi, which is surrounded by an “impenetrable sea of scrub” (2). There, Geoffrey Hernshaw and his brother Robert both seek a living and love. The central romance between Geoffrey and Eve is thwarted by Eve’s other suitor, Reverend Fletcher. The reverend is aided by the vengeful Englishman Bethwick, who believes Geoffrey wronged him back in England. Mr Anderson, father of Lena (who is Robert’s love interest), is a violent, absent, alcoholic who cannot provide for his family. He causes chaos and destruction, eventually threatening the entire settlement as he descends into an animalistic state.

The central binaries of the novel reflect a tension between progress and regression. The progressive pastoral nation’s challenges and fears are concentrated at the boundary between the modern farm and the ancient corrupting bush, as the action weaves in and out of those spaces. Faith and reason are opposed as Geoffrey’s scientific rationalism is pitted against Eve’s Christian faith. Māori and Pākehā are juxtaposed in their relation to the different spaces. Humanity and inhumanity are explored through the transformations of Mr

Anderson. Contamination is a frequent concern. Among the casualties of the bush's corruption are domestic harmony, the order and productivity of the farm, and humanity itself.

The tensions of the novel are finally resolved through a cataclysmic fire, which destabilises the significance of light and dark, and pushes the threat of the bush back. However, the resolution rings hollow in the face of the Gothic representation of the bush, which instils it with agency and ecological significance. Satchell attempts to portray the instability that the wilderness engenders as an opportunity for the interrelated transformation of environment, society and the individual. Instability is a tool to Gothicise doubt about settler project and progress; its resolution is an attempt to resolve that doubt. However, though doubts about the settler colonial project are raised and dispelled, a Gothic taint persists, having raised haunting, lingering questions about the risk of regression.

In *The Toll of the Bush*, there are two primary layers of instability developed through light and dark. The first is the physical and cultural instability caused by the corrupting darkness of the bush which represents the wild, ancient forces of regression. The second is the radical destabilisation of the meaning of light and dark themselves in the form of fire, which destabilises the moral framework of the novel. In this instability, moral and spiritual questions of the battle between old and new are swept aside as fate assures the march of progress.

The dynamic of light and dark is primarily applied to the bush and the farm, but extends to many aspects of the novel, often related to the bush/farm dichotomy. We frequently see comparisons such as a “paddock of maize extending back to the standing bush, and presenting in its vivid green a strong contrast to the sombre foliage of the forest” (283). The predominantly negative associations of darkness and positive ones of light are clear from the Gothic representation of darkness and from several narratorial comments:

The heart expands rapidly in the sunshine, and whereas in the shade of poverty growth is slow and subject to relapses, in the light of prosperity it comes rapidly to a head (201).

Satchell's use of light and dark facilitates an ambivalent representation of the bush, which forms the backdrop to the central conflicts and binaries of the novel: faith and reason, human and animal, Māori and Pākehā, and order and disorder, progress and regression. The central binaries and conflicts are finally variously resolved, reorganised or obliterated through fire, which complicates the light/dark binary and transforms the physical surroundings, pushing the boundary of the bush further from settlement. It is in this chaos that redemption is found,

true love is rekindled, Māori are westernised, and pastoral destruction of the bush progresses. Satchell pairs the reformation of land and its boundaries with the resolution of the central plot dynamics. The bush holds a mirror to the pastoral and comes to represent the opportunities that can be realised through its destruction and the formation of settler pastoral society.

The ordered paddock, the Edenic garden and the harmonious house are central images of the pastoral in *The Toll of the Bush*. Satchell does not portray a realised Arcadia, but he does gesture towards it. The first image of the farm is a disordered one. The wilderness of the bush threatens to infect the pastoralists and their cultivated spaces. The conduit for this notion is Pine, a Māori farmer, whose block bordering the bush lacks definite boundaries:

The only signs of cultivation were the bleached maize stems of the previous season. Old fruit-trees—chiefly peach, quince, and fig—grouped themselves at various points. Cattle, horses, pigs, dogs, fowls, ducks roamed everywhere through the broken fences at their own sweet will (5).

The scene encapsulates Pine's failure, as a Māori farmer, to create the European conception of order necessary for the Arcadian myth. The lack of human control is emphasised, even the trees have an implied wilfulness as they "grouped themselves". The danger of such a lack of boundaries is shown later, when Robert's potato crop and garden are destroyed by bullocks that entered through an open sliprail (270). Pine's own bullock is allowed to venture into the bush when it is not needed for work (7). With this lack of boundaries between bush and farm, there is also an implication of inherent Māori wildness, or connection to the bush. This dynamic is part of Māori's supposed ineffectiveness at farming. Geoffrey's sentiment is that the disordered, unproductive Māori-owned land would be better run by Pākehā:

' . . . It seems to me that the only land worth having in this north country is in the hands of the natives.'

'They were here first, I suppose?' Robert said.

'Yes, that is a good argument so far as it goes, but meantime the white men are sitting round on the hills eating grass, and the country is at a standstill (6).

The progress of the country is linked to the productive pastoral enterprise, and Māori presented as contrary to its necessary order.

The spaces of the ordered, Pākehā farm are presented as light: “The peaceful homestead, in its setting of lawns and groves, shone out vivid and clean cut as a cameo in the last white light” (250). The domestic ideal is also portrayed as light, while its breakdown is pervaded by darkness. Eve’s garden, a central signifier of domestication on the farm, is an Edenic image, with Eve “gathering the scarlet hibiscus blooms in the garden, her long fair hair, alive with sunlight, falling below her waist” (143). In contrast, when Mrs Anderson finally leaves the home of her drunken husband, the breakdown of the domestic situation is portrayed as a fall into darkness (207). Her daughter, Lena, returns to the house and her despairing realisation is linked to the “gathering darkness” of nightfall, the only hope the “slender rays” of starlight entering the window (205, 207). Domestic decay is also portrayed through the breakdown of the farm’s boundaries as Mr Anderson returns to find his abandoned property in disarray:

A few lean cows were cropping the weeds close under the broken windows, and an agitated pig rooted violently near the front door. The slip-rail was down, and a part of the fence had disappeared bodily (280).

However, the novel also undercuts the imagery of light on the farm by ruminating on its origins in death and destruction. Images of clearings “black from a recent burn” and trees “rising scorched and leafless from the black soil” appear throughout (4, 149). This signifies Satchell’s concern with the morality of the ecological destruction of pastoral expansion.

As in *The Heart of the Bush*, the bush is represented in varying and contradictory ways. The bush is frequently described as ‘black’ or ‘dark’: “the black bush-covered lands” with “dark unvisited depths” (4, 373). In the bush’s most terrifying incarnation, when Geoffrey and Eve are lost in the bush during the fire, it is represented as truly hellish. Satchell uses the familiar Gothic wilderness trope of nature imbued with agency and mystical power. When Eve and Geoffrey are lost in the bush, the dense vegetation is a “pit of terrors” dominated by the “snake-like”, “hellish” supplejack (kareao), whose “dead sooty blackness [...] had displaced the vivid green of fern tree and palm” (385). The aberrance of the space is furthered by “Monstrous plants of strange growth and in unnumbered variety” as they “choked the earth” (384).

Earlier, there is an example of the bush exemplifying the Edenic wild as Eve views the “unbroken forest” with “musing eyes”:

[F]ern-tree and palm and springing sapling formed a continuous curtain of greenery at the feet of the lofty trees. A sweet earthy odour mingled with the honeyed breath of a myriad flowers. High in the flaming rata trees the wild bees hummed. Now and again a pigeon flew with a silky whisper of wings from one bough to another. The tui's note sounded briefly, a scatter of pearls. No jarring sound broke the serene peace of this temple of life (148).

Eve's positive portrayal imposes order and design, through metaphors evoking human construction: the "curtains" and the familiar "temple" trope used to defuse wild spaces by presenting them as God's designs. The words "continuous" and "mingled" emphasise the harmony of this place. Wilderness is carefully shaped with the parameters of order and harmony under God's careful design, rather than having "snake-like" agency. The religious connotation is consistent with Eve's convictions of faith.

The ambivalence of the bush makes it flicker between sympathetic and repulsive, and its "toll" between righteous and evil. Eve reflects upon the destruction of the bush, saying, "the tuis are not so plentiful as they were. Soon the forests will be as silent as a graveyard", to which Geoffrey replies, "Soon they themselves will be gone" (145). Geoffrey continues: "Yes, civilisation is a ruthless thing. One is sometimes tempted to ask if it is worth the cost, but we are bound to think so. That is a thing we dare not disbelieve" (146). The Gothic is a vehicle for imagining that very disbelief in Arcadian progress.

The novel entertains the notion of the forest's mystical power, never confirming nor denying the reality of "a spirit in these forests same as in a man" (357). The "bushmen", tree fellers, such as Mr Anderson, are fearful of the titular 'toll' which the "forest demands (...) of its destroyers" (145-146). The bushman Mark Gird is said to have fallen victim to this magical force, paying his toll when he is "Struck by a flying branch" that left him unable to move, apparently in a coma: "the man who was dead and yet lived", himself as still as the forest (50, 55). The "superstition" is that, having paid his toll, the forest would not harm Gird, protecting Wairangi from "vegetable vengeance" while he lived (50, 146).

The significance of the frontier boundary is elevated by the real oppositional relationship between the farm and the bush. As settlers are actively expanding pastoral land by destroying the bush, the bush threatens the order of the farm. The farm's boundary with the bush is sometimes portrayed menacingly, "like the jaws of darkness itself" (135). The physical boundary of the frontier inspires doubt about the settler project. Geoffrey's scientific viewpoint is associated with pragmatism and a desire for progress. Doubtful of "any hope for the wretched country" covered with "clay and scrub and precipices, with here and there an

acre of orchard” he wonders “What’s the good of going on” (3). Later, Eve views the boundary, and the march of progress, with a reverence for the forest inflected with her Christian faith and even guilt. For her, the “evidences of toil everywhere, the blackened trees, the fallen logs, some with deep axe marks in them, the wilting grass among the stumps”, contrast with the “untouched virgin forest” and lead her to wonder, like Geoffrey, whether “the task set was too great, that God had forgotten” (190). However, she shakes the thought and instead views the red leaves of the rata as a sign of the violence on God’s creation: “the beautiful blue heaven was flecked with blood’ (190).

The bush also mediates the conflict between faith and reason. Faith, described by one character as a “primitive capacity of belief”, is associated with the primeval bush and the Pākehā superstitions and Māori beliefs that surround it (400). The notion of the bush’s mystical power is present throughout the novel. Geoffrey’s scepticism about the toll of the bush leads to a debate with Eve about faith and science. Geoffrey extolls the virtues of science as a “road into the unknown” and “foundation of the civilised world” (147). He is given a far greater persuasive voice than Eve, who “dreamily” asks of him, enraptured by the peace and beauty of the bush, “Is there nothing (. . .) that comes to you through the leaves out of the great Unknown?” (148). The novel seems to favour reason, yet the supernatural is never fully explained away.

Eve eventually marries Reverend Fletcher, persuaded by Bethwick’s false reports of Geoffrey’s misconduct in England. When she discovers Geoffrey’s innocence, she flees her wedding reception into the bush, where Geoffrey later rescues her from the fire that rages in it. When they find themselves in the darkest reaches of the bush, both faith and science fail them. They are surrounded by botanical monstrosity, with “twisting” black canes and “hideous fungoid growths (384, 385). There is no god in this arboreal hell from “the imagination of a Dante”, but nor can science penetrate the “obscurity of the forest roof” or rationalise and dissolve the “monstrous” (384). In the bush, Geoffrey and Eve find a space that is inscrutable by either of their favoured lenses. Not guided by an orderly Edenic bower, nor able to navigate scientifically, there is a suggestion that they must revert to more primordial senses: “in the mysterious murmur of the leaves they read the signal of approaching darkness” (385). Immediately after Geoffrey declares the futility of their “blind burrowing through the growths”, they happen upon their welcoming bower “as though there were a charm in the words to break momentarily the net that held them” (384, 386). Forces, unknown to either of them are their salvation. Though Eve retains her faith, and Geoffrey, his rationalism, the limitations of their views are revealed in the fire. If we were in any doubt

about the limits of faith, Reverend Fletcher dies after riding off the burnt down bridge, his own faith, "*thinking the bridge was there*", failing him (400).

In the chaos of the fire, fate guides Geoffrey and Eve. When Eve asks Geoffrey how he found her amidst the expanse of burning bush, he replies "Fate" (388). Stafford and Williams note that "The doctrinal questions that Satchell's lovers raise are unresolved" and suggest that "a Hardyesque destiny or perhaps random chance (. . .) prevailed rather than providence or the operations of a purely materialist universe" (236). At the mercy of the bush and the fire, fate supplants their conflicting ways of navigating the world. In the same way, fate seems to condemn the bush, and affirm the march of pastoral expansion.

The fire, the bush and the poetics of light and dark are central to Mr Anderson's regressive transformation into a raging animalistic state. This collapse of the human/nonhuman binary is Satchell's starkest use of the Gothic to destabilise Arcadian binaries. The "yeoman" that Belich identifies as hero of Arcadian civilisation, regresses to a wild animal as a result of the contaminating, corrupting bush. The descriptions of light and dark become unstable as he transforms and lights the deadly fire that threatens Wairangi. Mr Anderson's return to drinking and his vengeful arson is preceded by his appearance at a crossroads of light and dark, as he looks "upwards into the glittering heights, and down into the trembling misty depths" and considers jumping into the "mighty well of darkness" (285). Instead, he is lured by "the light of the great kerosene lamp over the doorway of the hotel" and its promise of alcohol (285-286). After he entered the "tremendous obscurity of the bush", en route to the public house, "A rage of animal desire possessed him. His lips moved, his throat checked and swallowed, his eyes glowed like hot coals" (287, 288). The animalistic rage that consumes him immediately before committing arson is associated with the "evil influence" of the moon: "the creature of the night", a quintessential symbol of both light and dark (294, 295). Adding to the lycanthropic implication, Mr Anderson emits "a laugh, like the cry of an animal that sees its prey in sight" (295). From the "midst" of the "doomed bush", Anderson emerges as "the monster the night had hatched" (295).

The fire Sven Anderson starts is described as a "monster (. . .) hidden, roaring angrily in the dry heart of the woods" (296). The fire is represented as the spirit of the bush which is "revealed to its center", before "waxing in brilliance to the point when, as it seemed, it must perforce burst into indistinguishable flame" (296). The bush, formerly dark, is now expelling its energy as a destructive "incandescence" (296). The fire finally destroys the previous significance of light and dark and initiates or facilitates every resolution in the novel.

Just as the fire resolves the question of faith and reason, and handily dispenses of the Reverend, the other tensions in the novel are resolved in the midst of its chaotic destruction (354). The fire finally reconciles the destruction of the bush with the creative transformation of pastoral progress.

Though significant damage is done, with someone reporting that “Half the houses are gone, the crops are destroyed”, the fire ultimately spares the settlement and pushes the boundary of the bush further back (327). In a similar inversion to that of light and dark, the moral question of deforestation is dissolved as the destruction is blamed on “the titanic forces of nature, inexorable, eternal”, which dwarf the “human weakling”, ignoring the fact that one of those weaklings started the fire (297). The question of the “blood toll” the bush demands is also resolved. During the fire, Stephen, an “old bushman”, states “the bush is out for its utu” and worries for Eve’s safety (356, 357). However, the toll is finally paid by the Reverend Fletcher. Upon finding his body, Stephen labels his death “the mark of the bush” (399). Even the arsonist, Mr Anderson is redeemed as he saves his children from the fire he started in “an act of sublime heroism” (299). However, the bush collects another toll as Mr Anderson is killed by a falling tree.

Another symbol of ‘progress’ arising from the fire is Pine’s transformation from a disordered, lazy farmer to someone who suits the Arcadian myth’s vision of productivity. Pine, who was paid for assisting the rescue effort during the fire, now “has a wooden house and a flock of sheep and lives like a pakeha”, his “extensive property” exuding “opulence”, rather than unproductive waste (417).

Exemplary of co-constitution and its related concept, contamination, the instability of the frontier, with the farm in the shadow of a looming, corrupting bush, initially encapsulates settler doubt about the morality and very possibility of pastoral progress. The Gothic raises questions about the agency of the bush, and the unstable humanity of settlers. The novel thus captures the uncertainty of a settler future whose habitat and identity are similarly in flux. Satchell’s fiery resolution affirms pastoral progress by aligning the destruction and chaos of pastoral expansion to creative energy, and reformation. Unlike the hybridity of *The Heart of the Bush*, Satchell resolves binaries through assimilation, evolution and destruction. However, incinerating one half of the problematic binaries is ultimately unsatisfactory. The real problems the novel identifies – unproductiveness, disorder, domestic breakdown, ideological conflict, moral decay – are, like the bush, not fully destroyed, but linger, ready to contaminate the farm and undermine the Arcadian. Satchell uses the ecophobic potential of

the wilderness/civilisation binary to make the bush a projection of the capacity for regression, which is within the settlers themselves.

Conclusion

Instability is a versatile trope of the Gothic. The temporal, spatial, cultural, and moral instability of the Arcadian are all evoked through the Gothic, raising insistent questions: is the farm a stable space, symbolising the achievement of the Arcadian project and nationhood, or is it an inherently unstable space with a troubling history just beneath its surface? Will settlers forge identity and nationhood from an amorphous and indifferent bush, or will it subsume them? Is the boundary of the bush a destabilising threat to settler progress, or will the wild force of fire simultaneously guarantee progress and absolve settlers? Though a writer may answer these questions, the Gothic often maintains the contradictions and preserves the paradoxes after their superficial resolution.

4. Expansion

The opening pages of John Bell's *In the Shadow of the Bush: A New Zealand Romance* (1899) demonstrate Kuzma's conception of the "dominant set of attitudes" towards the pastoral transformation of the landscape. The narrator presents, perhaps with a touch of irony, the productivity and progress that are the consolation for environmental destruction that is primarily figured as an aesthetic loss:

To the artistic eye, the bush clearings, especially in their earlier stages, may appear as a sore blemish on the face of the landscape. Thickly strewn with blackened logs and branches, and with, perhaps, some remaining giants of the forest still standing, but scorched and dead and gaunt in leafless nakedness, these clearings certainly stand out in ugly contrast with the virgin native bush, whose hundred shades of green, and wealth of feathery fronds, and rich carpet of fern growth must ever delight the eye of the lover of the beautiful in nature (2).

The "wealth" and "rich" fertility of the bush are only metaphorical for the narrator, who assures us that "viewed only with regard to the utility of things, these bush clearings, unsightly though they be, afford ample grounds for satisfaction" (2). This satisfaction is in productivity: the "vigorous growth of grass", the soil of "great fertility" and plentiful livestock (2). We are told the "primitive clearings" will be turned to productive land through "Time, and the action of fire, coupled with the continuous hard work" of settlers (2). The "improvements" include the establishment of "fences", "garden and orchard", the replacement of the "slab wharé" with "neat weatherboard cottage" and the formation of "townships" (2-3). The passage almost gleefully describes destruction of bush and the return of the land to a "primitive" barren state as necessary process for the achievement of settlement. For other writers, such an untroubled acceptance of the means and dynamics of 'progress' and conviction in its success is not possible.

In this section, I will consider how Settler writers transform the temporal and spatial dynamics of deforestation into Gothic challenges to the narrative elements of the Arcadian myth. Writers draw from the transitional phase of pastoral expansion to disrupt the ecophobic present/past binary that encapsulates the Arcadian myth's narrative of morally righteous improvement of the land. Helen Tiffin explains that the colonialist belief that "the destruction of primal forest and its replacement with human tilling" was justified by a capitalist conception of progress:

Settler-invaders were not, from their perspectives, murdering the inhabitants and destroying indigenous ecosystems; they were rendering their 'new' land 'fruitful' (xiii).

However, as I have outlined, the instability of the wilderness/nature binary and the dynamic of co-constitution means that "primal forest" is not a stable conceptual 'other' to the Arcadian farm. When representing deforestation, this instability is heightened, as writers oscillate between mourning the bush as nature and celebrating the conversion of the wild bush into pastoral land. I will analyse how writers use the Gothic to process this heightened instability and construct ecologically motivated challenges to the Arcadian myth. William Pember Reeves' "The Passing of the Forest" uses the Gothic imagery of bodily mutilation to poetically collapse the human/non-human binary to consider settlers' tenuous relationship with the land they have destructively transformed. The expansion of the farm's boundaries into the bush also results in the dissolution of boundaries as the bush is reduced to wasteland. Dora Wilcox and Blanche Baughan both use the Gothic to capitalise on this incongruous dynamic of pastoral expansion. Wilcox's "The Last of the Forest" uses haunting prosopopoeia to construct an environmental plea to settlers. Wilcox uses the Gothic to elevate and foreground the waste and emptiness that follow deforestation, imagining the shared anguish of settlers and nature in that space. Wilcox avoids the usual dialectic of an unproductive, aesthetically pleasing past with the productive Arcadian future and instead creates a unique engagement with environmental loss facilitated by the Gothic. Blanche Baughan also problematises the transitional space of pastoral expansion; however, Baughan's focus is pragmatic rather than ethical and she ultimately resolves the Gothic challenges to the Arcadian myth. Baughan's "Burnt Bush" challenges the Arcadian myth by problematising the farm's origin in death, before finally affirming nature's blessing of settlers. In contrast, Baughan's "A Bush Section" imagines the absence of nature's blessing upon the Arcadian project, envisioning an inertia to progress that threatens to trap settlers in a Gothic wasteland. Finally, Baughan affirms pastoral progress by evoking settlers' own creative capacity to master nature and shape their destiny.

The Embodied Bush: "The Passing of the Forest"

Andrew McCann defends the ecological value of Romantic elegiac writing's aestheticisation of nature as a rejection of an instrumental view of nature, rather than an evasion of nature's

materiality. Writing about the Australian context, he describes the use of the Romantic mode as a counterpoint to notions of progress through pastoral expansion:

Romanticism's normative moment – a moment at which an aesthetic detachment from the increasingly pervasive imperatives of instrumental rationality makes it possible to glimpse a relationship to nature through which the true malevolence of modernity is evident (72-73).

McCann also argues that the Romantic mode risks simultaneously creating an opposite impulse towards “instrumentality”, and that the culmination of this is the Gothic rendering of environment (73, 80). McCann suggests that through the “hypostasization” of Romantic elegiac poetics into Gothic effects, “the spectrality evident in elegy gives way to the prefabricated and prosaically packaged terror of literary sensationalism” (80). However, though this may fairly represent the Gothic in its most commodified and popular performance as genre, it does not capture the full range of the Gothic as a mode that can transcend genre performance or permeate other genres of writing. Here, I will argue that the Gothic can in fact resist or at least undermine the collapse of romantic elegy into a defence of progress and resist the “commodification” of nature. An ecoGothic approach demonstrates that, in “The Passing of the Forest”, it is the Gothic rendering of ecological damage and its political dimensions that resists aestheticism's collapse into a defence of instrumentality.

William Pember Reeves' “The Passing of the Forest” demonstrates the romantic elegiac elements McCann discusses, but it also has an ecological viewpoint, mourning the environment and its interconnected elements. The nation is constructed of land, flora and fauna and, though unnamed, the people. The nation is represented as an organic and political being, and colonisation is presented as an ecological assault upon, and conquering of, Māori land. Central to this is a metaphor that shades into the Gothic as deforestation is portrayed as a mutilation of an environment that is the foundation of settler nationhood. In an anthropomorphic collapse of the human/non-human binary, the representation of deforestation through the Gothic image of bodily mutilation conveys fear about the damaged interconnections between people and land as a result of deforestation. Settlers' harm towards nature undermines the Arcadian myth because it is incongruent with the Arcadian ideal of contiguity between nature and culture. Reeves is acutely aware that settler culture depends upon a relationship with the land and that the destructiveness of pastoral expansion threatens this relationship. This helps to contextualise why, for a poem nominally concerned with the forest, so much energy is devoted to the insistence on the land's residual and remaining

power, which the settler can presumably still harness. Though the poem equivocates and finally affirms progress, the Gothic imagery suggests “the price of progress” is not merely “beauty swept away” (line 72).

The poem begins not with the forest, but with the hills, which represent the land in both its environmental and political dimensions. The first two lines introduce two central concerns, loss and power: “All cannot fade that glorifies the hills, / Their strength remains, their aspect of command” (1-2). Reeves affirms the land’s resilience to deforestation:

Ancient of days in green old age they stand
In grandeur that can never know decay,
Though from their flanks men strip the woods away (6-8).

The preservation of the hills’ “strength” and their eternal “grandeur” suggests that settlers have not irrevocably damaged the land, and may yet harness its power and form an Arcadian relationship with nature. However, Reeves still acknowledges the compromised relationship with the land through the image of grass.

In the second stanza, pasture is compared unfavourably to the “nobler” “forest raiment”: “But thin their vesture now – the restless grass, / Bending and dancing as the breeze goes by” (13, 9-10). The metonymic grass captures settler anxiety of a tenuous connection with the land. The connection between environment and people, and the notion of the political dimension of the land continue in the third stanza:

Well may these plundered and insulted kings,
Stripped of their robes, despoiled, uncloaked, discrowned,
Draw down the clouds with white enfolding wings,
And soft aërial fleece to wrap them round,
To hide the scars that every season brings,
The fire’s black smirch, the landslip’s gaping wound;
Well may they shroud their heads in mantle gray,
Since from their brows the leaves were plucked away! (11-18).

There is a sense of resistance or retaliation that signals a fraught relationship with the land. New Zealand’s tempestuous weather is co-opted into a miniature guilt-ridden Pākehā creation myth. The poem uses the metaphor of royal clothing to present the forest’s passing as an

ecological and political change in the land. Reeves depiction of the regal character of the hills and his assertion of their continuing “strength” and “aspect of command”, suggests that the raw materials of nationhood remain intact; that there is intrinsic power within the land that can be harnessed by the new settler nation. However, this is undermined by the ecological viewpoint of the poem. In acknowledging the deep connection between land and people, Reeves finds the sartorial imagery alone insufficient to describe the environmental and political changes wrought by colonisation, and thus the Gothic image of the land’s “gaping wound” emerges. This poetic collapse of the human/non-human binary, which affords flesh to the land, works with the assertion of interdependence between nature and culture to both elevate the tension in the settler relationship with the land and suggest the self-harm of ecological destruction.

The next stanzas mourn “the forest nation” (31) and its many inhabitants. However, Reeves also equivocates about the bush, evoking a sense of wilderness and chaos:

Its jostling, crowding, thrusting, struggling race,
 Creeper with creeper, bush with bush at strife,
 Warring and wrestling for a breathing space; (26-28).

The bush, while mourned, is portrayed with the negative attributes of wilderness as well as the positive. The nature/wilderness binary is encapsulated by the lines “Below, a realm with tangled rankness rife, / Aloft, tree columns, shafts of stateliest grace” (29-30). The bush also takes on characteristics of human means of destruction, with a waterfall “like a sword, cleaving the foliage through”, and “Dense plumes of fragile fern” mirroring the destructive forces of the “mighty” “axe and fire, destroyers twain” that “scorched” and hacked the bush (61-65). Reeves mourns the bush conceived as nature, but uses the wild bush to temper the loss and provide a convenient moral ambiguity to pastoral progress.

The poem asserts the power of the “arch-destroyer, Man”, and links this destructiveness to the role of “pioneer of nations” (66, 68). The cost of nationhood is framed as the destruction of the beauty of God’s creation. The final line poses the “bitter” question: ““Is this the price we pay— / The price of progress—beauty swept away?” (71- 72). The aestheticisation of environmental loss in the final lines is at odds with the way the Gothic imagery of bodily mutilation exemplifies the paradox of settlers’ role as “arch-destroyer” and “pioneer of nations”. The Gothic image encapsulates the gravity of environmental destruction in light of the interdependence of culture and nature that the poem acknowledges. Reeves’

anxious defence of the lasting power of the land demonstrates an awareness of the interconnection of environment with our cultural and political life, and ways in which deforestation troubles this interconnection. It is the Gothic that resists Reeves' use of the aestheticisation of nature and defends the instrumentalisation of nature. Reeves hopes for the settling of the "restless grass" of a future Arcadia are undermined by the Gothic imagery of the fraught settler relationship with nature.

Haunting and Empathy: "The Last of the Forest"

In Dora Wilcox's "The Last of the Forest", the speaker is the haunting spirit of the dead bush. Wilcox uses the perspective of the dead bush to amplify the emptiness that follows deforestation and to suspend the consolation of pastoral progress. Wilcox draws upon the dissolution of boundaries following deforestation to deny the usual Arcadian dialectic of past/present. Wilcox instead creates a Gothic void of time and space, punctuated only by the haunting voice of the destroyed bush and settlers' anguish. This undermines the Arcadian myths' obfuscating narrative of progress to facilitate settlers' empathic engagement with the bush. The haunting voice works with the emphasis on destruction and spatial emptiness and the absence of the signifiers of progress. In this space, Wilcox uses the haunting prosopopoeia to develop the spirit's rhetorical agency and facilitate an environmental plea to settler consciousness and conscience.

The speaker is the spirit of the destroyed bush, the "Spectre of a mighty forest's greenness" (line 19). The spirit's perspective and ghostly nature are central to the creation of the spatial and temporal void through which Wilcox constructs a challenge to the Arcadian myth. From the opening lines, the speaker is addressing settlers, asking them to interrogate their experience of environment:

Hast thou not heard, O White Man, through a troubled dreaming,
On some still night when all the world lay stark,
Sharp through the silence, moaning of the sea, and screaming,
Of night birds in the dark? (1-4).

Wilcox imagines the destruction of the bush from a non-settler perspective. The personified bush is also apparently non-Māori, speaking in archaic English diction. The spirit of the bush

calls to settlers and implores them to listen to nature's cries and acknowledge their guilt and their fraught experience of the wasteland environment they have wrought.

Wilcox's representations of space and time are central to the destabilisation of the Arcadian myth. The perspective of the spirit elevates the spatial emptiness of the poem. The farm is pointedly absent, irrelevant to the speaker's focus on their own destruction. Rather than a survey of the land from a settler perspective such as Reeves' speaker, who "scan(s) / The ruined wonder never wrought again" and balances it against "progress", Wilcox imagines the destruction from the inside, which emphatically reaches out to settlers (68-69, 72). This allows for both opportunities of rhetorical play and a different emphasis on the pastoral reconstruction of space. Wilcox's focus is on the "utter desolation" and the spirit's disconnection from the earth (11). The notion of complete destruction is repeated throughout the poem: "all the world lay stark" (2). The spirit bemoans the "doom" wrought by the "White Man" (35) and their liminal, ghostly state, disconnected from seasonal rhythms:

Late, and with lingering footsteps, Spring draws near, revealing
Love, and new life, to every passer-by;
Angel beloved ! in thy touches is no healing,
No balm for such as I ! (21- 24).

This frames pastoral expansion as destruction of nature and signals the collapse of temporal boundaries in the poem.

Wilcox crafts a temporal void that undermines the Arcadian myth's binary of past/present and its narrative of progress. The spirit emphasises its haunting quality and temporal dislocation, stating "Now, I live in the past" and declaring itself "Death in Life" (36, 20). The voice aligns itself with the "Ghosts of Earth, and Air, that cry", mourning "old worlds passing by" (10, 12). Neither the "old worlds" nor any new world are elaborated upon beyond the existence of the forest and its destruction. There is also a suggestion that this voice is coming to the settler in a dream along with the other "Ghosts".

The spectre continues to bemoan the temporal paradox of being "Death in Life" as one "who shall never bloom again" yet is condemned to witness spring's coming without enjoying the "balm" of renewal: "Dawn after dawn, I, sleepless, wait the first faint flushes" (30, 25). Even the "red flood of the sunrise" leaves the spectre "white and cold" (27, 28). The spectre agonises over this ghostly state:

As the worn body by a lingering breath is haunted,
So is my Ghost withheld from final peace;
While these strong roots thus firmly in the earth are planted,
Am I denied release (41-44).

The forest's hidden roots ensure a spiritual presence in the land. The speaker beseeches the elements:

Hast thou no mercy, Storm-wind? let thy fury hound me ;
Let loose thy Fiends, and bid them work their will,
Till in Earth's bosom snaps the link that bound me !
Then shall my soul be still! (45-48).

Here, the forest longs for release from the liminal spatiotemporal void. This resonates with the experience of settlers who, as Baughan puts it in "A Bush Section", find themselves in:

(. . .) a silent, skeleton world;
Dead, and not yet re-born,
Made, unmade, and scarcely as yet in the making (lines 13-15).

Wilcox Gothicises the desolate landscape and the moment of epochal change to create a sparse, ghostly, dreamlike space and time through which the spirit appeals to the disturbed psyche of settlers in their own "troubled dreaming". Though the settler longs to be "made" and the forest longs to be completely "unmade", both share this space of desolation and can commune in the Gothic dreamscape, half in and half out of the world. The strange, fractured and "stark" place is filled with frightening sounds and "shrieking / Wild voices" (53/54). The spirit is Wilcox's tool to encourage settlers to see these "wild voices" as nature's legitimate anguish.

The void Wilcox creates combines the physical, psychological and spiritual to facilitate a representation of the settler fear of waste and settler guilt. This spatiotemporal context facilitates Wilcox's empowerment of the spectre's voice and its effect. Wilcox enlivens the spectre's rhetorical power through the varied and progressively bold ways it addresses the "White Man". The first stanza simply asks settlers whether they have heard the frightening sounds. The second stanza asks another question, and also quotes the settlers:

Hast thou not said, O White Man, shivering when the shrieking
Wild voices thrilled thee in a mystery of pain :
“ Peace ! 'tis the Ocean calling ! 'tis the Dead Tree creaking !
Hush thee, my heart, again ! ” (5-8).

The third stanza continues the questions, elevating the mocking tone. The spirit asks of the voices, “Are they but birds? is it the sea in lamentation” before suggesting it might be “the Ghosts of Earth, and Air, that cry” (9, 10). The fourth stanza asserts that this is indeed the case: “The Dead Tree thou ignorest, / Speech hath, and Spirit, though a shadow grey” (13,14). The spirit then commands settlers: “White Man, behold me! ghastly in the Spring's serenity, / Battered, and bruised, by ceaseless storm and strife” (17, 18). This demand seems to call settlers to simultaneously witness the physical death of the forest and also see beyond the physical, to acknowledge the forest's spirit. This is a profoundly anti-instrumental view of the environment that evokes its personhood. Finally, the spirit answers the questions posed earlier, asserting of the sounds the settlers hear in their sleep:

They are not birds ! the sea wails not in lamentation —
They are the Ghosts of Earth, of Air, that cry,
Moaning a requiem, in their utter desolation,
For old worlds passing by (57-60).

Wilcox crafts a vision of a disturbed settler psyche that is in denial of the cause of its anguish. By elevating the spatial emptiness and constructing an empowered and insistent voice, Wilcox creates a space to explore settler guilt over environmental destruction. Having emphasised the barrenness of environment, the spectre prompts the white man to engage with the ruined environment, inviting them to hear the chorus of lamentation from forest, earth and air:

What is there left, O White Man, what is there remaining?
What is there flees not from before thy face ?
Wonder thou not to hear the Spirits' loud complaining
For flower, forest, race ! (37-40).

The voice connects the settler's anxiety, their "mystery of pain" in their "troubled dreaming", to the experience of destruction and emptiness. There is an implication that settlers and the forest both share in the experience of emptiness. In the transitional stage between destruction and transformation, there is a sense of equivalence between the forest and the settler in their experience of desolation. In this space, both settler and forest "wait the first faint flushes" of spring while stranded in a void (25). In this representation of the anxious wait of pastoral expansion, Wilcox engages with a similar fear expressed by Arthur Henry Adams in "The Dwellings of our Dead". However, the bush's perspective and the spatiotemporal void facilitate a sympathetic view of nature rather than an adversarial drive to control nature and define space.

Wilcox crafts a unique way of engaging with environmental destruction and transformation wrought by pastoral expansion. The poem rejects the typical dialectic between an aesthetically pleasing but unproductive past and a productive pastoral future. Wilcox uses the Gothic to explore the emptiness wrought by pastoral expansion and find within it a moment for empathic engagement with the forest. The dynamic of haunting creates a meeting point for settler and forest within this space where the forest's voice can be empowered. The portrayal of settler psychological agony is connected to their experience of space. The spectre encourages settlers to see "wild voices", "screaming" and "moaning" that punctuate their dreams not as meaningless sounds, nor wild taunts, but as opportunities for empathic engagement with the land. Thus, though the poem nominally ignores the farm, it uses the Gothic to explore the farm's expansion, its effect on settler psychology, and experience of the environment. Wilcox, thus undermines the Arcadian myth's righteous antipathy towards the bush by destabilising the wilderness/nature binary. However, despite Wilcox's Gothic exploration of the psychological and ecological consequences of pastoral expansion, the poem is still beholden to the notion of the inevitability of this expansion. Of course, the absolute and irrevocable death of the forest is a poetic tool, but it is one that precludes any vision of remediation or a better way to live in the land. Wilcox troubles but does not completely stabilise the Arcadian myth's promise of progress.

Arcadia From the Ashes: "Burnt Bush"

Blanche Baughan's poems "Burnt Bush" and "A Bush Section" both utilise Gothicised imagery of a dead landscape to represent deforestation. Baughan focusses on the transitional phase in pastoral expansion where pasture is newly emerging amid the prolific remnants of

the dead bush. In both poems, Baughan capitalises on the instability of the boundaries of the transitional landscape. In “Burnt Bush” Baughan uses the Gothic to problematise the remnants of the dead bush among the nascent pastoral settlement. Baughan uses the imagery of death to trouble the Arcadian conception of the farm’s abundant productivity and harmony. “A Bush Section”, like “The Last of the Forest”, uses the spatial dynamics of pastoral expansion to destabilise the Arcadian myth’s binary of past/present and question the promise of progress. Baughan envisions settlers and their fledgeling farms’ entrapment in a deathly, Gothic inertia. Both poems ultimately demonstrate a Gothic problematisation of deforestation that is used to spur the completion of pastoral expansion, rather than facilitate a reflection upon its pitfalls.

Patrick Evans argues that “Burnt Bush” demonstrates a reaction of “shock” at deforestation while “A Bush Section” demonstrates the “rationalisation” of environmental destruction as “the price of progress” (Evans 109). However, I argue that both poems involve a rationalisation of deforestation in the way they resolve the Gothic imagery they portray, and that “A Bush Section”’s more emphatic optimism paradoxically indicates a more serious anxiety over the consequences of deforestation and the success of pastoral settlement. The Gothic is used to depict an eerie land full of death, darkness, stillness and silence. This clearly runs contrary to Arcadian ideals of fruitfulness and harmony and to the farm as a symbol of progress. In each poem, Baughan resolves the problematic juxtaposition of death and new life by emphasising the new possibilities of pastoral expansion. Both poems portray pastoral expansion as a positive remaking of the land. However, I argue that “Burnt Bush” has a more uncomplicated view of the devastation, where nature mourns itself and sanctions the humans remaking of the world. In contrast, “A Bush Section” Gothicises the human experience of the dead land and relates it to the stagnation of progress. They both employ a Gothicised mode of representing the deforested land, but their overall drive is future-oriented.

In “Burnt Bush”, the speaker recounts their solitary twilight observation of a gully with pasture emerging among the destroyed bush. Suddenly, they feel a presence and hear the river, Mangi, mourning his dead friend, the bush. The speaker eventually leaves the gully and sees light and life in the new settlement that overcome the surrounding death. The speaker recounts observing the devastation in solitude “In the depth of the gully, / At fall of the twilight” (lines 2-3). The twilight is apt for the blend of life and death in the surroundings. Baughan uses the mutilated body metaphor in the Gothicised depiction of the “Burnt bones of the Bush”. There is a clear sense that the “Gaunt tree-skeletons, / Tall blacken 'd splinters” trouble the space with an abundance of death (17-18). She writes of the gully: “Burden 'd

with black is the green of its pasture” (9). She emphasises this burden as she plays with the incongruity of agriculture and death:

The sheep in their browsing
Must leap o'er a million,
Strewn, helter-skelter, headlong and helpless
Burnt bones of the Bush (11-14).

The problematic juxtaposition of death and life on the farm is captured in this image; however, there are already signals of the anxiety to solve the Gothicised problem and of how Baughan attempts to solve it:

Gaunt tree-skeletons,
Tall blacken 'd splinters.
Limbless, and leafless, and lifeless for ever,
In piteous distinctness
Starkly appear (17-21).

The “splinters” imply inconvenience, nuisance, and the need to be removed. Baughan deals with the “piteous” dead forest with a piteous lament, as the speaker overhears “the old river, Mangi” (34) exuberantly mourning his dead forest friend:

“Sorrow, ah. Sorrow !
Wailing, ah, wailing !
Wail, for They hearken !
Wail — They are dumb !
Brethren departed, Beings lamented! (39-43).

The River mourns the kinship with overblown romantic sentimentalism:

"Soft Arms of the Coolness,
Deep Breast of the Beauty
Of old, that embraced me :
Now—no way otherwise—
Ghostly I greet you ! (50-54).

However, there are darker moments as the river describes the extremity of death on such a scale. Mangi describes “The raw devastation, the uncover 'd Death” and “must confront it” (90, 92). The ‘unmaking’ described in “A Bush Section” is also emphasised here as Mangi describes the night:

Now, unmelodious, barren, unfragrant,
Unillumined of loving, unhallowed of healing,
Weighs and presses the undesired Dark:
— I must endure it ! (94-97).

The succession of ‘un’s’ troubles the Arcadian myth as they express the destruction of the bush as nature and highlight the Arcadian qualities of the past that have been lost. As Mangi endures “the thinness of Silence” and “the long silence of Death”, the burden is his alone:

Yea, through the void light, through the blackness,
I, Mangi the River,
I, the sole relic
’Mid a world that I know not, of worlds that were mine :
Whole, unwounded, yet how mutilated.
Unchanged, plying what changed labour :
Through ways familiar unfriended go! (103-109).

Mangi’s lament channels the processing and experience of death and devastation, projecting the burden onto nature rather than humans. The prosopopoeia serves a very different purpose than in “The Last of the Forest”. Although the speaker is witness to the voice of nature, it is not addressed to them, nor is it particularly troubling, with pity being the primary effect. Here, nature mourns itself. The settler witnesses the scale of destruction and the “piteous” state of nature, but the problem remains nature’s. The speaker finds that the remaking of the world has already begun; the “silent, skeleton world” as Baughan describes it in “A Bush Section”, is remade with “flesh” (13; 143).

After witnessing Mangi’s lament, the speaker “turned and ascended the gully” as the former “darkness”, “gloaming” and “gloom” are alleviated by the “pale Moon (. . .) lifting” and the “firelight sparkling” (128, 36, 35, 28, 123, 136). The continuing fire of deforestation

is repurposed as a symbol of hope, affirming settlement, rather than a symbol of the spreading death. The deathly silence is broken by “voices echoing” (139). As the speaker emerges from the gully, the framing of the scene becomes positive. The juxtaposition of death and life is no longer Gothicised, but is resolved with the promise of new life in the form of settlement:

From the dead forest
(Old trees, but new timber),
Hark! voices echoing.
Through the Burnt Bush, and the little bare settlement,
Lo ! transmuted but vital as ever,
(No more from fern, from green branches no more,
But from flesh-and-blood tissues, through eyes and through fingers,
From brains and from bosoms), laugh 'd out the old magic
Of Nature, wise Mother of Forest and Man (137-145).

Here, the eerie silence and death are resolved by human presence in the land. “Nature” is not dead, only “transmuted”, the “Gaunt tree-skeletons” replaced by “flesh-and-blood tissues”. The “Old forest” is replaced by “new pasture” (131). The speaker’s emergence from the gully towards the settlement is punctuated by parenthetical phrases: “(Old forest, new pasture)”, then “(Old trees, but new timber)” (131, 138). These phrases reframe the incongruity of the transitional space, transforming devastation into productivity. Where before, the juxtaposition of life and death was given a Gothic “gloom”, it is now merely a naturalised transformation. The speaker has descended into a deathly gully of devastation, before ascending to a “vital” place of human creation, that still echoes with the “old magic / of Nature”. The troubling juxtaposition of life and death is resolved because “Mother of Forest and Man” seemingly bestows her approval. Nancy May Harris explains how “Baughan's strong concept of the unity of all things saves her from the Man-versus-Nature dichotomy exhibited by her contemporaries” (173). Considering bush and settler as “emanations of the One”, Baughan is able to resolve the Gothic challenge to Arcadian myth (Harris 173). The death and emptiness that troubles the Arcadian conception of the farm is affirmed as temporary. Moreover, pasture and people are affirmed as adequate, even sanctioned by nature, as replacements for an apparently unpeopled bush. This is what allows for the reframing of the continuing fire of pastoral expansion. Baughan asserts the pastoral settlement as a permutation of nature. This

resolves the contradiction to the Arcadian myth posed by destabilisation of the wilderness/nature binary that frames the bush as nature.

“Burnt Bush” demonstrates the use of the Gothic to problematise the death and destruction caused by pastoral expansion, and how the deflation of the Gothic can be a means to resolve the problem. Baughan uses romantic prosopopoeia to distance human experience from the devastation before asserting nature’s providence upon settlement. The way Baughan resolves the Gothic shows that the “rationalisation” Evans saw only in “A Bush Section” is already present. The resolution of the Gothic constructs pastoral settlement as an adequate compensation for the death of the bush. “A Bush Section” suggests Baughan was not entirely convinced by the easy resolution in “Burnt Bush”, as she revisits the transitional phase of pastoral expansion but places human experience at the centre of the Gothicised space.

The Settler “Re-creator”: “A Bush Section”

“A Bush Section” explores the young child “Thorold von Reden”, or “Thor’s”, experience of the emptiness that surrounds his home on a farm in the making. Baughan establishes the transitional landscape as a stagnant Gothic space of death, stillness and silence, finding within the dynamics of pastoral expansion a symbolism for the fear that the promise of progress will be unrealised. The abstraction of death in “Burnt Bush” becomes a more concrete problem and there is a more sustained resolution than the uncomplicated affirmation of human vitality and nature’s blessing in “Burnt Bush”. This signals that Baughan takes the problem of pastoral expansion more seriously here. The Gothic deathliness of the space gives no energy to past reflection, only anxiety for the future which is channelled into impetus for progress. Thus, death is incorporated into the poem’s vision of renewal. Baughan ultimately transforms the fearful, deathly stillness and emptiness into latent potential and affirms settlers’ infinite capacity to transform the world. Here, the Gothic represents the transitional phase of the expansion of the farm as a fearful moment that must be embraced and capitalised upon. The Gothic death of the land is just a moment between the unmaking and the triumphant recreation of the land.

Baughan uses the dead bush and waste spaces to imagine the inertia against progress. The poem begins: “Logs, at the door, by the fence; logs, broadcast over the paddock” (1). The repetition of “logs” enacts their oppressive multitude: “Sprawling in motionless thousands” (2). Logs are framed as a kind of boundary, as the “opposite rampart” to the “ridges” (3). The land’s stillness is emphasised and linked to the logs and dead trees, which have “Stuck,

prickled, and spiked” the “tumultuous land” (5, 4). As in “Burnt Bush” the deathly emptiness of the land is emphasised and given a Gothic inflection:

The green Bush departed, green Clearing is not yet come.
’Tis a silent, skeleton world;
Dead, and not yet re-born,
Made, unmade, and scarcely as yet in the making;
Ruin’d, forlorn, and blank (12-16).

The stillness, silence and death of this “skeleton world” are reiterated to form a sustained representation of the anxiety for progress and change and the fear they will not eventuate.

The child “Thorold von Reden” lives on this “little raw farm on the edge of the desolate hillside, / Perch’d on the brink, overlooking the desolate valley” (17,18). Contrary to “Burnt Bush”, the farm is insignificant compared to the scale of devastation. The boundaries of the farm are not fences but maddening desolate spaces that encapsulate the inertia of progress. Thor observes from a singularly unappetising “garden of Cabbage and Larkspur” (24):

The one little stump-spotted rye-patch, so gratefully green,
Out, on this desert of logs, on this dead disconsolate ocean
Of billows arrested, of currents stay’d, that never awake and flow (25-27).

The imagery emphasises how Thor is isolated from the farm that is his future and alienated from the lifeless land that is his present. Both Thor and the one patch of grass are suspended on the “dead disconsolate ocean”, its stillness ensuring they will remain apart. In a clear troubling of the Arcadian, death infests even the garden. The toxic larkspur grows among the cabbage, while the rye grass is “spotted” with the stumps of dead trees. Death and stillness dominate space and time as Baughan emphasises their persistence:

The prone logs never arise,
The erect ones never grow green,
Leaves never rustle, the birds went away with the Bush,—
There is no change, nothing stirs!
And to-night there is no change;
All is mute, monotonous, stark;

In the whole wide sweep round the low little hut of the settler
No life to be seen; nothing stirs (32-39).

The concurrent fall of the forest and rise of pasture that defined “Burnt Bush” is replaced by a deathly stillness, witnessed “Day after day” by Thor (28). The Gothic space lingers and is reiterated to enact its monotony. The Gothic experience of space is not deferred to nature but remains a human problem. Gone is the sense that nature is smiling on settlers and their “new pasture”. Devoid of Arcadian providence, the resolution to the Gothicised stagnation is found in an affirmation of the human capacity to shape destiny.

Baughan depicts Thor’s uplifting experiences of beholding a river, a train and the night sky. Their movement and freedom provide the inspiration to break the Gothic inertia. Wilcox emphasises the dynamism of each of these symbols before affirming the dynamic and creative capacity of Thor himself. The gloom suddenly evaporates with the introduction of the river. Unlike Thor, who is stranded and confined amid the desolation, the “Lively glancing, adventurously speeding” river is not oppressed by the logs but is

Busy and bright as a needle in knitting
Running in, running out, running over and under
The logs that bridge it, the logs that block it, (49, 50-52).

Though “The hills remain, the logs and the gully remain, / Changeless as ever, and still”, the river “stirs, it is quick, ’tis alive! (62-63, 66). It transcends the boundaries of the farm as “it presses, it passes / On—by the fence, by the bails” (59-60). Next, Thor sees the smoke of the train, its “airy river of riches” “Irrepressibly billowing” and overshadowing the “wavering” smoulder emanating from the trees (84, 85,80). The train, a symbol of the march of progress, is rapturously described:

Ah! like the glorious hair of some else-invisible Angel
Rushing splendidly forth in the darkness—
Gold! gold on the gloom!
. . . Floating, fleeing, flying . . .
Thor catches his breath . . . Ah, flown! (87-91).

Though “the paddock the logs lie still”, the train’s movement inspires Thor, suggesting he too has the capacity to break from the “gloom” (104). Finally, the unbounded and dynamic night sky becomes a template for the Earth. The sky becomes a reflection of the farm, “a wide black paddock without any fences” (128). The stars themselves become “shining logs”, and the “thin clouds, they are the hills” (129, 132). These hills “waver and move” and “wander and flee, they escape!” (138, 140). Just as Thor begins to think the stars are fixed, “No! they do not remain”, these “bright, live logs of the heavens / Wander at will” (142, 155-156). However, Thor’s world on the “raw little farm” remains still. The inspired and envious Thor asks of each of the river, train and sky a variation of “What are you? Where do you come from? / Who are you? Where do you go?” (160-161).

The speaker soothes Thor’s envy of the train, river and sky, assuring him of his infinite capacity for creation, that will overcome the inertia to progress. The speaker addresses Thor, “Son of the Burnt Bush; / Straightly pent ‘twixt its logs and ridges” (163), telling him that he is:

A Mind that moves ’mid the motionless matter:
 ’Mid the logs, a developing Soul:
 From the battle-field bones of a ruin’d epoch,
 Life, the Unruin’d, freshly upspringing.
 Life, Re-creator of life! (179-183).

Baughan asserts Thor’s spiritual power, portraying his mythic emergence from the earth after an epochal battle. This resolves his alienation from the land by suggesting his indigeneity. Bereft of the favour afforded to settlement by Mother Nature in “Burnt Bush”, Thor is blasphemously affirmed as “Creator” himself, though Baughan ensures a small ‘g’ while the speaker hails his “god-ship” (214, 192). Thor’s infinite capacity for creation and its boundless possibilities are emphatically reiterated and enumerated, the speaker asking “To this, thy disconsolate kingdom— / What change, O Changer! wilt thou devise and decree?” (191-192). The speaker suggests that Thor may wake the “Earth, from the sleep of her sorrow” (202) and enlist her help:

—Till the charr’d logs vanish away;
 Till the wounds of the land are whole:
 Till the skeleton valleys and hills

With greenness and growing, with multiplied being and movement,
Changeful, living, rejoice! (204-208).

Baughan seems to suggest that the inertia could be caused by the Earth's "sorrow" and grief for the "ruin'd epoch" of the forest. This would be a problem for the Arcadian myth, were it not for Thor's might. Far from needing nature's blessing, Thor is its commander. The speaker asks Thor, "What pasture, Settler and Sovereign, shall be grazed from the soil-sweetening ashes?" (223). It is only after affirming settlers' power that imagery of the farm can be employed in a positive way. Baughan goes so far as to depict Thor as an all-powerful farmer who can conquer death's unrelenting grip on the land around him to progress settlement: "Time and Decay run in yoke to thy plough" (201). This is drastically different to "Burnt Bush", where the death of the forest is naturally balanced by the vitality of pastoral settlement. Ownership and power are woven into the resolution as Thor becomes the embattled but powerful "Sovereign". He is made indigenous and reconciled with the land, "With the Burnt Bush within and without" him (336). Finally, Thor is no longer stranded in endless desolation, but the master of his destiny, limited only by his imagination, as the speaker asks:

What art thou? Where hast thou come from?
How far, how far! wilt thou go? (138-139).

Baughan Gothicises the waste that follows deforestation to destabilise the temporality of the Arcadian myth and question the promise of pastoral progress. Baughan depicts a Gothic inertia to progress, trapping the farm in rigid temporal boundaries. The Gothic rendering of space in "A Bush Section" and its emphasis on stillness and monotony depicts settlers in limbo, abandoned by God and nature. This abandonment and Thor's alienation from the dead land suggests a graver consideration of the consequences of the destructiveness of pastoral expansion than in "Burnt Bush". The Gothic facilitates a psychological exploration absent in "Burnt Bush". In "A Bush Section", the death and stillness of the barren land represent the risk of settlement's failure and are reiterated to create an oppressive psychological space. Baughan's resolution of the Gothicised wasteland and its inertia underline its gravity; settlers are described as indigenous, godlike masters of nature. Baughan constructs the expansion of the farm as involving an alienating death of the land, and requiring a rebirth that is far from guaranteed, let alone divinely, but is dependent upon

settlers' power. However, though Baughan affirms settlers' creative power and the Arcadian march of progress, her grandiosity undermines her resolution by signalling the gravity of the problems raised by the Gothic.

Conclusion

Reeves, Wilcox and Baughan use the Gothic to elevate the incongruities of pastoral expansion's means and ends: destruction and progress. Reeves' "The Passing of the Forest" acknowledges the interconnections of nature and culture by representing the land as the body of the nation. The Gothic image of bodily mutilation registers the destabilising implications of settlers' ecological damage, undermining the poem's implicit endorsement of progress. "The Last of the Forest" uses prosopopoeia to hauntingly personify the dead forest, imploring settlers to witness the death and destruction they have wrought and capitalising upon the fear of wastelands. Through elevating a spatiotemporal void and empowering the haunting voice of the forest, Wilcox imagines the shared pain of settler and environment in the wake of deforestation. Baughan's use of prosopopoeia in "Burnt Bush" has the opposite effect, distancing settlers from the destruction as they witness the river mourning the bush. Though "Burnt Bush" has one of the more succinct incongruous images of death on the farm, with sheep leaping over dead trees, Baughan's impulse to resolve the contradiction diminishes its force. The death caused by deforestation is balanced by the vitality of settlement. Both "Burnt Bush" and "A Bush Section" show the use of the Gothic to represent the devastation of deforestation as something to be moved on from, rather than reflected upon. In "A Bush Section", the easy resolution of the Gothicised environmental death is replaced by a prolonged and rapturous affirmation of human power. The resolution is so emphatic that it illustrates both a desperation for progress and emergence from the gloomy, nascent, barren world of settlers' creation, and an uncertainty in the eventual success of settlement. Although the Gothic invariably problematises the incongruity of pastoral expansion's destructiveness, this does not necessarily translate into condemnation or even reflection. However, as Reeves and Baughan's poems demonstrate, the Gothic can raise problems that linger despite attempts to resolve it.

5. Rot

This section will demonstrate the vulnerability of the Arcadian myth's ecophobic binaries to rot. Settler writers use Gothic depictions of rot to communicate fears of wilderness, the loss of control, the cyclicity of life and death, the impermanence of humans and their artifacts, and the fragility of progress. Rot's manifestation as a force of cyclicity is central to its Gothic effect. The Gothic representation of rot constructs the farm as ideologically and spatially vulnerable to the realities of natural cycles of death, decay and life.

First, I will outline some theoretical approaches to rot that demonstrate its expression of the fear of human impermanence and interdependence with nature. Second, I will demonstrate the use of rot to moralise the bush and express fear of the uncontrollable, unproductive and inscrutable agency of the wilderness. Third, I will explore different approaches in settler writing to the problem of rot on the farm.

I will demonstrate the association of rot with excessive, uncontrollable and dangerous vegetation in Satchell's *The Toll of the Bush*. I will examine Blanche Baughan's verse drama, "The Paddock", and how its affirmation of settler progress and productivity is troubled by cycles of life and death. Baughan ultimately diffuses the problem by asserting both the rise of the farm and Pākehā, and the fall of the bush and Māori. Though not Gothic, the play demonstrates the Arcadian principles of progress, control and productivity, and their incongruity with decay. In Baughan's "Pipi on the Prowl", rot is used to dehumanise and demonise Māori and exclude them from the productive space of the farm. Baughan's work serves to sanitise the farm by expelling plants, people and processes that are deemed to challenge Arcadian ideals. I will analyse how H.L. Twisleton's "The Whare" brings rot onto the farm and into the homestead to confront the fear of impermanence and the fragility of progress. Twisleton uses the Gothic to explore the tension of the Arcadian ideal of contiguity with nature by problematising the unstable boundary between humans' artifacts and works, and nature. In doing so, he destabilises the ecophobic binaries that affirm human exceptionalism. Finally, I will break with the focus on Maoriland settler writing to include a reading of Apirana Taylor's (Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Ruanui) "The Womb" (1979), which is a powerful act of writing back against racist and ecophobic ideas underpinning the farm, such as those expressed by Satchell and Baughan. Taylor asserts cyclicity to play on settlers' fears and expose the arrogance of the Arcadian myth's notions of progress and permanence.

Rot Theory

Ned Weidner proposes that “paradise is generated by an ecophobic desire to safeguard people from the dangers of nature, including its interpenetrating cycle of life and death” (251).

Weidner links the sanitised aesthetics of productivity to the destructive desire for control over nature:

Images of bountiful gardens, sweet-smelling jasmine, and prosperous growth reproduce a specific worldview, one centered on human dominance over the natural world and on maintaining economic prosperity at the cost of ecological destruction and social disparity. In the end, then, it is not the world but our imaginations of paradise that must change (251).

As I have demonstrated, the improvement of the wild is a central concept in settler depictions of the farm. The depiction of rot in the bush is a key part of presenting it as unproductive and in need of this improvement. Bryan McMillan suggests that the Gothic depiction of nature has been used to critique the improvement of nature and its underlying assumptions.

McMillan “define[s] as principal characteristics of the Gothicization of nature—deformity, isolation, transgression, and sterility”, and argues that:

[F]rom the late- eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth century, Gothic texts deploy these characteristics to combat the idea of improvement, illustrating the devastating ecological and societal effects of its reliance on the nature-culture binary (Abstract).

While settler Gothic representations of rot on the farm are not as ideologically coherent as this, they nonetheless evoke the slipperiness of the nature/culture binary on the farm in a way that challenges the Arcadian myth.

Both existential and ontological terrors that threaten the farm are communicated by Gothic representations of rot. The loss of control over nature is central to the existential terror manifested through Gothic rot. Critics explain that the fearful representation of rot is rooted in a fear of the uncontrollable wilderness and the loss of control in the environments thought of as human spaces. Simon Estok claims:

Decay and rot are important to the ecoGothic because they are agency and excess overgrown and unpredictable. Literary treatments of rot and decay clearly reveal the ecophobic unconscious (“Ecocriticism” 44).

I will demonstrate how depictions of rot in the bush portray its wild excesses of life and death as countering images to the Arcadian’s order and productivity. The moralising of the wild intemperance of the bush is observable in representations of rotting vegetation. Estok also discusses slime as a concept related to “decay and rot”, but with its own peculiarities and connotations (“Ecocriticism” 44). Estok describes the fear of the formless, the uncontrollable and the liminal, which often manifests as imaginations of malevolent agency:

Rot and slime are unpredictable in their transgressions and blurring of borders and in their imagined alliance with an antagonistic nature. Corruption is the horror of uncontrolled agencies (“Ecocriticism” 44-45).

The loss of control to rot also implicates the loss of human spaces and artifacts, which relates to the ontological problem of rot: rot is a visceral reminder of human impermanence and one that challenges the binary between human and nature. In her introduction to *Plant Horror* (2016), Dawn Keetley uses the Christian iconographic figure of the “Green Man”, “a face with vegetation bursting from (or perhaps penetrating into) the nose and/or mouth”, to illustrate a fear of plants (2). Part of this fear is the cycle of decay in which we find ourselves:

The Green Man suggests that at our most rational (figured by the head), and even in our highest achievements (language, culture, art), we are (already) matter, and will always *become* vegetal matter, matter for vegetation. The Green Man portends our movement downwards, defying the aspiration upwards symbolized by the human head and insisting we are of the earth (3).

Human connection with vegetation is manifested through the figure of the Green Man, which “serve[s] as a perpetual reminder of growth and decay” and “our inevitable entwinement with nature, as vegetation weaves violently in and out of the body” (4). This fear of regression to plant matter is captured in *The Toll of the Bush*, through Mark Gird, “the man who was dead and yet lived” after being paralysed in a bush-felling incident, supposedly caused by the

vengeful forest (55). Gird embodies an uncanny and uncomfortable mixture of death and life in his condition: “dead up to the eyes, but alive from that point upwards” (50).

The Gothic power of rot on the farm depends on settlers’ oppositional and controlling view of nature. Rot becomes a productive anti-Arcadian image, manifesting as an adversarial threat to settler control. The Gothic representation of rot challenges the physical and ideological binaries and boundaries that uphold the Arcadian.

Rot and Agency in The Bush

Depictions of rot are frequently used to characterise the bush. Imagery of rotten vegetation provides a visceral sensorial experience wherein the cycle of life in all its stages is visible. The concurrent growth, death and decay form a balance that is completely other to the managed cycles and spaces of the farm. The ever-present realities of death and decay and their concurrence with the bush’s vigorous growth are moralised and made monstrous in Gothic settler writing.

Estok’s observation of rot’s embodiment of “agency and excess overgrown and unpredictable” is identifiable in New Zealand settler literature. In George Phipps Williams and William Pember Reeves’ “An Old Chum on New Zealand Scenery” (1889), which catalogues the settler vernacular, they describe the bush or “*scrub*” as “growing rank in wild profusion” (46). In its unbalanced state, it is explicitly not “a leafy glade, / Nor a copse, nor shady bower”, all of which are manifestation of nature amenable to the Arcadian (44-45). Other settler writers Gothicise this excess to make it a dangerous, agential force. In *The Toll of the Bush*, rot is central to the horror of the bush as Geoffrey and Eve “struggle with the dense vegetation that rioted in these dark and humid depths”, particularly the “supple-jack” (382):

Casting its black canes from tree to tree, scrambling across the ground, turning and twisting snake-like on itself, this hellish vine added the final touch of horror to the scene. The dead sooty blackness that had displaced the vivid green of fern tree and palm, the distorted and suffocating saplings seeking to break upwards from that pit of terrors, the hideous fungoid growths like huge cancers on the trees, the chill air, the ominous rattling of the canes—formed together a scene in which the imagination of a Dante would have revelled (385).

These are the same canes that later “rattled without reason” (409). Reason is a concept that proliferates in the novel, and the bush challenges it. The vine, covered in a layer of rot,

becomes an incomprehensible agent of death. The sense of the bush fighting against itself adds to the horror of its unreason: “Monstrous plants of strange growth and in unnumbered variety choked the earth and wrestled with one another in a fierce battle for life” (384-385). The sense of a nature out of balance, indifferent to the forces of life and death, elevates the sense of danger for settlers. The duplicity of the bush is also on display as the “vivid green” of recognisable, acceptable growth is “displaced” by the “distorted” and the “hideous”. The supplejack is presented as a manifestation of rot that smothers life: “the place of the varied undergrowth had now been taken by one plant” (385).

Rot in the bush emblematises the wrongness of wild growth: uncontrollable, unreasoned, unproductive, and thus completely counter to the Arcadian. The Gothic implication of rot’s incomprehensible agency amplifies the fear of loss of control to the wilderness. In Arcadia, death must be hidden. The wild bush confronts settlers with the cycle of life and its implication that what is built can be taken back by nature. This is an obvious source for fear in a burgeoning settler nation. Blanche Baughan’s “The Paddock” demonstrates the necessity of safeguarding the farm from the cyclicity and loss of control embodied by rot.

The Sanitised Farm: “The Paddock” and “Pipi on the Prowl”

Rot has a particular resonance on the farm because productivity is threatened by plant and animal diseases, and because it is a force contrary to settler conceptions of progress and improvement.

Blanche Baughan’s verse and prose play “The Paddock” describes the ascendance of a settler farm and depicts the death of a Māori woman and a cabbage tree (tī kōuka), implying and linking together the fall of the bush and Māori. The cycle of life is a central theme used to communicate and link these ideas. There are three speaking human characters: Elizabeth, the matriarch who details the toil required to reach the current pastoral bliss, Janet, an orphaned teenager in Elizabeth’s care, who complains of the farm’s monotony and feeling trapped, and Hine, an elderly Māori woman who speaks of her and her people’s downfall. “The Paddock” is an ode to improvement and productivity. However, in detailing growth on the farm, Baughan has an anxious engagement with biological cyclicity that resorts to dark imagery. Finally, Baughan tortuously resolves the fear of the cyclical forces of life, death and decay by allocating Māori and Pākehā respective places within that cycle, assuring the ascendance of Pākehā and the fall of Māori. The play thus demonstrates how the imperatives

of productivity and improvement necessitate a sanitised and carefully managed image of the farm, in this case rehearsing racist notions of the unproductiveness and inevitable decline of Māori.

Imagery of productivity and improvement are central in “The Paddock”, which opens with “The Song of the White Clover”. The white clover, a central component of pasture, sings of its eagerness to contribute to productivity:

I, too, must fill with all my might,
Faithful my place,
And flush with freshest green and white
This Paddock-space (137).

The clover beseeches the elements to help the paddock transform from a “barren rootlet” and “A patch of pasture, nibbled bare, / Dewless and dry” to “Green seas of Growing” with productive livestock: “Plump and content the leaping Lambs / Thick, thick the wool!” (138). The clover also emphasises the importance of excluding the native plants, with the fence a crucial dividing line:

Lofty the russet Fern may grow,
The tufty Tussock shining go
Mile upon mile outside the fence,
But inside—No ! (138).

In this “*Home* amid the wilderness”, the wilderness must be kept out (140). This captures the tenuousness of co-construction and the fear of contamination.

The discourse of improvement and the anxiety over its instability is clear in Elizabeth’s recollections:

When the land was coming clean,
Fences up, and shearing-shed,
Apple-trees in bearing round
Such a well-stock’d garden-ground,
And the homestead was all but done,
And the battle all but won :—
Came the big Bush-fire ! So then

All was to begin again (141-142).

The metaphor of cleanliness is demonstrative of Baughan's sanitisation of the farm and the anxiety over its corruption. Elizabeth recounts the difficult journey to a productive farm where "Progress only came by inches":

Day by day, and year by year
Saw some blemish disappear,
Saw something else come clean and clear ; (144).

Elizabeth praises the "blessed daily round" of "sowing, weeding, letting be" and the "Sweet, sweet life, that knows no change" (148, 149). The stability of progress won is essential.

The farm is not, however, completely idealised. Baughan embeds a critique of the farm similar to Grossman's in *The Heart of the Bush*. The housekeeper, Janet, complains of the monotony of domestic and work life on the farm and turns to the metaphor of decay: "resting in one place, wheat ripens—yes, / But water rots" (168). She describes herself in isolating social decay "half alive, / A melancholy, meek, moss-cover'd log— / Mouldering inside" (169). Though not a Gothic depiction of rot, it demonstrates the use of rot as an image counter to productivity and its particular resonance on the farm.

"The Paddock", for all its celebration of growth and productivity, displays a discomfort with the cycle of life, which seems to undermine the stability of progress and the "sweet life, that knows no change". Baughan problematises the undoing that precedes renewal, depicting it with imagery that starkly contrasts with the joyous depiction of productive growth. Baughan turns to dark imagery in describing the cycle of life. The wind describes the field of harvested wheat as "the batter'd face of the dead", before a chant describes the cycles of the farm: "(Sow, reap ! / Slaughter, and sleep !)" (176). In "The Song of the Seeds", the seeds initially fear their death, which, though botanically inaccurate, suggests a fear of death and transformation within nature's cycles:

Behold, we are but just now born, and must
We down into the dust?
Yea, must we die?
Alas, the helpless woe!
Will we or no,

Die, die we must, and go
Down, deep into the Dark!
Our Doom is so (182).

The roots in the earth call the seeds down, promising “richer birth / From this poor burial” (182, 183). Finally, reconciled with the promise of new growth and fulfilling “Life demanding”, the seeds cry “So ! then – let’s die!” (184). This dynamic of a fear of death giving way to unselfish acceptance of self-sacrifice for the greater good is mirrored in both Hine’s death and the death of a cabbage tree. This displaces the disconcerting realities of cyclical change by suggesting that other places and peoples die so the farm and settlers can flourish. Baughan confines cyclicity to a temporal scale that does not immediately threaten the farm. Just as the bush must be kept out of the farm, so must the realities of death and decay.

Scattering those very singing seeds is Hine’s final act before she soliloquises and dies. Unlike those seeds, Hine is isolated from the cycle of life, with no direct descendants to “take / The toil from this tremulous hand” (184). All the aspects of pastoral improvement that Elizabeth details are things that Hine has lost. She has lost her house with a “*raupo* roof” (185). The pā’s fences, once “spiked” and “strong”, are now “white ashes” (186, 193). She is isolated from seasonal renewal “refresh’d as of old / Nevermore” (185). She recalls, “When the old net was rotten, behold, another was used– / But what successor to me?” (185). She becomes an emblem of decay without renewal. She speaks to the cabbage tree whose “dry leaves rattle”, and who stands “In the soil of the Maori, ‘mid turf of the *Pakeha*”, asking “Where are thy seedlings? Our saplings, where flourish they?” (185). Hine ruminates on the changes that time brings, using metaphors to express the end of Māori flourishing and repeats, “And Lo! that is which was decreed to be” (191). She finally accepts fate and death, “Where the bones of my kinsfolk lie bleaching and crumbling together / Let mine that are broken, grow whiter than *Kokota*-shell” (193). Hine tells herself “Lo ! the last of the seeds—they are sown ! / Take now your rest” (193). Hine’s final wish is the success of the farm and the flourishing of Pākehā seeds’, for which she prays to the atua, Rangi and Pāpā: “Receive them, and prosper the harvest” (198).

The cabbage tree also accepts and even wishes for death (201). The tree is happy to have had an instrumental value to the farm, having “added a smile to the Paddock’s face” and sheltered its sheep (203). These and other “deathless deeds” are the tree’s consolation

“though root and leaf decay” (204). However, the cabbage tree is given hope for its offspring, which Hine is denied:

Even in decaying,
My right part playing:
Having lived fruitful, I
Fruitfully die.
As in my growth,
So in my dispersal,
Deathlessly serving
Life universal (205).

Thus, similarly to “Burnt Bush”, Baughan packages the change from bush and Māori to pasture and Pākehā as merely a continuation of “Life universal”. Decay leaves the farm and Pākehā untouched because the bush and Māori have decayed for their benefit. The cycle of life is evoked to exclude Māori from the farm, describing decay without renewal. Baughan turns to an even more direct and dehumanising depiction of rot to exclude Māori from spaces of productivity in “Pipi on the Prowl”.

Baughan’s “Pipi on the Prowl” (1912) uses imagery of rot to dehumanise the titular Māori character and portray her as profoundly unproductive. The story begins with an image of rot, as Pipi, “bundled about with a curious muddle of rag-bag jackets and petticoats” is described as a “mummy-like old Maori woman” (163). Pipi is aligned with and likened to a frightening scene of a “sinister-looking river, black and sluggish, that drains the valley-head”, and a nearby swamp. Baughan describes “dark *manuka*-bushes with crooked stems and shaggy boles” that look “like a company of uncanny crones under a spell, stood knee-deep in thick ooze”. Baughan also likens Pipi to the “withered *raupo*” that “desolately lined the bank above” (164). The story depicts Pipi gathering food from the swamp. Baughan destabilises the human/non-human binary as Pipi’s movements are described animalistically, enacting her descent from humanity as she “slithered down into the swamp” (164). She removes a pumpkin that “had fallen from some passing cart, and rolled down into the swamp”, portraying her as a scavenger, rather than a productive person (164). Baughan emphasises the surrounding rot, “Old snags, quite black with decay, lay rotting round her, and the stagnant water gave forth a most unpleasant smell” (164). Baughan implies Pipi’s unity with the rotten environment, describing Pipi’s “brightened eyes” and sheer delight in the fetid swamp.

Baughan uses the settler fear of rot, and of non-productive spaces and people, to dehumanise Māori and exclude them from the very notion of productivity. This resonates with Satchell's racist depiction of Māori as too unproductive for farming.

Thus, "The Paddock" and "Pipi on the Prowl" make rot other to the farm, and use the fear of rot to safeguard the Arcadian myth's notions of productivity and progress by reinforcing a boundary between the farm and manifestations of decay.

Crumbling Boundaries: "The Whare"

The word "whare" can be translated as "house, building, residence, dwelling, shed, hut, or habitation" (Te Aka). Satchell glosses "whare" as a "native hut", but settlers also use it to refer to "a wide range of rough shelters" (Satchell, 5; Bardsley).

Ruins and decrepit buildings are central to Gothic literature. Fanny Lacôte suggests "The Gothic house, then, is the place where the unfolding of horror serves to express the fears and anxieties felt during a given era" (216). Their appearance in New Zealand settler literature is not merely as a transposed genre trope; instead, imagery of ruined houses communicates ideas that challenge Arcadian principles. In seminal Gothic literature, the decrepit buildings are often part of an encounter with an ancient, archaic and foreign evil. Lacôte describes "the Gothic villain's abode – typically an isolated, decrepit structure, standing out from the rest of the buildings and embodying the features of its inhabitant(s)" (Abstract). In settler literature, the houses are comparatively recent history, and are typically the settlers' own, but they perform similar metaphorical and metonymical functions, displaying the success or failure of cultivation and the achievement of settler values of hard work and domestic stability. The dilapidation of settler structures is a challenge to the notion of progress and the success of keeping the wild at bay. The "Gothic villain" is the wild itself. I will briefly outline the importance of the house on the New Zealand farm and describe the workings of rot in *The Heart of the Bush* and H.L. Twisleton's "The Whare". In these texts, rotting houses undermine the surety of progress as rot transgresses and erodes the boundaries between human and non-human, wilderness and civilisation.

Like the garden, the home is another signifier of progress and the domestic on the farm. The centrality of the homestead to the farm is clear in *The Heart of the Bush* and "The Paddock". In *The Heart of the Bush*, the building of Dennis and Adelaide's home marks the beginning of their domestic life together and its placement and beautification are crucial to Adelaide:

They had still another fortnight of holidays, and this they spent at home, making their house beautiful and laying out an orchard where flowers were to grow in the future (228).

The home is the centre of Adelaide's idyllic pastoral dream. In "The Paddock", Elizabeth describes the tragedy of the "all but done" homestead burning down and the trouble of having to live in "half a home" with "only two rooms even lined" (142, 143). In *The Toll of the Bush*, decrepit whare are used to depict Māori as disordered and lazy:

Along the sides of the road, and back in fenced paddocks, stood a number of unpainted weatherboard huts and rakish-looking whares, the edges of their palm-thatched roofs torn into fibres by the wind (5).

This is part of Satchell's depiction of unproductive Māori. Geoffrey, observing the scene, says:

If one had a place like this now, (. . .) it might be possible to do something. It seems to me that the only land worth having in this north country is in the hands of the natives (6).

Decay evokes moral condemnation from settlers, as it challenges Arcadian conceptions of progress and productivity. The Gothic takes this even further, using the mechanics of decay to explore the conceptual underpinnings of settlers' fears.

The sense of the wrongness of decay is captured in *The Heart of the Bush* with Adelaide's encounter with the "weather board house prematurely old" (190). The house is deep in the wilderness of the bush and "bracken grew tall and rank" around it (190). Although the room Adelaide sleeps in "had not been long disused", wilderness had already begun to reclaim it as "grass had sprung up in the rotten flooring" (190). The speed of the reclamation of the house demonstrates the wild's voraciousness and settler precarity. As previously explained, this house foreshadows Adelaide and Dennis' own house's problems with the proximity with the bush, which becomes a menacing force that intrudes on Adelaide's space to taunt her and exacerbate her isolation.

Even structures that were often temporary are a source for the horror of rot and its implications. H.L. Twisleton's "The Whare" describes the decay of a bushman's hut, now lying disused on a farm that has also fallen into ruin. The Gothic depiction of decay involves

the intrusion of wilderness, and the reclamation of human structures and spaces. As rot takes the house, the boundaries between nature and culture collapse. The Arcadian contiguity of nature and culture becomes unstable as nature reclaims culture through decay. The reversal of progress seems inevitable, and there is a suggestion of the wilderness' vengefulness.

Nigel Isaacs describes the process of building 'slab whare', a particular kind of makeshift shelter built from trees as and where they were felled. Twisleton's whare fits this description. The timber for slab whare was minimally processed, "depending on the tools available, the wood was used as rounds or split into slabs" (Isaacs 80). Even the interior used "lining of raupo, toetoe reeds or cabbage tree leaves" (80). Isaacs explains that slab whare were always temporary and would often be supplanted with superior buildings (80). It is an example of the redundancy built into progress. Nonetheless, Twisleton's depiction shows us how the remnants of earlier times can be a visceral reminder of the fragility of progress.



Figure 1 Sayer's Slab Whare, Carterton. Built circa 1859 – photo by Pat Ryan – Courtesy of Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. August 2002

"The Whare" describes the eerie scene of a ruined bushman's whare, which stands in an untended paddock near the bush and surrounded by decaying tree stumps. Decay, encroaching wilderness, and a sense of haunting, work together to form a picture that troubles the notion of progress by Gothically envisioning the natural cycles that work to undermine human control, and which suggest human entanglement in nature and decay. Twisleton

Gothicises the interconnections between nature and humans' 'improvements' of it and explores the impermanence of human creations. Twisleton confronts the reality that rot defies the boundaries of the farm.

The poem begins with an eerie sense that the forest and the decaying whare are communicating:

It stands upon the grassy slope,
A ruin, brown and lone :
The door swings on its hinge of rope
With strange and dismal tone,
Whene'er the wandering winds that pass
Bear with them, o'er the thistled grass,
The darksome forest's moan (lines 1-7).

Twisleton's tortuous and indirect implications of causation evoke an interconnection between the forest and the house, which is framed as responding with sound to the sound of the forest, rather than merely moving in the wind that happens to carry the sound of the forest. The forest is "darksome", evoking Gothic menace, and its moan is evocatively ambiguous; it could be pained, vengeful, or both. That it is a bushman's hut and the description of the whare's constituent parts dislodging, as "strips of brown manuka-bark / Drop from the tattered roof", add to the possibility of either pain or vengeance (16-17). So too, do the surrounding "stumps, that rot in rain and sun, / Stand bleached to spectral white" (26-27).

The farm is also in disarray, poorly controlled and apparently abandoned. There is no sign of Arcadian productivity, only "thistled grass" and "wandering cattle, wild as wind" (18). The wild cattle also enter the house, and "Upon the sward have left behind / The print of many a hoof" (19-20). The concurrent lack of human presence and control, the encroachment of wilderness, and the imagery of decay, work together to imply circularity as the once human space and its materials are being reclaimed. The sense of agency Gothically amplifies the threat of wilderness' slow creep.

However, though the environment is presented as threatening to humans, there is an implication that the whare is more connected with the forest than with humans. Twisleton implies the whare longs for the forest rather than mourning humans. The absence of the forest's sound is problematised as much as the absence of humans:

Lone seems it when on all around
The summer moon lies still ;
When not a zephyr stirs to sound
The rata on the hill :
When but the locust on the tree
Adds to the murmur of the bee
Its tuneless note and shrill (7-13).

It seems alone in the stillness, its only company is now the forest rather than humans; humans have abandoned it, and the forest will take it back. This connection reinforces the cycle of human products returning to the wild.

Twisleton's use of light and dark also creates a sense of interconnection and cyclicity that adds to the felled trees and house's shared state of decay:

No more, when with its burden black
Low broods the winter night,
Shall shine through every chimney-crack
The back-log's yellow light.
The bushman's tiring task is done ;
And stumps, that rot in rain and sun,
Stand bleached to spectral white (20-27).

The forest is "darksome" and the whare's "mouldering walls stand rent and dark" (14). Formerly, the house was lit by "the black-log's yellow light", and those black-logs are rotted to "spectral white". The confusion of light, shifting its manifestations as matter changes, enacts a slippage that mirrors the collapse of the boundaries between nature and culture. Both black and white are ominous now; the "spectral white" of the stumps adds to the sense of the agency of the damaged forest. The cycles of light and dark dizzyingly mimic the transformations of death, decay and life.

The poem ends like an ode to the whare, though its Gothic interconnections paint a more complex picture:

Lone whare, on the green hill-side,
From human haunts apart,
Unnoticed by the eye of Pride,

A hallowed spot thou art.
This roof, that ever inward falls,
This shattered door, these mouldering walls,
Once held a human heart (28-34).

There are traces here of the Gothic disturbances raised throughout the poem. The “shattered door” implies a violent incursion, capturing the significance of the boundary between wilderness and civilisation collapsing. The “roof, that ever inward falls” evokes progressive and eternal decay that undermines the notion of continual progress.

Twisleton’s use of a slab whare capitalises on the minimal processing of its materials to explore the idea that what we build is merely borrowed from nature. This is a powerful juxtaposition to Arcadian ideology such as that expressed in “The Paddock”. Rather than an elevation of human creation, improvement, progress, and separation from the wild, Twisleton portrays transformation, degradation, cyclicity and entanglement. Rot destabilises the ecophobic binaries that characterise the Arcadian myth’s exalted view of the farm, including: progress/regression, human/non-human, productive/unproductive and controlled/uncontrollable. It is a challenge to the Arcadian myth’s conception of settler exceptionalism. Rot manifests as a corrupting force of wilderness. However, the Gothic confrontation of rot’s processes does not necessarily reinforce fear of the wilderness. The Gothic representation of rot can also challenge the underlying logic of the Arcadian myth by showing its ecophobic hostility to the realities of certain natural process. Twisleton’s portrayal of the rot of the whare expresses settler fears of the loss of control, the fragility of progress and the impermanence of human works.

Conclusion

Written half a century after the Maoriland period, Apirana Taylor’s “The Womb” exposes and capitalises upon the suppressed fears of cyclicity and human impermanence evident in works such as Baughan’s. The personified land addresses “settlers and farmers” (8), recounting their ecological destructiveness:

Your fires burnt my forests
leaving only the charred bones
of totara rimu and kahikatea (1-3).

The trope of bodily mutilation reframes the processes of farming as assaults upon the land:

Your ploughs like the fingernails
of a woman scarred my face
It seems I became a domestic giant (4-6).

The speaker confronts settlers with their finality and their subjugation to nature:

But in death
you settlers and farmers
return to me
and I suck on your bodies
as if they are lollipops (7-11).

The poem is not merely a Gothic enactment of nature's vengeance; it is a conceptual challenge to the practices and ideologies of the farm. The poem undermines settler presumptions of control over and separation from nature. Settlers are placed literally within nature as their decay returns them to the land, "the womb of life and death" (13). This plays upon the horror of the human/non-human binary collapse that is symbolised by the Green Man icon. Such horror is not present in Māori worldviews, the emphasis on human interconnection with the land being captured, for example, by the dual meaning of *whenua* as both land and placenta. Taylor turns the settler fear of cyclicity and impermanence into an assertion of the continuing *mana* of the land. More directly than Reeves' "The Passing of the Forrest", human connection with the land contextualises the paradox of environmental destruction for the sake of progress and productivity. Apirana Taylor uses the Gothic to exploit settler fears of the collapse of the human/non-human binary. At the same time, Taylor critiques the negative effects that the ecophobic binary permits in the name of the Arcadian myth's conception of progress. In asserting the *mana* of the *whenua*, Taylor asserts the *mana* of *tangata whenua*, making a powerful statement against the entangled racist and ecophobic settler notions of improvement.

Rot reveals interconnections and processes that disturb the spatial and conceptual binaries that uphold the Arcadian. Cyclicity and interconnection undermine Arcadian notions of improvement, human exceptionalism and the ontological separation between nature and culture. Depictions of rot on the farm juxtapose Arcadian logic and its boundaries

against a reality of slipping, slimy, unstable boundaries. Rot reveals that though humans may try to fence the wild out, its forces still operate within the farm. Though humans may transform nature, we are beholden to transformations beyond our control. Though we may build, we only borrow from nature; though we may build a testament to our immortality, it will suffer the ravages of time. Though we may expel someone from a particular space, we share the same fate in returning to the same earth.

Conclusion

Through the Gothic management of the boundaries of the farm, settler writers in the Maoriland period challenge the Arcadian myth by representing the complications of the Eurocentric wilderness/civilisation binary; destabilising the temporal and spatial dynamics of the farm; interrogating the moral and practical consequences of the farm's origin in destruction; and exemplifying the incongruity of the Arcadian farm with the realities of nature's processes.

The Arcadian myth and the literary farm are constructed through ecophobic spatial and conceptual binaries related to the wilderness/civilisation binary. The Arcadian myth, as critics articulate it, manifests in Thomas Bracken's "The Colonist" and William Pember Reeves' "A Colonist in his Garden". These poems demonstrate central values of the Arcadian myth: productivity, progress, harmony with nature and yet control over it, and the improvement upon and exclusion of the wild native bush. They also demonstrate the conceptual links between the farm, race, nationhood and empire and the perception of a resolved wild past. A consideration of pastoral literary theory helps to frame the peculiarities of the New Zealand Arcadian as a national myth rather than a corrective vision for an urban population. New Zealand's Arcadian myth has a particularly overt oppositional stance to wilderness, which complicates its relationship with nature. The conceptual slipperiness of the categories of wilderness and nature, and the dynamic of co-constitution frame the tensions of the Arcadian myth's othering of the bush. The bush resists the binary conceptions of the Arcadian myth by manifesting variously as antagonistic or amenable to the farm.

Edith Searle Grossman's *The Heart of the Bush* portrays the Gothic corruption of idyllic hybrid spaces. Grossman challenges the Arcadian myth in a feminist critique that destabilises the wilderness/civilisation and nature/wilderness binaries. Adelaide's search for autonomy and marital compromise is coupled with her experience of space. Grossman capitalises on both the Arcadian myth's dependence on strictly controlled boundaries and the conceptual instability of the wild bush, to challenge the Arcadian through a feminist lens. The Gothic disrupts the Arcadian balance of nature and culture with incursions of wilderness that corrupt both the farm and the bush. Grossman thus mobilises fear of the wilderness in an illuminating critique of the Arcadian myth.

Gothic instability is a fundamental tool for settler writers posing challenges to the Arcadian farm. Dora Wilcox's "Onawe" uses the Gothic mechanics of haunting to destabilise

the temporal boundaries of the farm and challenge the Arcadian myth's resolution of the wild past. Wilcox uses the haunting voice of the Māori speaker to unearth the past and capitalise upon settlers' ecophobic conceptions of it. The threat of a wild past disrupts illusions of Arcadian peacefulness and blamelessness. Wilcox confronts Pākehā with their status as "subtle conqueror" as she uses the Gothic to place the farm in a historical context and assert that the past is unsettled. Arthur Henry Adams' "The Dwellings of Our Dead" associates unbounded, uncultivated spaces with an unstable sense of identity. The fear of human impermanence and the collapse of the human/non-human binary are used to spur the Arcadian myth's imperatives of the demarcation of space and control over the wilderness. The radical instability in *The Toll of the Bush* portrays a corrupting adversarial bush and envisions its threat to pastoral progress. Satchell portrays the bush as a corrupting threat to the farm by aligning it with disorder and monstrosity and instilling it with agency. The tensions in the novel are finally resolved as fire manifests as a self-destructive force of the wild bush itself. Fire does the settlers' work for them by pushing the problematic boundary with the bush into the distance. Although Satchell attempts to resolve the problematic opposition between farm and bush, the questions raised by the Gothic rendering of the boundary linger. The frontier boundary's threat to the Arcadian myth's binaries of progress/regression and human/non-human is not dispelled, only pushed further back.

Settler writers use the spatiotemporal dynamics of the destructive expansion of the farm's boundary to question the guarantee and morality of the Arcadian myth. The Gothic emerges to process the collapse of the wilderness/civilisation and wilderness/nature binaries that underline the farm's oppositional stance to the bush. In the wake of deforestation, the bush is reframed as nature, and the implications of settlers' destruction of it are rendered through the Gothic. William Pember Reeves' "The Passing of the Forest" acknowledges the interconnectedness of nature and culture and uses the Gothic to consider how deforestation fractures this interconnection. The poem undermines the Arcadian myth through the poetic collapse of the human/non-human binary in the Gothic image of bodily mutilation. This image implies the self-harm of ecological violence and undermines the poem's apologetic conclusion. The Gothic image resists Reeves' reduction of deforestation to an aesthetic problem. In "The Last of the Forest", Dora Wilcox uses the destabilising perspective and haunting voice of the spirit of the bush to create an opportunity to consider the shared impact of deforestation on settlers and nature. Wilcox disrupts the binary of wild past and productive Arcadian present to render a spatiotemporal zone of the waste that follows deforestation, in which both humans and nature suffer. The Gothic space and dynamic of haunting empower

the perspective and voice of the dead forest to facilitate a unique empathic engagement with settler psychology. Wilcox uses the Gothic to challenge the Arcadian myth's antipathy towards the bush. In "Burnt Bush" and "A Bush Section", Blanche Baughan uses the Gothic problematisation of the transitional phase of pastoral expansion to imagine and resolve challenges to the Arcadian myth. In the radical spatial and temporal openness of this phase, the transition between past and present is destabilised, and the promise of pastoral progress is uncertain. In "Burnt Bush", the traces of the dead past trouble the Arcadian conception of the farm. Baughan resolves this by projecting grief upon nature itself and by affirming the farm as compensation for the death of the bush. The problematic dynamic of destroyed past and guilty present is resolved as the farm is realigned with nature. "A Bush Section" evokes settlers' alienation from the barren landscape and denies the same solace in nature. The promise of the Arcadian is threatened by the spatiotemporal inertia of the deforested wasteland. Finally, it is through settlers' capacity for creation and control over nature that Gothic emptiness is resolved, and Arcadian progress is affirmed. However, as with Satchell's *The Toll of the Bush*, "A Bush Section" raises questions that strain the resolution.

Gothic depictions of rot challenge the Arcadian myth's binaries. Rot's embodiment of nature's cyclicity threatens the sanitised, segregated space of the farm by envisioning impermanence and interconnection. Rot's challenge to the Arcadian is both existential and ontological, embodying the ecophobic fears of loss of control and loss of self to nature. Rot threatens human exceptionalism and its attendant binaries of human/non-human and culture/nature. In *The Toll of the Bush*, Gothic depictions of rot portray the bush's wild, unreasoned agency and its force against productivity and harmony. Blanche Baughan depicts a sanitised farm in "The Paddock", demonstrating the Arcadian discomfort with natural cyclicity, death and decay. Baughan's "Pipi on the Prowl" uses rot to dehumanise and portray Māori as unproductive and aligned with unproductive environments. The depiction of decay in H.L. Twisleton's "The Whare" envisions the essential interconnection between nature and human transformations of it. "The Whare" expresses settler anxiety over decay's undoing of human work and reclaiming of space. This troubles the Arcadian myth by depicting the loss of control and reversal of progress. Twisleton's portrayal of rot reveals the Arcadian myth's incompatibility with the reality of natural cycles of decay. The Arcadian myth's antipathy towards rot is driven by the denial of the natural forces that threaten the farm's boundaries and destabilise the myth's ecophobic binaries. Finally, Apirana Taylor's "The Womb" simultaneously exploits settlers' fear of their interconnection with nature and critiques the damaging actions driven by this fear. However, Taylor does not present a land

bemoaning loss, but one asserting its power over settlers. Taylor critiques the Arcadian myth by undermining its conception of progress and asserting settlers' dependence upon the land.

An ecoGothic critical approach explicates the varied ways the Gothic management of the boundaries of the farm in settler literature constructs conceptual challenges to the ecophobic binaries that underline the Arcadian myth. The Gothic facilitates explorations of the contradictions and complications of settlers' imposition of binary conceptions of space, by imagining the frightening implications of the collapse of those binaries. Writers can ultimately use the Gothic either to challenge or affirm the Arcadian myth's narrative of settler exceptionalism, its justifications of control over nature, and its prioritisation of 'progress'. However, to see Gothically is to recognise the instability of the binaries and boundaries imposed upon the world. Thus, though some writers resolve Gothic challenges to the Arcadian myth, their resolutions are subtly undermined by their engagement with a different way of seeing environment. This demonstrates the Gothic's capacity for meaningful subversion. The Gothic can capture the ways that the realities of history and nature challenge the boundaries and binaries that uphold the Arcadian myth. An ecoGothic approach to texts can focus our attention on the Gothic's transgressive ability to undermine settler conceptions of space by representing nature's refusal to conform to the boundaries they impose upon it. The Gothic, by challenging binary understandings of environment and interrogating ecophobia, can facilitate a re-conceptualisation of the environment that acknowledges the interconnections denied by the Arcadian myth.

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