

NOSTALGIA FOR PLACES: THE BRONTËS AND ELIZABETH GASKELL

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‘Nostalgia’, a term coined by a Swiss medical student in 1688, was originally a disease characterised by insomnia, anorexia, palpitations and stupor, which could result in death if the patient was not returned home (Boym 3). It is the period between the mid–nineteenth century and the early 1900s which marks the transition between nostalgia as a disease and nostalgia as a more sentimentalised condition. In this article, I focus on place–identity and discuss place nostalgia within a politicised framework. While I compare the depictions of homesickness from two mid–nineteenth–century authors, Emily Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell, I also want to show the surrounding conditions related to homesickness. Gaskell and Emily Brontë take different approaches to the condition of nostalgia and in some ways reflect the changing perceptions of homesickness. Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) reflects humanist theories of place–identity which propose an authentic self that ‘belongs’ to, or is at home in a particular place. This is more closely aligned with the earlier perceptions of nostalgia as a disease related to the loss of a familiar place. In contrast to this, I examine nostalgia and place–identity in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855). Gaskell’s interest in nostalgia moves towards a more modern understanding. In discussing Gaskell, I draw on constructionist theories including those of Marxist geographer David Harvey. I also present Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* (1849) as a further example of place attachment of that same transitional time.

I have chosen to discuss the novels of the Brontës and Gaskell partly because these works depict examples of nostalgia for places, but also because of their part in the north–south discourses of mid–nineteenth century England. At this time, the north of England faced criticism and writers including Elizabeth Gaskell and the Brontës attempted to defend the reputation of their hometown areas. It is, I suggest, the attack on the places of the North that gives rise to much of the discourse about homesickness present in the Gaskell and Brontë works.

Johannes Hofer, who coined the term ‘nostalgia’, believed the disease to be caused by images of the native’s homeland clogging up the vital fluids in the individual’s nerve channels. Later explanations of the

disease include J.J. Scheuchzer's proposal in 1705 that changes in air pressure affect the brain and cause symptoms of nostalgia. The Romantic poets, including Coleridge with his poem 'Home-sick' (1799), indicate nostalgia's pathology and echo some of the clinical descriptions of the disease of that time (Wagner 16–17). As Linda Austin points out though, by the mid-nineteenth century writers were beginning to associate nostalgia with changes in culture rather than with changes in physical conditions (Austin 375). Nostalgia as a disease did, however, continue to appear in medical treatises as an organic malady through the late Victorian age (Wagner 20). The importance of nostalgia to the Victorians can be linked to the growing significance of the concept of 'home' and the growth of the British Empire. Travel was becoming more common, as was moving away from one's place of origin.

Martin Heidegger proposed that a longing for a particular place is basic to human nature and that it reflects an innate desire to live a more authentic life. Central to Heidegger's idea of Homecoming is the concept of an authentic self and the distance we feel from that 'true' self. Ultimately, there is a sense that a place can contextualise an individual's real self, and that other places cannot. Heidegger, for instance, felt that he could be his authentic self in a log cabin in the rural Black-Forest but not, for instance, in Berlin.

Nostalgia, as a strong and broken attachment to a place, is a theme within many novels during the nineteenth century. One of the greatest portrayals of homesickness is that of Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights*.¹ Although the relationship between Cathy and Heathcliff is often regarded as the dominant force in the novel, in many respects this relationship merely reflects Cathy's relationship with herself. Cathy loves Heathcliff because he represents herself: 'I *am* Heathcliff — he's always always in my mind — not as a pleasure...but as my own being' (E. Brontë 82). I would point out that the prevailing emotion of longing and loss which haunts the narrative of *Wuthering Heights* centres not only upon Heathcliff, but also focuses clearly on Cathy's divided self. In one of the most vivid scenes early in the novel, Cathy's ghost frantically attempts to get back into Wuthering Heights; yet Cathy's ghost does not cry at Heathcliff's window, nor does she cry for Heathcliff. Cathy cries outside her own window, and she cries to be let into her old home: 'Let me in, Let me in, I'm come home.... I'd lost my way on the moor' (E. Brontë 23). This chilling, yearning voice comes from someone who is lost and stuck in an unwelcoming place, who wants to return home. I suggest that this is a clear representation of homesickness.

Why is Cathy's ghost crying at her own window? According to humanist theory, *Wuthering Heights* is linked to Cathy's original, authentic nature. Once she moves to Thrushcross Grange, she ceases to belong to *Wuthering Heights*; she has literally been displaced. Heathcliff recognises this, but Cathy attempts to move between the two worlds of Thrushcross Grange and *Wuthering Heights*, and to inhabit both. As Cathy's sense of displacement increases, she becomes anxious, anorexic, and delirious, all of which are symptomatic of the disease of nostalgia, and she focuses her gaze upon the Heights. As befits a true sufferer of nostalgia, she becomes ill and dies.

The geographer Edward Relph expanded upon Heidegger's theories and focused on experiential relationship with places:

There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of, the places where we were born and grew up.... [T]his association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves in the world. (Relph 43)

It will be noted that nomadic peoples do not appear to retain this place attachment. However, they do become attached to a way of life and I think that this attachment to a way of life is often what place attachment really is; a longing for the familiar. Relph stressed the notion of authenticity, and the levels of insideness or outsideness, as being fundamental to an experience of place: 'an authentic sense of place is above all that of being inside and belonging to *your* place both as an individual and as a member of a community' (Relph 65). This concept of being inside or outside, as Relph indicates, applies not only to place, but also to the whole of our spatial awareness, and the more inside a place an individual feels, the stronger is their attachment to that place.

In a novel that centres upon themes of authenticity, pining for the true self, and a desire for belonging, *Wuthering Heights* represents the unadapted, the unveiled, the unpretentious and the uncivilised. It is this part of herself that Cathy longs for, her earlier uncultivated and unadapted self. Cathy loses her place as an authentic insider when she leaves the Heights, and her ghost seeks to return.

Wuthering Heights can be seen as a novel of its time, written during a period of great civil unrest and mass migration. From a more constructionist viewpoint, however, the novel is an account of what happens when people attempt to move between classes, as both Cathy and Heathcliff do. When Cathy is educated at Thrushcross Grange, she

crosses the threshold into a class separate from Heathcliff and the Heights, and there are penalties for traversing these boundaries. This theme of migration across class-barriers was prominent within early Victorian literature, and was frequently represented as a journey between geographical north and south.

This link between culture and place is examined within the discipline of Human Geography:

We think of our culture as a home, a place where we naturally belong, where we originally came from, which first stamped us with our identity, to which we are powerfully bonded...by ties that are inherited, obligatory and unquestioning. To be among those who share the same cultural identity makes us feel, culturally, *at home*. (Massey and Jess 182)

Catherine Earnshaw does not make a successful transition from one place to another, but is split, ambivalent, and displaced. Part of the intensity in *Wuthering Heights* comes from the power of this displacement, the sense of moving, painfully and abortively, between two worlds. It is significant that this crossing of the threshold, and the loss of an authentic self, is a repeated theme within north-south literature, and its assignment of identity to places.

At work in much of this is a fundamental reliance on place as a means of consolidating the self. Put simply, when people tell us where they come from, we receive much more information than simply location. Gillian Rose points out that a sense of place is sometimes so strong that it becomes a central part of an individual's identity: 'Part of how you define yourself is symbolised by certain qualities of that place', and the qualities of that place become part of our self-narrative (Massey and Jess 89). Edward Relph also highlights the importance of perception of places as stable, bounded entities: 'There is a feeling that [a] place has endured and will persist as a distinctive entity even though the world around may change' (31). He adds that 'to have roots in a place is to have a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular' (38). Therefore, nostalgia, while seeming to relate to a physical grounding in the earth, may say more about a person's desire to hold on to a coherent self-narrative. This is precisely the idea that informs the nostalgia of *Wuthering Heights*.

Elizabeth Gaskell deals with nostalgia in a quite different way to Emily Brontë. Her novel *North and South* (1855) confronts and queries the romantic attachment to places. The novel begins with the Hale family moving from their southern bases in London and Hampshire to Milton–Northern, ‘the manufacturing district in Darkshire’, a northern town bearing many similarities to Manchester. Margaret Hale feels nostalgia towards Helstone, her old home:

All the other places in England that I have ever seen seem so hard and prosaic-looking.... Helstone is like a village in a poem.... Oh, I can’t describe my home. It is home, and I can’t put its charm into words. (Gaskell, *North and South* 42–43)

But even in these early accounts of Helstone, Margaret becomes heated and confused as she struggles to convey to Mr Lennox, ‘what [Helstone] really is’, and he teases her for presenting a ‘picture’ rather than reality. Margaret Hale defends the south vehemently early in the novel, yet later she will not encourage her friend Higgins to go south to find work: ‘You must not go to the South.... You could not stand it...The mere bodily work...would break you down.... You would not bear the dullness of the life’ (*North and South* 382). When faced with the reality of what the rural south holds for those such as Higgins (the poor), Margaret is compelled to advise him against going, even though this is the same rural south that she has previously described in such idyllic terms. She recognises that Higgins will suffer if he goes to the rural south, and that it is not such a beautiful place for those who have to make a living there.

Margaret’s nostalgia is further undermined when she revisits Helstone, her old home. Even her journey ‘home’ has transfixing power: ‘every mile was redolent of associations...each of which made her cry upon “the days that are no more”’ (*North and South* 472). This chapter is titled ‘Once and Now’, an indicative chapter heading within a novel so concerned with nostalgia. When Margaret returns to Helstone, it is beautiful, as remembered, and she is emotional on her return. However, it is far from perfect; for a start, ‘there was change everywhere’ (*North and South* 481). What the novel reveals, then, is a longing for stability in its nostalgia for places. There is an evident desire to ‘belong’, and when social identity is imagined that identity is constructed in a place. Fear of impermanence can motivate us towards insistently attempting to create a stable sense of self. In doing so, individuals endeavour to locate their identity in space, to contextualise it. Theorists such as Gaston Bachelard, point out that places are viewed as more stable than individuals, and that

people attempt to narrate themselves into the histories of places; in effect to fix themselves. Bachelard refers to this in *The Poetics of Space*: ‘All really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home. [Here] memory and imagination remain associated.... Without it man would be a dispersed being’ (Bachelard 67).

When Margaret Hale returns to Helstone, it is a much–changed place. There is also a startling, but unremarked upon, anecdote in the chapter of Margaret’s return to Helstone (Chapter 45). In this anecdote, Margaret visits the home of one of her old domestic servants. Whilst there, she hears that a neighbour has stolen the woman’s cat and roasted it in order to call up the devil. Rather than viewing her neighbour as mad for stealing and roasting her cat, the woman sees the actions as quite possibly necessary in summoning the powers of darkness. It is only the fact that it was her cat that arouses the woman’s emotional interest. With this account of pagan antics, Gaskell scotches all possibility of a nostalgic return to Helstone.

In *North and South*, Gaskell clearly uses the concept of nostalgia to map Margaret Hale’s transition from childhood into adulthood; by the end of the novel Margaret no longer clings to memories, fantasies, nostalgia, or to home. She has been able to adapt to another place, to learn its rules of behaviour, to create a new life, and to accept a new place as home.

Gaskell also engages with place–nostalgia in her novel *Mary Barton* (1848). Alice Wilson, an old woman who left her rural home and moved to Manchester many years ago, has fantasised all her life about returning ‘home’. Gaskell does not encourage nostalgia in these novels, and Alice’s return never occurs. The narrator states: ‘If it did, how changed from the fond anticipation of what it was to have been! It would be a mockery to the blind and deaf Alice’ (Gaskell, *Mary Barton* 157).

Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë show a markedly more positive and accepting response to industrialisation than do their contemporary male authors, Benjamin Disraeli, Thomas Carlyle, and Charles Dickens. Susan Zlotnick has drawn attention to this difference in response between the male– and female–authored ‘Condition of England’ literature. Zlotnick argues that female writers of the Industrial Revolution, such as the Brontës and Gaskell, were excited by the change brought about by the Industrial Revolution. This was because they recognised that such changes might also bring the possibility of improved freedoms and economic independence for women (Zlotnick). Indeed, Charlotte Brontë indicated her sense of confinement in a letter to Emily in 1839: ‘I could like to work in a mill. I could like to feel some mental liberty. I could like this weight of restraint to be taken off’ (Smith 38). In *Mary Barton*

Elizabeth Gaskell recommended ‘occupation’ as a solution to many of the problems besetting women, the working classes, and England.

Geographical theorist Gillian Rose argues that nineteenth-century women would be likely to view their homes as restrictive because they represented confinement rather than freedom. Rose argues that women were confined within households and that, especially during the nineteenth century, middle-class women had very little access to public space and were confined within the home by strictures of decorum. In addition, during the nineteenth century a woman’s movement from one home to another would often be as the result of her marriage, when she transferred from being the property of one man to being that of another. Sara Stickney Ellis’s *The Women of England* (1839) and Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1854–63), along with Charlotte Brontë’s references to millions of women being condemned through domesticity to ‘a stiller doom than mine’ (*Jane Eyre* 141), suggest that women may have endured quietly rather than enjoyed domestic confinement.

While Elizabeth Gaskell and Emily Brontë have quite different attitudes towards homesickness, there are many similarities between their portrayals. Most importantly, in either case characters leave behind their childhood environments and are unhappy in their new ones. This stresses the point that nostalgia for a place occurs only after a person loses their link with the place, either after they have left it or after the place has begun to die.

Histories of places are often interwoven with legends, and nostalgia for places frequently interlinks with mythological tales. The Luddites and the Chartists, iconic characters in the mythology of the north of England, feature in the Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë novels *Mary Barton* and *Shirley*. Charlotte Brontë takes a decidedly middle-class approach to the Luddite legends in her recounting of the attack on Rawfold’s Mill. The working-class account of this Luddite attack is highly heroic and rousing (Thompson 613–15), whereas Charlotte Brontë’s version portrays the Luddites as a trouble-making mob. However, the pull of Luddite mythology was difficult for Charlotte to ignore and we experience some sense of its power in her description of the attack on Moore’s Mill:

‘They come on!’ cried Shirley. ‘How steadily they march in! There is discipline in their ranks. I will not say there is courage...but there is suffering and desperation enough amongst them’....

A yell followed this demonstration — a rioter’s yell — a north-of-England, a Yorkshire, a West Riding, a West Riding clothing-district-of-Yorkshire rioter’s yell. (*Shirley* 257–58)

This extract, as with much mythology of place, foregrounds the importance of place within the myth and locks the legend to a place. The attack on Rawfold’s Mill that this account describes had entered into folklore by the time Charlotte Brontë was writing the novel *Shirley*. Even though she was antagonistic towards the Chartist protests of her own time, Brontë could not avoid representing some of the Luddite myth. In so doing, she also foregrounds the importance of Yorkshire and the West Riding within the legend.

In *Shirley*, Charlotte Brontë promotes ‘Yorkshire’ as an identity, and as a unifying force: ‘I am — Yorkshire in blood and birth. Five generations of my race sleep under the aisles of Briarfield church. We are compatriots’ (*Shirley* 158). Emma Mason states that: ‘In *Shirley* the territorial identity of an ordinary Yorkshire produces a world of heroes, an imaginary community of vigorous, free-spirited individuals of all classes united by “race and blood”’ (Mason 306). Charlotte states of the Yorkshire man Mr Yorke that ‘revolt was in his blood’, and the novel insistently defends the Yorkshire character from attack:

Now, let me hear the most refined of Cockneys presume to find fault with Yorkshire manners! Taken as they ought to be, the majority of the lads and lasses of the West-Riding are gentlemen and ladies, every inch of them: it is only against the weak affectation and futile pomposity of a would-be aristocrat that they turn mutinous. (*Shirley* 267)

This bolstering of local identity becomes more interesting, and illustrative of place-identity when we trace it back to its origins. The Brontë women had been routinely criticised for their provincial, ‘coarse’ and ‘vulgar’ writing style and subject matter. Charlotte Brontë had received a personal attack in a review of *Jane Eyre* (1847) from Elizabeth Rigby, in which Charlotte was described as ‘a decidedly vulgar-minded woman’ who ‘combines a total ignorance of the habits of society [with] a great coarseness of taste’ (Allott 105–12). Charlotte attempted to publish a direct response to this review in the preface to *Shirley* but was dissuaded by her publishers. Instead, she delivered a series of north-south volleys from within the text of *Shirley*. The novel

Shirley displays an intense interest in defining and defending the ‘Yorkshire identity’, and this interest is not evident in Charlotte’s earlier novel *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Brontë’s interest in Yorkshire and the North become intensified the more the places come under attack. Similarly, during the mid–nineteenth century, working–class place identity was pronounced in areas that were suffering threat and difficult conditions. Centres of radical activity, such as Leeds, Bradford and Manchester displayed fierce local pride which is reflected in the publication of extensive amounts of dialect literature, folklore and local almanacs (Joyce 248–328). As the Marxist geographer David Harvey points out: ‘the places where martyrs fell...have long gripped the imagination’ (Harvey 322).

Solidarity and community, which can be established around a place, are prominent features in the writings of the radical working class of the nineteenth century. This is partly because of legislation such as The Anti–Combinations Act of 1799. This Act made most working–class political meetings illegal, and thus raised up the importance of loyalty and the integrity of one’s neighbours. Indeed, such qualities became a matter of life and death.

As can be seen from local mythologies, places provide locations for collective memory; individuals are able to construct identity around places and to configure their political solidarity with that place. What is recorded, either as stories or more materially, shapes what is remembered. There is not just a blurred distinction between individual and collective memories, as the one directs the other: ‘human memories are basically social memories...what we remember is often less a product of direct personal experiences and more of our embedding in social structures family, nation, and ethnic groups’ (Lewicka 212). Memories are seen as establishing a connection between our individual and our collective past. The past is always with us, ‘it resonates in our voices, hovers over our silences and explains how we came to be ourselves and to inhabit what we call our homes’ (Hua 137). The retelling of tales about places of the past is often part of a collective memory. However it is also necessarily a politicised retelling, indicating what is desired and what is important. John Barton’s retelling of the Chartist march of 1839, for instance, is strong enough to instigate a murder (Gaskell, *Mary Barton* 188–89).

The perception of places as fixed or bounded is problematic and nostalgia and clinging to home may not be such innocent tendencies. If individuals seek to be ‘inside’ a place, then they may also seek to be close to those who display an unadulterated, ‘authentic’ version of that place–identity. Prototypes of regional characters, such as John Thornton

and Heathcliff, display an exaggerated version of a regional character. The attractiveness of prototypes links with regional purity and the unhealthy tendencies of nationalism. If there are those who exemplify the regional character, there must be, as a corollary, those who are seen as outsiders; a rejected group who do not belong: ‘Purified identities are constructed through the purification of space, through the maintenance of territorial boundaries and frontiers’ (Massey and Jess 42).

Places are an ongoing series of contested discourses, imaginary attributions, negotiated boundaries, fabrications and beliefs. In addition, places alter over time, and are of course perceived differently by different individuals and by different groups at different times. Therefore we have many reasons for recognising that places cannot have fixed, essential identities, yet we may attempt to construct ongoing narratives and to affix attributes such as character to places. In assigning characteristics to places, people attempt to attach a sense of stability and personality to an area of space. This is similar to the ways in which individuals construct ongoing narratives about themselves and others.

Interestingly, nostalgia does not exist as an isolated condition but is part of a dichotomy. Edward Relph compared the sense of being uprooted (nostalgia), with the related sense of being entrapped. He referred to this entrapment as ‘place drudgery’:

Our experience of place and especially of home is a dialectical one — balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape. When one of these needs is too readily satisfied we suffer either from nostalgia and a sense of being uprooted, or from the melancholia that accompanies a feeling of oppressions and imprisonment in a place. (Relph 42)

This ongoing dialectic between nostalgia and place–drudgery is most evident in Charlotte Brontë’s novels *Villette* (1853), *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, in which the characters relate their experiences of claustrophobia and confinement.

A physiological analysis of place–attachment shows that such attachments usually begin in childhood. This strong association set up in childhood, in which individuals feel emotionally linked to a place, suggests a powerful and enduring physiological mapping in which environment and developing subjectivity are simultaneously interwoven (Austin 85). This interconnection of childhood environments with place–identity is such a common feature, and so powerful, that people sometimes mistake their childhoods for the places in which they grew

up. This can occur so markedly that what we think of as a strong attachment to a place is actually an attachment to, and longing for, our own pasts. There are certainly strong feelings associated with places from our pasts. Jeff Malpas, analysing Heidegger's theories of place, states: 'It is perhaps not surprising that such past places often take on an idealised form [there is a] connection between the memory of childhood and the idea of the idyllic character of past places' (Malpas 182).

Stuart Tannock examines the conditions under which nostalgia arises. He states that: 'The nostalgic subject turns to the past to find or construct sources of identity, agency, or community that are felt to be lacking, blocked, subverted or threatened in the present' (Tannock 454). Tannock also suggests that, 'by sanctioning soothing and utopian images...[nostalgia] lets people adapt both to rapid change and to changes in individual life stories' (Tannock 459).

It may be useful at this point to review the conditions of Emily Brontë's homesickness. Emily Brontë was said to suffer from such terrible homesickness that she rarely left Haworth. Her homesickness displayed typical symptoms of 'nostalgia': she was anorexic, and suffered from insomnia, palpitations, stupor, and persistent thinking of home. Her reputation for suffering from homesickness stems from the 1850 publication of *Selections from the Literary Remains of Ellis Bell* and the reprint of *Wuthering Heights*. In these, Charlotte Brontë romanticised the family life—stories, emphasising the remoteness of Haworth and fixing Emily Brontë forever as the isolated romantic on the moors, unable to leave Haworth: 'I felt in my heart she would die, if she did not go home' (Smith 146). As Linda Austin points out, the Brontës read Scott and Byron and were attracted to tales of the romantic, displaced Highlanders. This mythology may have encouraged the narrative concerning Emily and homesickness. It is also evident that the Brontës had access to John Abercrombie's *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers* (1834) via the Keighley Mechanic's Institute. Abercrombie's work discussed nostalgia as being typified by a distracted mind and he lists it amongst the febrile diseases. However, Charlotte had previously given more prosaic reasons for her sister's homesickness. She attributed Emily's return from a post as teacher at Roe Head school, for instance, to overwork and exhaustion, along with the fact that Emily was having to deal with 'fat-headed oafs', as Charlotte referred to one set of her charges (Smith 153).

Gaskell's and Emily Brontë's fictional characters deal with their experiences of homesickness differently. Gaskell's Margaret Hale is determined to gain an active and useful role in the new town. In searching for an active role, Margaret tackles two of the conditions that

Tannock describes as responsible for nostalgia; Margaret attempts to become involved in the community, to take part in Milton life, and to develop her sense of agency. Catherine Earnshaw, as discussed, struggles as she wavers between two locations. Interestingly, just as the treatments of nostalgia differ in the novels, there was also a contrast between the lives of Elizabeth Gaskell and Emily Brontë. Gaskell was moved from her father's home in Chelsea when she was just over one year old to live with her Aunt in Cheshire. She never achieved a more than chilly relationship with her father, stating that visits to her father's house left her 'very very unhappy'. However, on her marriage she moved to Manchester, and subsequently lived in other locations. She was able to move on, and in those moves she gained independence. Emily on the other hand, was unable to thrive away from Haworth.

Having discussed other examples of nostalgia, I would like to return to the original use of the term in the seventeenth century, and to the situation of the Swiss soldiers of whom the diagnosis of nostalgia was first made. These soldiers were often mercenaries fighting away from home, and the diagnosis of nostalgia was linked with their fierce love for their homeland. The conditions of the Swiss soldiers to some extent match Tannock's conditions for the creation of nostalgia; they had lost their powers of agency, and they had lost their old community, and these components, as indicated by Stuart Tannock, conspire to create a strong sense of nostalgia. An epidemic of nostalgia occurred later during the eighteenth century. Again, those diagnosed with this disease were mostly in the military and were fighting away from home on the losing side. This compares strikingly with the Swiss soldiers who had been so overcome by nostalgia that when they heard sounds that reminded them of their hometowns they had left their posts. Many different diagnoses have been applied to soldiers abandoning the battlefield in the succeeding years, but it is interesting to see that even the origins of the term nostalgia are so strongly linked with highly political, rather than solely romantic conditions. A replica (romantic) tale of the Scottish Highlanders also circulated during the nineteenth century. The Highlanders were said to have left the battlefield on hearing the sound of bagpipes.

While theorists such as Heidegger regard place-attachment as innate, and noble, the concept is, of course, riddled with issues of belonging and exclusion, and discourses of power and territoriality. Many are suspicious of the term 'belonging', including the Marxist geographer David Harvey who accuses place-attachment of fostering essentialist and exclusionary tendencies. Likewise Roberto Dainotto fiercely criticises attachment to places and states that regionalism is

merely ‘taking the place and role that once was given to nationalism; they speak the same language; they foster the same desires menacing and *unheimlich*, of purity and authenticity’ (*Place in Literature* 173).

‘Belonging’, ‘being in–place’, and ‘fitting in’ are integral to a sense of nostalgia and place–identity. However, these features can be given different emphasis, leading to a sense of place–identity as either inclusive or exclusionary. While expressions of place–identity in literature such as *Wuthering Heights* and in the folklore of places romanticise place–attachment, nostalgia and emotional attachment to places are certainly not regarded by all as innate or admirable. Attachment to places can be seen as the foundations to nationalism and to bigoted acts of rejection. Furthermore, longing for places is often a disguised longing for our own pasts. The underlying message regarding nostalgia for places is that we cannot go home or locate our original homes because home in this sense is the past. As Roberto Dainotto insists, ‘an authentic identity, as a first nature, is a place to which we cannot return’ (‘All the Regions’ 491), and as one famous migrant stated, ‘The past is a country from which we have all emigrated, its loss is part of our common humanity’ (Rushdie 12).

NOTES

¹ In a recent article for *Victorian Studies*, for instance, Linda Austin discusses Emily Brontë and homesickness but not in relation to *Wuthering Heights*.

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