

“REMEMBER HER ROOM: FEMINIZING SPATIAL AND
ARCHITECTURAL POETICS”

A Thesis
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English

by
Mary Gibaldi
Spring 2019

“REMEMBER HER ROOM: FEMINIZING SPATIAL AND
ARCHITECTURAL POETICS”

A Thesis

by

Mary Gibaldi

Spring 2019

APPROVED BY THE INTERIM DEAN OF THE GRADUATE STUDIES:

Sharon Barrios, Ph.D.

APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Erin K. Kelly, Ph.D., Chair

Matthew O. Brown, Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is dedicated to the ones who helped make it possible—the ones who helped make me capable.

To my mentors, Dr. Erin Kelly and Dr. Matt Brown, not only for helping me write and rewrite this project but for exemplifying what it means to be a true teacher; I am honored to know you and humbled to have learned from you. To every Chico State professor who pushed me to continue, compelled me to think deeper, and provided me with opportunities for growth. To my third grade teacher, Mrs. Wise, for telling me my writing was special and my thoughts mattered. To my cohort—my dear, wonderful friends—for being a constant source of laughter and inspiration; I look up to you all. To the Mathews family, for taking us in and keeping us safe. To my parents, for your unconditional love and unwavering support in everything. To the town of Paradise for being so beautiful.

And to Brian. For putting my success before your own. For making my joy your joy. To you, always, and most of all. Thank you for walking me home.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. Critical Introduction.....	1
II. <i>Villette and Jane Eyre</i>	13
III. <i>Love</i>	33
IV. <i>Bailey's Cafe</i>	52
V. Conclusion.....	73
Works Cited.....	80

ABSTRACT

“REMEMBER HER ROOM: FEMINIZING SPATIAL AND ARCHITECTURAL POETICS”

by

Mary Gibaldi

Master of Arts in English

California State University, Chico

Spring 2019

In literary worlds, as in the actual world, women are often left without a space to call their own. Obligated instead to navigate men’s societal structures and homes, female characters naturally respond to the spaces they inhabit differently than their male counterparts. However, the most significant theoretical works of spatial and architectural poetics—branches of literary criticism and philosophy that make meaning of houses’ physical features—do not account for this difference in perception because these texts are predominantly authored by men. Indeed, Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*, the most significant work in the field, omits any mention of domestic labor, assumes that his reader owns and is able to exact control over their home, and exclusively quotes other male writers; thus, the emotional impulses towards space as they currently exist in the field are profoundly privileged and inherently masculine. In order to respond to the

gendered oversights in Bachelard's argument, this project places his claims into conversation with female writers across time and space by explicating the houses represented in Charlotte Bronte's *Villette* and *Jane Eyre*, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Toni Morrison's *Love*, and Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Cafe*. By analyzing these texts, the discrepancies between Bachelard's masculine assertions regarding the experience of one's home space and women's experiences living in men's houses become apparent and a new, feminized iteration of spatial and architectural poetics begins to emerge.

CHAPTER I

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

*Our soul is an abode. And by remembering 'houses' and 'rooms,' we
learn to 'abide' within ourselves.
(Bachelard xxxiii)*

There is no space more fundamental to the individual, no place that suggests more comfort, tranquility, and freedom, than one's home. Our own corner of the world and our "very first universe," the longing for home is a feeling deeply rooted in the human experience.¹ Houses have been made the subject of countless works across genres, from classic philosophical writings to literary and feminist criticism—even contemporary fan fiction—making them a fascinating subject for textual analysis.² Indeed, the obsession with homes and the literary representations of homes has sparked a theoretical and imaginative tradition known as spatial and/or architectural poetics, a branch of primarily French literary theory and philosophy that makes meaning of spatial and architectural details represented in texts. To be sure, spatial poets have imagined and written extensively about what it means to imagine space—what significance is represented by imagining attics, cellars, gardens, and kitchens. However, the most prominent spatial theorists—the individuals who have written this theoretical framework into existence—are almost exclusively male. Thus, the emotional impulses towards space as they currently exist in the field are profoundly privileged and inherently masculine.

¹ See Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, p. 4.

² See *Decorating a Room of One's Own* by Wake Forest University Associate Professor, Susan Harlan.

This project, therefore, seeks to feminize classic imaginings of space—particularly, the imaginings of the houses women occupy in literature.³ To this end, I will, in my first chapter, analyze the ancestral home spaces, gardens, and attics represented in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* and make meaning of the undesirable nooks and crannies Brontë’s women are obliged to inhabit within men’s homes. My second chapter will then build upon the foundation laid by Brontë by examining two women’s fierce competition to obtain ownership of the “Monarch Street House” in Toni Morrison’s *Love*. Finally, in my third and final chapter, I will use Gloria Naylor’s representation of a cafe known as Bailey’s and a brothel/boarding house called Eve’s in her novel, *Bailey’s Cafe*, to reveal the culmination of feminized spatial and architectural poetics, in which women harness the power to imagine their own spaces, completely unencumbered by male ownership or influence. But before I approach these texts and use them to trace a genealogy of women’s representations of their home spaces, I must first set up the current theoretical landscape and unpack the most prominent and most relevant works of theory surrounding women and space.

In order to understand the feminist significance of the architectural and spatial poetics represented in Brontë’s, Morrison’s, and Naylor’s novels, and the ways in which they diverge from current spatial theories, one must first grapple with the most prominent work of spatial poetics to date, French philosopher Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space*. This seminal text explores signifiers of architectural poetics, deconstructing notions of verticality to make meaning of cellars and attics, as well as addressing centrality and periphery to

³ I intentionally choose to use the phrase “houses women occupy” instead of “women’s houses;” part of this theoretical conversation must include the fact that many, if not most, representations of literary women do not own their own homes.

differentiate the core spaces of the house from those on the margin. Bachelard's book employs the terms "topophilia" and "topoanalysis" to analyze the poetics of domestic spaces, postulating that topophilia refers to the feeling of love or affection towards an inherently "felicitous space" (xxxix).⁴⁵ He continues his conversation on felicitous space by noting that, "In our houses we have nooks and corners in which we like to curl up comfortably. To curl up belongs to the phenomenology of the verb to inhabit, and only those who have learned to do so can inhabit with intensity" (xxxiv). This description of what it means to experience one's own home suggests that the natural byproduct of inhabiting and "curling up" in one's home space is this deep feeling of topophilia. Bachelard's work explicates in exquisite detail what it means to inhabit a space, what each space in the house signifies, and what implications those spaces have on the one who inhabits them. Indeed, the crux of Bachelard's assertion regarding the poetic importance of the home space is that, "there is ground for taking the house as a *tool of analysis* of the human soul" (xxxiii).⁶

For Bachelard, therefore, the significance of home spaces far exceeds narrative detail, visual interest, or backdrop for a literary scene. The structure of the space itself—the things that take place in the space—are inherently rooted to the feelings those spaces conjure in the individual. Bachelard states of this connection:

It is not a questions of describing houses, or enumeration their picturesque features and analyzing for which reasons they are comfortable. On the contrary, we must go beyond the problems of description—whether this description be objective or subjective, that is, whether it give facts or impressions—in order to attain to the primary virtues, those that

⁴ Topoanalysis is defined by Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* as "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (8).

⁵ "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives" (8).

⁶ See also Edward Said's "Jane Austen and Empire" for further study on the connection between women and their space.

reveal an attachment that is native in some way to the primary function of inhabiting. (Bachelard 4)

Rather than simply describing the space, then, the spatial poet asks questions like, “Was the room a large one? Was the garret cluttered up? Was the nook warm? How was it lighted? How, too, in these fragments of space, did the human being achieve silence? How did he relish the very special silence of the various retreats of solitary daydreaming?” (9). Indeed, *The Poetics of Space* concerns itself with the analysis of space, the deep and significant understanding of its connection to the one who inhabits it, not simply the physical, visual observation of it.

Bachelard’s text has been the subject of numerous theoretical offshoots, each exploring different intellectual and imaginative territory. One notable example is Juliette De Soto, who, in her article, places Bachelard’s ideas into conversation with Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*. Following in Bachelard’s tradition of using space as a metaphor for one’s internal landscape, she asserts that, “As architects of modernity, we may shape space, but space shapes us in return” (50). She uses this focus on space to read Proust’s childhood bedroom and the effect it had on his “fixation with the passage of time and his anxious disorientation with his world” (51), and, in turn, make sense of how internal space affects one’s understanding of *In Search of Lost Time*. She writes of the connection between Bachelard and Proust, “Though their work is divergent in many ways, both Bachelard and Proust were obsessed with the formative and haunting influence of domestic space as well as the function of memory” (51). Indeed, De Soto postulates that, “a spatial psychology goes beyond descriptions of the psyche in spatial terms; it investigates the primal relationship we have with space as such, since it molds our ways of inhabiting” (51). Because one’s relationship to their space, according to both Bachelard and De Soto, molds their way of

inhabiting that space, it is vital to analyze diverse reactions to and impulses regarding space—particularly home space.

In addition to De Soto's work, French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* contributes to Bachelard's theoretical tradition by further connecting the psychic space and the actual spaces all people inhabit. In his text, he employs a "conceptual triad" to differentiate between spatial practice, representations of space, and, most relevant for Bachelard's work and for the purposes of this project, representational space (33). He postulates that representational spaces, "[embody] complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life" (33). Bachelard would likely reply to Lefebvre that houses, then, are excellent examples of representational spaces—a garret is not just a garret, a cellar is not just a cellar. These spaces are representational of social dynamics, internal landscapes, and most significantly for my purposes, gender significance and gendered power structures.

Bachelard's work has been the imaginative inspiration for countless scholars. Indeed, perhaps no thinker has written about the home space as intimately, specifically, and with as much affection as Gaston Bachelard. However, while beautifully written and imaginatively inviting, women and readers of fiction written by women will immediately notice problematic assumptions underpinning Bachelard's argument. Immediately and throughout his lengthy, profound analysis of the home space, Bachelard continually equates domestic spatial poetics with happiness, coziness, and a sense of safety. His understanding of home is inextricably linked to his notion of "felicitous space," or topophilia, which women reading his text may interpret as a shortsighted and insular assumption.

Despite the idyllic notion of the peaceful, serene home assumed by Bachelard, and the many male writers he references in his text, there are several major gendered oversights present in the text, the first and potentially most obvious of which is that there is no mention whatsoever of the experience of housework. If, indeed, these male writers' experiences of the home-space are affected by the unmentioned labor of their wives or housekeepers, not only is their imagining of the home-space incomplete, but women's imaginings of the domestic space are not even on the map. Not only do these gendered oversights omit the mention of labor, they also assume that the imaginer, or "daydreamer," owns and is able to exact control over his or her space. The literary representation of women's traditional work inside of the home coupled with their common lack of home-ownership inherently changes their interpretations and articulations of their space. Thus, the emotional connections that bolster Bachelard's argument are simply unable to be rapidly adopted by female writers or understood by female readers.

Indeed, if the significance of a house's architectural poetics—its verticality, its centrality and periphery, and its artifacts—are based on gendered assumptions about the shared experience of inhabiting home, there exists a significant theoretical problem. In order to acquire the language to accurately analyze the poetics surrounding women's domestic space, one must first reorient their reading of space to account for women's visceral reactions and impulses to the same signifiers about which Bachelard writes. Because Brontë, Morrison, and Naylor utilize the same examples of spatial poetics as are used in theory—verticality, centrality, drawers and dressers, and artifacts—these novels serve as excellent case studies for this project. It is through this lens that this paper seeks to imagine a feminine, and, indeed, feminist set of spatial poetics.

Certainly, some critical work has already been done to juxtapose spatial theory and feminist theory. Most notably, perhaps, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* employs the home space as a metaphor for the ability to freely take up space in the world, specifically, in the world of literature, postulating that, in order for a woman to write fiction, she must first possess, "a room of her own" (8). In her second chapter, she unfolds a stream of consciousness narrative in which she considers the discrepancies between men's wealth and women's poverty (33) and between men's quantifiable labor outside the domestic sphere and women's unpaid labor within it (50-51). She ponders this question as she enters her own home, noting as the final line of the chapter, "What bearing has all this upon the subject of my paper, Women and Fiction? I asked, going indoors" (51). This juxtaposition of themes suggests that the narrator's own domestic space sparks her intellectual curiosities regarding the experience of labor and space between men and women; here, she begins to imagine her home space in terms of what her experience means to the greater cultural context.

In addition to Woolf's text, Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* intersects feminist theory and spatial theory by making feminist meaning of Bertha Mason's entrapment in the liminal attic space in *Jane Eyre*, which allows her to neither occupy her own home nor make space for herself in the outside world. Their work also utilizes a metaphor of Snow White to assert that women's imagined relationship to space is both marginalized and miniaturized, noting that, "Snow White is a housekeeping angel in a *tiny* house conveys the story's attitude toward 'woman's world and woman's work': the realm of domesticity is a miniaturized kingdom in which the best of women is not only like a dwarf but like a dwarf's servant" (40). However, this vitally important and influential text, while successful in its analysis of Bertha's space as a metaphor for the entrapment of women

writers and its argument surrounding women's literary space, remains located squarely within feminist theory. The use of space in *Madwoman*, then, becomes a means by which a feminist end is realized. These feminized spaces are not treated as ends in themselves, and the ways in which they divert from representations of spaces as represented by male philosophers is not analyzed or addressed.

Similarly, Marleen S. Barr's *Feminist Fabulations: Space/Postmodern Fiction* enters into conversation with both Gilbert and Gubar's and Bachelard's work. It responds to Bachelard's masculine spatial assumptions by noting that, "He does not state that the house is one of the greatest powers to curtail the thoughts, memories, and dreams of *women*."⁷ Houses enclose women. Women do not live well while protected in a domestic environment which, like a constraining brassiere, holds them in" (113). Barr goes on to argue that, as opposed to female characters of the past, modern female literary protagonists, "live according to a feminist topoanalysis. They are able to ignore yellow wallpaper, engage in women's awakening to the public world, and transcend the experience of the madwoman in the attic" (115).⁸ While the text begins the work of addressing women's literal and figurative space, and even begins to rebut some of Bachelard's assumptions, like *Madwoman*, it turns towards making larger feminist claims and away from the interrogation of the masculinized poetics it identifies as problematic and incomplete.

While each of these works signifies a vital contribution to the positioning of feminist theory against spatial poetics, their methodologies do not explicate space as a significant end unto itself, but consistently use it as a lens through which to view a larger

⁷ Emphasis mine.

⁸ See *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman for further study on women's representation of their own spatial entrapment in literature.

feminist picture. However, they do begin to interrogate the gendered assumptions made by Bachelard and invite a fuller, more equitable way of understanding the poetics of the home-space. From the theoretical framework set up by these feminist scholars, this project will rigorously analyze Bachelard's sweeping claims about space and meaning and place his specific assertions about attics, cellars, and other specific points of home spaces into direct conversation, and, indeed, contention, with women writers like Charlotte Brontë, Jean Rhys, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, and Sandra Cisneros.⁹

To this end, this project will begin by analyzing Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, along with Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Set almost exclusively against the backdrop of ancestral houses and their attics, gardens, and boudoirs, these texts provide rich, detailed poetic representations of the spaces their female characters occupy. Indeed, for the feminist spatial poet, these texts are incredibly significant. Despite their plots which, in large part, subscribe to the conventions of Victorian novels—English class structures, questions of femininity and propriety, and the duality of women as either angel or monster—by analyzing the home spaces Brontë imagines, readers are able to better understand her female character's inner longings, societal limitations, and spatial daydreams.¹⁰ Because spaces like *Jane Eyre*'s Thornfield and Gateshead Hall and *Villette*'s Rue Fossett have been the subject of perhaps

⁹ Jean Rhys is the author of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a novel that reimagines Charlotte Brontë's character, Bertha Mason; Sandra Cisneros authors *The House on Mango Street*, an excerpt of which I will examine in the second chapter of this project.

¹⁰ The angel of the house was a common Victorian depiction of domestic women, a representation that is contrasted with "monstrous" women who do not fit this standard. See Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* and Coventry Patmore's Victorian poem, "The Angel in the House."

the most rigorous feminist spatial analyses to date, they serve as an excellent launchpad for the spatial examination of other works written by women.¹¹

After analyzing Brontë's spaces, this project will move into an analysis of the Monarch Street House and Cosey's abandoned resort hotel depicted in Toni Morrison's *Love*. Like Brontë, Morrison's female characters make meaning of the same sorts of spaces that Bachelard imagines—three story structures, cellars, central and peripheral spaces, and artifacts of the home. However, the narrative itself is laced with competition, animosity, and bitterness between women as Morrison's two central characters, Heed and Christine, fight for ownership over the Monarch Street House. The atmospheres of the text's spaces, therefore, are a far cry from the coziness and homeyness Bachelard assumes the act of inhabiting naturally produce. Finally, after my examination of *Love*, the project will conclude with an analysis of Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Cafe*, a text in which women are finally able to imagine their own spaces, fully and without reservation. The spaces in *Bailey's Cafe*, therefore, serve as a coda to my line of inquiry and begin to provide a context for a new set of feminist spatial and architectural poetics.

Though the transition from Victorian literature to twentieth-century African American literature may, at first, seem slightly jarring, the degree of spatial marginalization each of the female characters in these texts experience in their own homes is strikingly similar. Feminist author and scholar, bell hooks, writes of the experience of marginalization in her book, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, "To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body" (Hooks ix). To be sure, these are the exact sort of

¹¹ Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* addresses space in both *Villette* and *Jane Eyre*.

experiences this project will contend with; despite being set in different centuries and on different continents, the experience of marginal living by Brontë's, Morrison's, and Naylor's female characters is absolutely shared. Furthermore, Daniel Hack's 2017 book, *Reaping Something New: African American Transformations of Victorian Literature*, closely examines and interrogates the fascinating yet seldom explored connective tissue that has been constructed between Victorian and African American literature.¹² Though in every other respect, Victorian women and mid-twentieth-century African American women lived vastly different lives and, to be sure, navigated the limitations and constraints of vastly different cultural contexts, their experiences attempting to find their place in houses men own and carve out a room of their own are so similar it bears dwelling upon. It poignantly suggests that men's widespread homeownership and, as Bachelard might put it, ability to inhabit his space with intensity, consistently relegates women to the margins of the home across time, space, race, and culture.¹³

Thus, while Bachelard implores readers to "remember rooms" (xxxiii), this project remembers *hers*. While Bachelard imagines men inhabiting their spaces with intensity, this project asserts that when he does so, he leaves no space for *her* to inhabit. And while Bachelard understands houses to be a "tool of analysis of the human soul" (xxxiii), this project places *her* soul at the center of analysis. In doing this, in feminizing assertions that have long been accepted in their unconscious masculinity, in simply considering what a

¹² Daniel Hack is a professor of English at the University of Michigan. His book, *Reaping Something New*, begins to bridge the gap between Victorian and African American literature by examining the ways in which African American literature and newspapers have reimagined Victorian novels—including *Jane Eyre*—and placed their stories into conversations about slavery, as well as set them in the American south.

¹³ See *The Poetics of Space*, p. xxxiv.

woman's experience is like in a space as opposed to a man's, a feminist set of spatial poetics begins to emerge, and with it, a deeper understanding of the feminine experience.

CHAPTER II

VILLETTE AND JANE EYRE

In Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, Lucy Snowe muses to herself, "Is there nothing more for me in life—no truer home—nothing to be dearer to me than myself" (400). As succinctly exemplified in this instance, Brontë's novels are marked not only by their enduring popularity and profound literary influence, but also by the ways in which they begin to construct connective tissue between the physical structures of a woman's space and the internal landscape of her soul. In formulating a set of feminized architectural and spatial poetics, therefore, *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* provide an ideal starting point for analysis. Centering themselves around ancestral houses and the spaces within them—spooky attics, lonely gardens, unsettling red rooms, and ladies' boudoirs—*Villette* and *Jane Eyre*, as well as novels that follow in their tradition, such as Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, use the representation of domestic spaces to articulate meaningful claims about women's lives, longings, and limitations. Employing architectural signifiers such as verticality and centrality to introduce notions of memory, agency, and privacy, these novels enter into direct conversations with Bachelard's text by placing emotional significance on physical spaces. However, in order to make feminist and imaginative meaning of these spaces, we must first examine the consequences for a woman's imagination—or ability to "daydream"—when the only places to which she has access are the forgotten spaces within a man's house.¹⁴

¹⁴ Gaston Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space*, uses the term "daydream" to describe the imaginative potential of various spaces.

As I touched on in my introductory section, Bachelard explicates the term *topophilia* (the love of an inherently felicitous space) while Gilbert and Gubar and Carol Davidson examine *topophobia* (the hatred or fear of of a space). My analysis of Brontë's work, however, seeks instead to examine the constraints of what it means to think about "women's space" in the first place—to unearth imbedded claims about ownership, freedom, and entrapment, and to realize the poetic implications these themes have on our ideas of spatial and architectural poetics. Reading Brontë's texts through Bachelard's lens inevitably leads to several important questions that this project will address: when one examines the cellars, beams, attics, kitchens, boudoirs, and courtyards of houses as they are represented by their female inhabitants, what deviations exist from Bachelard's classic work? What are the social, societal, and spatial factors that contribute to these deviations? Through examining Brontë's representations of space in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, novels that utilize Gaston's principles of poetics to paint women into a proverbial corner, women's desire for spatial agency becomes realized, and with it, a feminized understanding of spatial poetics begins to emerge.

Not surprisingly, the most important vehicles of spatial and architectural signifiers represented in Brontë's novels are the various iterations of the Victorian house—it is upon the foundation of the Victorian home that the poetic significance of smaller spaces such as attics and gardens can be constructed. In order to view the Victorian house in light of spatial and architectural poetics, the it must first be understood as both a physical and metaphorical entity. Iona Boghian writes in her article on the Victorian house:

The metaphorical type of architecture that we have attempted to construct aims at viewing the types of objects within a house as linking knots in the web of the house, while the way in which these objects (be they ornaments or tools) are distributed in

space reveals not only a character's profession and/or personality (objects as extensions and projections of the self), but also indicates some kind of social hierarchy. (31)

The home space's "social hierarchy" about which Boghian writes, is, in fact, the exigence for the feminization of spatial poetics; it is the reason that Bachelard's work only encompasses half the equation. If spatial theorists write exclusively from the perspective of the male gender, they implicitly argue that only men require access to attics, cellars, and corners in order to daydream, only male writers and poets savor the reverie that the home space affords them, and that women's experiences of space will naturally mimic men's. Indeed, this social hierarchy places men at the top and women at the bottom. We must, therefore, move toward a topoanalysis of the Victorian home as a metaphor—specifically, as a metaphor for women's experiences of the world, the social hierarchy, and of herself.

The significance of this metaphor can begin to be understood by analyzing the vertical nature of Brontë's ancestral homes. Bachelard asserts that the house is a vertical entity, both rising upward toward the heavens and sinking downward towards the bowels of the earth (25). He writes, "Verticality is ensured by the polarity of cellar and attic, the marks of which are so deep that, in a way, they open up two very different perspectives for a phenomenology of the imagination" (17). Continuing this assertion, Bachelard cites Henri Bosco's *L'Antiquaire* when he writes, "The house Bosco describes stretches from earth to sky. It possesses the verticality of the tower rising from the most earthly, watery depths, to the abode of a soul that believes in heaven. Such a house, constructed by a writer, illustrates the verticality of the human being" (25). Thus, through the imagining of the three stories—the cellar, main living floor, and attic—one is able to articulate three different "levels" of the soul. The cellar and attic, therefore, become the poles of both the house and the self, framing

the clearly visible living space, the former inviting imaginings of deep, dark, secret things, and the latter of elevation, loftiness, and, perhaps most significantly, clarity.

Perhaps the most widely studied vertically significant space in either of Brontë's novels is Bertha Mason's attic space in *Jane Eyre*. The space itself is described during Rochester's ascent toward it after his secret comes out during his and Jane's wedding ceremony:

He passed on and ascended the stairs...we mounted the first staircase, passed up the gallery, proceeded to the third story: the low, black door, opened by Mr. Rochester's master key, admitted us to the tapestried room, with its great bed and its pictorial cabinet...He lifted the hangings from the wall, uncovering the second door: this, too, he opened. In a room without a window, there burnt a fire, guarded by a high and strong fender, and clamp suspended from the ceiling by a chain. (Brontë 337-338)

Though Bertha's attic has been often and extensively examined by feminist theorists, it has not explicitly been analyzed as a "vertical" space. When considering this attic in light of Bachelard's assertions about verticality, it is clear that his ideas regarding lucidity and imagination do not accurately represent Bertha's experience. While Bachelard asserts that the attic—the highest point in any home—is a space of mental clarity in which home-owning men can luxuriate in their daydreams, Brontë's iteration of verticality instead portrays madness and entrapment; indeed, Bertha Mason's mind is represented as the exact opposite of cogent.¹⁵

Despite her elevated position in the home, Bertha "haunts" the space, rather than "inhabits" it. Her vertical space—her elevated position—is not about lucidity at all; instead, it is about liminality. Relegated to the forgotten recesses of the home—the place in which she will be furthest out of sight and mind—her punishment for her *lack* of mental clarity is the

¹⁵ See *The Poetics of Space*, p. 149.

deprivation of spatial agency; she is allowed neither a space in the home nor a space in the outside world. Indeed, her unfortunate journey to the attic space is recounted by Mr.

Rochester, who vehemently attests to her increasingly flawed behavior:

I lived with that woman upstairs four years, and before that time she had tried me indeed: her character ripened and developed with frightful rapidity; her vices sprang up fast and rank: they were so strong, only cruelty could check them, and I would not use cruelty. (Brontë 353)

Later in the text, he continues, “Glad was I when I at last got her to Thornfield, and saw her safely lodged in that third-story room, of whose secret inner cabinet she has now for ten years made a wild beast’s den—a goblin’s cell” (356). Thus, Rochester’s response to the condition he refers to as “madness” is, in essence, to steal Bertha away to England, where no one could possibly know he had a wife, and to lock her secretly away in the attic. Instead of Bachelard’s “high point,” therefore, Bertha’s attic represents the liminal life of a woman trapped between worlds.

Though the attic is the only space in which readers experience Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*, she is reimagined and more extensively examined in Jean Rhys’ novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In this text, readers are provided with a detailed narrative of Bertha and Rochester’s life together in Jamaica before returning to England, the time during which her mental health begins to deteriorate. Regarding her spatial connection to her homeland, Rochester disturbingly states on the day of their departure for England, “She said she loved this place. This is the last she’ll see of it. I’ll watch for one tear, one human tear. Not that blank hating moonstruck face. I’ll listen...If she says good-bye perhaps adieu...I’ll take her in my arms, my lunatic. She’s mad but *mine, mine*” (Rhys 99). Despite acknowledging and seeming to understand how much Bertha adores her homeland, Rochester tests her—waits for her to show emotion—as if to appease his own conscience by taking note of her

indifference. Despite Rhys' novel depicting Rochester's obvious disdain of Bertha's beloved island and eagerness to return to England, this moment seems to indicate that if she were to express sadness over leaving for England, he would have reconsidered his choice.¹⁶

However, in this moment he acknowledges that she has, in fact, expressed love for the space. Instead of reconsider, however, he proceeds to assert his ownership over her and tear her away from her home. This removal of Bertha from her space is immediately followed by a reimagining of her attic, a juxtaposition that suggests that her loss of home and subsequent imprisonment are meant to be understood as linked—as two points on the same continuum.

The attic is described in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as exceedingly unpleasant, even more uncomfortable and prison-like than its iteration in *Jane Eyre*. In this text, Bertha recounts of the attic, “In this room I wake early and lie shivering for it is very cold. At last Grace Poole, the woman who looks after me, lights a fire with paper and sticks and lumps of coal...I get out of bed and go close to watch them and to wonder why I have been brought here. For what reason? There must be a reason” (Rhys 106). The explicit unpleasantness of the space, coupled by her confusion regarding why she is in the space to begin with, provides a profoundly empathetic view of Bertha as a thinking, feeling individual, irrespective of the madness and monstrosity with which Rochester diagnoses her. Bertha's raw emotion further emphasizes that spatial dynamics of ownership and agency matter greatly to the wellbeing of women, and that women, no matter their circumstance or mental capacity, yearn to exact control over their own lives through choosing the spaces they inhabit.

¹⁶ See *Wide Sargasso Sea* p. 97 for Rochester's letter to his father in which he states that he and his wife will soon return to Jamaica, thus indicating that his plans to return will continue regardless of her emotional response and p. 98 for his mindless drawing of English houses.

In addition to the stark unpleasantness represented in Rhys' text, the attic is also explicitly described in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as far removed from the rest of the house. Despite her lack of access to the rest of the house, Bertha knows that, "the door of the tapestry room is kept locked" (Rhys 107). The lock on the door to Bertha's room is important to note because it acts as a poetic signifier of unwavering separation. Bachelard postulates that, for the daydreamer, "the door schematizes two strong possibilities, which sharply classify two types of daydream. At times, it is closed, bolted, padlocked. At others, it is open, that is to say, wide open" (Bachelard 222). The image of the door in the spatial daydream evokes the vacillating duality of openness and closed-ness, a stark reminder that, in Bertha's case, the daydream is never allowed to open, the daydreamer never allowed to begin the dream. In addition to the padlocked door, Bertha is cut off from both the house and the outside world by the attic's lack of windows. Indeed, she muses to herself, "There is one window high up—you cannot see out of it" (Rhys 106). In this instance, however, Rhys' text slightly diverges from Brontë's; unlike the iteration of the attic space in *Jane Eyre*, which does not have a window at all, Rhys' choice to include a window too tall to see out of suggests that the outside world as just beyond Bertha's reach—a cruel tease. Thus, her lack of visual access to the outside world as well as her sharp divide from the rest of the house contributes to her sense of isolation—of liminality—both physically and psychologically.

Finally, in addition to the disconnect she experiences from both the home and the outside world, Bertha is fundamentally and tragically disconnected from herself. She states of the space, "There is no looking glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me... What am I doing in this place and who am I?" (Rhys 107). Here, she remembers the woman she used to be—she

is cognizant of her past acts of self-care and bygone femininity—but realizes that even this has been stripped from her by the attic space. To be sure, Bertha Mason’s attic acts as so much more than a prison in which the “madwoman” is locked away. It is a cleaver, one that severs her from her surroundings, her reality, and her sense of self. In imagining women’s space as a sort of soul metaphor, Bertha Mason is the epitome of a woman utterly lost in the recesses of someone else’s “abode,” desperately longing not only for spatial agency, but also for herself.¹⁷

Ultimately, *Wide Sargasso Sea* concludes with Bertha’s climactic attempt to burn Thornfield Hall to the ground. Because it serves as Rhys’ denouement, this articulation of the fire signifies in a more explicit manner than the fire she sets in *Jane Eyre* that Bertha Mason utterly detests the space she is obliged to haunt; this act of arson is, in fact, an act of “topophobia,” an expressed loathing of her prison/home. Of her dwelling, she states that, “this cardboard house where I walk at night is not England” (Rhys 107) and of setting the fire, she muses, “I saw the wax candles...and I hated them. So I knocked them all down. Most of them went out but one caught the thin curtains that were behind the red ones. I laughed when I saw the lovely color spreading so fast” (111). Her disdain for the vertical, liminal space she occupies reveals that in order for verticality to truly be “verticality,”—in order for it to illicit the clarity of mind and elevation of daydream that Bachelard imagines—there first must be in place agency, ownership, and freedom. Because Bertha Mason is imprisoned in the attic instead of choosing to spend a portion of her time there, lost in the reverie of daydream and imagination, she is rendered completely unable to ever “love a garret” (Bachelard 10). Instead, she seeks unapologetically to destroy the entire structure

¹⁷ Bachelard xxxiii

which confines her. Better, to Bertha, to have no home at all than to be confined to an attic, cut off from the rest of life, and stripped of her sense of self.

While the examination of Bertha Mason's attic space in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* undoubtedly does the work of connecting Bachelard's verticality with marginalization and liminality, Lucy Snowe's attic space in *Villette* plays a wildly different yet equally important role in feminizing one's understanding of homes as vertical entities. Over the course of the novel, Lucy has several experiences in the attic space of Rue Fossett—some by her own choice, some by force—but one of the most significant to the reading of the space is that of her haunting. It is in the attic that Lucy is repeatedly haunted by an apparition of a nun. These apparitions—or potential hallucinations—which allude to the supernatural and suggest the departure from reason, complicate Bachelard's claims about verticality and clarity in the same way that Bertha's madness does. Lucy describes the attic space and her initial apparition:

Taking a key whereof I knew the repository, I mounted three staircases in succession, reached a dark, narrow, silent landing, opened a worm-eaten door, and dived into the deep, black, cold garret... Something in that vast solitary garret sounded strangely. Most surely and certainly I heard, as it seemed, a stealthy foot on that floor: a sort of gliding out from the direction of the black recess haunted by the malefactor cloaks. I turned: my light was dim; the room was long—but, as I live! I saw in the middle of that ghostly chamber a figure all black or white; the skirts straight, narrow, black; the head bandaged, veiled, white. (272-273)

Because Lucy's unsettling apparition of the nun—as well as her vision of a bright, glowing light (284)—occurs within the attic space—a space that, like Bertha's attic, is separated from the rest of the house by flights of stairs and a closed door—the connection between verticality and a departure from reason is further solidified for the feminist spatial poet. Like Bertha, Lucy seems to begin losing her mind while in the attic space, rather than gaining any kind of heightened cognition. However, while Bertha Mason was entrapped in her attic

because of her madness, Lucy's attic in *Villette* seems to *cause* to her perceived bout of madness. Though the novel eventually reveals that the nun was simply a man sneaking around in drag, this moment is nevertheless significant because of the self-perception it creates in Lucy. She muses to herself, "I was left secretly and sadly to wonder, in my own mind, whether that strange thing was of this world, or of a realm beyond the grave" (280). It does not matter that Lucy was not mad; it matters that, while in the attic, she began to wonder whether or not she was. Like Bertha, Lucy's time in the attic chips away at her sense of self.

In addition to this attic being the site of a haunting, it is also a place in which Lucy, like Bertha, is, on another occasion, trapped by a powerful man; it is a place into which she is corralled against her will by M. Paul, who needs her to quickly and flawlessly memorize lines in order to perform last minute at his "fête." She recounts of this interaction with M. Paul:

He added: 'You must with-draw: you must be along to learn this. Come with me.' *Without being allowed time or power to deliberate*, I found myself in the same breath convoyed along as in a species of worldwide, up stairs, up two pairs of stairs, nay, actually up three (for this fiery little man seemed as by instinct to know his way everywhere); to the solitary and lofty attic was I borne, put in and locked in, the key being on the door, and that key he took with him, and vanished.¹⁸ (148)

Despite the fact that Lucy's time locked in the attic led to a successful theatrical performance—an observation that seems, at first, to align itself with Bachelard's ideas about verticality and heightened cognition—she did not, by any stretch of the imagination, enjoy being there, nor did her subsequent success change her negative opinion of the space. She notes that, "The attic was no pleasant place: I believe he did not know how unpleasant it was, or he never would have locked me in with so little ceremony. In this summer weather, it was

¹⁸ Emphasis mine

hot as Africa; as in winter, it was always cold as Greenland. Boxes and lumber filled it; old dresses draped its unstained walls” (Brontë 148). This explicit unpleasantness is integral to the poetic examination of the attic from the perspective of a woman—its importance lies in the fact that it is utterly different than the perspective of the man. “The man,” in this instance, did not interpret the space as unpleasant the way Lucy did, as noted by her assumption that, had he understood how unpleasant she found it, he likely would not have locked her there. This distinction stands in contrast with Bachelard’s broad statements about the garret or the vertical, thus indicating that interpretation of space is inextricably linked to power and choice. Being locked in the attic, the space that facilitates the loftiest psychological experience, may have allowed Lucy to succeed in memorizing her lines, but her success does not influence her perception of space—her lack of choice does. Success, therefore, must not be used as a justification for stripping a woman of her ability to make choices, even if the choices are as simple as which room she occupies.

Like Lucy’s experience in the attic space of Rue Fossett, young Jane Eyre also falls victim to the use of space as a means of punishment and control in her childhood home, Gateshead Hall. The first chapter of the novel concludes with Jane being marched into the “red-room” as retribution for rebuking Master John after he physically assaulted her. In this scene, Jane is forcibly removed from the hiding place in which she likes to curl up and read in peace and locked in a room rumored to be haunted. She describes the space:

The red-room was a spare chamber, very seldom slept in. . . This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire; it was silent, because remote from the nursery and kitchens; solemn, because it was known to be so seldom entered. . . Mr. Reed had been dead nine years: it was in this chamber he breathed his last; here he lay in state; hence his coffin was borne by the undertaker’s men; and, since that day, a sense of dreary consecration had guarded it from frequent intrusion. (Brontë 17)

Not only does Jane's representation of the red room foreshadow the attic-like cold and discomfort experienced by Bertha Mason in the same text, but it also explicitly connects the space with the death. In addition to the knowledge that Mr. Reed actually passed away in the room, the room's connection with death is further solidified by Jane's only feasible plan of escape—to die:

‘Unjust—unjust!’ said my reason, forced by the agonizing stimulus into precocious though transitory power; and Resolve, equally wrought up, instigated some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression—as running away, or, if that could not be effected, never eating or drinking more, and letting myself die. (19)

In order to rebel against her entrapment, young Jane, in this instance, threatens silently to exert one of the only areas of control over her physical being she had to exert—her refusal to consume food and water. This struggle for control is in direct relationship to her being placed into a space that she does not want to be in—one her young mind interprets as upsetting and unsafe. Jane thus illustrates that women's bodily self-destruction as an act of defiance can be deeply intertwined with her longing for spatial agency, and that this longing begins to show itself when she is relegated to the margins—or worst parts—of the house. Thus, while examining a house's verticality from Bertha and Lucy's perspective suggests that agency and choice are more significant to the imaginative process than vertical position, Jane's red-room begins to introduce the idea that spaces must also be imagined and understood as either central or marginal.

Indeed, while verticality introduces notions of loftiness and mental clarity, centrality and periphery do the work of locating the core and fringes of the house—the places of greatest and least significance—and explicating where Brontë's women choose to spend their time, when afforded the choice. Bachelard introduces notions of centrality by stating, “A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our consciousness of centrality”

(17). His imaginings indicate that the central points of the house—living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens—are the points of greatest poetic significance. However, just as important as the notion of centrality is the notion of spatial periphery, or living on the margins. In addition to the clear example of Jane’s red-room space, Bertha’s attic serves as an excellent example of a woman living peripherally, though it certainly represents the vertical as well. Feminized spatial and architectural poetics, however, do not stop at simply acknowledging women’s marginality. Rather, they must press in to explicate the ways in which women find ways to carve out spaces for themselves despite their lack of authority and agency. For example, as I briefly mentioned, in *Jane Eyre*, the childhood nook in which Jane attempts to hide from the abusive young master of the house is indicative of the powerful drive women who are spatially marginalized have to create a “room of their own” within a man’s house.¹⁹

Spatially, the nook is significant because of its hidden, peripheral nature; Jane is, of course, unable to freely occupy the center of the home, but she attempts to create life and joy for herself on the periphery, where she can enjoy moments of peace and solace while buried in her books. Indeed, even years later, adult Jane continues living peripherally by finding peace in the grounds outside of Thornfield Hall and taking long walks alone (Brontë 129), further exhibiting women’s knack for carving out peripheral space for themselves wherever they can.

Like Jane Eyre, Lucy Snowe chooses to spend a great deal of time in a lonely garden outside Rue Fossett. Eden-like, and clearly evoking images of the first mother, Eve, she describes the space, saying:

¹⁹ See Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*

Behind the house at the Rue Fossette there was a garden—large, considering that it lay in the heart of a city, and to my recollection at this day it seems pleasant: but time, like distance, lends to certain scenes an influence so softening; and where all its stone around, blank wall and hot pavement, how precious seems one shrub, how lovely an enclosed and planted spot of ground! (117)

Lucy goes on to detail all the reasons she loves the garden, indicating that one of its primary appeals is its “seclusion,” or her ability to access room to think (119). It was her joy to “rise early, to enjoy them alone; on summer evenings, to linger solitary, to keep tryst with the rising moon, or taste one kiss of the evening breeze” (118). Like Jane, Lucy revels in finding a place out of the way, somewhere she can be alone with her thoughts, a place in which to daydream. Lucy claims this space as her very own, saying of her garden walks, “the very gloom of the walk attracted me. For a long time the fear of seeming singular scared me away; but by degrees, as people became accustomed to me and my habits, and to such shades of peculiarity as were engrained in my nature—shades...born in and with me, and no more to be parted with than my identity” (119). Despite the fact that Lucy and Jane both seem to thoroughly enjoy their garden spaces, it is spatially significant and quite tragic that these women have to, quite literally, *leave* their homes in order to find a room of their own.

Despite the garden space existing as a place of solitude and respite for Lucy Snowe, it has also been criticized by literary critic, Lucy Hughes-Hallet, who postulates that the space is somewhat antifeminist. She writes for the *Wall Street Journal*, “The garden is a place of repression, haunted by the ghost of a medieval nun who, according to legend, was buried alive there for breaking rules containing female sexuality.” Despite the reasonable merit of this argument, it is important to understand in an analysis of the garden space that, in the first place, this is the only space Lucy had the opportunity and freedom to fully and independently inhabit. Indeed, Liana F. Piehler rebuts this argument in *Spatial Dynamics and*

Female Development in Victorian Art and Novels, “Its location behind the school, the relic convent, yet not far from the sights and sounds of city life, seems to suspend the garden between worlds and provide an unique, private space for Lucy” (54). Furthermore, despite the garden being haunted by a nun punished for her sexuality, it is in this space that Lucy finds the courage to confront the nun that seems to be haunting her. Immediately after Lucy buries her jar of letters in the garden, her apparition of the nun reappears; though her other apparitions of the nun occur in the attic, she is unable to confront it until she sees it in the garden (329). Though the garden may represent the nun’s repression and punishment for breaching boundaries of propriety, it invites Lucy to push back against such boundaries by boldly confronting her apparition. Thus, Lucy Snowe is more empowered in the liminal garden space which she feels is her very own than the vertical attic space into which she is forced. It is choice, ownership, that empowers the female imagination, not architectural position.

After having examined verticality and centrality and the statements they make within a feminized analysis of spatial and architectural poetics, the final set of spatial signifiers that becomes relevant when reading *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* are the artifacts of the home. From secret coin collections to the drawers and cabinets they are stored in, the actual items found in the home make meaning of life and space in the same way verticality and centrality do. Artifacts can be deeply rooted and memory and contribute to the poetics of a narrative through the visceral reactions characters have to them. However, in *Villette*, artifacts seem to be less important than the containers in which they are housed. One such example is the Parisienne teacher’s secret coin collection, about which Lucy states, “She loved this hoard as a bird loves its eggs” (139). Evoking the image of a nesting bird—which

for Bachelard would be particularly significant—this hidden hoard introduces perhaps the most poetically notable artifact—or type of artifact—represented in *Villette*: drawers, cabinets, and any other variation of what might contain the secret or private.²⁰

Privacy, or lack of privacy, is of great concern to Lucy Snowe, and she often pauses to reflect on the breaches in her privacy perpetrated by Madame Beck and even M. Paul. Indeed, she recounts of Madame Beck snooping through her things, “She turned to the chair where my clothes lay...hearing her touch and lift them, I opened my eyes with precaution...every article did she inspect” (76) and goes on to state, “she opened a little memorandum-book, coolly perused its contents, and took from between the leaves a small plaited lock of Miss Marchmont’s grey hair...all being thus done decently and in order, my property was returned to its place” (77). Over and over, she recounts small, enclosed spaces and the ways in which even they are intruded upon. Indeed, she muses of Rue Fossett in general, “This was a strange house, where no corner was sacred from intrusion, where not a tear could be shed, nor a thought pondered, but a spy was at hand to note and to divine” (258). However, Madame Beck is not the only character who invades Lucy’s privacy. She later states of M. Paul, “Now I knew, and had long known, that that hand of M. Emanuel’s was on intimate terms with my desk; that it raised and lowered the lid, ransacked and arranged the contents, almost as familiarly as my own” (380)—not even her work desk is safe from intrusion. Her possessions are constantly rifled through, her treasures secretly examined and then replaced. If these drawers and desks in which she keeps her things act as microcosms of her life and space, the takeaway must therefore be that she suffers a complete and total lack of privacy as a woman operating in Madame Beck’s house and M. Paul’s

²⁰ See Bachelard’s chapter in *The Poetics of Space* on nests

school. She longs for the privacy and dignity of womanhood, yet occupies a space and social context that continually facilitates intrusion.

Like Lucy, Bachelard is interested in small, secret spaces, but for vastly different reasons. He writes, “He who buries a treasure buries himself with it. A secret is a grave, and it is not for nothing that a man who can be trusted with a secret boasts that he is ‘like the grave’” (Bachelard 88). Of course, this assertion is easily placed into conversation with the burial of the letters Lucy received from Dr. John. So paranoid is Lucy that her precious notes will be devoured by another’s eyes and her privacy infringed upon in what she considers to be the most intimate space of her life, that rather than run the risk, she instead buries the letters in a sealed casket. She wonders, “In what corner of this strange house was it possible to find security or secrecy? Where could a key be a safe-guard, or a padlock a barrier?” (327) and continues of her plan to bury the letters, “I knew there was...a hollow, hidden partly by ivy and creepers growing thick round; and there I meditated hiding my treasure” (328). Thus, while Bachelard refers to a man’s ability to keep secrets to burials in an abstract, somewhat more metaphorical sense, in this instance, Lucy has no other possible way to keep her secrets other than to literally bury them in the garden, the one place she considers in any way *hers*. While Bachelard is interested in the poetics of keeping *others’* secrets, Lucy does not even have the luxury of keeping her own. The constant invasion of secret, private spaces indicates that not only do Brontë’s women live without a room of their own—they do not even possess a drawer of their own, a desk of their own, not even the smallest space which can be totally and wholly theirs.

Despite the poetics of *Villette* strongly suggesting that Brontë’s women were constantly and totally relegated to forgotten, uncomfortable, peripheral, and non-private

spaces, forced to literally bury in the dirt anything they wanted to keep private, *Villette* does seem to conclude with a breadcrumb of hope for the spatially marginalized woman. After laying out a complicated representation of space, after lengthy descriptions of attics, gardens, and artifacts, after opening with the description of a house, the novel ultimately closes with Lucy Snowe finally being set up by M. Paul in her very own home—her own, at least, until his return. She describes her new space intimately and affectionately, “This balcony was in the rear of the house, the gardens of the faubourg were round us, fields extended beyond. The air was still, mild, and fresh. Above the poplars, the laurels, the cypresses, and the roses, looked up a moon so lovely and so halcyon, the heart trembled under her smile; a star shone subject beside her, with the unemulous ray of pure love” (538). She focuses on recounting for the reader the exterior of the house rather than the interior, a detail that indicates that, to her, it is garden-like. It remembers the space she used to refer to as hers; it is, in a very real sense, the first time in her life she has had a “room of her own” within four walls, and we as readers are treated to her delight at inhabiting a space over which she feels a sense of ownership. While the novel ends on an ambiguous note regarding whether or not M. Paul makes it home alive, the bittersweet beauty in the ambiguity, for the spatial theorist or the feminist, is that Lucy now has the stability of her own home in which to weather life’s literal and figurative storms. She has a space that will “protect its daydreamer” (Bachelard 6), a base from which to build a self-actualized life, a space for Lucy to experience joy, heartbreak, and everything else life offers her.

After having examined Brontë’s representation of verticality, centrality, and artifacts, it is evident that her beloved novels not only invite a reimagining of spatial and architectural poetics from the perspective of women, but they also begin to provide an insight

into the ways in which her female characters imagine and interpret space. Lucy muses, “How often, while women and girls sit warm at snug fire-sides, their hearts and imaginations are doomed to divorce from the comfort surrounding their persons, forced out by night to wander through dark ways, to dare stress of weather, to contend with the snow-blast, to wait at lonely gates and stiles in wildest storms” (Brontë 310). Just as the male poets Bachelard cites write about spaces filled with reverie, imagination, and memory, women writers like Brontë—and the imaginations of characters like Lucy—fill even the coziest fire-side spaces with snow and storms. Therefore, in imagining a set of feminist spatial and architectural poetics, we must sit with these storms. We must ask what kind of internal landscape these dark interiors signify, we must ask why the intrusion of drawers cause such extreme anxiety, we must interrogate the attic, the garden, the distribution of spatial power and agency, all from *her* perspective, not his.

Virginia Woolf aptly writes in *A Room of One's Own* that “women have sat indoors all these millions of years...by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics” (91). The representations of women’s spaces in literature—particularly in *Villette* and *Jane Eyre*—exist for vastly deeper reasons than narrative detail or aesthetically pleasing interior design. Women inhabit their imagined worlds with that which fills their psyche, and peeking into a woman’s space, examining it from the perspective that architecture, layout, design, and possessions, all integrally matter to the internal landscape of a woman, is a vital component to a full and equitable understanding of spatial and architectural poetics. Even more so than

that—it is the key to understanding *her*. Women and their spaces are intimately linked, and by examining these links, we better understand the female soul.

Villette and *Jane Eyre* compel the reader, theorist, and spatial poet to observe its female characters attempting to inhabit a world that is wholly and totally possessed by men. They articulate the psychic pain inflicted by breaches in privacy, lack of control and ownership, and the liminality of being relegated to forgotten corners and uncomfortable spaces. In the second chapter of this analysis, however, Toni Morrison's *Love* will build upon Brontë's representation of domestic space by depicting two female characters vying for ownership over a dead man's house, a portrait which serves both to represent women living in a space unoccupied by the man of the house as well as hauntingly posit that his power over the space exists even beyond his grave.

CHAPTER III

LOVE

Toni Morrison's *Love* is a novel marked by its utilization of spatial and architectural signifiers. Set against the backdrop of an inherited house and a run-down resort hotel, the novel traces the complicated relational dynamics between two women, Heed and Christine Cosey. Though these women are the same age and were intimate childhood friends, much of the novel's tension lies in the fact that Heed married Christine's grandfather and, therefore, lays claim to the house he left behind after his death. Though the novel's plot concerns itself with Heed's and Christine's individual assertions of ownership over the space, the spaces themselves house much of the text's richness and complexity. Aligning itself with both Bachelard's imaginative tradition of spatial and architectural poetics and Brontë's literary heritage of playing out complex interpersonal dramas against the backdrop of ancestral homes, the text uses architectural signifiers such as verticality and centrality to introduce notions of memory, agency, and control. While Brontë's novels interrogate the ways in which women carve out small spaces for themselves within the larger context of a man's home, *Love* aptly demonstrates women in competition with each other over the house a powerful man leaves behind and asks its readers to consider what Heed and Christine's fight over the house truly signifies.

Similar to Brontë's texts, part of the poetics represented in Morrison's novel can be understood by examining the vertical nature of the buildings in *Love*. The text uses these poetics of verticality to assert that one of her female characters is dominant over the other within the most important structural signifier represented in the novel, the Monarch Street

House—the estate the deceased Mr. Cosey left behind. This large, looming house is dually described as, “big as a church...or a jailhouse” (Morrison 11), implying that the contents of the house could either be heavenly or hellish. It is further represented as, “graceful, imposing...its peaked third-story roof [suggesting] a church” (19), which allows the house to fit neatly into Bachelard’s affinity for three-story structures (Bachelard 25). In this house, Heed’s (and the late Mr. Cosey’s) bedroom suite occupies the entirety of the third story (Morrison 21). This representation of verticality reveals Heed’s position in the house as the reigning mistress and the benefactor to Christine, who occupies the servant’s quarters on the first floor. Indeed, in stark contrast to Heed’s massive third story suite, which is filled to bursting with furniture—“a chaise, two dressers, two writing tables, side tables, high-backed and low seated” (25)—the Monarch Street House’s second floor is much plainer, outfitted with two neat bedrooms, an office, and a bathroom. Because Heed’s fancy third story suite is the exact size of the sum of all of these modest rooms, the house itself asserts the superfluous nature of her haughty tase as well as her elevated sense of self.

Bachelard also posits that, when taking verticality into poetic account, the closer to the roof one resides, the clearer and more articulate their feelings become (18). However, not unlike Bertha Mason’s and Lucy Snowe’s attic spaces, Heed’s vertical residence speaks to an entirely different spatial and social dynamic than what Bachelard imagines.²¹ For Heed, an illiterate, emotionally stunted, profoundly abused woman, living at the top of the house is not an articulation of her spiritual or emotional clarity, but rather a constant reminder of her desperate attempt to retain control and power over the estate. Indeed, the text recounts multiple incidents of a woman gazing down from the window of Heed’s suite to the grounds;

²¹ See this project’s previous section on *Villette* and *Jane Eyre*.

one person, quite literally, “looking down” on another. In addition to Heed being able to look down on Christine from this space, in one instance, Junior, a girl Heed hires to help her execute her plan to secure the estate and keep it out of Christine’s control, gazes down upon another hired boy, Roman, while he works in the yard (60). Shortly after this moment, the much older Junior uses her power to seduce the teenaged Roman and begins a disturbing affair with him. Verticality is used to demonstrate perceived dominance and power—this time, in stark contrast to the rampant abuse of women by men represented in the rest of the text, it is a grown woman asserting her dominance over a teenaged boy. While Bachelard would contend that verticality implies heavenliness and clarity, Morrison uses verticality to articulate for her female characters a sense of dominance and a thirst for control.

Verticality, however, does not only concern itself with the high points in the house—the attics and third stories—but the low parts, such as the cellars and main floors. In one instance, Sandler, an older gentleman in the community, recalls memories of the late Mr. Cosey while in the basement of his own home. In this, the only moment of the entire novel in which a character appears in an underground space, Sandler remembers the many times he went fishing with Cosey, outings during which he discovered the dark side of the seemingly good-natured gentleman. He asserts that, despite Cosey’s hotel being host to the community’s best parties and entertainment and Cosey’s own reputation as a local figure-head, his corrupt financial motivations actually harmed the very community he appeared to care for. Indeed, Sandler muses that, “he refused to sell land to local people...[he sold it] to a developer cashing in on HUD money” (Morrison 45). In addition, he notes of his own wife’s naive opinion of Cosey, “Vida believed a powerful generous friend gazed out from the portrait hanging behind the reception desk. That was because she didn’t know who she was

looking at” (45). Through Sandler’s private memories, therefore, readers gain an unpopular insight into Cosey’s life—one that perhaps would not have been received by others if spoken out loud. The choice to place the recollection of these memories in the cellar is important to a spatial reading of *Love*, especially when one considers Bachelard’s assertion that “[The cellar] is first and foremost the *dark entity* of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces” (18-19). Thus, not all poetic notions of verticality rise towards the high heavens—some plunge towards the pit of the earth, evoking a sense of unspoken secrets and literal and figurative darkness.

For Bachelard, this darkness has a psychological effect on the daydreamer. He writes that, “In the cellar, darkness prevails both day and night...[Because] the cellar dreamer knows that the walls of the cellar are buried walls, that they are walls with a single casing, walls that have the entire earth behind them...*fear becomes exaggerated*” (Bachelard 19-20).²² Apparently aligned with Bachelard’s assumptions, Sandler’s memories of Cosey are sinister, foreshadowing dark revelations about what really took place on his boat. Indeed, later on in the text, it is revealed that Cosey used his boat to privately describe to Sandler his child bride’s “[narrow] hips, chest smooth as a plank...invisible navel above scant, newborn hair” (Morrison 148), as well as a secret space in which he settled his debts to powerful men in the community by selling Heed’s body (187). It is through these memories, which Sandler recalls while in the cellar, that Cosey’s public persona begins to unravel until, eventually, he is revealed to not be the flamboyant good-timer he was known to be during his life, but an opportunist and an abuser. For a woman, therefore, the cellar does not exaggerate fear—it

²² Emphasis mine

does not blow fear out of proportion or make it appear worse than it is. Rather, it speaks dark truths—truths otherwise buried—about women’s suffering and men’s secrets.

Through this examination of verticality, it is not only clear that Morrison’s text is reminiscent of some of Bachelard’s assertions, but also that she diverges from them to make specific arguments about ownership, gender, and perception of fear and power. By placing Heed on the third story and Christine on the first—while a perfectly livable floor filled with bedrooms lies unoccupied between them—the reader is able to see even more drastically the figurative distance between these estranged former best friends. Likewise, by placing the memory of Cosey’s deviance below ground—the only moment in the novel to do so—Cosey becomes, in essence, Bachelard’s “subterranean force.” Despite literally dwelling *under* the earth in death, Cosey’s ambiguous will still wields an incredible amount of destructive power over the lives of Heed and Christine. This truth, unearthed through the understanding of verticality, contributes to the reader’s understanding of the actual power dynamics at work in the text.

While the examination of verticality creates connective tissue between elevation and clarity or depth and secrecy, centrality and periphery do the work of locating the core and fringes of the house, the places of greatest and least significance. Bachelard introduces notions of centrality by stating, “A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our *consciousness of centrality*”²³ (Bachelard 17). However, just as important as the notion of centrality is the notion of spatial periphery, or living on the margins. For women writers like Morrison, examining what it means to live on the periphery within one’s own home is perhaps of even greater importance than examining what it means to live at the center. As

²³ Emphasis mine

explicated in *Madwoman* and mentioned in my previous section on *Villette* and *Jane Eyre*, one of the most significant factors of Bertha Mason's attic space is its great distance from the rooms in which the majority of home life occurs and the hard boundary set between the spaces. The point of entrance to Bertha's room is important to notice because it completely and totally closes her off from the rest of the house—not only is her attic separated from the rest of the house by long passages and corridors, but even this meagre connection is severed by a bolted door.²⁴ She is, in essence, locked out of the house, neither indoors nor outdoors, utterly marginalized.

Similarly, *Love's* primary articulation of centrality and periphery is in the peripheral representation of Christine's "apartment" within the Monarch Street House (Morrison 89). She occupies a few small rooms off the kitchen outfitted with a worn recliner and a scratchy sofa, despite the fact that the entire second floor of the home, which boasts several bedrooms, is completely unoccupied until Junior's employment.²⁵ Relegated to servants' quarters despite her Cooney blood, Christine occupies the home's periphery, both literally and socially. Like Bertha's, her marginality is defined by the hard and fast line of the bolted door, which she installs to protect herself from Heed's unpredictable anger.²⁶ Bachelard states of doors, "the door schematizes two strong possibilities, which sharply classify two types of daydream. At times, it is closed, bolted, padlocked. At others, it is open, that is to say, wide open" (222). Bachelard imagines that the open or closed door evokes either free or constricted daydreams, an assertion that suggests that Christine's relationship

²⁴ See *Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 180.

²⁵ See Morrison p. 28 for a description of the second floor and p. 133 for the details of Christine's apartment.

²⁶ See *Love* p. 140 for the scene in which Heed sets fire to Christine's bed.

with her own dreams of space have been cut off, as she is obliged to live on the safe side of her bolted door. Though Bertha is forced to occupy the margins of Thornfield Hall while Christine appears to choose her peripheral space, the disheartening truth is that when a woman lives with constant threat of bodily harm, there is no other choice than to occupy the safest available space. Her choice to occupy the house's margins, therefore, is no choice at all. Like Bertha, Christine represents not only a marginalized, periphery-dwelling woman, but one closed off, separated from the rest, both in body and in soul.

Perhaps most significant to note in a feminist/spatial reading of these texts is that both Bertha and Christine only become spatially marginalized when they fall from the graces of the man of the house. Indeed, Christine's fall from grace with her grandfather can be carefully tracked through her living situation. Despite Christine existing as his natural heir, every time Heed moves closer to Cosey, Christine is pushed farther and farther away. First, she is forced to move out of her beloved bedroom in Cosey's resort hotel to make room for her grandfather's new child-bride, then she is sent away from the Monarch Street House to a faraway boarding school because of her infighting with Heed (133). Christine recounts of being moved and moved again, "So who had to go? Who had to leave her bedroom, her playhouse, the sea? The only innocent one in the place, that's who" (133).²⁷ Because there is only room for one woman in the home of a powerful man, women are placed in an incredibly vulnerable spatial situation—any time a new woman is brought into the space, the existing one can be relegated to the margins by the man who controls the home. It is this vulnerability that gives birth to the spatial insecurity that makes the spatial signifiers in *Love* so

²⁷ Christine's assertion of innocence here is in response to Heed marrying her grandfather, an act Christine considers not only abhorrent, but also treasonous in terms of their friendship.

compelling. In this case, Christine was the unfortunate woman Cosey shuffled to the side.

Christine, who possessed both his blood and his name, is nevertheless obliged to occupy the Monarch Street house's periphery. Like Brontë's Bertha Mason relegated to the attic despite her seemingly advantageous marriage, Christine's experience serves as a prime example of the fact that virtually nothing guarantees a woman's spatial security short of owning the space herself, which is exactly what both she and Heed are determined to accomplish.

When applying Bachelard's principles to the Monarch Street house, it is clear to see that Christine's experience represents periphery while Heed's represents centrality. However, when examining Cosey's abandoned resort hotel—the space in which Heed and Christine spent a great deal of time during their childhood—what one finds regarding centrality and periphery, is, in fact, the warping of the distinction between the two. Most aptly, the blurring between centrality and periphery is represented in this lengthy but fascinated depiction of Cosey's hotel:

The hotel part of Cosey's Resort is still standing. Sort of standing. Looks more like it's rearing backwards—away from hurricanes and a steady blow of sand. Odd what oceanfront can do to empty buildings. You can find the prettiest shells right up on the steps, like scattered petals or cameos from a Sunday dress, and you wonder how they got here, so far from the ocean. Hills of sand piling in porch corners and between banister railings are whiter than the beach, and smoother, like twice-sifted flour. Fox glove grows waist high around the gazebo, and roses, which all the time hate our soil, rage here, with more thorns than blackberries and weeks of beet red blossoms. The wood siding of the hotel looks silver-plated, its peeling paint like the streaks of an unpolished tea service. The big double doors are padlocked. So far nobody has smashed their glass panels. (Morrison 7)

Despite its doors remaining intact, the boundary between the inside and outside of the hotel has completely melted away. Sand has made its way inside, and shells are found on its doorstep; unnaturally far from the ocean. The structure itself has dissolved into the nature surrounding it. This description of the hotel not only depicts its dilapidated state but also

hints at the disintegration of the boundaries—or borders—between center-dwelling Heed and peripheral Christine. When Bachelard speaks of the imagined borders between centrality and periphery, he asserts that, “If there exists a border-line surface between such an inside and outside, this surface is painful on both sides” (Bachelard 218). Thus, Bachelard’s claim alludes to Heed and Christine’s fractured relationship and the mutual pain inflicted by their separation. Spatially, while Christine’s apartment does the work of illustrating a marginalized woman, the rundown resort hotel smudges the lines between indoors and outdoors—between Heed and Christine—until the painful boundary that separates them is obliterated.

By examining Heed and Christine’s complex relationship in addition to the representation of the derelict resort hotel, one is able to understand that women’s central/peripheral spaces in *Love* diverge from Bachelard’s duality through their lack of understandable or articulable boundaries. Heed may live centrally and Christine peripherally during the time of the novel, but the fierce competition over Cosey’s ambiguous will complicates who is able to lay claim to which space.²⁸ Who, in fact, belongs in the first-story servant’s quarters, and who belongs on the third floor? The novel does not seek to provide a simple answer. Indeed, rather than honor the question and continue to pit Heed and Christine against each other, it instead interrogates the very concept of central and peripheral living for these women. While centrality and periphery certainly carry significance for the spatial poet, when considering women’s space—and, indeed, women’s *articulation* of space—these borders shift. Ownership and agency become unclear. Spatial poetics, therefore, and the

²⁸ The only will Cosey left behind was a menu on which he scribbled that the house belonged to his “Sweet Cosey child;” see p. 79.

articulation of the imagination, must be willing to adapt to the unpredictability and insecurity of a woman's ever-changing space.

After having examined verticality and centrality and the statements they make within a feminized analysis of spatial and architectural poetics, the final set of spatial signifiers that becomes relevant when reading *Love* is the artifacts of the home. From the chandeliers and lamps which bathe the Monarch Street house in light to the floral patterns on the wallpaper of the hotel, the actual items found in *Love's* spaces make meaning of life in the same way verticality and centrality do. Artifacts—the “stuff” of life—can be deeply rooted in memory and contribute to the poetics of a narrative through the visceral reactions characters have to them. One such artifact is the forget-me-not wallpaper in Christine's childhood bedroom in Cosey's hotel, the flowers on which, as if referring to the negative state of Heed and Christine's relationship and the childhood moments they shared in this space, are described as, “even more vivid in...deliberate dark than they ever were in daylight” (Morrison 183). This bedroom, the space in which many of Heed and Christine's most precious and intimate childhood memories took place before their relationship was fractured by Heed's marriage, quite literally begs the girls not to forget each other through the silent protest made by the blooms on the walls. While this seems to align with Bachelard's assertions that rooms *are* memories in and of themselves, this wallpaper does not signify a singular memory of one individual, but of innumerable memories shared between two women—memories that connect girls in a bond of sisterhood that outlasts even their liking for each other. It is not theoretical; it is not individuated. It is relational. It is female.

Like the forget-me-not wallpaper that remains on the walls until Heed and Christine's eventual reconciliation, the novel's lengthy descriptions of the light fixtures in the

Monarch Street House compel readers to consider the ways in which this emphasis on light may correlate to the exposure of secrets and revelation of truths that take place in the space. These lights invite an imagining of a bright, overwhelming power: “Like the kitchen below, [Heed’s] room was overbright, like a department store. Every lamp—six? ten?—was on, rivaling the chandelier” (Morrison 25). However, the particular brightness of the Monarch Street house suggests not only overwhelming exposure, but also either serves to separate the women in their own circles of light or to knit them together through their shared darkness, as illustrated through Junior’s internal musing, “It seemed to her that each woman lived in a spotlight separated—or connected—by the darkness between them” (25). Furthermore, in Bachelard’s analysis of light as a spatial artifact, “the narrower the ray of light, the more penetrating its vigilance” (34). The light in the Monarch Street House is not fluid, but rather disjointed, signifying the fractured state of the relationships within its walls. These pinpointing spotlights are illustrative of not only the obvious dissent in the space, but also the dark and mysterious bond which remains between Heed and Christine.

While for Bachelard such artifacts are of purely poetic significance, Morrison’s writing treats some of her artifacts as commodities—as elements of survival or symbols of power and ownership. While light is employed as a symbol of the fractured relationships within the house, the novel powerfully articulates the use of water as a commodity. In the Monarch Street House, the possession of water serves to reveal who is in power and who is not. This is best observed on Junior’s first night in the Monarch Street house during which she “thought immediately of a solitary soak in a real tub with a perfumed bar of colored soap. But the water she heard running through pipes above reduced the tap flow in the second-floor bathtub to a sigh. Heed had beat her to it” (Morrison 29). While it would be easy to write this

moment off as nothing more than a throw-away line, it does, in fact, reveal who is in charge of this vital household commodity, and in turn, the household itself. The two women cannot bathe at the same time because this moment speaks to more than a shared desire for cleanliness or the need for better water pressure; it represents power, and implies that there is not enough to go around. Heed's ability to control the water speaks to her affluence and place of primacy in the house, and she knows it—she bathes three times a day. (79).

Despite the poetic value of light and water in the space, perhaps the most significant and revealing artifact of the Monarch Street house is the incredibly ornate and illegibly monogrammed tea service on which Christine serves Heed her food (22). Despite perhaps seeming simply like a trivial descriptor, the two entwined letter C's engraved on the tea service may in fact hold the key to Heed and Christine's longstanding disagreement over Cosey's will. Ownership could be hidden in the secret of the C's—if they stand simply for Cosey, it is likely that the house would belong to Heed, Cosey's wife, the woman to whom he gave his name. If, however, they stands for Christine Cosey, the house would likely belong to Christine, Cosey's dear granddaughter. Heed and Christine's argument, therefore, seems to be about “whether the double C's engraved on the silver was one letter doubled or the pairing of Christine's initials” (73). What neither of the women seem to consider, however, is whether the C's may actually stand for Celestial Cosey, Mr. Cosey's beloved mistress, the women with whom he most loved to spend time. Heed and Christine concern themselves with who is *owed*, while the text gently implores its readers to consider who is *loved*.

This particular tea set, therefore, is worth much more than its weight in silver. In addition to representing the monetary wealth amassed by the Cosey estate, it implies

ownership of the estate itself and indicates which woman was, in fact the “Sweet Cosey Child” (79) ambiguously named in Cosey’s will. Morrison’s artifacts, then, do not simply revolve around memory, as Bachelard’s artifacts do. Rather, they seek to complicate and explicate the idea of ownership. They invite the examination of women’s struggle for spatial agency and reveal the fight that ensues when her space is threatened. Examining verticality, centrality, periphery, and artifacts not only serves to draw parallels and conflicts with Bachelard’s text, but also allow for large scale examination of a woman’s quest for ownership of her home.

The examination of the spatial and architectural poetics represented in *Love* thus reveals that the most significant points of contention the women writer—or the reader of fiction written by women—will likely have with Bachelard’s text is his assumption of ownership. He asserts of the love of home, “even when we no longer have a garret, when the attic room is lost and gone, there remains the fact that we once loved a garret, once lived in an attic” (10). He assumes that his readers will immediately identify with this feeling of love for one’s home-space, but what of the innumerable women who are trapped in these domestic spaces by societal expectations and constraints? What of the women who are relegated to the home’s fringes by powerful men, like Bertha Mason? What of the women whose space is continually threatened, like Christine? What of the women for whom, no matter how long they live in a house, are unable to feel secure in their ownership, like Heed? How indicative this must be of women’s inner stress and quiet turmoil! How different, then, their poetic imaginings of space must be. Bachelard writes that, “When we dream of the house we were born in, in the utmost depths of reverie, we participate in this original warmth, in this well-tempered matter of the material paradise. This is the environment in which the protective

beings live” (7). Though lovely and inviting, this assertion wrongly assumes that his readers will identify with possessing their own material paradise—it takes for granted that women are as content with their space as men.

Bachelard continues this assumption of ownership by asserting that homes, “give us back areas of being, houses in which the human being’s certainty of being is concentrated, and we have the impression that, by living in such images as these, in images that are as stabilizing as these are, we could start a new life, a life that would be *our own*, that would belong to us in our very depths” (33).²⁹ *Our own* seems to be the operative phrase in Bachelard’s entire line of reasoning. Herein lies is the spatial distinction between the men and women, the fault line between a man’s easy understanding of spatial poetics and women’s struggle to identify with the feeling of possessing a home of which Bachelard writes. Ownership is intimately wrapped up in Bachelard’s phenomenology, but if the subject of examination does not own her space, it becomes necessary to undo these assumptions. It is imperative, therefore, to explicate Heed and Christine Cosey’s fight over the Monarch Street House, the driving force of the novel’s plot and the reason ownership—or lack of ownership—is, in fact, the premier, ultimate, feminized spatial signifier.

Perhaps the most obvious and severe instance of their long fight occurs at Christine’s sixteenth birthday. Heed experiences a moment of real pride and affection for her home—the estate to which Christine believes she is the rightful heir (Morrison 126)—which leads Christine to snidely correct her uneducated manner of speaking. After Heed retorts, “Don’t you sit at my table and tell me how to talk,” Christine’s shocked response, “*Your table?*” speaks directly to the struggle for ownership between the two women (126). Whose

²⁹ Emphasis mine

table it actually is, whose house it actually is, takes primacy in the conversation surrounding feminizing spatial poetics; the matter must be settled in these women's minds before any imagining of verticality, centrality, or artifacts can take place. This fight to do so does not suggest greed or pettiness; rather it speaks directly to the reality that in order for the imaginative feelings of which Bachelard writes to be understood—much less articulated—by women, there must first be ownership. Christine's challenge to Heed thus destroys the daydream before it begins.

It is important to observe that when analyzing the reactions to social and spatial marginalization, there exists a level of continuity between the female characters that this project has examined. When Heed feels that her space is being encroached upon by Christine, she responds to this feeling by setting fire to Christine's bed (Morrison 140). For Heed, fire is not only a way to control space and assert power, but it is a direct attempt at driving Christine out of the home (134). This response is pointedly reminiscent of Bertha Mason's response to her lack of space; likewise, she responds to her enclosure in the attic space by igniting Mr. Rochester's bed while he is fast asleep in it.³⁰ Fire—which evokes imaginings not only of violence, but also of light—is a fascinating tool employed by these spatially marginalized women. Not only does it create a threat to one's physical being, but it threatens to destroy the entire spatial structure which has caused her pain.

Despite this drastic action Heed takes against Christine, however, the fire itself is not the factor which most pointedly contributed to the severance of their intimacy. In fact, it is Heed's claim to the house which is the last and most important bullet point on a long list of her betrayals. Christine lists these treacheries to herself, "One day we built castles on the

³⁰ See Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

beach; next day he sat her in his lap. One day we were playing house under a quilt; next day she slept in his bed...One day this house was mine; next day she owned it" (131-132). Thus, Christine declares that Heed traded playing house with her for stealing her *real* house, and by listing this betrayal last, it reads as the most hurtful and important. It is significant that their games revolved around domestic space—castles, houses—until the real-world vying for a house ruined their relationship. Their final severance, therefore, was not only bound up in their quest for space, but in the ways in which Mr. Cosey dictated that space. Stephanie Li writes in her article on *Love's* semiotics, "Like the semiotic, the paradise of Heed and Christine thrives upon unity between the female self and her bodily drives, a unity destined to be severed by entrance into the patriarchy of the symbolic and its insistence on division" (Li 30). It is this patriarchy that drives a wedge into Heed and Christine's personal paradise; it is Mr. Cosey's continued control of the Monarch Street House, even after death, which both women's spatial insecurity to fester.

Indeed, what Heed and Christine wanted most was not to live "like queens in Mr. Cosey's house" (10), but to *own* a house themselves. *Love* argues vehemently that too seldom do women have a home of their own in which to experience reverie, nostalgia, or any of the other euphoric feelings Bachelard simply assumes every daydreamer has. Instead, women remain in a man's bed, at a man's table, squarely within the emotional, physical, and imaginative confines of a man's home. However, neither Heed nor Christine acknowledges—until their eventual reconciliation in the novel's denouement—that they were not, in truth, the enemy of each other's home; indeed, neither owned it enough to take it from the other. Instead, Mr. Cosey, the man of the house, continued to assert his control on the space from the grave through his confusing and ambiguous will—the final nail in the coffin,

as it were, in Morrison's argument that women have to fight tooth and nail simply to have a room of her own. We must consider it a profound problem that a dead man has more control than a living woman.

Gilbert and Gubar cite Charlotte Perkins Gilman when they postulate that women, "Literally confined to the house, figuratively confined to a single 'place,' enclosed in parlors and encased in texts, imprisoned and kitchens and enshrined in stanzas, women artists naturally found themselves describing dark interiors and confusing their sense that they were house-bound with their rebellion against being duty-bound"³¹ (Gilbert and Gubar 84). Just as the male poets Bachelard cites write about spaces filled with reverie, imagination, and memory, women writers fill their spaces with anxieties, with insecurities over whether it will be taken from her, with the feeling of instability in trying to make what is clearly a man's home her own. In imagining a set of feminist spatial and architectural poetics then, spatial theorists must sit with these anxieties. We must ask what the dark interiors signify, we must ask why the monogrammed tea service causes so much anxiety, we must interrogate the attic, the cellar, the apartment off the kitchen, all from *her* perspective, not his.

Finally, in order to create a full feminist meaning of spatial and architectural poetics and *Love* and the ways in which they diverge from traditional spatial theory, one must contend with Bachelard's large-scale assertions about the protective nature of home. He claims that, "the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace" (Bachelard 6). The Monarch Street House, however, did not protect its daydreamers—it destroyed them. The house, which serves as a constant reminder of the looming, ever-present, grandiose man who owned it, snapped the ties between two

³¹ See Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "In Duty Bound."

friends, friends who loved each other, who lived in “the easy weather of pre-civil rights intimacy until they [were] explosively interfered with” (Morrison xi). These friends do not pretend otherwise. Christine says to Heed about her marriage to Cosey, during their time of reconciliation, “Well, you got this nice big house out of it,” to which Heed responds, “My Vietnam. Except I come out alive” (129). A woman’s imagining of a house—the house she fights tooth and nail to obtain—as a war zone is profoundly divergent from Bachelard’s notion of a space meant to shelter.

On occasion, however, a text written by a woman does the work of bringing the struggle towards ownership and space to its eventual goal, representing the culmination of this desire and the hope women can have to obtain it. Sandra Cisneros does this work in *The House on Mango Street*. She writes about her female protagonist, Esperanza’s, experience with owning her first home and describes it intimately.

Not a flat. Not an apartment in back. Not a man’s house. Not a daddy’s. A house all my own. With my porch and my pillow, my pretty purple petunias. My books and my stories. My two shoes waiting beside the bed. Nobody to shake a stick at. Nobody’s garbage to pick up after. Only a house quiet as snow, a space for myself to go, clean as paper before the poem. (Cisneros 108)

In order to begin the work of formulating a new set of feminized, feminist spatial poetics, we first must observe a woman struggle toward obtaining her own space and then watch in wonder as she provides her own articulations of spatial and architectural poetics. We must witness her write herself into her space and write out the man of the house, and we must listen when she tells us what her home means to her. We can then begin to make meaning of *her* verticality and centrality, of her petunias and shoes beside the bed, of her space—clean as paper before the poem. This will be the final subject of my analysis. In the following chapter, I will use the lens of Gloria Naylor’s *Bailey’s Cafe* to examine the

imaginative creation of women's very own space—not her space within Mr. Rochester's or Mr. Cosey's house, but an entirely different kind of space, one that directly reflects herself.

CHAPTER IV

BAILEY'S CAFE

After examining both Brontë's and Morrison's texts, it is evident that the home spaces women writers imagine are filled to bursting with poetic implications for the female characters who inhabit them. While Brontë's ancestral houses, attics, and gardens begin to interrogate the poetics of the spaces to which women are relegated by powerful men, Morrison's *Monarch Street House* portrays two women vying for ownership of a single space. However, it is Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Cafe* that poignantly demonstrates what happens when women are no longer relegated to the odds and ends within a man's home—no longer fighting tooth and nail with other women for a room of their own—but rather are engaged in the imaginative work of *creating* their own, uniquely feminine space and extending access to that space to other women.³² Indeed, this novel acts as the denouement to the central problems of feminizing spatial and architectural poetics located in Brontë's and Morrison's texts. Here, my analysis will begin to diverge from Bachelard's masculine imaginings—from exclusively examining the spaces women attempt to carve out for themselves within men's houses—and instead begin to observe the products of women's organic spatial imagination. Finally, through *Bailey's Cafe*, we are able to access women's spatial daydreams—to see spaces, imagined by her and only her, and filled with the poetic significance she alone places on them.³³

³² See *A Room of One's Own*.

³³ See *The Poetics of Space*.

However, Naylor does not simply conjure up dreamy spaces for her female characters and place them there without incident; women's imaginings of space are by no means a heaven on Earth without tension, nor do they necessarily follow Bachelard's tradition of coziness, safety, or homeyness.³⁴ Instead, Naylor examines what might happen to women and where they might find themselves *after* they have experienced the sort of spatial marginalization Brontë's and Morrison's women do. Indeed, she only creates this purely imaginative space for her women after they have suffered greatly at the hands of men—specifically, within those men's homes—and known what it means *not* to have access to a room of one's own. Like Bertha Mason locked in the attic and Christine Cosey kicked out of her childhood bedroom, Naylor's women endure a lack of spatial agency before they are able to find respite in one of two places—Bailey's Cafe, or Eve's boardinghouse.

When examining Naylor's representation of space, it is important to understand that the two primary spaces in which the text takes place—Bailey's and Eve's—are represented as magic-realistic. Magic-realism is defined in *The Oxford Dictionary of American Art and Artists* as, “A mid-twentieth-century form of sharp-focus representation featuring fantasy, paradox, or irrationality.” Indeed, Bailey's Cafe and Eve's are distinctly paradoxical—these spaces are unable to be located on any map, can be entered from anywhere in the world, and can only be found by people who desperately need the space they provide. The text recounts Bailey's Cafe's curious patrons trying to understand the nature of the cafe:

They'll start looking for us when they're hungry. And then when they don't find us, they'll start asking questions. Hey, why wasn't this place here last month when I came

³⁴ See previous sections of this project for further analysis of Bachelard's assertions about the home space as inherently safe and cozy.

by? I could see if you'd just closed down—but the whole damn building was gone. Life's too short to spend time trying to explain the obvious to the idiot. If they can't figure out that we're only here when they need us, they don't need to figure it out. (28)

Accepting that Naylor's use of space somehow provides space for real women while simultaneously not totally existing in the real world is an integral component of accurately explicating Bailey's Cafe and Eve's. In order to fully understand the poetic significance of these magic-realistic spaces and to examine the ways in which they provide space exclusively for those who have nowhere else to go, readers and theorists must be willing to grapple with their paradoxical complexity.

Though their textual descriptions make both Bailey's Cafe and Eve's boardinghouse seem like ordinary spaces in almost every sense, there are also elements to the spaces that render their existence impossible. In addition to being able to enter the spaces from anywhere on Earth, the actual functions of the spaces are not necessarily what they seem to be. For example, Gabe's pawn shop—which sits on the same magic-real block as Bailey's and Eve's—is never open. Indeed, the text notes that after someone who needs to know where Bailey's is located follows the arrow outside of the pawn shop to the cafe, “[Gabe will] flip the sign over to where it reads, Out of Business, with that same arrow pointing down the street to us. Gabe is never open—we never close” (Naylor 145). Gabe's pawn shop, therefore, is not a pawn shop at all—it simply serves to direct people to Bailey's Cafe. Furthermore, Bailey himself notes that when each of the three owners of the block—himself, Gabe, and Eve—step through their front doors, they find themselves back where they started. Bailey muses to himself, “When I walk out of this cafe and leave this street, I'm still in San Francisco. [Gabe is] up in the Caucasus Mountains. And Eve is in New Orleans. You see, it's whatever life we've come from” (222). The spaces come with other rules as

well; paradoxically, one cannot find Bailey's Cafe when hungry, because the purpose of the cafe is not simply meant to satisfy physical needs, but to give the patron a place to be—to provide something more meaningful than burgers or a coffee (28). The magic-realistic nature of these spaces, therefore, suggests that they are there to provide patrons not only with physical provisions and bodily shelter, but with something deeper and more profound—something they will not be able to find anywhere else in their world.

Naylor's spaces are not only represented as magic-realistic, but also as liminal. The block on which Eve's, Bailey's, and Gabe's is situated—literally—at the end of the world. The text states of Bailey's Cafe, "There is nothing in back of this cafe. Since the place sits right on the margin between the edge of the world and infinite possibility, the back door opens out to a void. It takes courage to turn the knob and heart to leave the steps" (76). When looking into this void, different characters find different things there; some find simple porch steps, staring into empty eternity (77), others find the beautiful remnants of their childhood bedrooms (138), and others still find abstract sparks and swirls of light and color (225). To be sure, the void is filled with pure imaginative possibility—with perfect, unconstructed spatial poetics—but it is also clearly meant to be understood as eternal nothingness—as certain death. To step off the back steps behind Bailey's Cafe is to choose not to return to life. Naylor's liminal spaces, therefore, must be understood as the last stop before the end of the world; once inside the cafe, patrons must choose whether to return out the front door to the hardships of their real lives, or disappear forever into whatever they see in the void.

While the intersection of spatial theory and liminality often concerns itself with geographical position, the liminal nature of the block is, in fact, defined by its geographic nonexistence. Though liminal feminist literary theories are particularly interested in the

representation and consideration of physical borders when it comes to women's space, the liminal nature of Bailey's and Eve's does not afford this type of conversation; because their block cannot be found on any geographic map, it inherently resists contextualization.³⁵ Observed in the aforementioned quote regarding the geographic locations in which Bailey, Eve, and Gabe find themselves when they open their respective front doors, instead of inhabiting a fixed place in the world, the whole world is able to come to them. Therefore, the limitations surrounding the geographization of feminist theory do not hold up when considering Naylor's magic-realistic, liminal space; her space, therefore must be contended with as purely symbolic—as its own microcosm.³⁶ *Bailey's Cafe* offers its women an in-between space, hovering not between two definable places, but between this world and the abyss.

In considering the most significant spaces in the novel for Naylor's female characters, Eve's boardinghouse emerges as clearly dominant, as it is the place in which many of the female characters live full-time. However, while Eve's certainly represents women's space in a more explicit manner than Bailey's Cafe does, it would be impossible to thoroughly write about women's space in the novel without first discussing the cafe itself and the female patrons who find themselves there. In fact, the cafe itself only comes into Bailey's possession because of a woman—his wife, Nadine.³⁷ When Bailey returns to San Francisco after his lengthy deployment in the military, he finds that they are now the owners of the cafe. He recounts of his sudden arrival, “There's a customer waiting, Nadine said. Startled, I

³⁵ See “Spatializing Feminism.”

³⁶ See “Learning in the Liminal Space.”

³⁷ The narrator and owner of Bailey's Cafe is unnamed. However, because the cafe is already named Bailey's, his patrons naturally refer to him as Bailey.

turned around and she was standing in back of me. And in back of her was this cafe” (Naylor 27). He goes on to describe the actual space of Bailey’s Cafe as nothing particularly special:

The scarred old counter. Peeling linoleum. A haphazard line of wooden chairs and tables at the front window. Greasy white smoke clouded around us from the hot grill. I stared at the spatula in my hand and I could hear the sound of the hamburger sizzling on the grill. It was burning, and without thinking I flipped it over. We were in business.
(27)

Bailey returns from war feeling lost, broken by the violence he has witnessed, and in desperate need of space, and just like the many customers who will filter in and out of the space, he is met with one—the visually unimpressive but vitally important Bailey’s Cafe.

Though Bailey is the owner and narrates the majority of the text, the text heavily implies that his wife, Nadine, is actually the one creating the space—imagining the space—of Bailey’s Cafe. Bailey recounts that, “[Nadine has] helped me make a lot of improvements over the last three years. She sewed the red-checkered curtains herself and went out and found the brass rail to hang ‘em on. The double-door Frigidaire was her idea and so was the jukebox” (28). Not only does Nadine find and take over the space while Bailey is away at war, but she quietly and consistently runs the cafe, improving the space as she sees fit. Like the other women in the novel, Nadine is the one to bring the space to life, indicating that even though this particular space is not necessarily supposed to be read as a woman’s space or inherently feminine, at its core, that is precisely what it is. Much like Eve’s, Bailey’s Cafe is a space over which a woman is able to exert agency, a dynamic of power and control that this project has not previously encountered.

In addition to Bailey’s Cafe being, at its heart, a woman’s space, it is largely characterized by the abyss beyond its back steps. Examining the abyss is critical to understanding the cafe as not only a liminal space, but also a space only available to those in

absolute crisis. Only people at the end of their rope are able to wander into Bailey's, and subsequently, they must make a decision to either bravely return to the world they fled or step off the back steps into oblivion. This is vital to notice, for my purposes, especially in the case of Bailey's female patrons. Even by their mere presence in the space, readers are able to ascertain the position these women are in in life—to sense and understand their emotional volatility. It is said of Sister Carrie's—a regular at Bailey's and a religious zealot—daughter Angel, “It's a shame that Carrie doesn't realize she's pushing that girl to the edge. Hasn't she ever wondered how Angel can even follow her into this cafe?” (160). This moment ominously indicates that because Angel can so much as see the cafe, much less follow her mother into it, she too has reached a heartbreaking crossroads in her life. Liminality, in Naylor's text, does not exist without danger; the abyss out back looms ominously, waiting to welcome patrons who have had enough of their worlds. Not even the liminal spaces themselves—Bailey's and Eve's—are able to provide lasting answers, as liminal space does nothing “but freeze time; [it gives no answers—and [gets] no answers—for ourselves or the next man” (219). Indeed, the cafe is, “nothing but a way station and the choices have always been clear: you eventually go back out and resume your life—hopefully better off than when you found us—or you head to the back of the cafe and end it” (221). In order to accurately read these spaces—Bailey's, Eve's, and the abyss—there must first be a sense of urgency; for Naylor's characters, having a space in the world is often a matter of life or death.

With this understanding of the nature of Naylor's spaces in place in mind, we can begin to examine the women who inhabit and imagine them. Like Brontë and Morrison, Naylor portrays many of her female characters as having been silenced, shoved aside, profoundly abused, yet still searching for small ways to carve out safe and beautiful spaces

for themselves.³⁸ One of the most significant characters in the novel who, throughout her entire life, searches for space the same way Lucy Snowe and Christine Cosey do, is named Sadie. The first woman in the text whose story is told in explicit detail, Sadie grasps at straws to make the abysmal space she occupies feel like a real home. During her childhood, she dreams of a “trim, white bungalow with a green picket fence,” a yard exploding with roses, the smell of roasting chicken and cigars wafting through the air, the comforts of a home defined by love, comfort, and plenty (Naylor 44, 49). Instead, her reality is suffering near-constant rape and being pimped out by her drug-addicted mother who tells her, “I’ve been selling my tail all this time to feed you till I’m sick and near death. Now you better kick in too” (44). Disturbingly referred to by her mother as, “The One the Coat Hanger Missed” (41), Sadie’s daydreams aptly represent women’s shared experience of chasing a fruitless dream for home while being shuffled around and used for others’ gain—an observation that poignantly remembers the experience of Brontë’s and Morrison’s women. The beginning of Sadie’s story, therefore, represents the harsh real-world reality of spacelessness and abuse—the reality that Bailey’s and Eve’s eventually allow women to escape from.

In her adult life, when Sadie eventually obtains a sort of home with her husband, Daniel, it is represented in stark contrast to her childhood dream. The two occupy a tin-roofed, three-room shanty coated with thick layers of coal soot from the constantly passing trains, which strips the land of the beauty and fertility Sadie envisions (51). Despite its bleakness, she desperately tries to keep the home clean and neat, feverishly sweeping the porch after each train, only for the next train to rouse another black cloud of soot. She

³⁸ See Dorothea Buehler’s “Below the Surface: Female Sexuality in Gloria Naylor’s *Bailey’s Cafe*.”

mentally runs through her daily routine, “Daniel gets his breakfast, his lunch pail is packed, and he’s out the door. The 5:15. Sweep down the front porch and railings...the 7:20” (51). Sadie’s days—and therefore, her life—revolve around combatting the steady stream of ugliness that falls across her space. Her frantic, vain attempt to keep it as lovely as possible is indicative of the struggle between hope and hopelessness she feels. No matter how tidy and mindful she is, no matter how hard she tries to breathe life into the space, the world continues to layer coal upon her spatial daydreams.

The only things that make her situation livable are the stunning red geraniums she grows. The text recounts that she, “grew the red geraniums on the back porch in any sort of container she could salvage: Mason jars, dented tin buckets, fruit crates, a few real clay pots that she scraped from the house money to buy. They were the reddest flowers she could find, hardy enough to thrive through the soot and vibrations” (54-55). Wasting nothing, she nourishes them with any scraps she can use for compost and gives them water fortified with old egg shells (55). Indeed, she loves these flowers so much that when she falls sick and Daniel carelessly allows them whither, she fiercely threatens, “They leave, I leave” (55). Not only do Sadie’s strong, vibrant flowers represent herself—growing and blooming despite the poisonous dust of life—but they emphasize women’s innate connection to bringing life and beauty into their space against all odds.

In order to obtain a fraction of her original home dream, Sadie eventually convinces Daniel to build her huge flower boxes for her geraniums; though her dream for a green picket fence was never fulfilled, the text notes that she, in an assertion of agency despite her circumstances, “went out there herself and painted the boxes green” (Naylor 56). She also, “used a few extra cents to buy real kitchen curtains instead of the old sheets she

was used to hemming up. A rag rug went down on the floor. A chintz cover was put on the easy chair” (56). Sadie’s innate ability and deep internal drive to transform the mundane into the beautiful represents a fully and unapologetically feminine spatial poetic. Indeed, her ability to find beauty in the ordinary follows her through her tumultuous life and ultimately gives her a sort of magical power when she finally finds herself at Bailey’s Cafe. Bailey notes of her arrival in the cafe, “She walked in here from the streets of Chicago the same way they walk in from Detroit, Saint Paul, Memphis, or New York...my wife decided her cup of tea or occasional dish of cobbler was on the house. Sadie more than paid for it with what it took to turn out thick mugs into fine bone china” (68). The text continues, “by the time Sadie had made the distance...to the table, the thick mug had lost its cracks and stains, hitting the tabletop with the ring of chine, while the bent tin spoon and paper napkin became monogramed silver and linen. Kind of an amazing thing to watch” (40). Through the space of Bailey’s Cafe and the imaginative freedom it provides, Sadie is eventually afforded the opportunity to make ugly things beautiful, just as she imagines they ought to be.

Throughout the rest of Sadie’s tumultuous life—even after Daniel passes away and she loses possession of her house—her original dream of home never leaves her. Instead, it changes—warps—with time and evolving circumstance. After losing the house and falling headfirst into a wine bottle, readers observe that her dream of home is all she has left. In one instance, when she reaches for her paper-bagged wine bottle, her head rested on the dried-out box of dead geraniums that were once hers, she imagines herself happily going about doing her household chores and tending her flowers:

She pulled the blanket around her and reached for the paper bag. The dingy white paint of her house flowed in the dark as the mucus in the corners of her sleepy eyes formed a halo around it. Rainbows stroked the roof and filled the yard with greens, blues, speckled the dead geranium leaves with spots of bright red. (65)

Under the near-constant influence of her alcohol, her dream of home becomes more like a fever dream, warped by abstract color and light. Nevertheless, it means just as much to her as ever before. At night, she would drink and “[make] a few improvements to her home” (66). In her mind’s eye, she adds a sewing room, [saves] up for imitation Tiffany shades, and [buys] a radio (66). In the wake of the loss of her actual space, her spatial dreams reach a fever-pitch; her drunken fantasies allow her to slip out of the pains of the world and into pure imaginative space.

Although throughout the span of her life Sadie is represented as someone who Bachelard might consider to be a quintessential example of a spatial “daydreamer,” she does not make her most powerful claim to space until she finds herself at Bailey’s Cafe. Here, Sadie provides readers with perhaps one of the most overt grasps for spatial agency in the entire text. Once she establishes herself as a regular patron of the cafe, she meets and falls in love with a man known as Iceman Jones. In an intimate description, Iceman “led her toward the rear door of the cafe...[Iceman] opened the door, his bulk shielding Sadie from the sight of that endless plunge” (76). While the two dance on the back steps of Bailey’s Cafe, looking out into eternity, Iceman proposes to her. Despite her obvious love for him, however, she rejects his proposal. She fantasizes to herself in the midst of his proposal, “He carved the chicken; they both liked the wings, so he winked and told her it was a good thing God made ‘em in pairs...He helped her clear the table and wash the dishes...Yes, so easy to feel at home with this man. *And she would keep him in her home*, since it seemed he wanted to stay” (77).³⁹ However, Sadie’s dream of home is, in fact, the very reason why she rejects Iceman’s marriage proposal; though she muses about welcoming him into her imagined space, he

³⁹ Emphasis mine

instead suggests she join him in his—“a deal she just couldn’t live with” (78). Even though the home she imagines does not actually exist, she prefers her drunken dream to the idea of once again folding herself into the fabric of a man’s house. The quiet, profound moment in which she leaves him on those back steps serves to suggest that a woman’s spatial daydreams can supersede her actual real-world needs. This suggests that a very different kind of daydreaming is taking place in the hearts and minds of women than anything Bachelard articulates in *The Poetics of Space*. It suggests that while Bachelard imagines that spatial daydreams are linked to real-world experiences of one’s home space, women experience spatial daydreaming as a longing for something they do not have.

Though Sadie’s gut wrenching relationship with space is perhaps the most explicit represented in the text, another woman with a sorted relationship with the space she is obliged to inhabit is named Esther. Sold as a child-bride by her older brother and moved into her new husband’s home, Esther initially takes in her new surroundings with wonder:

My new house is very pretty. And so big. A room just to eat in, with nothing but a long table and a cabinet filled with shiny glasses and plates. A whole bedroom just to myself...the mattress is so deep and soft. Goose feathers. I can pretend I am a princess. Only a princess would have a bed like this. Deep pink and trimmed with lace...The pitcher and basin...china with tiny pink roses. (96)

Esther’s initial impression of the space is not only beautiful and luxurious, but it is possessive; she states that it is *my* new house; *I* am a princess. Immediately upon her arrival in the house, she adopts a measure of ownership over it. However, after profound and deviant sexual abuse begins to occur in the basement of that big, beautiful house at the hands of her new husband, Esther immediately stops referring to the house as “mine” and starts referring

to it as “his” (99).⁴⁰ The abuse she suffers, her utter lack of control, strips her of her ability to perceive beauty in her home, rendering her spaceless in that big, beautiful house and deeply influencing the space she will come to occupy within Eve’s.

Though the majority of the novel is centered around Bailey’s Cafe and its patrons, the primary location of poetic significance for the women in the text is, without question, Eve’s—a peculiar and extremely secretive house made up of equal parts boardinghouse, brothel, and sanctuary. If one were to stumble upon the magic-real block, Eve’s is the very last place one would find, having first to find Gabe’s and then Bailey’s. Indeed, the text notes of this process, “A certain kind of person [Gabe] sends to the cafe; a certain kind of woman Bailey sends to me” (145). Though what goes on at Eve’s behind closed doors is, in many ways, shrouded in mystery, one thing is certain: it can only be found by women who have nowhere else left to go. Eve’s exists to both articulate and fulfill women’s desperate need for their own space—unencumbered by the expectations and authoritative rule of men—and poignantly suggests what we have discovered over the course of this analysis to be true: too often, there is literally nowhere on earth for women to turn. Too often, women are unable to access a space of their own.

Thus, part of the significance of Eve’s is that the house itself illustrates women’s *lack* of space. It serves to articulate that even when women are finally afforded a room of their own in which they can daydream, imagine, and inhabit with intensity, it does not actually exist in the real world—it is, in part, still a spatial fantasy.⁴¹ The spatial poetics of

⁴⁰ See my previous sections for spatial analysis of basements and cellars as inherently deviant spaces.

⁴¹ See Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* for further study on imagining space and inhabiting with intensity.

Eve's, therefore, are utterly defined by the space's semi-magical nature. Not only is the physical plot of land it sits on not fully part of the real world, but its representation as magic-realistic suggests that, for many women, a room of one's own does not yet fully exist, either. However, despite the potential for reading Eve's as pessimistic, part of the beauty of the magic-real nature of Naylor's spaces comes from the lack of constraints on the spaces to be realistic—to be sensible. Because the imaginative possibilities are endless in a place that does not have to be totally real, the poetics of the spaces are able to be even more explicit than they otherwise would.

A spatial examination of Eve's boardinghouse/brothel must first begin with a brief examination of Eve herself. An obvious allusion to the biblical first mother, Eve is raised by a man she calls Godfather—another apparent reference to the term “Father God” (Naylor 82). Godfather is a preacher and an extremely controlling guardian; refusing to tell Eve her own birthday, he argues that since she “never had a real mother or father and she wouldn't be alive if it weren't for him, *he* would decide when [she] was born” (82). After Godfather catches an adolescent Eve engaged in an autoerotic moment with the earth itself—an allusion that suggests that Eve is meant to be understood as literally and figuratively *one* with the earth (90)—she runs away from home. Over the course of her journey, however, she cites that she cannot get the “delta dust”—the dirt of the region from which she comes—off of her skin: “The delta dust exists to be wet,” she says, “And the delta dust exists to grow things, anything, in soil so fertile its tomatoes, beans, and cotton are obscene in their richness... Godfather always said that he made me, but I was born of the delta” (90). At the end of her aimless, ambling journey, she states that there is, “nowhere on earth for a woman like me. That's how I ended up... taking over this brownstone and starting my garden”—the

brownstone and garden that will come to be known simply as “Eve’s” (91). A woman with neither beginning nor end, one who is intimately acquainted with fertile land, Eve is destined not only to bear fruit, but the very choicest fruit. For her, in part, this means tending to the women that will come to stay with her and, in truth, *becoming* the garden in which they can bloom. Eve, therefore, demonstrates that often, behind an opportunity for women—in this case, an opportunity for a room of one’s own—is another woman holding open the door.

Despite the fact that the hardships faced by Sadie, Esther, and Eve herself are not at all uncommon among women, not all women are granted a room at Eve’s, much less are able to locate the brownstone at all. Indeed, Naylor writes, “A woman is either ready for Eve’s or she’s not. And if she’s ready, she’ll ask where to find it on her own” (Naylor 80). An inexplicable filtration system determines who can pass the magic-real border; the women who truly belong at Eve’s have the unexplainable ability to simply “follow the fragrance home” (94). In addition, the women who occupy the space are different from each other, confirming that there is no discernible trait Eve looks for: “The only thing they have in common is that they need a place to stay. And I tell them the only thing I can: Go out the door, make a right, and when you see the garden—if you see the garden, you’re there” (81). Though finding Eve’s is near-impossible, Eve also actively seeks women out—a motivation and system for which is never explained but certainly serves to add to the boardinghouse’s mystique. She visits solitary confinement floors of prisons and walks “slowly down the hall between the isolations cells,” handing out cards to the spaceless women in whom she sees potential for growth (133). As for the ultimate goal of the space, Eve plainly instructs one father, “Leave your daughter here...and I’ll return her to you whole” (113).

Finally, once inside Eve's, readers are granted minimal but vivid details regarding the layout and dynamics of the space. One of the few things readers are able to ascertain about Eve's architectural setup—other than it being a brownstone—is that there is a basement, which Esther inhabits. Esther occupying the basement space is, of course, a callback to the cellar in which she suffered sexual abuse as a child, and therefore significant to the feminist poetics of the space. Esther recounts of her childhood experience, “The only person I ever told is Eve...The first thing she offered me was this basement room. And she removed the lightbulbs herself. What they'll need from you, they'll need in the dark” (99). Despite Esther occupying this dark, dungeon-like basement in which she carries out unspoken acts with male callers, this cellar is not necessarily synonymous with sinister intentions—an absolute divergence from Bachelard's assertions about subterranean spaces.⁴² Instead, it is the place in which she takes back a measure of power regarding not only her space, but her sexuality. One theorist notes that, “After Esther arrives at Eve's ‘boarding house,’ she takes control of her life and starts to live on her own terms...Despite her sexual preferences—which she did not choose, but which were imposed on her—she can now control her experiences in Eve's basement” (Buehler 433). It is at Eve's, and specifically in Eve's basement, that Esther harnesses her sexual experiences and begins to move from abuse toward empowerment. No longer is she victim to Bachelard's subterranean force. Instead, she *becomes* the subterranean force—becomes the agent of power in the space.

In addition to using space to transform trauma into power, the architectural structure of Eve's also does the work of inverting gendered spatial norms. Throughout the first chapters of this project, I have observed women being relegated to forgotten spaces

⁴² See the previous sections of this project for full analysis of the spatial poetics of cellars.

within men's houses while the powerful men enjoy spaces of primacy. At Eve's, however, readers experience a line of men waiting patiently to see Peaches, one of Eve's women. The men are described as sitting "knee to knee in the parlor. That side of the room blooms with bouquets of the yellow flowers. The word didn't take long to spread. The hot one who moved into the second-floor room takes on all callers" (113). Reminiscent of classic images of women sitting close together in parlors, this scene inverts gender roles. Instead of women waiting on their men, the way Sadie did, for instance, here, the men wait downstairs for the women, the ones whose home it is.

Considering this inversion of spatial power leads me to consider another inversion in the text, that of the Garden of Eden metaphor. The text states that men are not permitted to visit the women at Eve's unless they bring them flawless bouquets of flowers, which they typically purchase from Eve herself (93). The text notes that, "If they go upstairs with a bouquet that's less than perfect, Eve's taught her to send them back down again. Look in that mirror good, and accept no less than what you deserve" (113). Here, flowers not only represent femininity, but life. Indeed, at Eve's, the men must bring the women perfect life, as women have been required to bring men perfect lives, essentially, since Eden. Furthermore, despite Eve's obvious connection to the Garden of Eden, unlike the Biblical account, "Naylor's story of Eve... does not end with the expulsion from the Garden of Eden" (Buehler 443), or, for the feminist spatial poet, the moment one might consider the first expulsion of a woman from her home. Instead, Naylor's Eve stays in her garden, works the land herself, and produces wildflowers. Indeed, it is of great poetic significance that all of the flowers Eve grows in her garden are wildflowers. Like the women whom the flowers are for, they not

contrived, they have not been manicured or pruned or tended, no one caused them to blossom, but nevertheless, they do (Naylor 92).

After examining the spatial dynamics of Bailey's Cafe and Eve's themselves, it is necessary to also consider the text's use of nonphysical, purely imaginative space—most explicitly, the expansive abyss behind Bailey's. The novel itself concludes with a miraculous scene of childbirth in this space after Mariam, a fourteen-year-old pregnant girl fleeing her Ethiopian village who adamantly claims no man has ever touched her, is found by Gabe (143). A victim of female genital mutilation, the girl is confirmed to be a virgin when Eve states, "I've bathed this girl and seen her body; no man has even tried" (152). When Gabe finds her, curled up in a ball and exhausted, he says, "I'll lead you to a place where you can rest" (159), and delivers her to Eve's. Despite the fact that children aren't "supposed" (160) to be born on the magic-realistic block, Miriam's approaching due date sparks the clearest, most powerful imagining of feminine space in the text.

In order to honor the birth customs of Mariam's village, Eve herself, by the power of her imagination, fills the abyss with things from Mariam's home:

Earlier that morning Eve had set everything up. The eucalyptus trees. The juniper. A steep-sloping mountain in the background. The air drifting from the back stalled like damp moss and thin lines of sunshine filtered in under the doorjamb. All of that effort drained her and, I guess, so did the worry of what lay ahead. Eve had hunched over a cup of coffee, looking older than I've ever seen her... I wondered if she was going to deliver the baby out in the open countryside...No...I'll just have to try and time it so she's back there by the first contractions, and then that hut she needs will appear. (224)

Not only is Eve's effort to fill the space with elements of Mariam's homeland an act of phenomenal compassion and generosity, but it is also a profoundly feminine act. Alluding to God's creation of the Earth itself, the image of one woman creating the perfect environment for another woman to bring life into the world simply through her poetic imagination is

stunning enough. However, Eve's spatial imaginings for Mariam do not end with her village.

She states:

I can't do anything about the blood, but there's a way to alter the pain. I never dreamed she meant lights. Sparkling...Waves of light...Besides the few customers, everyone who lived on the street was gathered inside...Silvers. Pearls. Iridescent pinks. They now sprayed out into the sunless room and hit the ceiling...Glowing copper. Gilded orange...Emerald. Turquoise. Sapphire...I looked over and there were tears streaming down Gabe's wrinkled face. God bless you, Eve...Then we heard the baby's first thin cry—and the place went wild. (225)

This section of the text reveals that not only does Eve imaginatively create Mariam's entire village for her to give birth in, but she conjures pure beauty to distract her from the pain of childbirth. Fulfilling Sadie's dream for beauty and Esther's dream for the comforts of home, Eve utterly exhausts herself to create both necessary space and unnecessary comfort for young women—actions that carry a great deal of meaning for the feminist spatial poet.

When women are afforded the freedom to envision their own space—when there are no constraints on what they can imagine space to be—the truth that emerges most powerfully and most clearly is that women are willing and ready to spend their time and drain their energy in order to provide space for other women. Indeed, in this scene, Eve takes infinite nothingness and creates not only a feminine space, but a personalized space, a space filled with unimaginably beautiful light and color. In imagining a set of feminist spatial poetics, then, creating beauty and security for oneself—what Bachelard, in large part, imagines—is only part of the equation; however, it also indicates that when women have power over space, they use those spaces to support other women—to bring them alongside. It is not about who owns what, it is not about luxuriating alone in one's thoughts. It is about a fellowship of women—about the creation of life itself.

To be sure, feminist spatial poetics are, in large part, about women providing space for other women; however, there still remains one anomaly in the text to grapple with: a rather masculine man named “Miss Maple” who serves as Eve’s housekeeper and happens to enjoy wearing dresses. Though at first blush, Miss Maple may seem out of place in a house that exclusively shelters and protects women who have endured unthinkable cruelty, through Miss Maple, Naylor asserts that it isn’t only women who are marginalized and in need of a space. Through Miss Maple, she includes other marginalized people groups in the conversation about space, safety, and agency. Eve’s, therefore, grows by leaps and bounds in the final chapters of the novel and becomes a launch pad from which to explore the lack of space suffered by many other groups of people. The text recounts of Miss Maple’s journey through the space, “[Miss Maple] says that if things keep going the way they are, we won’t be seeing him by the end of the new year. He’ll have saved enough to start his own company. I’m really happy for the fella; he shouldn’t have been here anyway. But I guess that can be said for about just everybody, myself included” (213). Eve’s then, does not only provide true imaginings of spatial poetics for women; indeed, it also begins to open its arms to other marginalized groups, such as gender-nonconforming individuals, and allows each of them to launch back into their lives from the safety of spaces like Eve’s. It powerfully and poignantly reveals that when women are in control of space, they fiercely protect it, but they also use it to fiercely protect others.

Through the spaces represented in *Bailey’s Cafe*, Naylor provides women with a stop before the end of their world—through Eve’s, she gives them a soft place to land after hard times and an opportunity to reflect and decide how to reenter their lives. However, her spaces do not simply inform the reading of her novel; they also provide incredible insight

into what a feminist set of spatial poetics might look like. Throughout the text, woman after woman suffers abuse, spacelessness, expulsion from their homelands, and a lack of control over their lives, but when *one* woman obtains a brownstone house, each of their lives are transformed. Through *Bailey's Cafe*, spatial poetics grows from an idea of one man owning one home and dreaming one daydream into one woman owning one home and providing daydreams for countless women. Truly, these are rooms worth remembering.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the first pages of *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard asserts that authors, “Finding little to describe in the humble home... spend little time there; so they describe it as it actually is, without really experiencing its primitiveness, a primitiveness which belongs to all, rich and poor alike, if they are willing to dream” (4). The crux of my argument, however, depends entirely on the notion that women authors do, in fact, spend a great deal of time describing houses in vivid, significant detail. Subsequently, my work attempts to locate in these novels the feelings that Bachelard posits require nothing more than the ability to daydream and seeks to find the poetic significance behind these descriptions of space. Indeed, over the course of this project, I have explicated several iterations of women’s space as represented in literature across centuries and continents. I have examined Charlotte Brontë’s ancestral homes and analyzed their attics, gardens, and red rooms, I have considered Toni Morrison’s Monarch Street House and resort hotel, and I have dreamed with Gloria Naylor about what pure, unadulterated women’s space might look like. To be sure, the factor that prevents Bertha Mason, Christine Cosey, and Sadie from inhabiting their spaces with intensity is not their inability to dream—in fact, Sadie is a daydreaming expert. Rather, the powerful grip men have on the spaces these women inhabit and the control they exact over those spaces prevent women from experiencing the emotions Bachelard takes for granted.

When I first noticed the gender discrepancy in spatial and architectural poetics, I knew immediately that it was a worthwhile line of inquiry. I found that the theory itself and the writings contributing to the field were so incredibly elegant—so imaginatively rich—that

dwelling on the subject was enjoyable; *meditating* on houses and rooms began to provide me with the sorts of comfortable feelings Bachelard imagines come from *inhabiting* houses and rooms. However, the field's obvious lack of a feminine perspective on space stuck me, and I realized that these sets of poetics could be further enriched by filtering Bachelard's assertions about space through women's experiences. In the process of conducting my research and formulating my argument, however, I first had to curate which specific texts I would examine and decide what methodologies I would employ to do so. There are many theoretical works as well as novels written by women that I chose not to include in this project, and there certainly remain areas of this project that could be expanded upon. Therefore, now that I have completed the work I set out to do with this project, I feel it necessary to provide a brief justification of my methodological approaches and to make a short case regarding my choices to include or exclude various texts.

To be sure, the most important thread I maintained throughout the project was Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*—understanding, grappling with, and ultimately feminizing his assertions about the connective tissue between space and emotion. While many other theorists and scholars have written on the home space, I intentionally chose to narrow my focus to Bachelard's work rather than expand it to include others. His specific, sweeping, and profoundly masculine claims coupled with his prominence in the field made his text an ideal theoretical lens; to productively grapple with additional theoretical texts would require a much longer project. Furthermore, by simply comparing Bachelard's poetics to the spaces represented by women writers, the disparities in spatial experience emerge clearly and organically. Therefore, I chose to include few other scholars and secondary sources because I concluded that the most important voices in the conversation surrounding spatial and

architectural poetics were Bachelard himself and women writers writing about the home space. Maintaining this simple, direct conversation over the length of my analysis best allowed me to streamline the conversation I aimed to facilitate.

After securing Bachelard's text as my primary theoretical source, selecting the novels I wanted to analyze became a question of the development and progression of women's representational spaces. Because Brontë's *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* are so widely recognized and highly regarded, and the spaces represented in them have already been the subject of so much theoretical work, they seemed the best possible springboard for my specific conversation about Bachelard. They aptly reveal the first of three steps of feminist spatial progression I imagined the project would tackle: that of women carving out space for themselves within men's homes. By and large, Brontë's women portray traditional Victorian angels navigating life in their husband's homes, with the important deviation of Bertha Mason and her attic.⁴³ This simultaneous adherence to and divergence from women's traditional domestic representation allowed me to better understand women's emotional impulses towards their space while still obliged to operate within the confines of their world.⁴⁴

The second of the three steps I imagined that the project would address—the representation of two women fighting *each other* over space—is powerfully exemplified by Toni Morrison's *Love*. In this text, women progress from simply occupying space in a man's house to attempting to fill the gap he leaves behind after his death. To be sure, it is a small,

⁴³ See the introductory section of this project for further contextualization of the angel/monster of the house.

⁴⁴ Other novels I considered for this section that similarly represent women navigating their place in men's houses include other well-known works like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*.

yet significant, progression in the representation of women's spatial agency. While, at first, Heed and Christine's vicious fight may seem a step backward for feminism, the climax of the text reveals that what Morrison's women wanted most was the restoration of their relationship with one another. Their relationship is inextricably linked to power over the estate, because Mr. Cosey, the deceased owner of the house, was the reason Heed and Christine's relationship was severed in the first place. By seeking control of his property, they were also seeking space for their relationship to be rebuilt. After enduring the experience of a man taking power from them, both women were chasing control over their lives, and their frustration over their lack of spatial agency, until the climax of the novel, simply misplaced on each other.

Finally, the third step I imagined for the project was to analyze the representation of women's eventual home ownership and the ways in which they choose to represent their own spaces. However, shortly after beginning the research and drafting process, I realized that the depictions of women owning their own homes in literature is incredibly uncommon, and because of their rarity, they may not make as strong a claim for the need for feminist spatial poetics as a space like Eve's does. Indeed, Eve's simultaneously imagines what a purely women-owned and woman-imagined space might look like while its liminal, magic-realistic nature contends that this is not yet existent in the real world. The women that find themselves at Eve's have never known a room of their own, but crave one so desperately that they are able to imagine it into existence. The culmination of the project, therefore, does not necessarily provide the neat, clear-cut ending I originally imagined; the final text I chose to explore is not the one that provides the most peaceful representation of a woman-owned

home. Rather, it continues to assert a need for space—for more space, freer space, unadulterated feminine space—for women to inhabit.

Before selecting *Bailey's Cafe* for my denouement, however, the novel I planned to analyze in its place was Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, which I briefly mentioned towards the end of my second chapter. *The House on Mango Street* recounts a young woman's journey through life and space as a first-generation Mexican-American. Told in a series of vignettes, Cisneros' heroine, Esperanza, occupies many different apartments and houses until she grows up and obtains a house of her own. As quoted in my second chapter, one of the few significant details she provides about her house is that it is "not a man's...not a daddy's" (Cisneros 108), thus indicating that one of the most important factors of her space is its independence from male influence. However, this text alone and its minimal spatial details are not nearly enough to imagine feminist spatial poetics. As represented by Eve's, the need for literary and real-world feminine spaces still exists. Indeed, this rampant, wide-spread need is more significant to feminist spatial poetics than the few encouraging representations of women inhabiting their own spaces. Unfortunately, in the field, as in the world, women still inhabit the space of *need* more intensely than they inhabit any room.

Considering these representational spaces and the ways in which they suggest sustained spatial inequity despite the notable progress represented in literature leads me to think about the implications feminist spatial poetics have in the real world. In order to attain an equitable feminist spatial poetic within the world of literary theory, real women must first have access to the comforts and safety of the same sort of spaces as their male counterparts and, in turn, write about them. Indeed, feminist architects do some of this work—

participating in scholarship surrounding women's space and thinking about the feminist implications of real-world structures. In an article for *Built Environment*, Jos Boys writes, "Architecture constructs...reality for women inasmuch as it contains ideas about the proper 'place' of women, about what is private and what public activity and for whom; about which things should be kept separate and which put together; and about what are 'appropriate' behaviors for women in particular locations" (26). Feminist architects, therefore, concern themselves with the idea of structures possessing the ability to implicitly affect culture through their design. They understand the actual design of buildings as a form of visual rhetoric that asserts spatial norms.

Feminist architects also do the work of expanding the idea of feminine space beyond the house and including analyses of communal spaces. Boys continues in the same article:

In architecture, safety outside the home has...been a major concern of designers and planners, with housing layouts based on particular ideologies about community and 'defensible space,' although women's fears are hardly ever mentioned...This is precisely why we urgently need a feminist analysis of architecture which can be critical of the contemporary content of the built environment...Most feminist work has a double aim—to expose the ways in which the world is male-defined, and to show the ways in which women do *not* define it. (Boys 31)

Because women do not define the world, they are obliged to navigate not only men's houses, but masculine workplaces, masculine neighborhoods, and masculine culture. Therefore, when a woman obtains a room of her own—or perhaps even a house of her own—the ways in which she represents her space are incredibly important to understanding *her*. Likely, she has no other place in her world of which she is the sole creator, sole imaginer, a place that reflects her inner landscape. Like feminist literary theorists, feminist architects understand that women experience the constant burden of attempting to navigate men's spaces—whether

the context is a house or a company—and it is necessary to expose and explicate this inequity in all of its iterations.

Feminist spatial poetics may not be quite as involved with garrets and cellars as Bachelard imagines; they may not concern themselves with the vertical nature of a house or how close to the heavens they are. These poetics simply may not be particularly important to women. Women, rather, may place emphasis on their bedrooms, where they find respite from the world that is not set up for them, on the kitchens in which they share life with other women. Perhaps their emotional impulses towards space would not be quite as solitary and cerebral as Bachelard's, but more relational and dynamic. And this may come from the gratitude for the space itself—the inability to take it for granted—coupled with the intuitive understanding that her space may provide shelter for more women than just her. However, we will not know for sure what spaces she finds most significant until she is able to write about them with authority—through experience.

WORKS CITED

WORKS CITED

- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Complete and unabridged. ed., Book League of America, 1940.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places*. Boston: Beacon P, 1994.
- Barr, Marleen S. *Feminist Fabulation: Space/Postmodern Fiction*. University of Iowa Press, 1992.
- Boghian, Ioana. "Towards a Metaphorical Type of Architecture: The Inside of the Victorian House." BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience [Online], 1.1 (2010): pp. 31-39. Web. 25 Aug. 2018
- Boys, Jos. "Is There a Feminist Analysis of Architecture?" *Built Environment (1978-)*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1984, pp. 25–34. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23286005.
- Brontë, Charlotte, and Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Open Road Media Romance, 2014.
- Brontë, Charlotte, et al. *Villette*. New ed., Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Calvino, Italo. "The Road to San Giovanni." *Grand Street*, no. 46, 1993, pp. 10–28.
- Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. 1st hardcover ed., A.A. Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1994.
- Davison, Carol. "Gothic Architectonics: The Poetics and Politics of Gothic Space." *Papers on Language and Literature*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2010, pp. 136–163, 236.
- De Soto, Juliette. "The Poetics of Domestic Space in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*." *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2018, pp. 49–64.

- Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, and Dale M. Bauer. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Bedford Books, 1998.
- Hack, Daniel. *Reaping Something New: African American Transformations of Victorian Literature*. 2017.
- Harlan, Susan. *Decorating a Room of One's Own*. Abrams Image, 2018.
- Hughes-Hallett, Lucy. "REVIEW --- Books -- Five Best: A Personal Choice: Lucy Hughes-Hallett --- on Gardens in Fiction." *Wall Street Journal*, 2018, p. C.10.
- James, Henry, and Pierre A. Walker. *The Portrait of a Lady*. 2002 Modern Library pbk. ed., Modern Library, 2002.
- Kumar, Anurag. "From Margin to Centre: Reading Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Cafe*." *Language in India*, vol. 11, no. 10, Oct. 2011.
- Land, Ray, et al. "Learning in the Liminal Space: A Semiotic Approach to Threshold Concepts." *Higher Education* (00181560), vol. 67, no. 2, Feb. 2014, 199-217.
- Lefebvre, Henri, and Donald Nicholson-Smith. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell, 2009.
- Li, Stephanie, -. "Paradise Lost: Reconciling the Semiotic and Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Love*." *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2014, pp. 27-47.
- McDowell, Linda. *Spatializing Feminism*. In *BodySpace*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

“Magic Realism.” *The Oxford Dictionary of American Art and Artists*, The Oxford

Dictionary of American Art and Artists, 2018,

<https://books.google.com/books?id=2FByDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT373&lpg=PT373>

&dq=%E2%80%9CMagic+Realism.%E2%80%9D+The+Oxford+Dictionary+of+

American+Art+and+Artists&source=bl&ots=NgNndx9PYX&sig=ACfU3U1gVtp

k4KdivxahbAbZb95S_BNYdQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjm4qD14sjhAhV

4IzQIHT-

SCP0Q6AEwBXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9CMagic%20Realism.

%E2%80%9D%20The%20Oxford%20Dictionary%20of%20American%20Art%2

0and%20Artists&f=false

Montgomery, Maxine Lavon. “Authority, Multivocality, and the New World Order in Gloria

Naylor’s *Bailey’s Cafe*.” *African American Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1995.

Morrison, Toni. *Love*. First ed., Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Naylor, Gloria. *Bailey’s Cafe*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992.

Piehler, Liana F. *Spatial Dynamics and Female Development in Victorian Art and Novels:*

Creating a Woman’s Space. P. Lang, 2003.

Proust, William C., and Marcel Carter. *In Search of Lost Time*. Volume 1, Swann’s Way.

2013.

Rhys, Jean., et al. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. 1st ed., W.W. Norton, 1999.

Ricks, Christopher. *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. Oxford University Press,

1987.

Said, Edward W., and Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. First ed., Knopf:

Distributed by Random House, 1993.

Vijayalakshmi, A. and Padmavathi. "Gender and Ethnicity in Gloria Naylor's Novel *Bailey's Cafe*." *Language in India*, vol. 13, no. 10, Oct. 2013.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1st Harvest/HBJ ed., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989.