University of Alberta

Texts like the World:

The Use of Utopian Discourse to Represent Place in Works
by Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand

by

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Dedication

For Darcy
& J.B.

Abstract

In "Texts like the World" I examine Nicole Brossard's *Picture Theory* and *Mauve Desert* and Dionne Brand's *No Language is Neutral* and *A Map to the Door of No Return* in order to demonstrate how these authors figure place in ways that are representative of utopian discourse. To do so, I draw primarily on two disciplinary perspectives: cultural geography and utopian studies. I turn to postmodern cultural geography, in particular to the work of Doreen Massey but also to works by Canadian cultural geographers Derek Gregory and Jane Jacobs, in order to examine Brossard's and Brand's understanding of space, time, and place. In general, postmodern cultural geographers argue that such conceptions of a socially-constructed, multiple, non-totalizable, dynamic space-time cannot be represented, or they call for some as-yet-unknown way to represent it. I turn to utopian studies to demonstrate how these authors deploy utopian discourse in order to figure such a geographical imagination. Rather than to studies of utopia as a literary genre, I draw on theories that posit utopia as a discourse in various dialectical relationships with ideology. In particular, I draw on the work of Fredric Jameson who argues that utopian discourse arises in the transitional moments between two modes of production. Through its unintentional narrative discontinuities and continual play and production, utopia figures the experience of existing within the moment's inevitable contradictions, including contradictory constructions of place. Expanding on Jameson, I modify his theory of utopian discourse so that it figures the contradictions arising spatially as well as temporally. In other words, the contradictions of utopian discourse can be

intentionally employed to figure the experience of existing among and within multiple co-exiting constructions of space, time, and place. Jameson argues that utopian discourse figures a world that cannot be known abstractly, and in Brand's and Brossard's texts, such a world is postmodern cultural geography's space-time dynamic that counters hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place.

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Introduction

"Pinery Road and Concession 11:"
Burnt River Passage

In two passages in *A Map to the Door of No Return*, Dionne Brand describes her time spent living on an acreage along Concession 11, just outside of Burnt River and Kinmount, Ontario. These Burnt River passages are full of dread and of images of a harsh environment and even harsher people. Her house is described as her "bunker," her car as her "armour," and her time as spent "in the bush" (146, 140, 147). Victimized by an antagonistic environment, she struggles against deep snow, cold, drought, wildlife, and silence. She describes the landscape ominously: "There is a way that land defeats you, just the sum of it ... you notice its width. When it's covered in snow you know it is hardly sleeping. It is like a huge brown-backed being waiting" (146). As for the people, she fears them "more than the elements, which are themselves brutal" (143). They are, like the small towns they live in, "unremittingly the same" (140). Brand illustrates: "they are as cold and forbidding as the landscape. They live out here free of the city, they guard what they call their 'property,' they eschew city life, they love country music's lonesome and outlaw tenors. They are suspicious of strangers" (145). Imagining "nightmarishly what they think of [her]," a newcomer and a black lesbian, she feels she needs an aggressive dog and a gun (145).

Terrified, she finds herself stranded on the road one winter. Her car is broken down and she is working her way through her options. She is trying to avoid asking the judgmental post mistress, who guards the telephone in town, for help, as well as to avoid dealing with the mechanic who she imagines may "take [her] face for a target, [her] arm for something to bite" (141). The last thing she says about Burnt River, however, is that for years she never noticed the wildflowers because she was "so intent on the hardship of living here" (152). Then, one fall in the brown and dry grass, on the back of that huge brown sleeping

being of the land, she sees wildflowers. These purple flowers signify a shift in the way she relates to both the place and the people. In the end, she leaves the armour of her car and heads back down the road to town.

While just a brief section of Brand's work, these Burnt River passages are mentioned here in detail to demonstrate that there is a need to think about land and the environment differently in the study of Canadian women's writing. As Linda Warley, John Clement Ball, and Robert Viau assert in "Mapping the Ground," "in the Canadian literary context space and place have always mattered" ("Mapping" n.p.). They state that "there is no doubt that land and the natural environment continue to be important symbolic concepts around which formations of identity accumulate" and to which should be added urban environments since "cities and city life are so often absent in our critical conversations" ("Mapping" n.p.). However, while earlier discussions of the relationship between identity and environment were based on "a form of geographical determinism," the concepts of space and place have been challenged by "recent developments in cultural theory, cultural geography, and postcolonial and gender studies [which] have encouraged new ways of articulating the intersections of language, space, time, and identity" ("Mapping" n.p.). It is now generally understood that "what is social has a spatial component" and "spaces are socially constituted through language and other symbolic signs" ("Mapping" n.p.). They argue that what is now needed "is to find ways of describing the experiences of human beings who are located in particular spaces that are neither static nor singular but can be imagined as networks of diverse social relations that are constantly in process" ("Mapping" n.p.). This thesis examines how Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand have taken up such a call.

For example, Brand's images of her house as a bunker in the bush and her car as her armour seem to take part in the geographic determinism of earlier studies of Canadian literature. As Maia Joseph asserts, Brand "draws on the old national trope of survival in an inhospitable landscape" (82). In this geographical imagination, identity is constructed in relation to environment. As Brand writes, "I am simply where I am" (150). In reaction to what she sees as Northern

Ontario's harsh environment, she encases herself in her armour and garrisons herself behind a closed door. This geographical imagination influences her social interactions, as is seen particularly in her dealings with the Mechanic. Like Brand, he is also subject to geographical determinism and its social relations; therefore, he too keeps an aggressive dog to protect his property. She describes the dog as "*also ...* cultivated for fierceness" implying that she and the Mechanic have been cultivated to keep the other at bay and fiercely protect their property (emphasis added 140). As Terry Eagleton argues, in a system based on property ownership, objectivity is "translated as the imperative: 'You respect my property and I'll respect yours'," and subjectivity is constrained as "to mark your limit ('keep off my property!) is to sketch, impossibly, my own" (71). The Mechanic is as necessary to Brand's mental armour as he is to the maintenance of her car. In this social order, she needs this construction of him, just as she does an antagonistic landscape.

The wildflowers, however, signify a shift in Brand's geographical imagination and social relations. She realizes that her reaction to the external world has been learned, not inevitably determined by her environment. As she says in these Burnt River passages, she inherited her fear of the unknown from her grandmother, "a fearful woman, a private woman" (143), and "a person of sure perimeters," who rarely left her home (152-153).[1] Brand describes herself: "I still take the small steps of my grandmother; I lift my eyes only to the immediate area of the house I live in, the small bit of road I can see from the window" (151). Like her grandmother, she garrisons herself in a closed and understandable space.

Significantly, when her car/armour, breaks down, she finds herself stranded at the corner where she has seen a different side to the environment, the wildflowers. She is at a crossroads where she can either stay on Pinery Road and, as the name implies, end up in the wilderness, she can continue on to the safety of home, or she can take the concession road and reject the geographical imagination of environmental determinism. She concedes and heads for the post office. In this

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[1] She inherits this fear from her grandfather as well, who sentries the door to the family home, keeping family in and people who don't belong, such as Brand's father whose mother is Portuguese, out (57-58).

moment, she chooses the road over home. Whereas home represents an attempt to close and control space, the road represents the recognition of the continual passage through a dynamic space. The geographically determined identity, "I am simply where I am," becomes dynamic and socially constructed so that now she writes, "the road knows wherever you find yourself you are" (152). In this position, she opens out to the Mechanic and imagines him as on his own trajectory and in a specific socio-historical context. She describes him as "burned by wind and snow and gas fumes. His face is scaled red with white patches. His mouth is a tight thin wire. His jeans have grown small but he hasn't disowned them" (140), and later writes, "if there is desperation here it is the kind that is slow burning, the kind that drinks beer and smokes cigarettes and is overwhelmed by the bush or the river, the kind that makes the body grow large and lumbering and listless" (149).

While other critics of Brand and Brossard are also engaged in the study of place and environment and also see place and space as dynamic and as networks of social relations, none have closely examined the narrative strategies employed to figure such a geographical imagination. For example, Marlene Goldman and Joanne Saul each read Brand's *A Map to the Door of No Return* as an alternative type of map that challenges the closed spaces of nation and home. Goldman examines Brand's memoir as a fluid map that challenges "the bounded, progressivist narratives of nation-states" and posits the notion of "drifting" or "grafting affiliations" with its "recognition of multiple histories" and of "home as a constellation of multiple sites" as "an alternative to the boundedness of home and nation state" (Mapping" n.p.). Saul also sees Brand's memoir as a map that "can allow for a redrawing of space and place, and allow for a rethinking of connections and alliances" (62) as well as "a potentially new way to envision citizenry, both national and global, within a world order dominated by expansion and global capital" (60). Also examining how Brand's memoir opens up the possibility of a different kind of nation, Maia Joseph argues that Brand imagines "possible collective futures not constrained by exclusionary teleological narratives or the ossified social relations such narratives engender" (76). Examining the

Burnt River passages specifically, Joseph argues, as do I, that they describe a shift that allows Brand "to make sense of her relations in space differently" (82). Joseph, too, sees the wildflowers as an indication to Brand of her own "misreading" of the landscape, a misreading that alters "her relation to the rural space" (84) and results in her opening "to the potential of the space in which she finds herself" (84). Thus, Brand comes to accept her "'landing' in Burnt River" (84). Joseph concludes her essay by asserting that Brand's:

> ... careful interrogation of social relations ... [momentarily] open up the possibility of alignment across socially constructed boundaries. Reflecting on how we might begin to make sense of Canadian community differently, Brand insists that '[w]hat we have to ask ourselves is, as everyone else in the nation should ask themselves also, nation predicated on what?' In wandering and wondering her way into her desired country, she suggests that the answer lies in a particular kind of asking—in a sustained, attentive querying of the contours of belonging. (90)

While this thesis shares the postmodern geographical imagination of these critics, it adds to their analyses by examining in greater detail how such a geographical imagination, unrepresentable in its multiple and dynamic nature, can be figured. In other words, to the question of how such an unrepresentable geographical imagination is potentially represented, I posit a rethinking of utopian discourse and utopian ideas of place and rhetoric through place. The focus on utopian discourse allows me to outline how the constant process of social networks, the coexisting, conformational, and often conflictual trajectories and ideologies that constitute space can be figured.

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Whereas many of the critical examinations of Brand's work focus on Brand's construction of place and space as dynamic and social, most critical examinations of Brossard's work focus not on Brossard's construction of place and space, but on her relationship to language. However, as does Dionne Brand, Nicole Brossard also creates constructions of place that demonstrate our locatedness "in particular spaces that are neither static nor singular but can be

imagined as networks of diverse social relations that are constantly in process" (Warley *et al*, "Mapping" n.p.) and that there is a need to think about land and the environment, natural and urban, differently in the study of Canadian women's writing.

The critical emphasis on Brossard's relationship to language may perhaps be explained by the fact that, as a Quebec nationalist, Nicole Brossard began publishing poetry in the 1960s during the growth of the "Quiet Revolution," a movement that "redefined the identity of French Canada along territorial lines" as the province desired "to repossess its natural and financial resources" (Randall 25). As Marilyn Randall writes, "revolution was in the air, and in literature," and "themes of land and country—*terre Québec*—[were] central to *poètes du pays* such as Gaston Miron and Paul Chamberland" (25). This collection of male poets turned to the land as a source of authenticity, attempting to "assume the ownership of their land by naming it, by giving linguistic weight to its physical features" (Bayard 18). Much of their work involved a rewriting of the Quebec countryside as female. As Barbara Godard notes, for the Hexagone movement "the ideal relationship with their homeland is embodied in the figure of a beloved woman" ("Nicole" 122). For example, equating Quebec with a soon-to-be mother about to give birth to the dreams of the male revolutionaries who are suffering "the universal pain in each man hollowed out," Miron writes, "Land of Quebec, Mother Courage / in your long march you are swollen / with our painful infectious dreams" (51). In these kinds of texts, woman and land are conflated as the longed for "home," both portrayed as authenticating and nurturing. Conflated with the land, woman is also presented singularly, the beautiful object and possession of the male subject's gaze. Dividing Brossard's work into stages, Barbara Godard argues the first stage was a reaction against this rewriting of the land. As a *Québécoise* writer, Brossard instead "shifts her terrain to make the metaphors literal" by mapping not the land but her own body in order "to make a place for the Quebec woman in this new homeland" ("Nicole" 122).

As Godard goes on to write, in a second stage, Brossard, influenced by French poststructuralism, came to realize the ineffability of the private reality of

the body as well as the external world. Language, while incapable of "convey[ing] the essence" ("Nicole" 122), at the same time was now freed, and Brossard's texts became objects of linguistic play, concerned with the acts of making meaning, writing, and reading. Yet, of this phase, Brossard states:

> I was giving priority to language over me, myself, and I. Which is to say that I was willing to subdue the anecdotes of living and the biographical notes to the passion of words, their mystery and the fun triggered by sounds and puns we make with them. So gradually I developed a fetishism for words. … Of course, after I will understand that to pretend to a neutral body of writing only silences one gender: the feminine. (*Fluid* 69)

Therefore, she moved into what Godard sees as her third and final phase which injects a feminist politic into her writing in order to work on a "language that has been shaped by patriarchal usage to exclude women's experience" (Godard, "Nicole" 123). At this point, Brossard shifts from transgression to vision and her writing takes on a "utopian thrust" (Brossard, "Poetic" 81). A part of the reason for this "utopian thrust" is to counter patriarchy's disabling metaphorical connection between woman and land.

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Dionne Brand and Nicole Brossard both, in fact, represent place in ways that are representative of utopian discourse. This discourse works against hegemonic formations of space, time, and place that support the dominant subject. For the dominant subject, time is unilinear, progressive, and privileged over space, which is seen as a surface to be crossed and conquered. Space and time also become gendered and racialized constructions, where time is interior and associated with the consciousness and experience of the (white, male) subject, and space is exterior, a surface that is the object of knowledge, possession, and use, and associated with the feminine and colonized. Place, also associated with the feminine and the colonized, is fixed on external space and is static.

Instead of conceiving of space, time and place in this way, Brand and Brossard construct representations of place that figure feminist geographer Doreen Massey's space-time dynamic. In the space-time dynamic, time is

constructed out of multiple coexisting trajectories, some intersecting—often violently—and some not. Space, therefore, cannot be a surface to be crossed and conquered because the people and objects on that space have their own coeval trajectories. It is instead interrelational and always in process. Any binary division between space and time breaks down as space itself becomes lively and unfixed. In this space-time, place also cannot be stalled and becomes contested and porous. Consequently, place also cannot be associated with woman or the colonized as static and fixed. Massey, however, wants to sever space from representation and sees its complexity as unrepresentable (*For* 28). Yet, if representation is constitutive rather than mimetic, as Massey acknowledges (*For* 26), then it is vital that the dynamic be represented in some way. Not doing so would leave Brand and Brossard in the hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place.

Therefore, Brand and Brossard attempt to represent the unrepresentable space-time dynamic through what I see as a type of utopian discourse. Utopian discourse, according to Fredric Jameson, is the opposite of ideological discourse ("Islands" 21). Whereas ideological discourse smoothes over contradictions, utopian discourse does not. Instead, it figures the experience of living among multiple ideologies and their contradictions. While Jameson is referring to classic utopian literature and to the historical contradictions that occur during transitional moments from one mode of production to another, I argue that utopian discourse can be deployed in non-utopian texts to figure the multiple ideologies and contradictions that arise in the midst of the trajectories of the coeval and their constructions of place.

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This thesis draws primarily on two disciplinary perspectives: cultural geography and utopian studies. The field of cultural geography allows me to examine Brand's and Brossard's understanding of space, time, and place as well as to demonstrate how the understanding of geography and history presented here fits within previous examinations of place in Canadian literature. Therefore, I spend some time in chapter one outlining some of the varieties of cultural geography, focusing on those geographers who connect geography to the

humanities and to hermeneutics. This discussion moves from areal differentiation, to landscape geography, and ends with an examination of postmodern geography, in particular the work of Doreen Massey but also including Canadian cultural geographers Derek Gregory and Jane Jacobs. In the rest of the chapter, I examine the confluence between these various geographical imaginations and the representation of place in previous studies of Canadian literature demonstrating how this thesis both draws on and differentiates itself from such studies.

In order to demonstrate how Brand and Brossard figure their geographical imaginations, this thesis also draws on the field of utopian studies. In chapter two, therefore, I examine theories of utopia that posit utopia not strictly as a literary genre that imagines the ideal society but as a discourse in various dialectical relationships with ideology. Some of the key architects in this area are Karl Mannheim, Paul Ricoeur, David Harvey, Michel Foucault, and Fredric Jameson. After briefly outlining Mannheim's, Ricoeur's, and Harvey's conceptions of the utopia/ideology dialectic and demonstrating some of the difficulties that arise, I turn to Michel Foucault's theories of utopia and heterotopia as a possible solution. However, Foucault also argues that his conception of space makes it unrepresentable. Finally, I examine Fredric Jameson's understanding of utopian discourse where, once again, utopia is in a dialectical relationship with ideology, but, for him, it is a negative dialectic that refuses any synthesis and instead leaves both terms in their continual negation of one another. At this point, I modify Jameson's conception so that it can be applied to non-utopian texts and so that its emphasis is spatial as well as temporal and multiple instead of binary.

The following four chapters examine the deployment of utopian discourse to represent the space-time dynamic in texts by Brossard and Brand. Chapters three and four work together not only in that they both examine works by Nicole Brossard but also in that they demonstrate how Brossard re-conceptualizes unilinear time, singular space, and delimited and unified place as the space-time dynamic and the heterotopic noplace. The discussion begins with her novel *Picture Theory* where Brossard reconstructs the patriarchal city as an open and multiple space. This chapter draws on theories of the city presented by Fredric

Jameson and Michel de Certeau and demonstrates how Brossard employs de Certeau's spatial practices to counter Jameson's cognitive map. Although, de Certeau says of these spatial practices that they cannot be "circumscribed in a text" (102), Brossard figures them in utopian discourse and counters the construction of the city as a singularly patriarchal space. Chapter four examines how Brossard extends this discussion to non-urban spaces. In her later novel, *Mauve Desert*, the land itself becomes a heterotopic noplace represented once again through utopian discourse.

Chapters five and six also work together by examining two texts by the same author, Dionne Brand, and by demonstrating how Brand shifts (rather than extends) her conceptions of space, time, and place. Chapter five examines how, in *No Language is Neutral*, she reconstructs space, time, place, and language in order to take part in the articulation of place and to present place as a positive articulation of her subjectivity as black and as a lesbian. In doing so, she creates a sense of home. However, this home place is neither singular nor static as it acknowledges another coeval construction of the same place. Place becomes heterotopic and is represented through utopian discourse. Chapter six moves on to examine Brand's *A Map to the Door of No Return*. In this text, Brand turns to an even more open construction of place by refusing even a momentary and shared home place and place-based articulation of her identity. Such a home place echoes rather than counters the colonial and patriarchal constructions of place, and she rejects it for the ruptures and continual passage of space-time, or what she calls the Door of No Return. In this sense, *A Map to the Door of No Return* differs from the previously discussed texts. While not classic "utopias," *Picture Theory, Mauve Desert,* and *No Language is Neutral* can all be seen as "utopian." Each reconstructs place in a way that enables a positive articulation and sense of home for transregional communities and each deploys utopian discourse to do so. A *Map to the Door of No Return*, however, with its emphasis on continual passage is the least utopian text, yet it still deploys utopian discourse—not to create any sense of home but to locate readers in the transitional and unpredictable space of

the space-time dynamic and to figure the geographical imagination such a perspective entails.

Chapter 1

"*Here* is where Spatial Narratives Meet Up":
Conceptions of Space, Time, and Place in Studies of Canadian Literature

In *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*, cultural geographer Katherine McKittrick states that Dionne Brand provides "a different geographic story" (ix). Brand, writes McKittrick, "not only refuses a comfortable belonging to nation, or country, or a local street, she alters them by demonstrating that geography is infused with sensations and distinct ways of knowing" (ix). For McKittrick, Brand "disclose[s] that geography is always human and that humanness is always geographic" and "suggests that her surroundings are speakable ... allowing her to emphasize the alterability of space and place, to give up on land and imagine new geographic stories" (ix). Thus, Brand's writing continually reminds McKittrick that the discipline of human geography needs some critical attention because "existing cartographic rules unjustly organize human hierarchies in place and reify uneven geographies in familiar, seemingly natural ways" and because "these rules are alterable and there exists a terrain through which different geographic stories can be and are told" (x).

I agree with McKittrick. Writers such as Dionne Brand and Nicole Brossard challenge traditional geographic and cartographic rules and represent place in ways that "imagine new geographic stories" (McKittrick ix). However, non-traditional geographers such as McKittrick herself have also been challenging those geographic rules. While Brand inspires the idea that critical attention be paid to the field of human geography, cultural geographers remind me that attention must also be paid to the study of the representation of place in Canadian literature.

In the following chapter, I will outline some of the shifts that have occurred in the field of cultural geography, focusing on those geographers who connect geography to the humanities and to hermeneutics. This discussion moves

from traditional geography, to landscape geography, and finally to postmodern geographies, ending with a close examination of the work of Doreen Massey. From here, I relate these geographical imaginations to the underlying conceptualizations of place in previous studies of Canadian literature.

I emphasize Massey's geographical imagination because it enables me to examine how Brand and Brossard conceive of history as constructed out of multiple trajectories, often in violent struggle and negotiation, how they conceive of space as dynamic, as constituted through the interrelations of those trajectories, and how they often represent place as multiple and momentary articulations. These alternate constructions of space, time, and place allow Brossard and Brand to counter the gendered and racialized binaries between time and space, and between space and place, and to critique the longstanding association of colonial peoples and women with place. Massey, however, insists that the space-time dynamic is unrepresentable, but, as I will argue in chapter two, the dynamic can be figured through utopian discourse. Through utopian discourse, Nicole Brossard's and Dionne Brand's texts counter hegemonic constructions of space, time and place. As McKittrick observes, Dionne Brand, and I would add Nicole Brossard, alter the geographic rules to create a terrain that enables different geographic stories.

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I begin with an examination of cultural geography. In a number of his works, Derek Gregory historicizes the field by examining its relationship to social theory. He notes that the 1960s saw the discipline turn from areal differentiation and the mapping of society onto geography to a Marxist analysis of the production and reproduction of concrete spaces through the relations of power ("Areal" 90). In the 1970s, it became more cautious about positing abstract universal claims and began to critique the idea that any frame of reference could be separated from its object ("Areal" 95). Geography, like some other disciplines, had to face the postmodern questions surrounding methods of representation, authority, difference and multiplicity. To do so, some areas incorporated theories of discourse and hermeneutics that were being developed in the humanities and

social sciences. Gregory himself argues that the social sciences, including human geography, rely on social preconceptions to make interpretations (*Ideology* 144-146). Therefore, he calls for a shift towards a hermeneutic geography which will result in "a doubly human geography:"

> human in the sense that it recognizes that its concepts are specifically human constructions, rooted in specific social formations, and capable of—demanding of—continual examination and criticism; and human in the sense that it restores human beings to their own worlds and enables them to take part in the collective transformation of their own human geographies. (*Ideology* 172)

This turn to hermeneutics resulted in a more politically enabled and transformative human geography as it opened up to concede multiple and dynamic ways of constructing place.

The influence of the humanities on cultural geography led to the development of what Linda McDowell names "the landscape school," which "recognised that material landscapes are not neutral but reflect power relations and dominant 'ways of seeing' the world" (161). Influenced by the work of Raymond Williams, the school examines "the class-based significance" of both the material production of the landscape, or "environment," as well as the ways that environment is represented (McDowell 162). Drawing on literary theory, they "develop ways of reading the landscape as though it were a text" and have "analysed writing about landscape in a range of forms" (162). As Claire Omhovère writes, in the 1980s geography transformed landscape studies "by insisting that not only should landscapes be read *like* texts, that is as palimpsests retaining the traces of successive human inscriptions, but that they should also be viewed as constructed *by* texts, namely as systems and symbols" (emphasis in original, *Sensing* 31).

While the landscape school does study what would traditionally be considered landscape, for example Western aesthetic representations of the land, their definition of the term "landscape" is broad. "Landscape" typically refers to "the artistic and literary representations of the visible world, the scenery ... which

is viewed by the spectator" (Cosgrove, *Social* 19), but for landscape geographers, it "denotes the integration of natural and human phenomena which can be empirically verified and analyzed by the methods of scientific enquiry over a delimited portion of the earth's surface" (Cosgrove, *Social* 9). Geography turned to the concept of landscape because the concept could "challenge the orthodoxy of the scientific method in geography" by "incorporat[ing] into the discipline an open acceptance of subjective methods of study" (Cosgrove, *Social* 28) and "a sensitivity to human engagement with particular places and areas" (Cosgrove, *Social* 34). These places can be both material places (indoor, outdoor, rural, and urban) as well as artistic and scientific representations of place (maps, blueprints, urban plans, poetry, paintings, fiction and non-fiction). What draws all these places under the term landscape is that, in both aesthetic representations and geographical examinations, landscape is always "a way of harmonizing the external world into a ... visual unity" (Cosgrove, "Geography" 121). In other words landscape is a way of seeing that attempts to represent place as a cohesive whole.

Two key members of the landscape school are James Duncan and Denis Cosgrove.[2] Examining human productions and conceptualizations of locations such as the natural environment, the pastoral countryside, city plans, and neighbourhoods, Duncan comes closest to defining what he means by "landscape" when he says it is "an ordered assemblage of objects, a text" that "acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored" (*City* 17). Unlike traditional geography that understands material landscapes as "reflections of a culture within which they were built or as a kind of artifactual 'spoor' yielding clues to events of the past," he wants to see landscapes as "constituent elements in socio-political processes of cultural production and change" (*City* 11).

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[2] The label "landscape school" tends to be used in order to differentiate the approach outlined here from the approach of American geographer's such as Carl Sauer, W.G. Haskins, and J. B. Jackson (Gregory, "landscaft" 432, Duncan, "landscape" 431, McDowell 161). It is a loose affiliation of geographers that do not necessarily see themselves as members. Geographers that McDowell includes in the landscape school include D. W. Meinig, J. Agnew, J. Duncan, N. Duncan, D. Cosgrove, K. Anderson, F. Gale, and C. Mather (161-164).

In "(Re)Reading the Landscape," he and co-author Nancy Duncan assert that the ideology presented within the landscape is particularly nocuous as landscape naturalizes its ideology so that it is absorbed inattentively. "If, by being so tangible, so natural, so familiar, the landscape is unquestioned," they write, "then such concrete evidence about how society *is* organized can easily become seen as evidence of how it *should*, or *must* be organized" (123). Therefore, landscape must be denaturalized or deconstructed to demonstrate the multiple ideological adherences at work beneath its apparent coherence. To do so, they apply deconstruction to a landscape they imagine as a text. However, in order to examine those ideological landscapes in struggle and tension, they "reject the undue emphasis on the infinitude of meanings of the poststructuralists" (125). They assert that "although it is claimed that the poststructuralists' project entails permanent contestation ..., it is not clear if critique is in fact possible, given their steadfast refusal to assert a privileged vantage point from which to launch this critique" (125). For the Duncans, that vantage point is empirical reality: "The relativism of this stance can be tempered with the realist recognition that there is an empirical reality to which explanations are accountable" (125).

Denis Cosgrove is a more radical member of the landscape school. He defines landscape as "denot[ing] the external world mediated through subjective human experience in a way that neither region nor area immediately suggest. Landscape is not merely the world we see, it is a construction, a composition of that world. Landscape is a way of seeing the world" (*Social* 13). In *Social Formations and Symbolic Landscape*, he argues that that way of seeing is distorting and that landscape imposes onto the world a singular, coherent, rational, and controlled order that has developed in association with the growth of capitalism and its commodification of the land. It is, he argues, intimately connected to the development of perspective and realism in painting and to cartography; both of which enabled a conservative spatial control as they represent slices of timeless space as "truth" where "reality was frozen at a specific moment, removed from the flux of time and change, and rendered the property of the observer" (22). Thus landscape as a coherent and unified way of seeing is

aligned with the ideology of the landholding classes who are in control of the external world and have the choice to remain the voyeur or to turn away (19). The insiders, or those who work on the land, he argues, do not have the distance to separate themselves from their surroundings and therefore lack the conventions that mediate the world and separate subject from object (19).

While in his early work Cosgrove's conception of landscape extends only to the traditional gentrified countryside of the landholding classes, in his later work, he broadens his definition to include multiple environments—from shopping malls ("Geography" 130), to the "domestic landscapes" of homes and gardens ("Geography" 133), to "the most apparently unhumanized natural environments" ("Geography" 126)—and sees each environment as subject to multiple ways of making coherence. He writes, "As a signifying system, landscape is able to contain and convey multiple and often conflicting discursive fields, or sets of shared meanings, whose claims to truth are established contextually" ("Landscapes" 281). The study of landscape, he argues, should include the examination of multiple ways of seeing as landscape contains the alternative constructions of "residual" and "emergent," as well as "excluded" sub-cultures, in which he includes women, arguing that "the organization and use of space by women presupposes a very different set of symbolic meanings than by men" ("Geography" 133). He maintains that when landscape is seen as a single unified construction, it is unified only through the power of the dominant group, whose power, in turn, is "sustained and reproduced to a considerable extent by their ability to project and communicate ... an image of the world consonant with their own experience, and to have that image accepted as a true reflection of everyone's reality" ("Geography" 128).

In *Geographical Imaginations*, Derek Gregory criticizes the landscape school, and James Duncan in particular, for maintaining an "ambivalent" position between poststructuralism and a "depth hermeneutics" that "seeks to disclose orders of meaning" and to uncover "a set of master codes" in the landscape (144-45). According to Gregory, this "middle position" allows for the "domestication" of the postmodern sublime (144). The sublime, observes Gregory, "is of immense

importance to postmodern thought ... because it marks that moment when we confront something that we are unable to represent as a purposive unity, something that exceeds our capacity for totalization, intuitively or conceptually, and when we are wrenched away from our tranquil contemplation of the world's seemingly obedient regularity" (143). This version of the sublime is derived from Kant, who, writes Gregory, domesticates the dread of the sublime by arguing that "sublimity is a repudiation of sensuality *not reason* and that our common response to the sublime lies *within ourselves*: that it ushers in ... 'the material appearance of practical reason in the world'" (emphasis in original 143). Gregory argues that this "(modern) path leads back to a stilling of the waters, so to speak, a sort of domestication of dread, whereas the postmodern path leads to a perpetual guerrilla warfare in which we 'wage war on totality' and become 'witnesses to the unrepresentable'" (143).

Duncan, asserts Gregory, domesticates postmodernism and "stills the waters" through "interpretive stasis and interpretive privilege" (146). Gregory maintains that reading a culture as text creates a static image and "all too often imposes an uncanny sense of social life suspended like a butterfly between a pair of tweezers: delicate, beautiful, yet profoundly melancholy in its immobility" (146). It "erases process" because the text is seen to be a written object removed from the process of writing (146). In other words, the emphasis is on "the text, not the process of textualizing" (147). As Cosgrove himself notes, in both artistic and geographical constructions of regions as landscape, "never, is the picture frame broken and the landscape inserted into the historical process" (*Social* 38).

Gregory also criticizes the landscape school for interpretive privilege. He posits that the concept of culture as a text is a metaphor that "derives from (and contributes to)" discourses such as cartography and geometry that enframe and represent the world in ways that maintain colonialism (147). In other words, as Jane Jacobs states, "the claim to readability in 'textual' geographies resonates uncomfortably with the transparency assumed by imperial visioning" (10). This method, argues Gregory, takes part in a discourse of totalization where imposing order on diversity and difference by making it appear coherent grants authority to

the observer (*Geographical* 148). These textualizations are not dialogical as "there is only 'an invisible voice of authority who declares what the you-transformed-to-a-they experience" (148). In the end, "whatever [these readings] may tell us about those people and those places," they represent these other cultural landscapes as "strangely familiar" (149-50). Landscapes are seen as "not just random noise, empty signifiers whirling and clashing" but are "made intelligible in ways that enlarge our own understandings in our own present" (150). In doing so, the readings of the landscape school overwrite any differences.

In their ambivalent location between poststructuralism and depth hermeneutics, landscape geographers, asserts Gregory, posit that "postmodernism's celebration of difference need not produce a babble of sound," but that "it is possible to *make* sense of those texts, to *make* them mean" (emphasis in original *Geographical* 150). They thus domesticate postmodernism because "their response to the sublime is a thoroughly Kantian one" (150) and "ushers in" practical reason to calm the dread and anxiety felt in the face of an absence of order, totality, and representation (143). These readings of cultural landscapes indicate the remnants of a "humanism" that does not yet fully recognize reality as "its own offspring or construction" (150).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Geographers like Derek Gregory and Jane Jacobs respond to these shortcomings and open the field of human geography to process and production. Jacobs, in particular, challenges stasis. Claire Omhovère notes, "landscape is rarely perceived as having a movement of its own," but Jacobs removes the representation of place from its frame and inserts it into the historical process. ("Melting" 59). In *Edge of Empire*, she argues that "textualized readings" of the landscape, or the "textual conceptualisation of space," "over-privilege the built form and the visioned urban plan which are themselves a mark of power" (9). She, on the other hand, examines the struggles and politics that go into the production of space rather than the built structure that is produced (9). For her, "it is not the 'object' which is *the* thing to be 'read' but 'change itself'" (emphasis in original 10). Examining postcolonial challenges to imperialism that occur in and

through urban space, she argues that these struggles are not just about aesthetics but are also nodes around which coalitions gather and express "their sense of self and their desires for the spaces which constitute their 'home'" (2). The politics around redevelopment are also a politics of identity. In order to examine these politics and their relations to place, she turns to Doreen Massey's concept of space as "a part of 'an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification'" that produces "a troubled social/spatial dynamic" (5). Jacobs analyzes "institutional discourses" such as city plans and statements by interest groups but also "reaches out beyond the narrow discursive and representational spheres ... and incorporates a broader political and economic context" in order to "show how these discursive and representational practices are in a mutually constitutive relationship with political and economic forces" (9). "Together," she asserts, "they actively create the material and imaginary landscapes of the city" (9). Opposing her cultural politics of place to the concept of landscape as a text, she argues that the object of her study "is not that which *is* but that which is *not yet*" (9-10). Thus, "the places visited are not static sites but sites in the process of becoming. They are places saturated with the politics of transformation ... [and] mark a geography in which centre and margin, Self and Other, here and there are in anxious negotiation – where there is displacement, interaction, and contest" (11). Like Warley, Ball, and Viau, Jacobs posits place as neither static nor single. It is instead constructed out of networks of social relations that are themselves constantly shifting and in process. Of particular value to this thesis is Jacobs' emphasis on the not-yet, or on the interaction and struggle that goes into the continual production of place. This focus allows her to de-emphasize built and material places and to examine instead the various imaginations of place and their interactions, conflicts, and negotiations that create both "material and imaginary landscapes" (9).

In *Geographical Imaginations*, Gregory challenges interpretive privilege. He questions "by what right and on whose authority does one claim to speak for those 'others'? On whose terms is a space created in which 'they' are called upon to speak" (205)? He answers that while we cannot reduce our knowledge to what

we know through our own experiences, as this would be to "reinstate an empiricism," the challenge is to "find ways of comprehending these other worlds – including our relations with them and our responsibilities toward them – without being invasive, colonizing, and violent" (205). By thus enlarging our "geographical imaginations," he asserts, quoting Michael Ignatieff, we will "realize not only that our lives are 'radically entwined with the lives of distant strangers,' but also that we bear a continuing and unavoidable responsibility for their needs in times of distress" (205). Gregory thus calls for "a critical human geography" that "reaches out *from one body to another*, not in a mood of arrogance, aggression, and conquest but in a spirit of humility, understanding, and care" (416). This geography "requires a scrupulous attention to the junctures and fissures between many different histories: a multileveled dialogue between past and present conducted as a history (or historical geography) of the present" (416).

One of these non-invasive "ways of comprehending these other worlds" (Gregory, *Geographical* 205) is presented by feminist geographer Doreen Massey. Massey also recognizes the coexistence of multiple entwined speaking positions and the need for the recognition of multiple histories and their junctures and fissures. She argues that the division of the world into coherent states and regions that compete against one another in moods of "arrogance, aggression, and conquest," to use Gregory's phrase (*Geographical* 416), "is part of a wider world view in which identities are autonomous, pre-formed before they come into relation with each other" (*World* 20). "This," she asserts, "is the philosophy of the isolated individual, and the imaginary of a geography always already territorialised is a specifically spatial articulation of this view" (20). She maintains that in order to appreciate the complexity of space and our responsibility within it, we need an alternate conception of subjectivity. She writes, "perhaps what is required is the inculcation of a (notion of) subjectivity which is not exclusively temporal; not the projection of an interior-conceptual, introspective ... but rather a subjectivity which is spatial too, outwardlooking in its perspectives and in the awareness of its own relational constitution" (*For* 80). Massey shifts the angle of vision to a subject not solely created around an internal temporality and history

but around relationships and spatiality as well. Doing so would "release our imaginations," she writes:

> for if experience is not an internalized succession of sensations (pure temporality) but a multiplicity of things and relations, then its *spatiality* is as significant as its temporal dimension. This is to argue for a way of being and thinking otherwise—for the imagination of a more open attitude of being; for the (potential) outwardlookingness of practiced subjectivity. (*For* 58)

She defines "outwardlookingness" as "a positivity and aliveness to the world beyond one's own turf, whether that be one's self, one's city, or the particular parts of the planet in which one lives and works: a commitment to that radical contemporaneity which is the condition of, and condition for, spatiality" (*For* 15). This conception of subjectivity would correlate with an alternate geographical imagination where "the character of a region ... is a product not only of internal interactions but also of relations with elsewhere" (*World* 20-21), and where, as Gregory writes, we are more likely to approach one another "in a spirit of humility, understanding, and care" (*Geographical* 416).

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Massey's work is key to my examination of Nicole Brossard's and Dionne Brand's representations of place so I will spend some time explaining her concepts of space and place. Like Gregory and Jacobs, she too opposes unified and static representations that map society onto place. These geographies, she argues, support nationalist and exclusionist claims to place which attempt to "fix the meaning of particular spaces, to enclose them" and "to endow them with fixed identities" (*Space* 4). These positions view "place as bounded, as in various ways a site of authenticity, as singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity" and are "a conceptualization of place which rests in part on the view of space as stasis" (*Space* 5). She declares: "All attempts to institute horizons, to establish boundaries, to secure the identity of places, can in this sense therefore be seen to be *attempts to stabilize the meaning of particular envelopes of space-time … to*

impose the meaning to be attributed to a space, for however long or short a span of time" (emphasis in original, *Space* 5).

This conception of place as closed connects to and supports the unified subject who sees time as the mode of experiencing the internal and space as an empty surface to be travelled across and conquered. Historicizing conceptions of space and time, Elizabeth Grosz notes that there is a correlation between the ways that space, time, and subjectivity have been represented. She asserts that many of our contemporary notions of subjectivity are still derived from Enlightenment philosophers, particularly Immanuel Kant, in accordance with Euclidian and Newtonian conceptions of space and time. For Euclid, spatial axioms "permitted space to be considered homogenous, universal, and regular" and "enabled all the various conceptions of space … to be represented according to a single definitive model" (Grosz 94). This conception of space correlates with the Newtonian conception of time: "the equation of temporal relations with the continuum of numbers assumes that time is isomorphic with space, and that space and time exist as a continuum, a unified totality" (Grosz 95). Thus, as Omhovère writes, "the passing of time" is seen "as a spatial displacement" and is observed not only in the movement of the hands around a clock face, but also in "the sundial making uniform time into space or the clepsydra converting the instant into a trickle of vanishing seconds" ("Melting" 46). Grosz argues that these conceptions of space and time become "*a priori* categories we impose on the world, (sic) space is the mode of apprehension of exterior objects, and time a mode of apprehension of the subject's own interior" (98).

Massey and Grosz connect these traditional ideas about space and time to issues of gender. Massey asserts that in the time/space dichotomy, "time is aligned with history, progress, civilization, politics and transcendence" and as "the privileged signifier" is "typically coded masculine" (*Space* 6). On the other hand, space, "being absence or lack," is coded as feminine (*Space* 6). As Grosz explains:

> [I]n the West time is conceived as masculine (proper to a subject, a being
> with an interior) and space is associated with femininity (femininity being

a form of externality to men). Woman is/provides space for man, but
occupies none herself. Time is the projection of his interior, and is
conceptual, introspective. (99)

In the same spirit, race, sexuality, and class, among others, could be added to the
binary divisions between subject and object, time and space, so that the white,
heterosexual, bourgeois man can fix his others in space.

Doreen Massey points out the ramifications of these associations in her
analysis of Aztec space and time in a colonialist framework:

Conceiving of space as in the voyages of discovery, as something to be
crossed[,] .... equates space with the land and sea, with the earth which
stretches around us. It also makes space seem like a surface; continuous
and given. It differentiates: Hernán, active, a maker of history, journeys
across this surface and finds Tenochtitlán upon it. It is an unthought
cosmology, in the gentlest sense of that term, but it carries with it social
and political effects. So easily this way of imagining space can lead us to
conceive of other places, peoples, cultures simply as phenomena 'on' this
surface. It is not an innocent manoeuvre, but by this means they are
deprived of histories. Immobilised, they await Cortés' (or our, or global
capital's) arrival. They lie there, on space, in place, without their own
trajectories. Such a space makes it more difficult to see in our mind's eye
the histories the Aztecs too have been living and producing. (*For* 4)

Imagining space as a surface, in other words, denies others their own histories and
fixes them "on" that surface. Time here is a single "story," denying other "stories-
so-far" (Massey, *For* 9). It denies their "coevalness" (*For* 69), or does not
recognize the radical coexistence of all contemporary identities and their histories.
Of the terms "coeval" and "coexistence," Massey states that they are "perhaps
inadequate: stress needs to be laid also on coformation, and on the inevitability of
conflict. What is at issue is the constant and conflictual process of the constitution
of the social" (*For* 147). This, writes Massey, leads to a "a temporality which is
not linear, nor singular, nor pregiven; but it is integral to the spatial" (148).

As Diana Brydon asserts, "space is always produced rather than merely found" ("It's" n.p.), and in *For Space*, Massey offers three propositions through which to conceive of space and its relationship to time differently. The first proposition is to see space as constituted through interrelations. Consequently, "space does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations" but the two are co-constitutive (10). This view of space, she argues, parallels an anti-essentialist politics where identities are neither given nor authentic, but constructed relationally. Her second proposition is that space should be seen as "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of a contemporaneous plurality" (9). It is the sphere of a co-existing heterogeneity and cannot be reduced to the single trajectory of the West. Thinking of space in this way "force[s] into the imagination a fuller recognition of the simultaneous co-existence of others" (11). Connecting points one and two, she writes, "Without multiplicity, no space; without space, no multiplicity" (9). Third, she argues that because space is "a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded in material practices which have to be carried out," it must be seen as always in process, as never closed (8). Space is described as a dynamic alterity: "In this open interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished" (11).

This perspective then counters the typical prioritization of lively (masculine) time over dead (feminine) space. One of Massey's main arguments is that rather than being fixed, space is as lively as time. Her argument is that while "neither time nor space is reducible to the other," they are "co-implicated" in that not only does space require "the integral temporality of a dynamic simultaneity" but also time requires "the necessary production of change through practices of interrelation" (55). She writes, "Bergson, in response to his own question 'what is the role of time?', replied 'time prevents everything from being given at once.' In this context the 'role of space' might be characterized as providing the condition for the existence of those relations which generate time" (56). Time when seen as

change requires interaction, interaction requires multiplicity, and multiplicity requires space. Space is vital because "the multiplicity of the spatial is a precondition for the temporal" (89). However, for Massey, the importance of space should not be reduced to its role as contributing to the generation of the new (56). Her argument is for "the mutual necessity of space and time" and that "it is on both of them, necessarily together, that rests the liveliness of the world" (56). If time, and specifically the future, is to be open, space cannot be closed (59). In other words, "conceptualising space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and always becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open" (59). As "co-implicated," space and time must be considered together as space-time in that "while the closed system is the foundation for the singular universal, opening that up makes room for a genuine multiplicity of trajectories, and thus potentially of voices" (55). A single closed space supports the conception of history as unilinear while a multiple and dynamic space supports the conception of histories as multiple.

This re-conceptualization of space is a prerequisite for any possibility of a meaningful politics. Lisa Chalykoff explains that while spatial divisions impact the subjects within them:

> they rarely exert such forces uniformly across a given society. 'Everyday' spatial divisions—such as those which differentiate between public and private space ...— provide a practical means of demonstrating how spatializations exert uneven social forces on human subjects enforcing different degrees of freedom on our access to, and mobility within, these diverse spaces. (165)

Further, she argues that "what must be emphasized is that such uneven social forces do not derive from 'space' itself, but rather from the social agents who produce (through laws, by-laws, and the deployment of 'public' sentiment) and reproduce (through legal enforcement and/or hegemonization) these socio-spatial divisions" (165). When such space is naturalized, it denies our ability to "recognize the social origins of spatial production" and to counter spatial inequities (165). It "removes from the realm of the political (if we consider 'the

political' that which is socially contestable) not just the process of spatialization but also the uneven social effects such spatializations exercise on the disparate groups that compose regional societies" (165). As Massey points out, seeing space as the product of social relations means seeing it as inherently dynamic and open to the realm of politics (*Space* 2). She writes, "since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification" (*Space* 3). In addition, the various locations of phenomena in this "dynamic simultaneity" can provoke new social effects (*Space* 4). "The spatial organization of society, in other words, is integral to the production of the social and not merely its result. It is fully implicated in history and politics" (*Space* 4). Seeing space as the product of social relations also radically opens the future by rejecting unilinear time. Massey declares that this proposition "escapes the inexorability which so frequently characterizes the grand narratives of modernity" such as "Progress," "Development," "Modernisation" and "the succession of modes of production elaborated within Marxism" and leads instead to "the genuine openness of the future" (*For* 11).

This alternate understanding of space has consequences for the conceptualization of place. If the spatial is thought of as the dynamic working together of space-time and as "formed out of social interrelations at all scales," place cannot be seen as "closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as 'home', a secure retreat" or timeless origin because this posits space as static and naturally divided (*Space* 5-6). Place, instead, is conceived of as "a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks" that make up space-time (*Space* 5). Her view of place, she argues:

> includes relations which stretch beyond – the global as part of what
> constitutes the local, the outside as part of the inside. Such a view of place
> challenges any possibility of claims to internal histories or to timeless
> identities. The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and
> multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed
> not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through

counter-position to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part)

through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that

'beyond'. Places viewed this way are open and porous. (*Space* 5)

This view of place relies on a different conception of time. A single construction of place relies on a single metanarrative to support it. To see place as "unfixed, contested, and multiple," we must also acknowledge multiple co-existing trajectories and histories (*Space* 5).

Massey's conception of place troubles another gendered binary; this one between space and place. In this construction, space becomes the privileged term as it is associated with the "general, universal, theoretical/abstract/conceptual" and is coded masculine, while place is associated with "Being ... local, specific, concrete, descriptive" and coded feminine (*Space* 9). Then, the "local/place/feminine side of the dichotomy is deprioritized and denigrated" (*Space* 10). Further, "place," as the material and concrete, becomes associated with "a culturally constructed version of 'Woman'" and both are connected to the private sphere of the "Home" and to "nostalgia" and separated from the active and political public sphere (*Space* 10). As Diana Relke notes, "Romantic Mother Nature is the signifier of all that civilized man has lost; ... she represents the loss of Eden to the fallen Adam ... the loss of the intimate connection between subject and object" (17). While "Man" is a metaphor for civilization, "Woman," Massey observes, is metaphorically connected to nature, to "what has been lost (left behind), and that place called home is frequently personified by, and partakes of the same characteristics as those assigned to, Woman/Mother/lover," characteristics such as nurturing, authenticating, a safe escape from the corruption of the civilized world (*Space* 10). Place is represented as woman and both are "longed for and romanticized" at the same time as they are depoliticized (10). However, Massey's understanding of place as a localized moment of the interrelations that make up space, opens place to the global and to change while, at the same time, it connects space to the local and material.[3]

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[3] For another reading of the land as female and associated with home, see Annette Kolodny, who argues that in America the fantasy of the "harmony between man and nature" is "based on an

There can be no nostalgia for an authenticating static place called home because such a place never existed. Cheryl Lousley argues that the "nostalgia for a place 'to come home to' does not ... accommodate" colonized people or women (320). She asserts that for colonized peoples neither the construction of space nor that of time has ever been singular or closed. For those in the peripheral colonies, the encounter with the other "has for centuries been 'immediate and intense'" (320). Further, for women, "those Others within the center," home "is a site of work, conflict and violence, not just repose" (320). Even for patriarchy, the closed space-time of home is a nostalgic dream and not a reality. Massey describes how homes are "relatively open and porous spaces" (*For* 179). Although entry is restricted, they are still "a base for a variety of people, for multiple interests and activities" (179). Home, like anywhere, is a relational space-time "constructed out of the articulation of trajectories" and "continually shifting in its construction, being renegotiated" (179).

While Massey focuses her attention on the connection between women and the land-as-home, there are other ways in which woman and land are connected which are equally troubled by Massey's conception of place.[4] Rather than nurturing constructions of the land, Margaret Atwood examines representations of the land as harsh and the implications that those representations have on the construction of woman. Atwood argues that "if the Divine Mother [nurturing Nature] is conspicuous by her absence …, the person who demands Divine Mothers and Presences may conclude that Nature is dead" or "hostile" resulting in nature still being constructed as a woman, but now "an old, cold, forbidding and possibly vicious one" (238).[5] Additionally, it is not only women that are connected to nature. As Andrea Parra states, "people of color have long been subsumed into the category of nature in the mainstream imaginary" and that

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experience of the land as essentially female … enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless integral satisfaction." (4).

[4] For a discussion of women's relationship to the city, see pages 120-122.

[5] See also Darby Lewes who coins the word "somatopia," or "body place" to signify the various types of representation, from advertisements to maps, that present the landscape as "a generalized female body" and "pseudogeographic site of male pleasure" or dread (2). She argues that these texts "act out the conflict between masculinised culture and femininized nature" (3) and that, from the sixteenth- to the nineteenth-century, the British territories were often depicted as either "ripe and eager" virgins (103) or as whorish, "promiscuous and man-hungry" (110).

this "derives from Western conceptions of identity based on rigid dualistic thought that continues to prevail" (1099-1100). As Relke puts it, "it was not merely gender that determined one's identification with nature. Age, class, race, ethnicity, and nationality went into defining one's place on either side of the civilized/primitive divide" (19). "Mother Nature" she jests, "enjoyed the company of just about everyone – everyone except 'civilized' men" (19).[6] Once again, Massey's construction of place as a localized moment of the trajectories that make up space insists on the multiplicity and dynamism of place and its interrelation with space, thereby resisting these dualistic notions and their static and depoliticized constructions of place.

Importantly, however, for Massey place is not only open, interrelational, and fluid but also contains "temporary cohesions of articulations of relations, ... provisional and partial enclosures" (*For* 175). These multiple partial enclosures, she argues, are necessary to an open politics. On a quick reading, Massey seems to champion only open space. Hardt and Negri misread her conception of place, arguing that it "empties the concept completely of its content" (426). However, Massey allows for both place as unique territory and place as enclosed (as long as it is always seen to be so partially and multiply). Her conception of place as an articulation of interrelations, both internal and external, "in no way works against specificity and uniqueness, it just understands its derivation in a different way" (*For* 169). Places are not "bounded, with their own internally generated authenticities, and defined by their difference from other places which lay outside, beyond their borders" (64). This imagination of place stalls the space-time dynamic. According to Massey's geographical imagination, places can still be unique, but their specificity comes from the local coming together of various trajectories.

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[6] See also Darby Lewes, who states that the imperial conception that culture "must forever reassert its power over nature" has been applied to both women and indigenous peoples and "used to justify both sexual and political imperialism" (6), and Jonathan Levin who points out that "nature" has become central to both feminism and postcolonialism "because of a slippery combination of historical associations and natural conditions" where woman is seen as nature and "the 'new world' and the 'dark continent' as undeveloped natural environments" ("Beyond" 172). For other in-depth studies of the connections between race, class, gender and the environment see Catherine Villanueva Gardner and Karen Warren.

As mentioned, Massey also does not completely reject the closure of place, as long as it is not based on a kind of "spatial fetishism," defined as "assuming a politics from a geography" (*For* 103). Her conceptualization of space is, she writes, neither "a sentimental plea for the joys of mixed localities, [n]or for the simple locatedness of place" (95). Spatial fetishism, she argues, can "lose a possible point of purchase for an effective politics" (103). She writes, "the appeal to an imagination of pure boundedness or pure flow as self-evident foundation is neither possible in principle nor open to political debate" (86). She argues that "neither hermetic closure nor a world composed only of flow (no stabilizations, no boundaries of any sort) is possible .... Mobility and fixity, flow and settledness; they presuppose each other" (95). As an example, she examines neo-liberalism's emphasis on flow. She points out that neo-liberalism is actually based on a double construction of space that supports the already-powerful in that while it prizes the flow of globalization and free trade, it also insists on the closure created by immigration policies and the organization of labour (85-86). In other words, its spatial fetish, the space of flows, "is deployed (when needed) as a legitimation of its own production and which pretends to a universality which in practice it systematically denies. For, in fact, in the context of and as part of 'globalization' new enclosures are right now being erected" (87). What is needed instead of imaginations of pure closure or flow "is for this tension to be negotiated explicitly and in each specific situation" (86). Instead of a space of flow or a space of stabilization, there is instead "negotiation (and a responsibility to negotiate) between conflicting tendencies. (*sic*) A restructuring of the geography of that simultaneity of stories-so-far" (95-96). In other words, spatial fetishism, or "abstract spatial form[,] in itself can guarantee nothing about the social, political or ethical content of the relations which construct that form. What is always at issue is the content, not the spatial form, of the relations through which space is constructed" (101). Campaigns for the "defence of a local way of life" can also be seen as spatial fetishism, and "the question cannot be whether demarcation (boundary building) is simply good or bad. Perhaps Hamburg should indeed open up, while the Deni are allowed their protective borderlands" (165). In fact:

holding such apparently contradictory positions may be perfectly legitimate. It all depends on the terms on which the argument is based. When those on the right of the political spectrum argue, say, for the free movement of capital and against the free movement of labour, it does not necessarily entail a contradiction. It only lays itself open to that charge … when each argument is legitimated by an appeal to a geographical imagination held as a universal, and when … the two legitimating imaginations contradict each other. The 'inevitability' of a modern world without borders versus the 'naturalness' of a world in which (some) local people have a right to defend, with borders, their own local place. It is perfectly coherent to argue both for a significant relaxation of European rules on immigration (greater openness) and for the right of developing countries to put up protective barriers around, say, a vital sector of production or a nascent industry (greater closure). The issue is not bounded or unbounded in itself; not a simple opposition between spatial openness and spatial closure. .... It is a genuinely political position-taking not the application of a formula about space and place. (165-66)

Place here can be closed but such closure must be acknowledged as a political move and cannot be posited as natural (a spatial fetishism) or absolute (an impossibility). Because space is the sphere of multiplicity, there will always be multiplicities of imaginations of place: "any 'simultaneity' of stories-so-far will be a distinct simultaneity from a particular vantage point" (89).

Massey's view of place as both partially closed and as open, multiple and shifting, is connected to feminist positions which argue that personal identities are multiple and shifting. Massey repeats Chantel Mouffe's argument that "we are in fact always multiple and contradictory subjects, inhabitants of a diversity of communities (as many, really, as the social relations in which we participate and the subject-positions they define), constructed by a variety of discourses and precariously and temporally sutured at the intersection of those positions" (*Space* 8). Massey argues that "the concept of place advanced here is very similar to that" and that in terms of both identity and place, Mouffe's conception "is a move ...

which can recognize difference, and which can simultaneously emphasize the basis for potential solidarities" (*Space* 8). For Massey, place "is a concept which depends crucially on the notion of articulation" (*Space* 8). As Mouffe explains in "Feminism, Citizenship, and Radical Democratic Politics," articulations create "totalizing effects" amidst a "dialectics of decentering/recentering" (372). They are "efforts to establish ... historical, contingent, and variable links" between subjects (372). Extending this model to the construction of place, Massey posits place as a momentary articulation of the intersection of spatial trajectories. She then argues, "moreover, if places are conceptualized in this way, and if their definition is amplified to take account of the construction of the subjects within them, which are part and parcel of what it is to talk about place, then the identity of place is a double articulation" (*Space* 8). In other words, as a double articulation, place articulates a localized moment in the trajectories that make up space-time as well as is one of the articulations that contributes to the subjectivity of those who take some aspect of their identity from it.

While the unified subject and its social relations connect to and are supported by the conception of space as a surface and place as fixed and bounded, Massey's alternate understanding of space and place links up with different conceptions of the subject and social relations. As I mentioned earlier, her geographic imagination is based on a subjectivity that can appreciate the complexity of the space-time dynamic and its connections and responsibility within the coeval (*For* 9). This subject is constructed both temporally and spatially, and, aware of its relational constitution, it positions itself in an attitude of outwardlookingness. This attitude demands that we do not completely withdraw behind our frontiers but open out to what is beyond (*For* 58). Thus, the subject shifts from a unified and static self opposed to its others to a multiple and dynamic subject among and radically entwined with a multitude. In this position, it can answer Gregory's call for non-invasiveness by acknowledging multiple dynamic space-time trajectories.

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As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the trajectory in geography from areal differentiation to postmodern geographies inspires me to examine the way place is understood in studies of the representation of place in Canadian literature. "Literary place studies," as I call these examinations, has a long history in Canada,[7] and in the following section I will outline its major developments including thematic criticism, regionalism, ecocriticism, ecofeminism, discursive place studies, and cartographic place studies as well as demonstrate how this thesis is situated in relation to each.

I will begin with one of the longest standing types of literary place studies in Canadian literature, thematic criticism. This criticism attempted to deal with Canadian nationalism and place by examining Canadian literature for specific representations of place which were then linked to a national identity. Many of the thematic critics understood place in a way that is similar to that of traditional geography, as fixed and authenticating. For example, Northrop Frye, a key figure in Canadian thematic criticism, envisioned space as naturally divided into regions/nations and society and identity as overlaid onto geography. For Frye, identity was "local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of culture" which are themselves responses to the regional environment (*Bush* ii). He declared that the Canadian environment was harsh and overwhelming and that Canadians relationship to it created their national literature and identity ("Conclusion" 220), an identity he dubbed the "garrison mentality" (225). Centred on the social community rather than the heroic individual, the garrison mentality is the overriding need to withdraw behind frontiers and become a part of the group in Canada's isolated communities which provide values, law, and order in

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[7] The term "place studies" gathers together under one umbrella the multiple ways that place is represented and studied. Margaret Sommerville *et al* define "place studies" as a subset of cultural studies that "offers insights about the relationship between cultures and environments" (6). While Sommerville *et al* then focus the term so that it refers to "a new interdisciplinary formation that takes as its focus" the "new understandings of place" that have been developed by "anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and geographers" who argue "that (shifting) geographies, boundaries, and multiple scales continue to matter 'as expressions of social practice, discourse and power'" (5), I employ the term in its broadest sense. Further I use the term "literary place studies" to refer to the multiple ways that place has been understood and examined in literary studies. My use of such a term is meant to bring together a number of approaches to place without conflating them. It is meant to allow for, as Sommerville writes, "multiple contingent, divergent, and situated conversations" (3).

the midst of chaos and menace (225). As he famously asserted, Canadian identity "is less perplexed by the question 'Who am I?' than by some such riddle as 'Where is here?'" ("Conclusion" 220).

Frye's conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada* had a strong influence on Canadian literary criticism in the 1960s and 1970s,[8] and was thus followed by a flurry of thematic studies.[9] The drawbacks of thematic criticism are well-known, and I summarize only some of them here. One result of criticism such as this is that the study of English Canadian literature became rooted in a tradition that canonized texts which depicted the Canadian environment as harsh,[10] and because national identity was environmentally determined, these texts were also realist. Concerned with closing an envelope of space for a length of time, these critics avoided other modes and representations of place which presented difference and alterity and countered national coherence. As Fredric Jameson asserts, in moments of high realism, "alternative narrative registers begin to disappear" and are replaced by "a massively homogenous narrative apparatus" (*Political* 193), where "shifts in register and the modal variation of destinies are no longer linguistic possibilities" (*Political* 196). At this point, the "modalities of the Imaginary," such as utopian, gothic, and adventure literature are "throw[n] off" to become mass culture "subgenres" (196).

However, while realism purports to depict the truth of the world, it succumbs to the mimetic fallacy whereby "an approximate, subjectively reconstituted and historically contingent model of the 'real' world is passed off as an accurate, objectively presented and universally applicable copy" (Huggan,

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[8] Russell Morton Brown argues the conclusion was given "special status" because Frye was "perhaps the best known literary theorist in the world" and because the "Anti-American cultural nationalism of the 1960's and the centennial celebrations of 1967 had provoked new interest in the old question of whether Canada had a coherent and distinct culture and tradition," a question that Frye answered affirmatively ("Practice" 655).

[9] For other examples not discussed here, see D. G. Jones's *Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature*, John Moss's *Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction*, Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, and Gaile McGregor's *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape*.

[10] See John Moss who argues that thematic criticism, in its effort to create a national literature, emphasized and canonized texts that participated in its own arbitrary tradition and ignored those that did not ("Paradox" 17).

"Decolonizing" 117-118). Seen as an accurate and neutral depiction of the environment, it, in fact, reflects the desires and social values of the dominant group; it is just that these are conventionalized and naturalized. Graham Huggan asserts, "mimesis has consistently provided a means of promoting and reinforcing the stability of western culture" ("Decolonizing" 116). Applying this concept to depictions of place, W.J.T. Mitchell argues that this type of landscape representation is "tailor-made for the discourse of imperialism" which sees itself as "an inevitable, progressive development in history, an expansion of 'culture' and 'civilization' into 'natural' space in a process that is itself narrated as 'natural'" (17). Realism and naturalism are not somehow more accurate depictions of the land but are hegemonic constructions that support the colonial centre by demonstrating the superiority of Western representation thereby helping to legitimate Eurocentric authority. The result was the coding of imperial territory through these European landscape conventions.

In other words, many of these thematic critics did not just want a clearly demarcated and coherent national literature and identity based on environmental determinism; they wanted literature and identity to live up to colonial standards. Therefore, Frye criticised Canada's literature for being overly romantic, rhetorical, and concerned with illustrating cohesive social attitudes rather than the more realist themes of self-conflict and individualism, and argued that there are no Canadian authors who have yet managed to write the universal, or whose "readers can grow up inside their work without ever being aware of a circumference" (213). This lack of universality was seen by Frye as a mark of cultural immaturity, a stage through which Canadians will pass on their way to a cohesive national identity (214). Realistic depictions of the uncivilized Canadian environment would signify a unique Canadian imagination and create a coherent national identity. However, they did so by denying intranational differences (Wyile, "Regionalism" 270).

Thematic criticism's emphasis on a harsh environment and on the realist mode, both of which favoured man the hero triumphing over external obstacles, also led to the marginalization of texts written by women. Women writers often

employed modes other than high realism and often depicted place differently. "Canadian poetry by women tended overwhelmingly to refute Frye's terrifying view of nature as other and irreconcilably opposed to human consciousness," writes Diana Relke, "hence the work of women poets either remained on the peripheries of Canadian myth criticism or was subjected to the imposition of this dualistic way of knowing nature" (25).

However, this kind of thematic criticism does more than distort the literary canon. It also distorts place by seeing space as a surface, removed from multiplicity and time. The desire of many of these critics for a coherent Canadian national identity based on environmental determinism relied on the positing of a singular depiction of place. Because "here" is singularly labelled (threatening) in order to create a national "I" (garrisoned), space is reduced to a surface and place is seen as singular, closed, and authenticating. As Jeff Derksen argues, in "this ideological grid, the landscape" is "unable to enter a sociohistorical dialogue" and is represented as "static ... as a self-contained naturalness or as a bleak metaphor for the thematic of terror" (Qtd in Wiens 100). However, this uniform sense of place "cannot always adequately account for the huge variety of spaces themselves" or "the multiple ways in which they are represented" (Warley, Ball, and Viau, "Mapping" n.p.).

Along with this narrowed conception of place goes a narrowed conception of time in the form of a single history. Barbara Godard argues that in his conclusion to the *Literary History of Canada*, Frye reveals a desire for the history of Canadian cultural development to be "a fully realized narrative with a coherent structure" ("Notes" n.p.). However, she argues that this kind of coherent historical representation can only be constructed by "the subject identifying with the social system and authorized by it" ("Notes" n.p.). "Those on the margins of power," on the other hand, "produce fragments, catalogues, rather than coherent narratives for a nation in formation" ("Notes" n.p.). Frye, she points out, sees the *Literary History of Canada* as "'something of a catalogue' rather than a full narrative" ("Notes" n.p.). She argues that for him, "'Where is here?' comes to signify a failure of the imagination to conceive of Canada as a community" ("Notes" n.p.).

"Paradox is Frye's figure for this aporia when spatial relations that should bring cultural and aesthetic values into alignment and create 'Canada' as a cultural presence with a self-legitimating tradition, pull, instead, in different directions" creating "a structural absence" ("Notes" n.p.). Still, within this catalogue, he "discerns between the lines" "a relatively small and low-lying cultural development" and relates a narrative of "the establishment of a settler literature as bildung ... in the name of ... nationalist values of self-determination that would fashion citizens and foster identity" ("Notes" n.p.). In other words, out of this catalogue or collection of historical fragments, Frye constructs a history centred on a cohesive Canadian nation existing within a single progressive time.

While such criticism helped establish the field of place studies in Canada and the study of Canadian literature in general, it cannot be employed to analyze these texts by Brand and Brossard and, in many ways, has formed the tradition against which these authors are writing. As will be shown in chapters three through six, both of these authors reject environmental determinism and the realist mode, and Dionne Brand, in particular, rejects nationalism as overly coherent and conservative. These authors instead propose space and time as multiple and open.

* * *

The focus so far has been on thematic criticism, yet there have been other critical approaches to the study of representations of place in Canadian literature. These studies often acknowledge place as multiply constructed and, therefore, as open and dynamic, yet many exhibit some of the same problems that Gregory and Jacobs attribute to the landscape school's investigations of place: an ambiguous position on poststructuralism, interpretive stasis, and interpretive privilege.

Another longstanding area of Canadian literary place studies is regionalism. Broadly, literary regionalism examines portrayals of the geographic and cultural moments of specific areas. Almost always, the works examined are authored by someone who lived or spent time in the region. This definition is simplistic, however, for despite a long history, regionalism is difficult to define

fully.[11] This lack of a clear definition results in part from the general ambiguity of and ambivalence towards regionalism (Wyile, "Regionalism" 273). Herb Wyile argues that this ambiguity correlates with the etymology of "regional" as outlined by Raymond Williams in *Keywords* ("Writing" 10). Williams traces two denotations for "regional." The first simply refers to the boundaries of a distinct area and the second, on which Williams focuses, sees that area as a part of a larger whole. In this sense, "region" comes to mean "an administered area," and thus "not only a part but a subordinate part of a larger political entity" (Williams 264-65). "Regional" and "regionalism" are then used "within this assumption of dominance and submission" (Williams 265). Therefore, in literary regionalism, the label "regional novel" not only acknowledges the representation of a "distinct place and way of life" but is also usually seen as "a limiting judgement" supporting the binary between rural provincialism and urban cosmopolitanism which favours the urban centre over the rural periphery (Williams 265).

Placing this ambivalent relationship with regionalism in a Canadian context, Wyile notes that the period when Canadian literature was established "also encompasses the concentration and consolidation of cultural, economic and political power in the metropolises of central Canada" ("Writing" 11). People were, and still are, attracted to regionalism as a means to resist the centre of power, yet they also avoid it because the regions are denigrated spatially and temporally from within the centre, whose emphasis on a cohesive nationalism must negate any evidence of the internal coeval. Thus, "regional" is associated with the spatial margins and "has largely been used as shorthand for writing of the periphery, of those outside the heartland of central Canada" and has taken on numerous "negative connotations" ("Writing" 11) such as being "hopelessly specific and contextualized," as "a parochial discourse, a restrictive local

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[11] Alexander MacLeod writes that "generations of editors, anthologists, and critics ... [have] never been able to articulate a clear critical statement that might once and for all establish the defining attributes of a regionalist aesthetic" (103) and the editors of *A Sense of Place* assert that the term "lacks a clear definition," and "is used alternately to describe the unifying principle of a corpus of literary texts (that is, regional literature), the attachment of a writer to a particular place, the diversity of writing within the larger body of national literature, or a kind of ideological consciousness or discourse" (x). Even further confusing the issue, "the boundaries between the different uses of the term in literary criticism are not always clear" (xi).

colourism or provincialism," and having "only a faint hope of escaping to the
realm of the universal" ("Regionalism" 270). Regionalist texts are also denigrated
temporally as they are often seen as less mature or more primitive versions of
nationalist literature. This temporal imagination rejects the coeval as it presents
only one trajectory, the one that supports the dominant centre. [12]

While there may not be a clear statement of regionalism's theoretical
purchase or aesthetic, what can be said is that regionalist criticism is currently
enjoying a revival. As Wyile argues, "the decline of a reductive nationalism and
of a universalist poetics that worked against the particular, in tandem with the
recognition of the importance of difference, of distinctiveness, of the particular"
has increased interest in the field ("Writing" 12). Because of this revival,
regionalism has been readily addressing the postmodern questions surrounding
methods of representation, authority, difference, and multiplicity in relation to
place. Alexander MacLeod writes, "the old portrait of regionalism as an
essentially conservative, inherently realistic, inescapably mimetic aesthetic is
slowly giving way to a new model as today's writers effectively reinvent the
genre for a new time and an entirely new way of thinking about place" which has
been "nurtured along" by postmodern geographers (106). I agree; however, rather
than the unilinear chronological division between "old" and "new," I refer to
these regionalisms in a way that can avoid such unilinear progression: as
"coherent" regionalisms and "open" regionalisms.

Coherent regionalisms, like thematic criticism, posit a cohesive identity
but at the regional rather than national level. Herb Wyile argues that these
regionalisms end up "repeating the same totalizing gestures [as thematic criticism]
on the regional level" and respond to "the internal colonialism" of "national
formulas by stressing regional diversity within the nation, but at the expense of
diversity within the region" ("Regionalism" 271). As Frank Davey asserts, if such
regionalisms "begin to develop internal differentiation and debate, or to develop
institutions to accommodate internal debate, they also ... begin to cease to be

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[12] Of course, something similar could be said about Frye's assertion that Canadian literature's lack
of international universality is a mark of cultural immaturity.

regionalisms" (8). Thus "successful Canadian regionalisms ... have become new dominants, serving particular class, race, and gender interests, and constraining social/textual dissent and change" (Davey 16).

At their most extreme, they too are based on an assumption of environmental determinism, defined by Alison Calder as the belief that "landscape determines culture; that we are who we are because of where we are" ("Coming" 6). Environmental determinism insists on a single representation of geography that closes an envelope of space-time[13] and posits a regionally coherent, single identity and a realist literary canon. Calder writes, "the idea of environmental determinism stabilizes the multiple meanings of 'prairie' [and I would add any place] through erasure of the region's many internal conflicts, as attention to landscape precludes consideration of gender, race, and class conflicts included (or suppressed) in these texts" ("Reassessing" 57). "Environmental determinism," she asserts, "is far from neutral" in that it "carries illusions of immutability and homogeneity" and creates the "idea of a regional homogeneity which is at best arbitrary and artificial" ("Reassessing" 56-57). In literary studies, environmental determinism results in the "value" of regional literature "resid[ing] in its ability to mirror a specific environment, to show what real 'life' is like" (Calder, "Reassessing" 52). Therefore, if a text is regional "it must, by definition, be 'true.' The fiction cannot be fiction: it must be representative of a typical regional ethos" (55). Because the land shapes the artist's awareness, "the challenge of the artist becomes finding a suitable means of representing that landscape" (Calder, "Coming" 6). Thus, like thematic criticism, this type of regionalism "neglect[s] textual and stylistic considerations" (Wyile, "Writing" 11) and is, once again, connected to mimetic content and the realist mode.

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[13] As Calder and Wardaugh write of traditional prairie regionalism:
> Until recently, reading available historical and literary sources, it has been possible to believe that the Canadian prairies began in 1850 or so, when the beginnings of intensive agricultural practices came to the West. It has also been possible to believe that the Canadian prairies have ended, or at least that time has ceased to pass here, judging by representations of the prairies in much literature and popular culture, and that we are permanently frozen in a rural, agricultural scene. (3)

Further, as with thematic criticism, the stalled space-time of these canonized texts depicts place in ways that support the dominant group. For example, Kristen Warder argues that the representations of the prairie in texts canonized by regionalism "typically feature white, rural, and of course, heterosexual subjects" and "uphold the conservative place identity of the prairies by obscuring the lives and realities of millions of people .... Those who identify as urban, non-white, and/or non-heterosexual ... are effectively denied a prairie identity" (Warder 115-116). These representations of the prairie also deny a prairie identity to women. The depiction of the land as harsh and forbidding supports the construction of man as active conqueror. Lisa Chalykoff argues that there is an "obvious gender bias" seen when Henry Kreisel argues that "the sheer physical fact of the prairie" results in two possible states of mind: "'man, the giant conqueror, and man, the insignificant dwarf'" (167). "Where," she asks, "do we situate prairie women within this model?" (167). They are absent because "though it pretends to universality, this model describes with greater precision a 'state of mind' generated by a very particular set of social circumstances—those that govern the life of the overwhelmingly male, rural, agrarian prairie dweller" (167).[14]

Cohesive regionalism, however, is not limited to environmental determinism. It can also be found in the work of critics who argue that cohesiveness originates in shared mental constructions of a region or territory. Chalykoff asserts that, for this kind of regionalism, space is "dematerialized" and becomes "a subjective condition" (162). She argues that regionalisms that turn to "shared identity positions to delimit the borders of regions grounded in mental or geographic space" are, as much as are those based on environmental determinism, "informed by the same *assumption* of intra-regional social coherence" (emphasis in original 175). Space is seen as constructed, but the ramifications of such an acknowledgement are mellowed by an *assumption* that it is constructed in a like manner by *all* its inhabitants. The positing of an absolutely consistent mental

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[14] See also Alison Calder's "'The Nearest Approach to a Desert'" for another discussion of Kreisel's gender bias (175).

construction of place and identity once again refuses the challenge of space. It closes an envelope of space-time too completely and, while the external politics of such constructions are often explained, for example their political positioning in relation to the national centre, the internal content of the relations through which the region is constructed as well as the internal politics behind such a closure are often not recognized. There will always be multiple imaginations of any place, fractures within any seemingly consistent construction. As noted above, while it may be prudent for a place to close its borders (real or imagined), such closure must be acknowledged as a political move and cannot be posited as either natural (a spatial fetishism) or absolute (an impossibility).

Chalykoff argues that coherent regionalism, which has been heavily critiqued, "continues to cast its spell" (163). She notes its presence in "the popular construction of regions as smaller spatial divisions of the Canadian nation-space" (167). She writes, "while it is thought to be blatantly ideological to assume the existence of an overarching national identity or culture, positing the existence of such homogenizing entities on behalf of regions meets far less suspicion" (168). Regionalisms, she argues, must recognize "the sociocultural plurality of regional space" (174-75). Places are always multiply constructed. As Calder writes of prairie regionalism:

> The problem with a definition of prairie writing that centres on place is that it can always be confused by a small question: which place? Space is not neutral; it is always culturally inflected in a myriad of ways. How we experience place depends on race, class, gender, education level, and any other number of factors. ("Coming" 6-7)

As she writes, "the same place has many different meanings" and in the case of the prairies, "[i]roning out this complexity, insisting ... that there's only one authentic prairie voice, flattens all the prairie's fabulous complexity into that one straight line tourists always say they see" (7). Space is reduced to a single surface to be travelled across and mapped in a unilinear history.

Chalykoff's text is a kind of limit text located in between coherent and open regionalisms in that she also posits coherence. Her argument is that any

belief in coherence must be substantiated and not simply assumed (175). While finding "a nexus of shared beliefs and practices ... across time and space" may not be possible, she "finds this possibility to be unlikely" and writes, "the very meaningfulness of the term 'region' derives from its capacity to represent some kind of collectivity or identity" (175-76). Another limit text is Alexander MacLeod's reading of George Elliott Clarke's critical and creative work to imagine and create what Clarke calls "Africadia," defined by Clarke as a place for Black Nova Scotians, "a place where the free self can live" (Qtd. in MacLeod 109). Clarke states of Africadia:

> It may not necessarily have to exist as a state with an anthem and a standing army, but it is important that we understand that we have this unique vantage point which does exist within ourselves, and which is manifested in different ways at different times, in different places with different groupings of people of African descent in this place that on paper we call Nova Scotia. But I don't think we have to accept these standard notions and that it's important to claim the place for ourselves, and to rename, reorder, or rethink the whole thing. (Qtd. in MacLeod 109)

MacLeod reads Clarke's dream of Africadia as a type of regionalism arguing that "Clarke's work touches on so many of the central ideas related to regionalist literary thought" (103), while, at the same time, it "extends regionalist discourse into new areas of social and political action" (96). Clarke's work, writes MacLeod, "straddles the line between traditional and contemporary interpretations of cultural geography" and regionalist criticism or between real and imagined spatiality. MacLeod argues that Clarke's concern for "collect[ing], protect[ing], and nurtur[ing] the cultural artefacts of his community" assign him a role as "an anthropological recorder and museum curator for Black Nova Scotian history" (106-107). Yet, writes MacLeod, Clarke is more concerned with imagined space, with "actively (and even aggressively) ... imagin[ing] his home" and reconstructing it "in the real world" (107). Clarke, he writes, is not "determined by his native land," but is instead "determined to change that place" (107). Clarke does not "com[e] from Africadia," but is instead "going to

Africadia," and "literature provides the means by which he travels between these two points, slowly tearing down the old, real world and gradually building up its replacement" (107-108). His "writing is devoted to a region that did not exist in the real world before he gave it a name and initiated the slow process of its creation" (108).

MacLeod rejects what he calls "the old portrait of regionalism" which he sees as "an essentially conservative, inherently realistic, inescapably mimetic aesthetic" and turns to a regionalism based on a conception of region as socially and discursively constructed. He rejects environmental determinism and argues that place is discursively produced and that "regionalist writers are active participants in the cultural construction of the worlds they inhabit" (106). He also sees regions as stratified and argues that black Nova Scotian society is composed of "a diverse collection of individuals" and has its own "internal divisions" (100). He writes that Clarke's work "offers us only one way of writing and reading his culture, and not everyone in the community agrees with his portrayal" (100). As an example, MacLeod offers the writing of Maxine Tynes, who, he states, "has made a clear effort ... to distance herself from Clarke's poetic and political agenda" (100).

While MacLeod understands regions as constructed places which contain multiple stories-so-far, his reading of the imagined region of Clarke's Africadia implies an artificially closed and coherent place. He asserts that Clarke's work is a response to a desire for home (98) and appears to define home as a place and identity that is singularly constructed. MacLeod argues that Clarke's "creative and scholarly work" confirms "the *collective identity* of an *entire* population" (emphasis added 112). He writes that Clarke's dream of Africadia and work to create a place for black Nova Scotians speaks to a "community of believers" and is "maintained by ... the desperate desire of a population" (108). Whereas Clarke, as can be seen in the long quotation above, seems to understand the region of Africadia as based on a community of dissensus, a community that has "a unique vantage point" but that such a vantage point is "manifested in different ways at different times, in different places with different groupings" (109) and states that

"African-Canadians are an assembly of miniature nations" (110), MacLeod, who understands that the community of black Nova Scotians is stratified, posits the imagined region of Africadia as overly coherent and singular. The corrective, as Chalykoff asserts, is that "claims of regional social cohesion must be held to the same critical standards as claims of national social cohesion" (169). One needs to ask, who of the black Nova Scotian community is included in Africadia and who is not? Once again, the issue here is not one of spatial form, but is instead one of spatial content. Black Nova Scotians have been subjected to racial discrimination since the black loyalists and the slaves of white loyalists immigrated to Nova Scotia during and after the American Revolution. Black Nova Scotians coming together to imagine and /or create an alternate construction of place is certainly warranted, as is, to my mind, the closure of such a place. The issue here, instead, is with MacLeod's implication that such a region is based on a cohesive identity and coherent mental construction of place. The positing of such coherence removes spatial dissent and politics from the construction of Africadia and stalls its space-time. As Wylie argues, such a regionalism responds to "the internal colonialism" of "national" (and here it must be added "provincial") "formulas by stressing regional diversity within the nation [or province], but at the expense of diversity within the region" ("Regionalism" 271).

Instead of looking for a coherent regional identity, open regionalisms return to William's first definition of "region" as simply a demarcated area. From this starting point, they can examine the myriad and dynamic constructions of that place. For example, in "Towards the Ends of Regionalism," Frank Davey studies "both region and regionalism not as locations but as ideologies" (1). Neither "a kind of geographic determinism" nor "the product of intuitive regional self-recognition," they are instead "social creations" (2). "Region" is "a territorial definition of geographic space based on a selection of possible differentiating criteria—a territorial definition that can change as national political policies change," and "regionalism" is "an interpretation of social interests that gives geographic location priority over such other possible interests as gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, and race" (2). In order "to more fully serve the

ideological diversity of the inhabitants of their regions," he argues for a shift from "regionalism" to what he calls "regionality" (16). From the perspective of regionality, place is not some kind of static, authenticating and singular home but instead becomes a location for "competing and intersecting ideologies and internal difference" (17). Regionalities are "open to internal differentiation by other ideologies—ideologies both of the sectional kind that provinces and powerful cities can offer, and of the transnational kind, such as gender, race, and ethnicity" (16). As Doreen Massey argues, "space is relational" and, like any place, the "character of a region" is a product of both "internal interactions" and "relations with elsewhere" (Massey, *World* 20). Regional identity here, like Massey's conception of place, is multiple, contested, and struggled over.

Denying any overriding regional coherence may appear to be, as Davey entitles his essay, "the ends of regionalism," but this is not the case. Alison Calder and Robert Wardaugh's *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies* examines the prairie region in just such a way.[15] In their introduction, Calder and Wardaugh argue that in order to "understand the diverse cultural landscapes" of the prairie, time, space, and identity must be multiplied (4). Consequently, their examination of history posits the multiple trajectories of the coeval. They argue against historian Gerald Friesen's call to create a new national history that will "'provide assurances of continuity' in the face of challenges arising from 'the apostles of poststructuralism and postmodernism'" because of whom, "time and space ... are not only under siege but have been annihilated, leaving us bewildered and without a pole star'" (14-15). In response, Calder and

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[15] See also *A Sense of Place* whose editors view regionalisms as negotiated and conflict ridden constructs (x) and argue that regionalism "must be theorized ... in relation to other elements central to the construction of subjectivity and of literature" (xii). There are, they assert, "complex connections between place, subjectivity, and culture" leading to "the need to define the writing of particular regions in more pluralistic terms" (xiii). Another example is found in Lynes and Wyile's concept of "neo-regionalism" which "goes beyond trying to establish a sense of place and suggests instead that sense of place is always shifting, defined only provisionally and metaphorically, and is inflected by various factors, including race, gender, and both local and popular culture" (25). Finally, see Susanne Marshall's examination of Lisa Moore's short fiction, which Marshall argues "move[s] away from depicting a cohesive model of identity," but "is, nevertheless, intimately concerned with the construction of regional identity" in that it "suggests a conception of regional identity founded in a state of constant 'flux'" (80-81).

Wardaugh assert, "it is these 'apostles' who are offering some of the most invigorating challenges and new ways of understanding the prairie region" (15). As an example, they offer American Colin G. Calloway's portrayal of the American West where space is seen "less as a fixed place than as a web of historical processes, connections and continuities" and time becomes multiplied, leading to "a much more open-ended history" where "two interpretations— Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—exist side by side, competing with one another, occasionally overlapping but ultimately remaining worlds apart" (15). They call for a similar turn in Canadian regional history and note that "such an examination may involve ... working without 'assurances of continuity'" (15). Consequently, place also shifts as they question "where, precisely, a coherent prairie may be sited, as an ostensibly stable landscape is revealed to be, in Aritha van Herk's words, 'an upthrust and earthquake prairie'" (17). As a result of this alternate geographical imagination, in *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies*, Calder and Wardaugh do not attempt to posit an overall prairie identity or any kind of continuous history. Instead, as they say, the essays they include in their collection are based on "alternative models of time" and/or extend "the traditional boundaries of the 'prairie'" (17).

There is a strong crossover between this thesis and open regionalism as both are concerned with the multiplication of place and history. However, this thesis extends open regionalism's conception of place by applying it broadly to place in general rather than to any specific region or locality and by examining how such a construction of place can be expressed in a single narrative through utopian discourse.

I apply open regionalism's construction of place to place in general for two reasons. First, the writers and texts that I examine would not typically be considered regional. Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand are from major urban centres in Quebec and Southern Ontario, areas that are typically not considered to be regions. As Davey explains, in Ontario and Quebec, "nationalist or linguistic identifications are readily available" and "negate a potential regionalism" (7). He argues that in these areas "strategies of resistance to, dissent from, or difference

with dominant national ideology cannot take the landscape as ground ... because it has already been taken as a ground for identity by national narratives" (7). Speaking specifically of Quebec, he writes, "the boundaries of the subdivision, Quebec, however, despite francophone attempts at territorialisation, remain political before they are geographic" (6-7). In Southern Ontario, on the other hand, "regionalism has been successful largely by being invisible, by resisting territorial definition, and by passing itself as the Canadian nationalism or internationalism" (6). Additionally, Brand and Brossard do not tend to focus on their regions in these texts. Brossard's Montreal and Brand's Toronto are often secondary locations in their narratives. These writers, instead, attempt an identity-based inquiry that is associated with the construction of place but that is not necessarily based on any specific delimited area.

Therefore, rather than specific regions, or places, Brossard and Brand are concerned with what could be called "noplaces." Even further, these are not the dystopian noplaces often posited as resulting from a homogenizing globalism or empty postmodernism. Such would be the noplace defined by Marc Augé as space that rejects meaning, interpretation, identity, relations, and history (52), and perceived by Susan Naramore Maher, who sees "current ideologies and practices" resulting in a homogenizing dystopian noplace. She writes:

> The assault to place ... continues to reflect what James Howard Kunstler has called "the geography of nowhere." In dystopian mood, Kunstler argues that "we have become accustomed to living in places where nothing relates to anything else, where disorder, unconsciousness and the absence of respect reign unchecked." Echoing Kunstler, William Beavis bemoans "the no-place of capitalist modernity" that affronts an appreciation of region and love of particular places. (5-6)

Rather than dystopian, the noplaces discussed here are utopian in both senses of Thomas More's pun: as *outopia*, the no place, and *eutopia*, the good place. They are more in line with the noplaces posited by theorists such as Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault. For de Certeau, as is further outlined in chapter three, place, which he defines as "the technological system of a coherent and

totalizing space," is a prison that can be transformed into a liberating noplace through active spatial practices that each have "a discourse relative to the place/nowhere ... of concrete existence" (102). As is discussed further in chapter two, another positive reading of noplaces can be found in Foucault's theory of heterotopia. Heterotopias are real places, or sites, that are also "outside of all places" because they juxtapose many possible constructions or classifications and thereby counter the hegemonic construction of space as singular and closed (24). For Brand and Brossard, all places or sites have the potential to be heterotopic noplaces, multiply constructed and subjected to numerous sets of relations that make them unclassifiable. Benjamin Genocchio writes of the heterotopian noplace:

> the heterotopia is ... more of an idea about space than any actual place. It is an idea that insists that the ordering of spatial systems is subjective and arbitrary in that we know nothing of the totality that it must presuppose. It is an idea which consequently produces/theorizes space as transient, contestatory, plagued by lapses and ruptured sites" (43).

Rather than concerning themselves with specific areas, such as those that attract regionalists' attention, Brossard and Brand concern themselves more with such an idea about space: the multiple social constructions that combine and make places into open and unclassifiable noplaces.

The depictions of place by these writers are not only *outopian* but also *eutopian*. "Good" is a relative term. In traditional utopian studies, "good" has been associated with qualities such as happiness, satiation, and universal order. However, these kinds of utopian "good" places have been co-opted by capitalism. As Tom Moylan argues, utopia has become an important part of the maintenance of the capitalist system where "stimulated but unfulfilled desires are effaced and channelled into the service of the state or the consumer paradise" (8). This channelled utopian longing is particularly apparent in advertising where capitalism creates "an image of the ideal life filled with material goods and proceed[s] to sell a steady line of products to those whose lives [are] shaped by that limited image" (8). Moylan writes:

In the commodity society, then, utopia was reduced to the consumption of
pleasurable weekends, Christmas dreams, and goods purchased weekly in
the pleasure-dome shopping malls of suburbia. The system as it existed
provided all the satisfaction that passive consumers were encouraged to
want. Longing beyond those commodity-defined needs was suppressed
and indeed questioned as being psychologically or socially aberrant. (8)

Additionally, late capitalism insists on its own globalization and co-opts utopia in
its promise to deliver the capitalist good place universally. However, as Paul
Smith argues, "the evidence points to globalization as a project of capitalism,
rather than as the *fait accompli* we are supposed to believe in" (49). "The pressing
task" is to counter this "dream of millenarian capitalism," "to keep on hammering
away at an alternative analysis of the totality and its contradictions" and "to pose
against its totalizing and almost oceanic vision a different description of reality"
(61). In the age of capitalism's claims to provide happiness, satiation, and
universal order, utopia can be re-appropriated in order to provide alternatives to
such a totality. In this position, the good place might be associated with qualities
such as difference, dissensus, and struggle. These are the qualities of Brossard's
and Brand's noplaces. Again, their noplaces are posited as general rather than
regional constructions.

Finally, I extend open regionalism's construction of place by examining
how such a place can be figured through utopian discourse. Typically, regionalists
indicate place is multiple and dynamic by examining how a delimited area is
represented differently in numerous texts. The focus in this thesis, however, is to
examine how different constructions of place can be represented and interact with
one another in a single text. Such a focus has led me to rethink utopian ideas
about place and rhetoric through place and landscape.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

A relatively recent development in literary place studies has been
ecocriticism with Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's 1996 publication, *The
Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, typically cited as the

beginning of this critical field. *The Ecocriticism Reader* brought together a number of studies that had previously been "categorized under a miscellany of subject headings, such as American Studies, regionalism, pastoralism, the frontier, human ecology, science and literature, nature in literature, landscape in literature, or the names of the authors treated" (Glotfelty xvii). As one can see, ecocriticism is the nexus of a number of approaches to literature and it should not be surprising that the term sports multiple definitions.[16] Most, ecocritics, however, tend to agree with Michael P. Branch and Scott Slovic that Glotfelty's definition which broadly defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty xviii), "remains the closest thing … to a general definition" (xvi-xvii).

Because of its diversity, the field is difficult to summarize. Most overviews, however, divide the area by historicizing its shifts in methodology.[17] A number of ecocritics describe these shifts as progressive developmental stages.[18] For example, Simon C. Estok divides previous critical studies of the representation of nature in Shakespeare into two categories: formalist and "protoecocritical" ("Forum" 1096). Formalist criticism "is structuralist (concerned primarily with enumerating thematic clusters, with comparing them ... and so on)" while protoecocritical criticism "is poststructuralist in its various theoretical discussions of the ways that thinking and talking about the natural world

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[16] These definitions range from William Ruckert's initial definition as "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (Quoted in Glotfelty xx), to Simon C. Estok's assertion that ecocriticism can be distinguished from other fields "first by the ethical stand it takes, its commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than simply an object of thematic study, and, secondly by its commitment to making connections" ("Report" n.p.), to Jonathan Levin's definition where it "is a term used primarily by scholars trained in literary studies to describe an interdisciplinary approach to the study of nature, environment, and culture" and within which "most" but not all practitioners are concerned about environmental crises ("Beyond" 171).

[17] See Lawrence Buell's "The Ecocritical Insurgency," Ursula K. Heise's "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism," Steven Rosendale's "Introduction: Extending Ecocriticism" in *The Greening of Literary Scholarship*, Karla Armbruster and Kathleen Wallace's "Introduction: Why Go Beyond Nature Writing and Where To?" in *Beyond Nature Writing*, and Jonathan Levin's "Beyond Nature? Recent Work in Ecocriticism."

[18] See Glotfelty, who divides ecocriticism into "three developmental stages" (xxii), Dodd who notes that "for the field to mature, ecocriticism needs critiques of its shortcomings" (1095) and Buell who states, "the movement can never be expected to reach full critical maturity until it has figured out how, as it were, to envisage John Muir and Jane Addams as part of the same narrative" ("Ecocritical" 707).

interrelate with other early modern discourses" ("Forum" 1096). None of these Shakespearean studies, however, have yet to progress to the point of becoming "properly ecocritical" ("Forum" 1096). For him, "properly ecocritical" means criticism that not only makes connections but is also "committed to changing things" ("Report" n.p.). This focus on progression, however, narrows time. "Proto" implies a beginning or earlier stage that will develop into something else, not something that carries on alongside or continues in an interaction with the "properly" ecocritical. Attempting to avoid narrowing time to a single trajectory, I divide ecocriticism into two types, "realist" and "constructionist." While these terms allow for a discussion of historical differences in the field, they also allow for a coexisting coeval that can continue alongside, interact with, or move away from each other.

Realist ecocriticism posits direct access to and full representation of nature. Jonathan Levin notes that ecocriticism's "first wave," influenced by the immediacy of 1970s environmentalism and its "sense of the natural world ... being lost," involved "little reflection on the discursive dimension of science or even of notions of 'nature,' 'wilderness,' or 'environment'" ("Beyond" 173). Instead, ecocriticism turned to realism and the biological sciences and developed into what Steven Rosendale calls an "oppositional mode" through which environmental criticism could be established in the academy (xv). As Ursula K. Heise writes, between the 1960s and 1990s, the dominant literary theories approached nature as "a sociocultural construct that had historically often served to legitimize the ideological claims of specific social groups" (505). "This perspective," she argues, "obviously did not encourage connections with a social movement aiming to reground human cultures in natural systems and whose primary pragmatic goal was to rescue a sense of the reality of environmental degradation" (505). Ecocriticism attempted to bridge the gap between representation and reality through "the restoration of realism over 'poststructuralist nihilism' as the dominant mode for the revaluation of nature" (Rosendale xvi) as well as through the claims of the biological sciences, particularly ecology.

While most Canadian ecocriticism takes an ambiguous position in relation to poststructuralism and social constructivism (see below), an example of Canadian realist ecocriticism is provided by D. M. R. Bentley's study, *The Gay]Grey Moose: Essays on the Ecologies and Mythologies of Canadian Poetry*. In this pioneering 1992 text, Bentley rejects postmodernism and argues for a return to realism. This return, he argues, would contribute to a sense of local identity which would counter a homogenizing globalization and its accompanying environmental destruction. Turning to the land to reignite what he sees as a dying nationalism, he argues that certain strains of "Deconstruction, Feminism, Marxism, Post-Structuralism and ... Post-Modernism that have implicitly or explicitly declared themselves hostile to nature, history, locality, [and] individuality" have assisted the expansion of capitalism and fuelled "the forces of globalization and homogenization" (6-7). Therefore, he attempts to "reawaken attention to the mimetic ... qualities of Canadian poems" and to "raise questions about the possible ... consequences of the contemporary emphasis on the non-realistic" (10). A return to realistic representations of the land, he asserts, could take part in creating a "benign nationalism rooted in local pride and responsibility" that "can provide the wherewithal to counter a multi- and supra-national capitalism that knows no loyalty to particular places and their inhabitants" (7). He argues for an "ecological poetics" that would elaborate "on two key ecological assumptions—the assumption that man and nature are a 'community of interdependent parts' and the assumption that 'diversity' in the human and natural world must be safeguarded and fostered" (274). Thus, a return to realism could connect people to their environment, create a sense of local pride and uniqueness in the face of a standardizing globalization, and instil environmental awareness and empathy.

At the other end of the spectrum are the constructionist ecocritics who apply contemporary literary theory to their examination of the relations between literature and the environment. As Levin argues, "environmental systems and environmental stress remain central to their work," but constructionist ecocritics argue that "these can only be addressed effectively if they are understood in

relation to the larger social and socio-discursive concerns" ("Beyond" 172). These ecocritics not only criticize "particular ideas about the environment wrongly believed to derive from science but also expos[e] the concept of the environment itself as a cultural construct" (Heise 510). Science, representation, and claims to authentic connections to wilderness and nature are examined for how they take part in the "the environment myth" by rejecting the concept that the environment is a construction deriving from the discourse we create about it (Heise 510).[19]

There are few Canadian studies at this end of the realist-constructivist spectrum. One example is Jason Wien's examination of works by Jeff Derksen and Peter Culley. Wien argues that Culley exhibits "a self-conscious awareness of the mediating role of language" (107), that Derksen critiques "the idea that 'nature' somehow lies outside ideology" (104), and that overall "whereas other poets ... across Canada have looked out at the landscape and seen, variously, threats to survival, indifferent sublimity, exploitable resource, imagist beauty, spiritual salvation, and any number of metaphors, these poets look out and see ideology and history" (99). In other words, as he writes, "their approach to nature de-naturalizes it" (99).

Most ecocriticism can be located somewhere between these two poles. Few ecocritics "adopt a 'naive realist' stance with respect to nature, biology, and environment" (Levin, "Beyond" 173), and most "have been reluctant to ... reduc[e] nature to a discursive reality" (Heise 511). Consequently, many "embrace some kind of provisional realism with respect to ... naturalist foundations" (Levin 173). In other words, they adopt an ambiguous position between realism and constructivism, opting for what Lawrence Buell calls a "post-poststructuralist account of environmental mimesis" (705). Buell defines this position as "a critical practice that operates from a premise of biodirectionality, imagining texts as gesturing outward toward the material world

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[19] See William Cronon's discussion of the American conception of "wilderness" and James Kirwan's discussion of the concept of "nature." Kirwan asserts that "just as there are forms of art that become dated there are forms of nature that do the same, and this because our nature is always as much a construct as our art, because our nature is a form of art" (243).

notwithstanding their constitution as linguistic, ideological, cultural artefacts"
(705).

Many Canadian ecocritical works could be called "post-poststructuralist."
For example, Alanna F. Bondar argues, citing Bentley, that contemporary
Canadian poets "attempt to 'bring poetry back to earth'" and "reintegrate[e]
humanity and nature" as a "reaction to modernist and post-modernist movements
which aim towards a 'sublime escape' by employing theoretical strategies ... that
distance the author from the text and the poet from the source" (65). Instead,
taking the perspective of deep ecology, Bondar argues for an "attentive wilderness
connection" that can momentarily allow the ecopoet to glimpse something's
"alien being" and establish a "profound identification with wilderness" (69).
Poetry then performs a "translation" that, while necessarily anthropomorphic,
must attempt to remain "thoughtful," or true to nature (70). This position is
echoed by Marilyn Rose, who states that the attempt to align ourselves with
nature "can never be more than partial, given that the very 'capacity for language-
use possessed by our species cuts us off from the world...'. The best we can hope
for is an intuition of the entity that is our other, and the possibility that its 'traces'
will illuminate our linguistic experience" (55).[20]

Ecocriticism provides new and interesting readings that examine our
relationships with our environments, as well as contributes to the movements
against environmental destruction. However, as we have seen, most ecocritics
either reject or have an ambiguous position to poststructuralism, and I find this
problematic. They see poststructuralism as "a roadblock" (Buell 705), as implying
that there is no environment beyond the text and thereby as refusing scientific
knowledge, the reality of environmental degradation, and any political
engagement with the real. However, those ecocritics who reject or maintain an

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[20] See also Dickinson and Bradley. Dickinson states, "I do not see metaphor as completely
ignoring the referential world" and argues that the figurative language of poets provides "an
attention where perception constantly returns to ... the resonant ways in which matter is
meaningful" (48). Bradley discusses Dennis Lee's "faith in the communicative power of the non-
human world" (24).

ambiguous position to poststructuralism inadvertently partake in interpretive privilege and interpretive stasis.

Interpretive privilege can be seen in one of ecocriticism's main projects, "questioning anthropo-normativity" (Buell 707). Many ecocritics rightly argue that poststructuralism's constructivism is anthropocentric and, thus, imposes human systems on nature. However, as Dana Philips argues there is no "beyond of literature, call it nature or wilderness or ecological community or ecosystem or environment, where deliverance from the constraints of culture, particularly that constraint known as 'theory,' might be found" (585). Because it is impossible to step outside of our discourses and ideologies, those ecocritics who mitigate poststructuralism with some level of faith in an unencumbered access to the real posit their own anthropomorphic constructions as a universal singular truth. As Gregory writes of the landscape school, they overwrite any difference by presenting the environment as "strangely familiar" rather than as "random noise, empty signifiers whirling and clashing" (*Geographical* 150). In other words, ecology, like geography, is not objective, transcendent, and neutral. It, too, reflects dominant ways of seeing the world that can become neutralized.

For example, Bondar sees Don McKay as revisiting "nearly lost primal connections with nature" (65) through a turn to empirical experience arrived at by "living deliberately," a form of experience that "transforms those divisions between self and other into a kind of unity found through profound identification with wilderness" (70).[21] "Wilderness," asserts Bondar, "becomes recognizable on an instinctual level ... not in the mind at all" (82). Not only can "living deliberately" provide revelatory moments that "dismantle traditional dichotomies" and "dissolve the distance between self and 'radical otherness'" (71) in order to experience the "Truths" of nature (82), it can also "seek a wilderness connection unencumbered by guilt and fear" (71). This revelation and reintegration of humanity and nature leads to the "recentering of the enlightened subject, as instigator and agent of change" (67). However, this recentered subject is now armed with an essentialized conception of nature, a single truth, that he or she can

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[21] For a similar reading of Lorna Crozier's poetry, see Rose.

act upon without guilt and fear. As Jenny Kerber states of such readings, "the poet elides his own aesthetic fashioning of nature" (93), and by "making his speech nature's speech," asserts "the Truth of Nature," "the essentiality of capital-'n' 'Nature'" (94). Nature becomes a "trump card that overrides all ongoing conversations of environmental politics and debate" even though "it is often deployed in political ways that hide their own particularity and contingency under the cloak of naturalness" (94). Thus ecocriticism's turn to direct access and to realism exhibits an interpretive privilege that, as Jacob's states of landscape geography, "resonates uncomfortably with the transparency assumed by imperial visioning" (Jacobs 10).

This singular construction of nature and the environment is especially problematic when it becomes associated with the concept of "home."[22] For example, Nicholas Bradley argues that Dennis Lee's *Civil Elegies* is concerned with the concept of home at multiple levels: "civic, national, and ecological" (28). These levels are linked in the text through its ecological vision which "encompasses a concern for wholeness" (28). Lee thus connects city and wilderness as "a committed city dweller possessed of an unusually broad understanding of *home* and of a fine eye for the symptoms of a poisoned environment" (emphasis in original 28). Lee writes, "any man aspires to be at home where he lives" and Bradley argues that "*Civil Elegies* asks whether, in Canada, being at home is in fact possible" (19). "Canadians," Bradley writes, "have betrayed nature as well as their nation," and are "in a state of estrangement," or a dysfunctional home (19). This dysfunctional home is signalled in a quotation Bradley takes from Lee's *Nightwatch*: "the country, my beautiful / gutless Canada, lay back / and spread for a star-spangled buck, / in the time of the great betrayal" (29). However, argues Bradley, Lee indicates "optimism about the possibility of ... the return home" not only in urban and

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[22] For other connections between the environment and home, see Bondar who argues Don McKay takes part in the "process of home-coming or home-making" which "transforms those divisions between self and other into a kind of unity, found through profound identification with wilderness" (70). See also Dickinson who argues that McKay and Jan Zwicky explore "the meaningfulness of things" as "a consequence of being at home" in the physical world (43). Bowen, too, argues that we must recognize "the hinterland wilderness, together with the city, as the home we must inhabit with care" (14).

national terms but especially in ecological terms (19). In fact, "finding *home*," writes Bradley, "is the sole means by which the speaker can participate in an ethical, sustainable relationship with the city and with the planet" (emphasis in original 19). This home is found by "paying close attention to the non-human properties of a particular place" (25). "To be at home in the world is to respond to this difference without assuming human superiority," a response which "tends toward a form of spiritual vision" (25) and "faith in the natural world" (26). This leads to "a more ethical response to" rather than a betrayal of "the natural world" (27). Yet, this construction all too easily slips into a conflation between home and the virtuous, steady woman as can be seen in Lee's image of the nation he wishes to escape where the body politic is an unfaithful woman—promiscuous and open—qualities which are believed to have led to the corruption of the nation and the environment. With such a woman at its core, the house is not a home, not a closed place of comfort and moral certitude. In contrast, the body politic to which Bradley argues Lee struggles to come home to might be figured as the faithful wife. This longing for a home place leaves the gender binary intact. Place, in this construction, is all too easily associated with a patriarchal construction of "woman," who metaphorically represents the nurturing home place and the connection to a redeeming nature that has been lost.

Of course, as Heise asserts, poststructuralist ecocritics who see "nature as a purely discursive construction ... must face the objection that such a view plays into the enemy's hand by obfuscating the material reality of environmental degradation" (512). In facing this objection, I would argue that poststructuralist positions are anything but a-political. Rosendale states that unlike many realist ecocritics, poststructuralist ecocritics see literature "not as a mere cultural adjunct to more important forms of environmental activism but as the primary location where human relationships to the environment can be understood and perhaps altered" (xxviii). For many poststructuralists, the idea is not that nature is "a *purely* discursive construction," as Heise words it, but that it is only through discourse that the environment can be defined and discussed and the human responses to it examined. "All reality, including nature, is discursively

constructed," write Dobrin and Weisser, who "argue not that mountains, rivers, oceans, and the like do not actually exist, but that our only access to such things is through discourse, and that it is through language that we give these things or places particular meanings" (573).[23] Therefore, the poststructuralist examination of language and literature, as two primary locations where we form and modify our understanding, are vital to any politics, including environmental politics.

My examination of Brossard's and Brand's representations of place could be seen as adding to what is currently the minority position of constructionist ecocriticism. It is certainly, as Glotfelty defines ecocriticism, a "study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xviii). However, I have reservations about identifying this thesis as a part of the "ecocritical insurgency" (Buell 699), as doing so would stretch the boundaries of ecocriticism to the point where it would lose its political focus.

This expansion of the field is already occurring and can be seen in the current debates over the boundaries and inclusivity of ecocriticism. For example, Wallace and Armbruster argue that if ecocriticism is the study of literature and the environment, "environment" should include "cultivated and built landscapes, the natural elements and aspects of those landscapes, and cultural interactions with those natural elements" (4), and literature should include "every literary and cultural text" (12). Dobrin and Weisser go even further and argue to open the study of literature and the environment by defining "environments" as not only natural and constructed places but also imagined places and to expand literature to include all discourse including "speaking, writing, and thinking" (572-573). Along with the arguments to expand ecocriticism's subject matter is a move towards expanding its limits as a discipline. In some cases, this expansion is to the point where it would become an all-inclusive metadiscipline. For example, Levin sees ecocriticism as a means to bring together the sciences (social and natural) and the humanities. Desiring such an all-inclusive perspective, he asks "What

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[23] Lousley also writes, "while there might be an ontological category 'nature,' a physical reality outside our knowledge systems, we can only access and know this nature through social constructs, whether science or aesthetics, (*sic*) thus in practice there can be no separation of ontology from epistemology" (340).

middle ground is available to the critic who would understand the dynamic and elusive relation between nature and culture? Is there *a criticism* that will do full justice to the natural world and to the social and cultural contexts that shape our relationship to that world?" (emphasis added, "Beyond" 186). This desire for disciplinary inclusivity stems from two perspectives. First, nature and culture can be brought together in such a way only when they are first separated and there is a belief in access to nature outside of culture. Second, this desire for inclusivity perhaps stems from an emphasis on certain ecological theories. Following Barry Commoner's "first law of ecology" that "everything is connected to everything else," many ecocritics posit the interdependence of all things which makes the call for an inclusive discipline understandable (Qtd in Glotfelty xix). Following this formulation, rather than opening to unpredictability and multiplicity, they turn to a single community or system. For example, Louise Westling argues that ecocriticism needs to articulate "an ecological humanism" that "must define human consciousness and action within an enormously complex, interdependent community of life on earth" (1103-1104).[24]

Critics on the other side of the debate, such as Buell, wonder "whether the category of 'ecocriticism' is ... infinitely ductile or else so porous as to amount to nothing more than an empty signifier" (702). They argue for disciplinary boundaries. While for some, the boundary around ecocriticism is connected to the field's crossover between the humanities and the sciences,[25] for most, consensus is created through the political goal of understanding and reversing environmental crises. As Heise writes, "ecocriticism coheres more by virtue of a common

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[24] See also Arnold, who claims, "if a mysterious nature resides outside our expanding human knowledge, the natural and cultural whole we do not understand must be seen for the enclosed system that it is" (1090), Bradley, who insists "on the interconnectedness of all things" (21) and sees his "ecological vision" as "extend[ing] beyond a regard and compassion for the natural world and encompasses a concern for wholeness" (28), Bondar, who calls for a "biotic community" or "that embracing biosphere that considers all sentient and perceived non-sentient members in respectful partnership" (76), and Rose who argues that the lyric's "object is to 'form a community' ... which is, in effect, an 'ecosystem' in which all parts are of equal value in the functioning of the whole" (55).

[25] See Buell who states that the "major focus of ecocritical work" is "the question of the pertinence of scientific models of inquiry to literary studies" (706). As well, Levin argues that what is "most distinctive about ecocriticism" is "its fuller understanding and appreciation of natural processes, whether thriving or in some sort of crisis" ("Beyond" 185).

political project than on the basis of shared theoretical and methodological assumptions" (506). Simon C. Estok also argues that the field distinguishes itself "first by the ethical stand it takes, its commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than simply an object of thematic study" ("Report" n.p.). Again, many Canadian ecocritics associate their work with the political and ethical response to environmental crises,[26] implying a general belief in the connection between ecocriticism and environmental politics.

While it is important that the subject matter of ecocriticism be expanded to include all kinds of environments, for example urban, pastoral, domestic or corporate, I agree with those who argue that ecocriticism as a critical discipline is best served by establishing boundaries. Ecocriticism is often compared to feminism,[27] and just as not all studies of women are feminist (as Virginia Woolf demonstrates in *A Room of One's Own)*, not all studies of place are ecocritical. As Buell states, "self-identified ecocritics by no means have a monopoly on place theory" (712). Among others, he lists Patricia Yaeger, Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Doreen Massey as scholars "who have done particularly important work on place theory upon which environmentally-valenced literary scholarship has been drawing" but that are not ecocritical in their own right (712). Instead of expanding ecocriticism into an all-encompassing discipline, I argue ecocriticism should be seen as an important part of a multi-disciplinary perspective. Such a perspective, argues Buell, forgoes "consensus" for "liveliness" (Buell, "Forum" 1091). [28] It keeps ecocriticism's political and ethical focus and allows for

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[26] See Bondar (81), Kerber (92), Bentley, Bradley (14-19), Wiens (98), Dickinson (48-49), and Huggan, "Greening" (702)

[27] For example, Glotfelty writes, "just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective ... ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (xviii).

[28] This multi-voiced perspective, it can be argued, is actually more in line with contemporary ecology than is interconnectedness and inclusivity. Heise argues that the focus on ecology "has opened the way for a holistic understanding of how natural systems work as vast interconnected webs that, if left to themselves, tend toward stability, harmony, and self-regeneration" (509-510). However, "holistic notions of universal connectedness, stability, and harmony had lost much of their credibility" by the 1960s when ecosystems came to be seen as "dynamic, perpetually changing, and often far from stable or balanced" (512). Dana Phillips argues that contemporary sciences such as ecology emphasize "indeterminism, instability, and constant change" and "might be said to be more like poststructuralism and less like the sort of values-rich, restorative, and recuperative discourse ecocritics have imagined it to be" (580).

coevality and dissensus. [29] Finally, while I believe such a political and ethical focus is important, neither my methodology nor the works by Brossard and Brand that are under consideration here address the environment in this way. Thus to include this thesis within the field of ecocriticism would be to stretch the limits of the discipline and dilute its political force.

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Another relatively recent and similar approach to the study of place is ecofeminism. Karen J. Warren defines ecofeminism as "the position that there are important connections between how one treats women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other" (xi). Building on Warren's work, Catherine Villanueva Gardner argues that ecofeminism's focus is "on exposing and revising the conceptual framework that sanctions the joint subordination of women and nature" and, in particular, on examining Enlightenment binary thought that opposes mind to body, man to woman, human to nature, and rational to emotional (193).

As with ecocriticism, ecofeminist analyses can be positioned along the realist/constructionist continuum. For example, Diana Relke's *Greenwor(l)ds: Ecocritical Readings of Canadian Women's Poetry*, like most ecocriticism, could be located somewhere between these two poles. Relke presents a valuable ecofeminist analysis of texts by Canadian women. As Alison Calder writes, Relke correctly argues "that the Canadian literary tradition has been retrospectively constructed to endorse the nature/culture opposition and so to exclude women poets" and that "it is possible to support Northrop Frye's theory that Canadian poetry is marked by a 'deep terror' of nature only if the writings of the women

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[29] A similar argument is made on a smaller scale by Susie O'Brien who argues against the conflation of ecocriticism and postcolonialism. (For an example of such a call to join ecocriticism and postcolonialism, see Huggan's "The Greening of Postcolonialism.") She argues that both postcolonialism and ecocriticism are concerned with "the material contexts and consequences of representation" ("Articulating" n.p.). However, the two fields are engaged with these questions in different ways: "While the world, in postcolonial terms, comprises the political and economic structures that shape and are shaped by culture, ecocriticism focuses on the interface between culture and the physical environment" ("Articulating" n.p.). While the two disciplines have strong connections, the danger in merging them into "a new 'world' literary theory" is that "the ethical commitment of both to the articulation of complexity … will be sacrificed to the compulsion towards economic and/or aesthetic resolution and conquest" ("Articulating" n.p.).

poets she discusses are ignored" ("Reading" 233). However, in the process of making her argument, Relke rejects postmodernism and poststructuralism and turns instead to a direct, albeit mediated, access to the real, which, she asserts, is more readily available to women.

Postmodernism, for Relke, is a crisis that denies coherence and unity and strips both women and nature of any stable identity so that they become "merely discursive categories" (22). She follows Bentley's assertion that poststructuralism dislocates literature from any "physical, emotional and moral contexts" (26), and argues that postmodernism "confirms the death of nature" because it sees nature as strictly semiotic, "a cultural construction" (22). Thus postmodernism "has liberated poets from responsibility for the green biomass that supports human life because that biomass is beyond the reach of accurate linguistic representation. The poet's material reality is confined to ink upon paper, and s/he is responsible only to poetic language" (22). Consequently, she softens poststructuralism with a belief in access to the real. She asserts that there is a reciprocal connection between "text and context" (26), and that "language may stand between us and ["a reality external to our constructions of it"] but it also connects us to it" (201). Therefore, although it is important to examine the ways in which scientific and literary discourse have "disconnected us from nature" so too is the examination of "how discourse connects us to it" (23). Relke argues that this connection can be found most often in texts written by women. These texts explore "the alternative myths of nature evident in the poetry of women, myths that acknowledge a two-way relationship between text and context" (26).[30]

The difficulty with this kind of approach is that it leads to interpretive privilege and stasis as it essentializes both women and nature. As Catherine Villanueva Gardner points out, beneath any such claim of a feminine connection with nature is also the assumption that there is "some kind of unified woman's

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[30] Alanna Bondar also posits a mediated access to the real and also argues for a more authentic connection between women and nature. She sees Don McKay as "mov[ing] away from deep ecological principles and lean[ing] more towards ecofeminist philosophies" (70). She writes, "like ecofeminists who call for a 'practical essentialism' as a means of revisioning the female-nature link from a feminine perspective, so McKay investigates origin poetry that resituates the body within wilderness" (75).

experience of, or connection with nature" which "ignore[s] differences between women" (201). Further, argues Gardner, "the meaning of 'nature' and 'the environment' ... are no more biological facts than 'woman' .... Our concept of 'nature' is neither universal nor timeless" (202).[31] There can be no deep-seated connection between woman and nature because there is no unchanging essential nature with which to connect nor is there an essential woman that can do so.

At the end of her introduction, Relke notes that she is critiquing "orthodox postmodernism," which for her is a postmodernism that is complicit with the master narratives it critiques because it does not valorize any difference and therefore does not offer "a program for change" (37). However, her use of the term "orthodox postmodernism" implies there are other postmodernisms (37). I would agree and turn to postmodernisms which do not deny any valorization of difference but instead allow for multiple discursive constructions of place and for multiple, often conflicting, valorizations of differences.

In fact, there are strong arguments for the political and ethical ramifications of the postmodern turn in Canadian literature. Herb Wyile identifies two kinds of postmodernism. In the first, postmodernism's "formalistic qualities" of "self-referentiality and anti-representationalism" lead to "the self-containment of art" which combined with "its reproduction of the impulses of commodity culture" makes this "post-modernism quite compatible, even complicit, with the homogenizing global culture of late capitalism" ("Writing" 15-16). This type seems to correspond to Relke's orthodox postmodernism. The second type is critical rather than complicit. Wyile writes, "if post-modernist art foregrounds the importance of construction—whether subjective, artistic, or social—it can do so in a politically disengaged way that reflects and perpetuates commodity culture .... But it can also provide … the means to a 'new engagement with the social and historical world'" (16). This postmodernism derives from "post-structuralist

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[31] Ursula Heise confirms the non-universality of "nature," writing that "some cultures," particularly European-Americans, "see nature most clearly manifested in wilderness untouched by human-kind, but for others nature includes cultivated rural areas, and in yet other cases it also encompasses a historical heritage of monuments and buildings" ("Forum" 1097). Further, these constructions of nature change over time. For example, William Cronon historicizes the construction of nature for European-Americans as it shifts from a God-forsaken desert, to a new Eden, and finally to a tourist attraction and place of retreat.

theory's concern with the construction of meaning and the encoding of power relations in conventions of discourse" and leads to "the appearance of previously disenfranchised or marginalized voices" (13). It is characterized by "fragmentation, heterogeneity, and centrifugal tensions" as well as by "a cultural revolution challenging the centralization of cultural power" (15).

      Much of Canadian postmodernism fits into this second category.[32] Claire Omhovère argues that it has "a political cutting edge" as it is concerned with "the questioning and rewriting of Western master narratives to accommodate the diverging vision of the disenfranchised or the eccentric" ("Poetics" 347). This "radical dimension" makes it, as Omhovère states, "quite immune to the accusations of playful vacuity frequently levelled against postmodern literature, particularly in the U.S." (348). In relation to literary place studies, as Omhovère argues, "it would be reductive ... to limit the significance of the Canadian topocentrism to the idle game with exhausted mimetic forms some associate with a postmodernism that has run to the end of its tether" (356).

      In other words, postmodernism, as Fredric Jameson subtitles his influential essay, *is* "the cultural logic of late capitalism," but it is also a location for resistance, particularly in its Canadian context where its refusal of any metanarrative or unmediated knowledge of space and place is not a crisis but can be seen as an opening onto difference and multiplicity. [33] In this way, as Heidi

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[32] See also Russell Morton Brown. For Brown, Canadian postmodernism posits a counter discourse that "does not strive to negate and thereby be rid of a threatening hegemonic narrative ... but instead seeks to counter ... exclusiveness with a literary form of mythic inclusiveness that is simultaneously generous *and* disruptive" (emphasis in original, "Robert" 123).

[33] It should also be noted that postmodernism's recognition that there can be no direct access to or true representation of the world does not itself release us from a sense of responsibility for that world. We should not only feel responsible for nature when we feel we can converse with it, speak for it, or directly know it on some level, all of which reduce nature to our understanding and overwrite difference. As William Cronon writes, it is:

> crucial for us to recognize and honor nonhuman nature as a world we did not create, a world with its own independent, nonhuman reasons for being as it is. The autonomy of nonhuman nature [is]... an indispensible corrective to human arrogance. Any way of looking at nature that helps us remember ... that the interests of people are not necessarily identical to those of every other creature or of the earth itself is likely to foster *responsible* behaviour. (emphasis in original 87)

Graham Huggan also argues that we should not attempt to make people care about nature by making it seem human. Instead, people need to care about nature *because* it is other ("Greening" 718). Such a perspective is one way of practicing a relational, outwardlooking subjectivity.

Slettedahl Macpherson argues, the postmodern can lead to a revaluation of women's discourse (92).

Counter to Relke, Cheryl Lousley examines Canadian prairie literature from a constructivist ecofeminist perspective. For her, "particular forms of 'nature' ... represent the desires of particular social groups embedded in sociohistorical relations of power with other people and animals," and "poststructuralist critiques ... challenge notions of an authentic, knowable nature 'out there' of which we may have direct experience unmediated by culture, technology, or social relations of power and privilege" (322). Consequently, she argues that we need to "consider how sociocultural histories and geographies shape 'nature writing' and how 'writing nature' involves particular exclusions, historical erasures, and representations of Others, human and nonhuman" (319). Specifically, she is concerned with examining how nature is constructed as "home" and wants to add "'nature' to the dimensions of 'home'—body, domestic space, community, nation—unsettled by postcolonial and feminist theorists" and to question "the 'nature' too often unproblematically written as 'home' by nature writers and ecocritics alike" (319). To do so, she turns to Doreen Massey's critique of 'home' and 'place.' Massey argues that these concepts act as "a source of belonging, identity, and security" and are at the foundation of numerous discourses that attempt to stall the space-time dynamic (321). To these discourses, Lousley adds "the discourse of environmentalism," which has "attempted to fix and contain the meaning of 'nature' as an authentic, original essence/place untainted by human touch; an essence/place to which we may refer or go for ecologically, and possibly even spiritually, redeeming values and experiences" (321). Thus she considers "the politics of writing nature, place, and identity in the quasi-autobiographical prairie writing of three Canadian women" and shows how "these writers are positioned quite differently in relation to the natural and social landscape of their (shared?) 'prairie home' on account of historical relations of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and gender" (320). She concludes that there is no single "prairie" and can be no recourse to a shared home in nature. There is, she writes, no "possibility of defining such a place, especially in terms of the prairie

landscape or a particular 'prairie identity,' except in relation to various sociohistorical relations and discourses" (338).

As with ecocriticism, there is a crossover between ecofeminism and this thesis. Both are concerned with examining the subordinating connection between non-dominant groups, especially women, and the environment as well as with examining binary thought in general. Further, poststructuralist ecofeminism rejects essentialist notions of nature and identity, and in the case of Lousley, also argues for multiple constructions of place. However, as with ecocriticism, much ecofeminist work is concerned with the ramifications of our representations of place on nature and the environment and such a focus does not apply to my examination of works by Brand and Brossard. In the case of Lousley, one of her main goals is, like open regionalism, to demonstrate that place and place-based identity must be multiplied in relation to "various socio-historical relations and discourses" (338). This thesis takes such an assertion as its starting point and goes on to examine how writers such as Brossard and Brand represent place in general as multiple, or as a "noplace," through the deployment of utopian discourse in their texts.

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Another recent turn in Canadian literary place studies has been to what I call discursive literary place studies, or the study of the language of place. Once again, these studies can be divided by their relationship to representation: those that see representation as mimetic and those that see it as constructive. Claire Omhovère's work on Canadian landscape writing provides an example of mimetic discursive place studies. Omhovère examines the relationship between geography and language. She argues that the writers she examines "devise a chorology" and create "an inventory of the traits which define Cape Breton, the Battle River Valley, the Ontario Shield country, the subarctic Barrens, or Banff's glacial site as unique and remarkable," and, in order to do so, they use "physical geography to alter and renovate the conventions of landscape writing" (*Sensing* 161-162). In other words, with changes in landscape come changes in convention and language as subjects respond to the uniqueness of place. These renovations are done

through "geographical troping" which "reshuffles semantic paradigms, and ultimately reconfigures categories of meaning" (*Sensing* 163). Rather than basing such troping on the various discourses to which a non-coherent subject has access, she bases it on moments of direct access to a never before encountered reality. She finds that Canadian literature has an "ongoing preoccupation with the bedrock of reality" and with "elevat[ing] it to language" (*Sensing* 164) and that "the creative imagination receives an imprint from geography whenever its space is read for the signifiers that will grant the subject an existence as a distinct interpreter" ("Melting" 57).

As does this thesis, Omhovère locates her work within "the changes that have affected geography in the past decades" (*Sensing* 36), but her summary of cultural geography ends with the landscape school. From here she skips over postmodern geographers such as Derek Gregory, Jane Jacobs and Doreen Massey, and turns from "systematic methods" which separate subject from object to "responsive methods" and to phenomenological geography, which posits "the double articulation between mankind and the earth, each one shaping and being shaped by the other" (*Sensing* 33). Geographical troping, she argues, challenges the distinction between "living beings and the *ecumene*" so that landscape becomes a "cultural area where the separation between perceiving subjectivity and objectified reality cannot be upheld" ("Poetics" 349). In other words, "the analytical separation between subject and object is no longer stable, even reliable" (*Sensing* 163). Her "double articulation between mankind and the earth" thus differs from Massey's concept of a double articulation in that while Massey's "place" also articulates us, it is itself always constructed.

Because of her ambivalent relationship to poststructuralism, Omhovère posits a kind of interpretive privilege where geographical communities have a direct access to reality which creates a coherent, although dynamic, landscape and identity. For Omhovère, landscapes not only are created through momentary access to the uniqueness of the real but "also contribute to fashioning communities of feeling" ("Poetics" 350). They function as "rhetorical operations" that "ensure the adhesion of any 'reading constituency'" ("Poetics" 352). The

narrative "conversion of geography into poetic material," she argues, can "enlarge, consolidate or transform communities of interest" and contribute to "adhesion to place" ("Poetics" 353). Unlike coherent regionalism or much thematic criticism, any place can support a number of geographical communities of interest, yet space is still seen as a surface. Place may be landscaped in various ways by different groups but these landscapes are still coherent communal constructions based on a belief in direct access. Further, although landscapes and the groups connected to them change over time, such change is driven by changes in geography not social relations and politics.

   W.H. New's *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing* provides an example of non-mimetic discursive place studies. New differentiates his study from those, such as the thematic critics', who have "encapsulated a collective Canadian identity in land-based metaphors" and who assumed "the land is a 'neutral image' for a distinctive national character" that is "by definition fixed" (17). Instead, he extends the work of landscape geographers such as Denis Cosgrove to a study of the language of the land (9). In particular, he is interested in Cosgrove's description of the landscape in *Social Formations and the Symbolic Landscape* as a "discursive terrain across which the struggle between the different, often hostile, codes of meaning construction has been engaged" and notes that "the dialectical relation is figured ... as a form of military combat" (9). To read the landscape as discursive, he asserts, is "to draw on the extensive semiotic theory that sees *text* as a *ground* of contestation" (emphasis in original 9). "What then," he asks, "about the reading of the language of land (that is the words that express the idea of 'land' and attempt to represent it, as distinct from the idea of reading-the-landscape, or treating the land itself as (*sic*) kind of language, or word)" (10)? In particular, New is interested in "some of the social functions of literary language in Anglophone Canada: the way it embodies (and so reveals) social presumptions; the way it works unconventionally to reject social presumptions; the way it criticizes, validates, or sometimes seeks to be neutral; the way it resists uniformity" (17). Land and its depiction not only reveal the *status quo* but can also function as "the *space* or *place* or *site* of challenge to the

accustomed borders of power" and all can use land-based metaphors to "express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction" with authority (6). To this end, his is a study of "how, inside a social context, land-language *slides*" (emphasis in original 17). New, like Jane Jacobs and Derek Gregory, rejects the "interpretive stasis" of the landscape geographers (*Geographical* 146) and examines language and its various constructions of the land as in process. As does Omhovère, he sees our representations of place as changing over time; however, unlike Omhovère's, his shifts in place occur through the dialectical coming together of social constructions of the environment and not because of shifts in the environment which is being perceived. However, he narrows this process overall to "two forms of language" (212), the received and the vernacular, and these continually come together from opposite positions in a kind of combat over power and domination. He writes, "because the language of literature ... can be a medium of resistance as well as a medium that passively confirms the status quo, cultural values—and the particular forms through which they are expressed—do change" (18). Thus, New writes in his introduction that his concern is "to explain how various configurations of the land ... question or confirm configurations of power" (5), and argues in his conclusion that "literature in Canada has recurrently used a 'land' discourse while probing a contrast between received language and vernacular language, and ... this contrast in turn articulates a shifting contact line between groups that hold and assert power and those that don't but want to" (212).

New's examination is constructionist and dynamic; however, it is still based on the idea of a single space moving through a single time. It supports Barbara Godard's assertion that Canadian literary criticism is increasingly "denaturalizing the relation between literature, language, and territory" ("Notes" n.p.). However, as Godard states, such criticism still reads literature "synecdochically to take the pulse of the nation, though it is posited as imagined rather than geophysical space" ("Notes" n.p.). Signalling his concern with nation, New is primarily concerned with the temporal changes of a single culture—the dominant—and states, "these essays ... deal primarily with the schooled values

and the dominant forms of culture in Canada" (18). This focus on the nation results in a singular space that changes through time. Such a space-time can be seen in New's emphasis on conflict, which results in what David Harvey describes as an "either/or dialectic" and a "succession" of "existential or political choices" (174). Further, his either/or dialectic is founded on the assumption of two broadly coherent identities. Chalykoff argues that his broad division between "insiders" and "outsiders" assumes a certain "social coherence" (175) that "effaces important particularities" (174). In other words, while New's perspective is constructivist, it broadly posits two languages (received and vernacular) and two identities (centre and margin) in struggle over the transformations of one history and one space.

These discursive place studies need to be opened up in order to be applied to texts by authors, such as Brossard and Brand, who depict space as the condition for multiple interrelations, who understand time as multiple, and who see place as constructed, dynamic and heterotopic. New's vision can be expanded if we shift our spatial imagination and instead of seeing the language and construction of the land as subject to a binary struggle in an either-or dialectic, we see them as multiple. Instead of always seeing a single combative either/or dialectic, we would open to the coeval. This more complex geographical imagination allows us to comprehend multiple articulations of place in various shifting struggles and alliances, or not. We could recognize multiple differences and "simultaneously emphasize the basis for potential solidarities" (Massey, *Space* 8).[34]

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[34] Barbara Godard ends in a similar argument. She argues that in order to "find a line of escape from the dialogue among communities that overlooks the history of their radical asymmetries in a too easily affirmed consensus," we must "recognize the material reality of difference" ("Notes" n.p.). She calls for "a disjunctive temporality" and "a community of dissensus" rather than "consensus" ("Notes" n.p.). Dissensus counters the tendency to consensus and binary self-other social relations. As a "logic of relations" it "attends to one's positioning and obligations in respect to history not by seeking consensus but by stretching toward the horizon of the differend, the heteronomous, the incommensurable" and "posits the social bond as a question rather than as self-legitimating, as one of competing differences" ("Notes" n.p.) Ethics then bind "to this historical condition rather than to an other, so this contingent community escapes structuring by the opposition of inclusion to exclusion" and "foregrounds the relations of power, the violence, attending any coming together" ("Notes" n.p.). Dissensus results in an outwardlooking subject and an "open dialogue rather than defensive inwardness" ("Notes" n.p.).

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A similar approach to literary place studies can be found in what I call Canadian cartographic place studies, or criticism that focuses on the places constructed through the literary representation of maps. Examining maps in a colonial context, Graham Huggan argues that they are "exemplars of, and therefore provide a framework for the critique of, colonial discourse" as rhetorical strategies in cartography such as "the reinscription, enclosure and hierarchization of space" are analogous to "the acquisition, management and reinforcement of colonial power" ("Decolonizing" 115). Cartography is also connected to colonialism through its claim to faithfully reconstruct the geographical environment (116). Mimesis, he argues, serves colonial discourse because the representation of reality it endorses is "the representation of a particular kind or view of reality: that of the West" (116). Its "imitative operations" attempt to stabilize "a falsely essentialist view of the world" and suppress alternatives (116). However, when what appears to be a coherent totality is instead understood as "a manifestation of the desire for control," the map becomes a "proposition rather than a statement of fact" (117) and can be deconstructed to demonstrate "blind spots" or that which has been left out (118). These "blind spots" "identify the map's supposedly 'universal' mode of representation as a set of rhetorical strategies," open both place and maps to being read in alternative ways, and enable "the exercise of cultural critique and, in particular, the exposure of and resistance to forms of cultural domination" (122).

This deconstructionist perspective on the map is employed in a feminist framework in Marlene Goldman's *Paths of Desire: Images of Exploration and Mapping in Canadian Women's Writing*. Goldman observes that "many women writers are actively struggling with the problem of representing female subjectivity within the linguistic terrain" and that as a response they "invoke images of exploration and cartography to signal their interest in recoding traditional representations of female identity" (3). Because "inscriptions, whether cartographic or literary, are never entirely coherent," Canadian women writers can, she argues, "resist the ideological weight of colonization and imperialism

through deconstructive readings of their repressive discourses" (14-15). These readings "expose the 'blind spots'" found on patriarchal maps and open space to "generate alternative perspectives that were eclipsed by established discourses claiming to represent the Truth about female identity" (15). The texts she examines deploy cartographic images in order "to portray both women's position within a set of traditional discourses and attempt to chart alternative representations of female identity" (6).

However, Goldman, following Fredric Jameson, writes that "the confusion generated by postmodern culture and the rifts caused by differences in gender, race, and class continually force [Canadians] to redefine our identity and ask ourselves, yet again, "Where is here?'" (11). Like Jameson, she sees postmodernism as having generated "confusion" and "rifts" and desires "a practical solution to the contemporary social and cultural upheaval we are experiencing" (12). Goldman and Jameson, then, both call for "cognitive maps" and "the practical reconquest of a sense of place" (Goldman 18).

In "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," Jameson calls for an aesthetic of cognitive mapping because, he argues, it has become impossible to represent the totality, which leads to the loss of intentionality and any form of political agency (92). It is, he asserts, "not that we cannot know the world and its totality in some abstract 'scientific' way," but that "it is unrepresentable, which is a different matter" (91). According to him, there is always a "gap" between "existential experience and scientific knowledge" and one role of ideology is to bridge, or reconcile, the two. However, in the current era, this reconciliation has become impossible, leading to the current postmodern "crisis" (91).

To explain this crisis and the use of his term "cognitive maps," Jameson detours through a brief history of cartography. He observes that the invention of the compass introduced a "relationship to the totality" that was not previously available to those who created "itineraries" or *portulans* based on "the still subject-centred or existential journey of the traveller" (90). The compass joined "existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract

conceptions of the geographic totality" (90). This relationship to totality was represented by the cartographic maps that evolved from the earlier sea charts. This unity was soon disturbed by a crisis of representation when it was realized that the world was round which resulted in "the unresolvable dilemma of the transfer of curved space to flat charts" and the realization that "there can be no true maps" (90). For Jameson, this historical moment is comparable to the postmodern condition where we know the late capitalist world and its totality abstractly but cannot yet represent it (91). Representation would bridge the gap between abstract knowledge and lived experience and allow us to once again locate ourselves in relation to the whole and to act in informed and intentional ways. Cartography solved the fifteenth-century crisis of representation with the globe (90), and Jameson calls for a similar reconciliation through aesthetic representation that will "endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of place in the global system" which is now "enormously complex" (92). Jameson concludes:

> The new political art—if it is indeed possible at all—will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object—the world space of multinational capital—at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as social confusion. The political form of postmodernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as a spatial scale. (92)

Jameson sees postmodern "confusion" and the lack of representation of any totality as negating any political solidarity or agency and with it any intentionality. Without a representation of the totality, "we fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable" (57).

These calls for cognitive maps, however, are calls to return to a narrowed and thus representable conception of space (and time). In the image of postmodernism creating "confusion" and in the word "rifts" is the implication that there was at some time a mappable whole to which we should return. As Jane Jacobs notes, in a postcolonial world, "spaces of Otherness are increasingly hard to incorporate into cohesive visualizations such as those proposed by Jameson" (34). Jameson's cognitive map, she argues, "is nostalgically imperial" and anyway impossible as "the disordered geographies of the present are no longer available for the 'critical distance' which precedes the map" (34). As Jacobs argues, there can no longer be any recourse to a singular global system, and as we will see in the discussion of Mannheim's paradox in chapter two, there cannot be any non-ideological, transcendent perspective from which to construct a single map or globe. In fact, I would extend Jacobs' criticism of Jameson by arguing that it is not that there can *no longer* be a "cohesive visualization" of global space, but that there never was. As is demonstrated by texts such as Jay Levenson's *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* and David Turnbull's *Maps are Territories*, there have always been multiple ways to "map" or represent place. In particular, Levenson's text demonstrates the various representations of place that were practiced in the Fifteenth Century when, as Jameson points out, the globe was invented.

What if we change Goldman's imagination of "generating confusion" to "revealing the overwhelming" and "rifts" to "multiples"? Instead of negative fragmentation, we would have alterity and, moreover, an alterity that is not limited to the present era. Instead of a crisis that needs to be solved, we could have a recognition of the dynamic multiplicity of space-time which has always been present although repeatedly "tame[d]" (Massey *For* 20). Place, or "here," would become "where spatial narratives meet up or form configurations, conjunctures of trajectories which have their own temporalities (so 'now' is as problematical as 'here')" (Massey, *For* 139). This place cannot be represented by Western cartographic discourse.

Graham Huggan's cartographic criticism comes closer to just such a perspective. He moves beyond deconstructing maps of power to reconstructing or interpreting maps in ways that figure place as multiple and shifting (123). Rather than a totalizing representation, the map "becomes a locus of productive dissimilarity" and "provisional connections" which "indicates a shift of emphasis away from the desire for homogeneity towards an acceptance of diversity" (124). Postcolonial Canadian writing, he argues, advocates a cartographic discourse "whose flexible cross-cultural patterns not only counteract the monolithic conventions of the West but revision the map itself as the expression of a shifting ground between alternative metaphors rather than as the approximate representation of a 'literal truth'" (125). This map is "open" rather than "closed" (126). In other words, the concern is no longer on filling in the blind spots and further refining colonial representation in order to reveal the totality, but is on opening onto multiple ways of interpreting maps in order to reveal multiple constructions of space and place. These "creative revisions" "register the transition from a colonial framework within which the writer is compelled to recreate and reflect upon the restriction of colonial space to a post-colonial one within which he or she acquires the freedom to engage in a series of 'territorial disputes'" (128).

Huggan's conceptions of space and place are similar to those presented here. This thesis does, at times, discuss Brand's and Brossard's deployment of cartographic discourse in ways that draw directly on Huggan's work. In fact, Huggan discusses Brossard's work as an example of his territorial disputes (125-126). Yet, overall, in Brossard's and Brand's texts, discussions of cartography take up relatively little space, and in Brand's *A Map to the Door of No Return*, where cartography is a major theme, Brand moves beyond providing alternative interpretations of colonial cartography and explores alternate ways of representing place. Additionally, this thesis expands on cartographic criticism by demonstrating similar conceptions of space and place are figured more broadly through the deployment of utopian discourse.

* * *

In summary, this thesis sets itself apart from the emphases on realism, direct access, environmental determinism, geographically shared mental constructions, and/or totalizing constructions that can be found in thematic criticism, coherent regionalism, realist ecocriticism, realist ecofeminism, mimetic discursive and totalizing cartographic place studies because such emphases narrow space-time, posit place as cohesive and/or identity as singular (whether global, national, regional, or communal). They construct place in ways that sometimes support and often replicate the power structure of dominant groups.

On the other hand, this thesis shares the emphases on place as constructed, multiple, and dynamic which are found in open regionalism, constructionist ecocriticism, constructionist ecofeminism, non-mimetic discursive place studies and non-totalizing cartographic criticism. These fields posit space as heterogeneous, time as multiple, and place as heterotopic, which allows for multiple constructions of nature, women, and colonial peoples, and counters the association of women and colonial peoples with any static, a-political home place by revealing such a place to be a myth. However, this thesis expands on these fields in the following ways. It removes such a construction of place from any specific region and focuses instead on the construction of utopian noplaces. In addition, while it shares the same broad subject matter (the connection between literature and the environment) and poststructuralist methodology as constructionist ecocriticism and ecofeminism, it differs in its focus. While ecocriticism and ecofeminism are primarily politically and ethically concerned with the effects of representations of place on the environment, this is not a primary concern in the texts examined here. Also, this thesis shares W. H. New's representation of place as multiply and discursively constructed and in continual process, but whereas New turns to landscape geography's focus on the either/or dialectical struggle for the dominant construction of place, this thesis turns to postmodern geography's focus on multiple histories and constructions of place in various positions of alliance or struggle, or not. Finally, the texts examined here share non-mimetic cartographic criticism's concern with moving beyond any totalizing cartographic representation of place towards reinterpreting maps in

order to present place as multiple and shifting. Yet, this thesis extends such a perspective by moving beyond re-interpreting colonial maps to presenting alternative ways of organizing space and by demonstrating how such a geographical imagination can be expressed through deploying utopian discourse.

* * *

Such a geographical imagination and its connection to space-time is most fully elaborated on in the works of Doreen Massey. However, Massey fully embraces what Derek Gregory sees as postmodernism's "war on totality" and "celebrates" the "unrepresentable" postmodern sublime (*Geographical* 143). Thus, she is adamant that the space-time dynamic is unrepresentable and desires to permanently sever space and place from representation. She observes that over and over again representation and conceptualization are "conceived as spatialisation" (*For* 20). This is then followed by a "slippage" whereby "the characteristics thus derived have come to be attributed to space itself" (20). For example, explains Massey, in countering empty time, or "a time where there is no evolution but merely succession, a time of a multiplicity of discrete things," Henri Bergson turned to "continuous difference," to "evolution rather than succession" (21-22). He argues that time as a continuum cannot be divided into a series of discrete instants. Because time is evolutionary, these slices are seen to be impossible: "static time-slices even to infinity, cannot produce becoming" (23). According to Massey, his focus on time, however, results in opposing time to space, depriving space of any dynamism, and identifying it with representation (21). Bergson assumed "the instantaneous slice through time" was static and called it "spatial" and space became equated with a static discrete multiplicity (23).

Massey turns Bergson's argument around noting that since these slices of timeless space are impossible "the space that comes to be defined [through them]... must likewise be impossible" (23). She contends:

> The slide here from spatialisation as an activity to space as a dimension is
> crucial. Representation is seen to take on aspects of spatial*isation* in the
> latter's action of setting things down side by side; of laying them out as a

discrete simultaneity. But representation is also in this argument understood as fixing things, taking the time out of them. The equation of spatialisation with the production of "space" thus lends to space not only the character of a discrete multiplicity but also the characteristic of stasis. (23)

To Bergson's conception of space as "a discrete multiplicity *without duration*," Massey responds, "a dynamic simultaneity would be a conception quite different from a frozen instant" (23). This image of a dynamic simultaneity is what she calls "the dimension of multiple trajectories, a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (24).

Massey sees two arguments in these conflations of space with representation: "First, the argument that representation necessarily fixes and therefore deadens and detracts from the flow of life; and second, that the product of this process of deadening is space" (26). Of the second argument, she contends that what is fixed in representation is not only time but also space or space-time. As for the argument that representation fixes the flow of life, she states she does not dispute it (26). Seeing representation as static and fixed, she insists that "space itself … far from being the equivalent to representation, must be *un*representable" (28). Massey's goal is "to liberate space from some chains of meaning (which embed it with *closure* and *stasis*, or with *science*, *writing*, and *representation*) and which have all but choked it to death, in order to set it into other chains (… alongside *openness*, and *heterogeneity*, and *liveliness*) where it can have a new and more productive life" (19). But does representation always have to be conflated with the a-political space-time of closure and stasis? What about seeing texts and representation as constructed and produced, as open, heterogeneous, and lively themselves? Instead of severing space from representation, what if we associate space with these kinds of representations?

In her discussion of deconstruction in *For Space*, Massey alludes to this kind of connection but never expands on it, preferring to keep space as separated from representation as possible. She acknowledges theories that see representation as "an activity, a practice, an embedded engagement *in* the world" and "as an open disseminatory network" constructed out of various and conflicting

ideological adherences (28). In this vein, just as "the text has been destabilized in literary theory so space might be destabilized in geography" (29). As we have seen, this idea has lead geographers such as James and Nancy Duncan and Denis Cosgrove to deconstruct landscapes. This, Massey agrees, "chimes well with the critique of place as internally coherent and bounded" (50). However, she calls for a shift in perspective from "an imagination of a textuality *at which one looks*," such as the perspective of the landscape geographers, "towards recognizing one's place *within* continuous and multiple processes of emergence" (emphasis in original 54). Instead of the "the world," here defined as "space-time," being "like a text," she posits that perhaps what is needed is "a text" that "is just like the rest of the world" (54). In other words, rather than seeing the world as a constructed object or text that can be observed and whose coherence can be demonstrated to be illusory, the world, seen as something in which we are fully immersed and unable to observe, should be understood as incomprehensible, as multiple, dynamic, and continually produced. In order to be represented, this world demands a text that, like it, is multiple, dynamic, and non-totalizable. Massey ends her discussion by theorizing that by opening the text in such a way "so might be avoided the longstanding tendency to tame the spatial into the textual" (54).

One such understanding of texts is Fredric Jameson's conceptualization of utopian discourse. He writes, "to understand utopian discourse," as he proposes, "is indeed precisely to propose to grasp it as a process, as ... productivity, and implicitly or explicitly to repudiate that more traditional and conventional view of utopia as sheer representation, as the 'realized' vision of this or that ideal society or social ideal" ("Islands" 6). He describes utopias as "model railroads of the mind" and asserts that "these utopian constructions convey the spirit of … production far better than any concepts of *écriture* or *Spiel*" ("Politics" 41).

However, in "Of Islands and Trenches: Naturalization and the Production of Utopian Discourse," Jameson sees this productivity and process as "problematical" and argues that its lack of coherence results in utopia's "deepest subject" becoming "our inability to conceive it, our incapacity to produce it as a vision, our failure to present the other of what is, a failure that, as with fireworks

dissolving into the night sky, must once again leave us alone with this history"
(21). In chapter two, I will argue that Jameson's utopian discourse is the inverse
of his cognitive map. Whereas the map represents the world in a way that
reconciles abstract knowledge and existential experience, utopian discourse
refuses reconciliation, leaving us in a representational "crisis." Once utopian
discourse is modified to fit our different conception of space-time, it can be
deployed to figure the multiple heterogeneous trajectories of the coeval. It is in
this way that Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand challenge the hegemonic
constructions of space, time, and place and the metaphoric connection between
women and colonial peoples and place.

Before moving on, however, it must also be noted that the space-time
depicted in Brossard's and Brand's texts can be connected to their involvement,
with their crossing of generic boundaries and drawing together of the literary and
the theoretical, in the feminist project known as "writing in the feminine." [35]
Karen Gould defines this feminist project as "a series of related experimental texts
that, despite [rhetorical, poetic, and political] differences ... do contain certain
common aesthetic features and political intentions" (3). While this feminist
project has a diverse membership[36] and while it encompasses various approaches
to feminism, to writing, and to literature, approaches which are impossible to
classify under a coherent school of thought, the project draws together a number
of texts that share some significant aesthetic and political commonalities. As
Marie Carrière asserts of the various authors included in this collectivity, "in
individual and plural ways, they seek to incorporate discourse centred on the
female body, language, and (inter)subjectivity, within the literary text itself" (4).
Importantly, in Brand's work, this aesthetic and political approach is also
connected to the racialized body. Seeing "modernity's apparent need to 'bracket
off the referent or real historical world'" and with it "political forces capable of ...

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[35] While there have been many studies connecting Brossard with this project, for example see
Marie Carrière's and Karen Gould's examinations of writing in the feminine, Dionne Brand could
also be included. Marie Carrière's study of writing in the feminine in both French and English
Canada, in fact, does include Brand's name in a listing of Anglophone members (3).
[36] This project includes a diversity of writers from Quebec, such as Louky Bersianik, France
Théoret, Madeleine Gagnon, and Louise Cotnoir, as well as from English Canada, such as Daphne
Marlatt, Erin Mouré, and Di Brandt (Carrière 3).

social change" (Gould 25), these writers employ post-structuralist forms and language play to, as Barbara Godard asserts, "decentre the dominant discourse in a perpetual movement of *differánce* and, paradoxically, simultaneously attempt to inscribe the feminine [and black] subject in discourse" (*Canadian* 99). They "move women's writing out of the realm of colonized writing and into a space of multiplicity and affirmative *becoming"* (Gould xvii). In doing so, they also create a means to voice the various trajectories of Massey's stories-so-far that counter the closed space-time of constructs such as nation, region, and home.

Chapter 2

"A Text … Like the World:"
Narrative Figuration of the Space-Time Dynamic in Utopian Discourse

Dionne Brand and Nicole Brossard represent space, time, and place in ways that correspond to Doreen Massey's conceptualization of the space-time dynamic. However, as I outlined in chapter one, Massey argues that conceiving of space, time, and place as she does makes them unrepresentable. In order to show how Brand and Brossard represent the unrepresentable, I turn now to an examination of utopian discourse.

Typically, utopian literature has been studied in two ways: either as a reflection of the historical circumstances of its cultural moment or as a motivating and transformative vision of the future. Both of these approaches can be seen in the most well known study of the genre, A. L. Morton's *The English Utopia.* Morton defines utopia as "an imaginary country described in a work of fiction with the object of criticizing existing society" (10). Primarily, however, it is "an image of desire" which may become "an elaborate means of expressing social criticism … but is always based on something that somebody actually wants" (11). Therefore, he argues, "the history of Utopia … will reflect the conditions of life and the social aspirations of classes and individuals at different times" (11). Thus, Morton famously asserts, "the English Utopia is … a mirror image, more or less distorted, of historical England" (11). He historicizes the varied contents of utopias from the fourteenth- to the twentieth-century claiming that they reflect the aspirations of their authors and their generating classes. Many investigations of the genre have followed Morton's historical approach,[37] and some of the key studies of feminist utopias fall within this category.[38] These feminist studies

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[37] For example see Ralph Pordzik's examination *The Quest for Postcolonial Utopia: A Comparative Introduction to the Utopian Novel in the New English Literatures*, Ruth Levitas' *The Concept of Utopia*, and Chris Ferns' *Narrating Utopia*.

[38] Among these studies are works such as Nan Bowman Albinski's *Women's Utopias in British and American Fiction*, Carol Pearson's "Coming Home: Four Feminist Utopias and Patriarchal

examine the contents of utopian novels written by women and relate them to the cultural position and representation of women in the texts' historical periods. As Frances Bartkowski writes, feminist utopias examine "what women are both free and constrained to want" (4).

Morton goes even further in his conclusion, however, alluding to the idea that utopia not only mirrors but also influences history. He observes:

> To-day the long honoured stream of utopian writers has entered and made a noble contribution to the great river of the movement for socialism. Today millions are convinced that Utopia, not in the sense of a perfect and therefore unchanging society, but of a society alive and moving toward ever new victories, is to be had if men fight for it. (213)

At this point, Morton seems to have shifted his definition of utopia from a literary text that reveals history to a motivating politic. Utopia keeps history alive and, Morton implies, literary utopias enrich this larger process. Many Marxist critics follow this approach and argue for, as Tom Moylan writes, "the more mediated effects that the utopian imagination can have on a set of readers at the level of ideological formation" (5).[39] In *Partial Visions: Feminism and Utopianism in the 1970s*, Angelica Bammer argues that feminist utopias can also be transformative. She examines feminist literary utopias and argues that in these texts "the construction (in the literary realm) of new female heroes, new plots, and new approaches to language … influenced similar efforts to change the oppressive structures of women's lives being undertaken by women in other (non-literary) realms" (5).[40]

Experience," Lyman Tower Sergeant's "An Ambiguous Legacy: The Role and Position of Women in the English Eutopia," and much of Frances Bartkowski's *Feminist Utopias*.

[39] Key examinations in this vein have been Tom Moylan's *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, Raymond Williams' "Utopia and Science Fiction," and E. P. Thompson's insistence that utopia is about "the education of desire" in *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (790).

[40] Other studies of feminist utopias as transformative include Erin McKenna's *The Task of Utopia: A Pragmatist and Feminist Perspective*, Tom Moylan's *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, Natalie Rosinsky's *Feminist Futures: Contemporary Women's Speculative Fiction*, and Margrit Eichler, June Larkin, and Sheila Neysmith's introduction to *Feminist Utopias: Re-Visioning Our Futures*.

Some streams of literary place studies have also examined utopian literature as a motivating politic. For example, ecocriticism has recently called for the expansion of its purview to include the imaginary places in utopian literature. Patrick Murphy connects science fiction and nature-oriented literature because both are "linked to, and based on, getting people to think both about the present and about this world in which they live" (263).[41] Science fiction, and in particular utopian fiction,[42] is "nature-oriented" in that it "directs reader attention toward the natural world and human interaction with other aspects of nature within that world, and, on the other hand, makes specific environmental issues part of the plots and themes of various works" (263).[43]

This approach to utopian literature has also been taken up by urban place studies. In these studies, utopia is typically considered to be a representation of a coherent plan or structure that is either imposed on the city or turned to in order to reignite intentionality. David Harvey writes, "the figures of 'the City' and of 'Utopia' have long been intertwined. In their early incarnations, utopias were usually given a distinctly urban form and most of what passes for urban and city planning in the broadest sense has been infected (some would prefer 'inspired') by utopian modes of thought" (156). "Infected" would seem to be the view of Michel de Certeau who connects the concept of utopia to the aerial perspective, or "celestial eye," of medieval and Renaissance depictions of the city. These depictions have transformed our contemporary understanding of the city so that "architectural productions" now "materializ[e] today the utopia that yesterday was

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[41] For other ecocritical calls to examine science fiction, see Kathleen Armbruster and Kathleen Wallace's introduction to *Beyond Nature Writing* (16) and Ursula Heise's contribution to "Forum on Literatures of the Environment" (1097). Graham Huggan directly connects ecocriticism to utopian thought by declaring that "while the early history of the twenty-first century, already darkened by a series of preventable human/ecological disasters, might well suggest that there is little room left for utopian thought," we must find a means "of imagining alternative futures in which our current ways of looking at ourselves and our relation to the world might be creatively transformed" (721).

[42] The two authors Murphy singles out as being most environmentally responsible are both utopians – Ursual Le Guin and Kim Stanley Robinson.

[43] For example, William Morris (*News from Nowhere*) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman (*Herland*) both present arguments on how humans should alter their interactions with nature for the good of both people and the environment. In more contemporary utopias, Kim Stanley Robinson (*Pacific Edge*) and Ursula Le Guin (*The Dispossed*) deal with questions of scarcity and the effects of production on the environment, and Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia*, based on the principles of deep ecology, deals primarily with man's relation to the natural world.

only painted" (128). He calls this "scopic drive" the "atopia utopia of optical knowledge" and states that the abstraction of the city as an ordered and knowable structure, what he calls the Concept-city, was founded through utopian and urbanistic discourse (129).

On the other hand are those who see utopia as inspiring and as needed for any socio-political transformation of the city. For Joanne Gottlieb, "the possibility of reading urban spaces seems to rest implicitly on utopian impulses inherited from a previous era" (250). She associates the contemporary "moment when urban space is being transformed beyond the bounds of comprehensibility" with "the obsolescence of utopia" and argues this can result in either "the waning of the utopian imagination" and "diminished urban aspirations" (249) or the return of "some type of utopianism" that can generate "a coherent understanding of the city as a humanistic political project" with "the city comprising the possibility of improvement of social life" (250). Utopia revives intentionality. Myles Chilton also sees utopian representation as transformative. He argues that Balzac's novels construct a utopian representation of the city that counters capitalism's singular desire to posit the city as a *table rasa* that can be continually destroyed and rebuilt in the quest for capital accumulation ("Bleeding" 14). This counter "utopian image" first makes "legible how capital creates the city and maintains the spatial order that is also the class order" and second "reveals the forces of change that must be utilized if social and moral orders are to be successfully transformed" ("Bleeding" 14).

In this chapter, however, I will not repeat these kinds of studies of the literary genre. Instead my focus is on the function of utopian discourse to figure the space-time dynamic by allowing for multiple ideologies in utopian frames that work against and alongside hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place. In this sense, "utopia" does not refer to literary texts but to non-dominant trajectories and reality constructions.[44] While utopia has its deepest roots in literature, the

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[44] *The Cultural Studies Reader* appears to use "utopia" in just such a way when it states in the introduction to de Certeau's "Walking in the City" that this "is a utopian essay: it conceives of the 'everyday' as different from the official" (During 126). Here the sense is that "utopia" refers to that which is different from the dominant order.

field of utopian studies is multi-disciplinary and is contributed to from areas such as architecture, urban planning, political science, sociology, philosophy, and gender studies. In these disciplines, utopia is often separated from the literary genre and posited instead as a dialectical discourse. However, while these conceptions of utopia as dialectical understand space-time as constructed and dynamic, they see it unilinear. They thus narrow time and space to a single construction which changes through time and over which various groups struggle for domination.

In this chapter, I will briefly outline the ideas of three architects of this type of utopian thinking: Karl Mannheim, Paul Ricoeur, and most recently David Harvey. I will then outline the major difficulties with their conceptions of utopian discourse and present Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopia, which I argue can be understood as a theory of utopian discourse, as a possible solution. However, although the concept of heterotopias posits multiply constructed places and trajectories, heterotopias are also unrepresentable. At this point, I return to a study of the literary genre of utopia and examine the work of Fredric Jameson. While Jameson sees utopian literature as connected to the linear time of Marxist history, his conception of utopia as a negative dialectic can be modified to figure the multiple trajectories and heterotopic places in the space-time dynamic.

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Sociologist Karl Mannheim is perhaps the first person to bring ideology and utopia together as transcendent ideas (Ricoeur, *Lectures* 159). In *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, Mannheim engages in a quest for a comprehensive understanding of what he understands to be the current atomized social order (98). As we are confronted by the reality constructions of different social classes, he observes, "we begin to suspect that each group seems to move in a separate and distinct world of ideas and that these different systems of thought, which are often in conflict with one another, may in the last analysis be reduced to different modes of experiencing the 'same' reality" (99). With the "unanimity" of the construction of the world broken by "divergent and conflicting modes of thought," he remarks, "the fixed categories which used

to give experience its reliable and coherent character undergo an inevitable disintegration" (103). This fragmentation creates a "crisis" that "has penetrated even into the heart of empirical research" (102). He argues that without the belief that we understand the totality of the world, even if that belief is mistaken and our understanding only partial, we cannot evaluate and organize actions and events and are left in an undifferentiated stalled time (253). But, asserts Mannheim, sociological knowledge, "as it assimilates more and more of these divergent perspectives, will become more comprehensive" (193). By becoming "aware of the limited scope of every point of view," it will progress towards "the sought-for comprehension of the whole" and once again will offer an understanding of reality and allow for historical process (105).

Mannheim divides ideas into two types: congruent and non-congruent. The former "are relatively rare" and are only apparent to "a state of mind that has been sociologically fully clarified" (194). These "situationally congruent ideas" (194), he writes, "distinguish the true from the untrue, the genuine from the spurious among the norms, modes of thought and patterns of behaviour that exist alongside of one another in a given historical period" (94). Most ideas are, instead, non-congruent. They are "'transcendent' or 'unreal' because their contents can never be realized in the societies in which they exist, and because one could not live and act according to them within the limits of the existing social order" (194).

Mannheim then further divides non-congruent ideas into ideologies and utopias. As non-congruent, both are "distorted mental structure[s]" (97), or mentalities, and are "oriented towards objects which do not exist in the actual situation" (192). They differ in that ideologies support the *status quo* while utopias shatter it. Ideologies are "'organically' and harmoniously integrated into the world-view" of a certain social order (192). However, their content can never be realized because when they are "embodied in practice their meanings are most frequently distorted" (194). "Ideologically determined conduct," Mannheim

asserts, "always falls short of its intended meaning" (195).[45] On the other hand, utopian ideas, when they are acted on, "shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time" (192). They "succeed through counteractivity in transforming the existing historical reality into one more in accord with their own conceptions" (195).

For Mannheim, utopia exists in a dialectical relationship with its existing social order:

> By this is meant that every age allows to arise (in differently located social groups) those ideas and values in which are contained in condensed form the unrealized and unfulfilled tendencies which represent the needs of each age. These intellectual elements then become the explosive material for bursting the limits of the existing order. The existing order gives birth to utopias which in turn break the bonds of the existing order, leaving it free to develop in the direction of the next order of existence. (199)

Thus the various utopian mentalities arise in temporal succession; however, they do not disappear when the social order moves on, but instead continue on as "mutually antagonistic counter-utopias" (208). For Mannheim, "the different forms of utopia" exist in a state of "co-existence" (208). Along with the various forms of ideology, which Mannheim allows for but does not explain any further, they become "parts of a constantly shifting total constellation" (208). Thus, he sets out to historicize the dialectical relationship between ideology and utopia in order to "assimilat[e] and transcen[d] … the limitations of particular points of view" (106) and comprehend the whole of the current cumulative social order (200).

Mannheim identifies four types of "utopian mentality," each related to a specific class or group and formed around a "dominant wish" (209). The nature of the wish "moulds the way in which we experience time" and, because space and time must always be thought together, I would add that the nature of the wish also

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[45] As an example, he outlines how the idea of Christian brotherly love was unrealizable in a feudal society (194-95). He writes, "To live consistently, in the light of Christian brotherly love, in a society which is not organized on the same principle is impossible. The individual in his personal conduct is always compelled—in so far as he does not resort to breaking up the existing structure—to fall short of his own nobler motives" (195).

moulds the way we experience space (209). Overall, argues Manheim, the four types move from a complete transcendence of the present – or "the here and now" (219) of the social order – to a close understanding of social and historical reality, and, in the process, utopia, as a non-congruent idea "annihilates itself" (250).

The first and most transcendent is the chiliastic mentality created when the "orgiastic energies and ecstatic outbursts" (213) of millennialism or "'chiliasm' joined forces with the oppressed strata of society" (211). In chiliastic experience, Mannheim argues that the present, or the "here and now" we occupy "on the spatial and temporal stage," is only "incidental" and "becomes the breach through which what was previously inward bursts out suddenly, takes hold of the outer world and transforms it" (215). Utopia "was suddenly to break upon the world" (224), making space and time radically discontinuous as at any point there may be "a sudden swing into another kind of existence" (217). This mentality shifted from the passive escapism to utopian shattering when it began to believe that the transformation could be aided by acts of violence against those considered to be evil.

According to Mannheim, the middle classes, threatened by chiliasm's violent outbursts, responded with the liberal-humanist utopia of the idea (219). Unlike chiliasm, this mentality "has not broken … contact with the present—the here and now" and instead projects "a formal goal" or ideal world into the future which functions to regulate everyday affairs (219-220). Time is now experienced as "unilinear progress and evolution," and space becomes abstract, moving "continually towards an ever closer approximation of the rational" (223).

This contrasts with the third utopian mentality, the conservative mentality, which "inclines to accept the total environment … as if it were the proper order of the world, to be taken for granted" (230). Mannheim explains that while in liberalism there is "a relative approximation to the 'here and now'" (233), in conservatism, "the process of approximation … [is] completed. The utopia in this case is, from the very beginning, embedded in existing reality" (233). Reality is no longer seen as needing repair "but is the embodiment of the highest values and meanings" (233). Consequently, this is the mentality of the dominant class which

"has no utopia" until its worldview is threatened by the rise of the other groups (233). The temporal focus for this mentality is not on the chance moment or on the future but is on the past from which "the historical configuration" is seen to have grown (234). Therefore, this mentality works to "rescue" the past from "oblivion" by observing its continuation (235).

The final mentality is the socialist-communist utopia. Like the liberal mentality, it locates its moment of wish-fulfillment in the future, but unlike liberalism, it locates it at a specific, determinable point in time (240). Its wish is also more concrete as the conditions of existence needed for its fulfillment can be investigated and determined scientifically. "The economic and social structure of society becomes absolute reality for the socialist" and is seen as the driving force of history (241). Thus, for Mannheim, socialism is "the utopia which achieves the closest relationship to the historical-social situation of the world" (242). It creates a complicated multi-dimensional time-sense where the present not only embodies the past, as in conservatism, but also the future, which is "always testing itself in the present" (246). The idea of utopia no longer "regulates the event from the outside" but becomes "a 'tendency' within the matrix of this reality" (246).

In the end, Mannheim argues that history demonstrates the "gradual descent" of utopia from a state of complete transcendence to "a closer approximation to real life" (248). This descent leads to "the general subsidence of utopian intensity" because each stage "manifests a closer approximation to the historical-social process" (249). The utopian impulse and "the closely related capacity for a broad perspective disintegrate … into a mere body of directions for mastering a vast number of concrete details with a view to taking a political stand with reference to them" (251), and it becomes clear that "it is possible to think productively from any point of view" (252). This "present atomization" of thought cannot comprehend the whole (252). Utopia, the unreal idea that shatters the existing social order, has "annihilated itself" and "the utopian element disappears" (250).

This annihilation is disastrous for history. As Mannheim argues:

> Whenever the utopia disappears, history ceases to be a process leading to an ultimate end. The frame of reference according to which we evaluate facts vanishes and we are left with a series of events all equal as far as their inner significance is concerned. The concept of historical time which led to qualitatively different epochs disappears, and history becomes more and more like undifferentiated space. (253)

According to Mannheim, we must submit "to the different possibilities of viewing the world" and attempt to find "a theoretical framework which will comprehend them all" (252). Utopia has disappeared but sociology will take its place as a science that can understand the totality. Every point of view must be scrutinized and an "intimate grasp of the total situation" be developed (157). "When this is achieved," writes Mannheim, choices will be made "on the basis of a conscious orientation in society and in accordance with the demands of intellectual life" (160). Once again, we will be able to evaluate individual items in relation to the whole and reignite the historical process once and for all.

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However, Mannheim's insistence that the sociologist can become objectively aware of the totality of the contemporary social order creates a paradox. He himself writes, "It is no longer possible for one point of view and interpretation to assail all others as ideological without itself being placed in the position of having to meet that challenge" (74). Yet, as Paul Ricoeur notes, Mannheim "requires the position of the sociologist be a kind of null point, a zero degree point" where the sociologist "does not belong to the play but is rather an observer" (*Lectures* 166). This is impossible, argues Ricoeur, because "if everything that we say is bias" and "represents interests that we do not know, how can we have a theory of ideology which is not in itself ideological?" (*Lectures* 8).

In his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, theologian and literary critic Paul Ricoeur expands on Mannheim's study by continuing to oppose utopia to ideology as that which shatters and that which conserves, but he discards Mannheim's larger opposition of non-congruent and congruent ideas arguing that it creates Mannheim's paradox. Whereas Mannheim tries to turn to sociology to

access some kind of knowledge of the whole, Ricoeur surrenders to the paradox. Instead of grouping ideology and utopia together as non-congruent and opposing them to some kind of congruent knowledge, he opposes them to each other. He argues, "no one knows reality outside the multiplicity of ways it is conceptualized, since reality is always caught in a framework of thought that is itself an ideology" (*Lectures* 171). There can be no objective stance, no absolute understanding. If anything opposes ideology it must be another non-congruent construction: utopia. He concludes, "The judgment on an ideology is always the judgment from a utopia. This is my conviction: the only way to get out of the circularity in which ideologies engulf us is to assume a utopia, declare it, and judge an ideology on that basis" (*Lectures* 172). He solves "the problem of judgment" by asserting that, because the position of the "absolute onlooker" is impossible, "it is someone within the process itself who takes the responsibility for judgment;" therefore, utopian judgment becomes a "polemical point of view" that "declares itself as such" and "claims to assume a better future for humanity" (173). Mannheim's utopian dialectic shifts from being between utopia and reality to between hegemonic ideology and ideologies in utopian frames.

Ricoeur presents utopia and ideology as the innovative or productive side and the inertial or reproductive side of the social imagination. The two come together in a dialectical relationship to construct and transform social reality (178). To create his dialectic, he performs what he calls a "regressive analysis of meaning" on both terms (311). "We must dig under their literary or semantic expressions," he asserts, "in order to discover their functions and then establish a correlation at this level" (3).

Ricoeur argues that there are three integral levels of ideology and utopia, each with a corresponding function. He argues that ideology's first and most pejorative function is to conceal or distort social reality in order to support the ruling class. Ideology inverts reality to present the interests of the ruling class as universal, as the common interest of all. Thus the ideas of the ruling class, instead of being seen as reflecting a singular interest and expressing one option among many, become the only valid way to comprehend social reality. At this level,

ideology is "pathological" in that it works hegemonically to shut down any challenge to the dominant order (1).

The correlating function of utopia is "fancy" or "the completely unrealizable" (*Lectures* 310). Ricoeur locates literary utopias at this level asserting, "To this eclipse of praxis may be referred the flight into writing and the affinity of the utopian mode for a specific literary genre" ("Ideology" 122). As fancy, utopia can be pathological in two ways. First, it may be overly magical and deny the negotiation or even violence needed to create a better world creating a gap in history. This gap allows the utopia to ignore real questions about power and authority. Second, it can, like ideology, present itself as a finished and static state, existing without obstacles and no longer calling to any kind of innovative imagination.

At the second level, ideology's function is legitimation. Because ideology preserves the existing social order, it plays a role in legitimating the existing system of authority. Ricoeur argues that in order to rule without constant force, not only must the class in power claim the right to their position of power over, but those being subjected must also believe such a claim. However, there is always "a discrepancy between the status granted to claim and that granted to belief" (*Lectures* 201). Through its first function of distortion, ideology fills this "credibility gap" and resolves the tension between the authority's claim to, and the people's belief in, the ruling class's legitimacy (183).

If the second function of ideology is legitimation, the correlating function of utopia is challenge (Taylor xxi). Utopia, too, exists as a political force by unmasking ideology's supplementation and challenging the claims of authority. In other words, writes Ricoeur, utopia functions "to expose the credibility gap wherein all systems of authority exceed … both our confidence in them and our belief in their legitimacy" (17). Examining the utopias of Saint-Simon and Fourier, he argues that utopia "is an imaginary variation on power" that "puts into question what presently exists; it makes the actual world seem strange" and "introduces a sense of doubt that shatters the obvious" (299-300).

At the third and most basic level, ideology and utopia are seen as the integrative and innovative sides of the social imagination. Their constitution of the social imagination consequently creates social reality. At this point Ricoeur turns to Clifford Geertz. In "Ideology as a Cultural System," Geertz argues ideology integrates groups by providing the patterns and templates that make meaning for a group—for everything symbolic from language to social action (216-217). In other words, ideology determines what makes sense. From this, Ricoeur concludes that ideology, at its most positive level, is integrative. Arising through confrontation with other systems of identity and legitimacy, it provides an orientation in space and time by consolidating and defining the limits of a group in relation to other groups in space as well as working to preserve identity through time (258). This temporal preservation, however, also creates ideology's most negative function: "All the pathology of ideology proceeds from [its] 'conservative' role" ("Ideology" 117). Thus level three connects back to level one and closes the circle.

Of the third level, Ricoeur writes, "just as the best function of ideology is to preserve the identity of a person or group, the best function of utopia is the exploration of the possible" (*Lectures* 310). As identity establishes its boundaries, it enables the critical glance from a utopian nowhere which makes our identity dynamic. Utopia's estrangement is a part of social innovation. It is "the leap outside" that "has a *constitutive* role in helping us *rethink* the nature of our social life" (emphasis in original, *Lectures* 16). If ideology is social integration, utopia is social subversion—or even better, "there is no social integration without social subversion" (*Lectures* 16-17).

The two work together at all levels to create a dynamic social imagination: "We are always caught in this oscillation between ideology and utopia" (*Lectures* 312). Because of this, in order to combat a tendency towards a pathological system, we must counter level one with level three, the negative with the positive. Utopia offers a critical view from nowhere and provides alternative possibilities that enliven the circle. However, the element of criticism extends both ways. Speaking as it does from the limit or horizon of sense, utopia is not to be blindly

followed and instead must always be carefully judged. We never really leave the circle because the possible is always judged from ideology's drive for belonging and identity which holds the circle together. Thus while utopia challenges ideology's conservatism, ideology reigns in utopia's flight.

Ricoeur ends by arguing that there is no way out of this "practical circle" (*Lectures* 178), and defines "practical" as "not simply the matter-of-fact but all the dimensions of action ruled by norms and ideals; it covers the whole field of ethics and applied ethics. The practical includes all areas of action that have a symbolic structure, a structure that both interprets and regulates action" (226). "We must," he writes, "let ourselves be drawn into the circle and then try to make the circle a spiral" (312). Yet, while we can never escape, "we are also not entirely conditioned by" it (313). Even though there is no totalizing view, there is what Ricoeur calls "practical wisdom" that results in a "judgment of appropriateness" defined as "a concrete judgment of taste, an ability to appreciate what is fitting in a given situation" (314). All we can do, he argues, is "wager on a certain set of values and then try to be consistent with them … No one can escape this" (312). "Social ethics," therefore, will always have "the element of risk" (312). He ends his lectures by supposing: "We cannot get out of the circle of ideology and utopia, but the judgment of appropriateness may help us understand how the circle can become a spiral" (314).

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Finally, geographer David Harvey also proposes a dialectical relationship between utopia and ideology. While, as we saw earlier, he seems to posit utopia as a negative force on urban planning, in *Spaces of Hope*, he examines utopian discourse as a transformative force in the face of a pathological global capitalism. He argues that we must not only confront "the hidden utopianism" in urban planning but also resurrect it "in order to act as conscious architects of our fates rather than as 'helpless puppets' of the institutional and imaginative worlds we inhabit" (159). His hope is that a dialectical utopia will pose and construct "an alternative mode of production, exchange and consumption that is risk reducing and environmentally as well as socially just and sensitive" (223).

Although utopian thought has failed in the past, he believes that "reignit[ed] utopian passions" can act "as a means to galvanize socio-ecological change" (195). Earlier utopian discourse, he argues, focused on either space or time. He asserts that "utopias of spatial form" are attempts at closed and completed utopian structures that inevitably fail because they cannot "stabilize and control the processes that must be mobilized to build them" so that "the historical process takes control of the spatial form that is supposed to control it" (173). On the other hand, utopias of social process are temporal, and Harvey associates them with two kinds of dialectic. The first unfolds according to the logic of "both/and" and ends in synthesis (174). This type most likely will end in an attempt to unite all in an impossible utopia of social form. The second, and preferred model, unfolds according to the logic of "either/or" and results in a "succession" of "existential or political choices" (174). These either/or utopias of social process, however, "have the habit of getting lost in the romanticism of endlessly open projects that never have to come to a point of closure (within space and place)" (174). At some point, argues Harvey, "the utopianism of process runs afoul of the spatial framings and the particularities of place construction necessary to its materialization" (179). In other words, "to materialize a space is to engage with closure" (183) and "free-flowing processes become instantiated in structures ... that acquire a relative permanence, fixity, and immovability" (185). For example, "social, institutional, and material structures (walls, highways, territorial subdivisions, institutions of governance, social inequalities) are either made or not made" (185). Thus, whereas open historical process negates the possibilities of spatial form, closed spatial form negates utopias of social process. Therefore, he argues for a "dialectical utopianism" which incorporates "the production of space and time ... into utopian thought" (182).

This utopianism requires the careful construction of spatial form as specific choices are made. As might be surmised from his preference for the either/or dialectic, Harvey is "interested in progressive change" (233) and his utopianism "requires the perspective of a long and permanent historical-geographical revolution" (252). Because the "environmental and ecological

movements are full of competing and cacophonous claims as to the possible future of the human species on earth" and "make for innumerable confusions, particularly when taken in combination, " we must find "some sort of common grounding" which can "become the basis for decisions" in the midst of this "witches' brew of political arguments" (214-215). Any effective political organization will depend on a politics of "class alliances" and will require "respectful negotiation with many environmental movements" (223) across "a variety of spatiotemporal scales" (234). "Real political change," he asserts, "arises out of simultaneous and loosely coordinated shifts in both thinking and action, across several scales" (234). The political practice of this "web" is imagined as a battle between two foes where there are "several different 'theatres' of thought and action on some 'long frontier' of 'insurgent' political practices" and where "advances in one theatre get ultimately stymied or even rolled back unless supported by advances elsewhere" (234).

　　To bring all these forces together, there must be some kind of universal goal. In his either/or system, "dialectical enquiry necessarily incorporates ... the building of ethical, moral, and political choices (values) into its own process and sees the constructed knowledges that result as discourses situated in a play of power directed towards some goal or other" (230). These values and goals "are not imposed as universal abstractions from outside" but are "arrived at through a living process" (230). They are created through what he refers to as "translation," or the discovery of universals that results from finding points of convergence among social movements in constant contestation: "universal principles ... emerge from the rich experience of translation to define what it is we might have in common" (246).

　　According to him, our contemporary rejection of spatial utopias as closed and authoritative systems has left us "without a vision of Utopia" and with "no way to define that port to which we might want to sail" (189). His translated universal goals will provide just such a port. He argues "universals are socially constructed not given" and any overriding utopian goal will be "a moment of existential decision, a moment of 'either/or' praxis, when certain principles are

materialized through action in the world" (246). Harvey gives a list of his own "preferred ... universal rights worthy of attention" as "meaningful ideals upon which to let our imaginations roam as we go to work as insurgent architects" (248). These include, for example, "the right to the inviolability and integrity of the human body," "the right to a decent and healthy living environment," and "the right to political association and 'good' governance" (249). Harvey's dialectical utopianism is a "speculative leap" where there will always be unknowns and "unexpected consequences" but we must "know the courage of our minds" and take the "speculative plunge" (255).

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From the perspective of the space-time dynamic, there are a number of difficulties with these conceptions of utopian discourse. While Mannheim acknowledges that there are numerous trajectories and reality constructions, often in conflict, and sees them as developing historically in relation to one another as well as continuing on as a mutually antagonistic coeval, he sees such a situation as a crisis. His belief in congruent knowledge, or some kind of absolute truth and understanding, correlates with his positing a single, although highly complex, space, a total constellation that can be comprehended and acted upon in a unilinear time. In other words, his desire is for a single space-time that can be wholly comprehended and manipulated.

Paul Ricoeur, on the other hand, understands that there can be no such truth, no congruent knowledge, because there is no outside to ideology and social construction. However, while he argues against Mannheim's turn to the sociologist as a non-ideological observer, Ricoeur also discards Mannheim's mutually antagonistic coeval which he replaces with two broad forces, the ideological and the utopian. In the image of the spiral, he proposes a unilinear and progressive system where the dominant group is continually challenged by marginal groups in a bid for changes to and power over a single social reality. Even further, his is a conservative imagination in that the judgement of appropriateness that maintains the spiral comes from the centre.

Finally, David Harvey, like Mannheim sees numerous reality constructions and claims to the future which he imagines as a web of interactions across several social scales. Here, once again, is an acknowledgment of the coeval. However, he, too, sees this web as a crisis, as a "witches brew" of cacophonous confusion (214-215). Unlike Mannheim, he does not tame this confusion with a belief in a totalizing knowledge, but he still reduces the coeval by turning to an imagination of a binary struggle between two groups: a coherent dominant force and numerous antagonistic marginal groups, which he argues must be brought together under the drive for universal goals. Harvey's web becomes a theatre of war between two foes. His space-time, too, is singular, unilinear, and progressive.[46]

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Key to the problems that have so far occurred in these studies of the dialectical relationship between ideology and utopia is that they have all reacted to the closed systems of structuralism by arguing that such a system can be opened up by seeing it as changing unilinearly over time. All three thus posit space as a single, although complex, system and time as unilinear and progressive.

In "Of Other Spaces," Michel Foucault presents his concept of heterotopia as a counter to structuralism and singular space. Foucault argues that, rather than time, the "present epoch" of structuralism and rationality, with its emphasis on classification and complete understanding, is "the epoch of space... the epoch of simultaneity ... of juxtaposition" (22). It is concerned with "the site" which is classifiable, knowable, and predictable (22). Sites are "defined by relations of proximity between points or elements," relations that can be described as "series, trees, or grids" (23). "Space," therefore, "takes the form of relations among sites" (23), and as Benjamin Genocchio observes "can be mathematically or scientifically described" (37).

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[46] Additionally, his list of universal rights, while obviously a starting point for discussion, is vague, and perhaps necessarily so since its purpose is to bring together numerous antagonistic groups. Who decides what qualifies as "good governance" or healthy living conditions? Further, the concept of universal human rights has historically been used to subjugate others, such as women or colonial peoples, who are associated with nature and defined as non-human.

This shift in the understanding of space results in a shift in the understanding of time. "Structuralism," Foucault writes, "is an effort to establish, between elements that could have been connected on a temporal axis, an ensemble of relations that makes them appear as juxtaposed," as "implicated by each other," and as "a sort of configuration" (22). However, as he argues, there can be no "denial of time" or "disregard of the ... intersection of time with space" and structuralism has its own "manner of dealing with what we call time and ... history" (22). As Cam McEachern asserts: time is attitudinal, not natural (272). In other words, time exists but like anything else, we can relate to it only through our cultural constructs. Structuralism's attitude towards time, argues Foucault, sees time as "one of the various distributive operations ... for the elements that are spread out in space" (23). This attitude is essentially conservative and correlates with the conception of space as closed and, therefore, fully knowable.[47]

Countering structuralism's space-time, Foucault asserts that "external space" or "the space in which we live," is not a "void, inside of which we could place individuals and things" (23). It is, he insists, social: "a set of relations that delineate sites" (23). While we can "attempt to describe these different sites by looking for the set of relations by which a given site can be defined," in other words, while we can attempt to order and classify them, many sites, if not all, are ultimately unclassifiable because space, or the set of relations that delineates sites and allows them to be defined, is "heterogeneous" (23). As an example, he notes that a train is not only a "site of transportation" but also "an extraordinary bundle of relations because it is something through which one goes ... something by means of which one can go from one point to another, and ... something that goes by" (23-24).

Foucault writes that of all sites, he is interested in those that, like the train, counter structuralism's rationality. Such sites, he writes, are "in relation with all

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[47] However, Foucault notes the impossibility of such a complete understanding and closure of space. He writes that the "importance of the site" is "a problem in contemporary technical work," for example in understanding sets of elements "that may be randomly distributed" or in "the circulation of elements with a random output" (23). He also demonstrates structuralist space-time's frightening relation to humanity where "the problem of siting" becomes one of knowing "what type of storage, circulation, marking and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end" (23).

the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (24). These sites are in an obviously contradictory relation to the others and thus demonstrate that space's centredness or ideological construction and deny the classifications functioning in structuralist space.

Included among these sites are utopias and heterotopias. He limits utopias to imaginary constructions of worlds such as those found in utopian literature. Utopias are, he writes, "sites with no real place" but that "have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of society," or the socially constructed relations that delineate sites. (24). Instead of replicating these relations, utopias present them "in a perfected form" or as "turned upside down" (24). Comparing utopias to mirrors, he sees each as a noplace, or, as he writes, "a placeless place" (24). Looking into the mirror/utopia, the viewer sees herself "in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface" of the page or the glass (24). Seeing herself "over there" creates estrangement and "gives [her] own visibility to [her]self" or allows her to see herself and her time in a critical light. However, the noplace of utopia is strictly an image, a representation in/on the glass/page.

Heterotopias, or "other/places," are also contradictory sites that, like literary utopias, counter "real space" (24). However, unlike the "fundamentally unreal spaces" of literary utopias, they are, like the train, "real places—places that do exist" (24). They are, he writes, "effectively-enacted utopias" or "counter-sites" that simultaneously represent, contest, and invert "all the other real sites that can be found within the culture" (24). In addition, while heterotopias are "real places," as in socially sanctioned and recognized sites, they are also "outside of all places," or are noplaces (24). Heterotopias fit into the classificatory system of places and sites, yet they also escape these categories and demonstrate the system's constructed nature. Like the example of the train, they are "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces" or socially constructed relations of sites, and include "several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (25). Benjamin Genocchio argues that heterotopia's distinguishing feature is "its

purported status as a form of spatially discontinuous ground; a status which, in turn, gives [it] the ability to transgress, undermine, and question the alleged coherence or totality of self-contained orders and systems" (37). It is "a space in which the structure no longer defines any common center of classification or coherent locus beneath the categories" (Genocchio 41). Significantly, heterotopic space has its own attitude towards time which is connected, not to unilinear progressive time, but to the space-time dynamic. Foucault insists, "heterotopias ... open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men (*sic*) arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (26).

Foucault again compares them to mirrors. Unlike in his discussion of literary utopias where he located the viewer as looking into the mirror, he now reverses the image and describes the experience "from the standpoint of the mirror," or from the perspective of the reflection (24). From this perspective, the image discovers she is absent from her position in the glass because she sees herself standing before and looking into the mirror. She recognizes herself and her world as a construction, as virtual space. Heterotopias, he writes, "create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory" (Foucault 27). This perspective highlights the constructedness of the division and classification of space into sites as well as opens us to space as heterogeneous and potentially subversive (Genocchio 41).[48]

For Foucault, the term "utopia" is limited to utopian literature, but it could be argued that heterotopias are similar to the form of the utopia found in utopian discourse. Containing alternate and contestatory constructions of space and place, heterotopias can be seen as utopian, as allowing for multiple ideologies in utopian frames that counter hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place. In other words, heterotopias are heterogeneous—multiple rather than binary—and demand multiple trajectories. In this sense, they also connect back to Doreen Massey's

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[48] Perhaps somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Foucault goes on to classify or give the set of relations that define heterotopia, a site which denies all such structures. But then again, heterotopias are real places as well as noplaces, and as such would on one level conform to the rules of socially constructed dominant space.

conception of the space-time dynamic which, it could be said, underlies the construction of place as heterotopic.

Foucault ends with discussing the ship, which like the train "is the heterotopia *par excellence*" (27). Like trains, ships are "an extraordinary bundle of relations" (23-24) and therefore demonstrate that our classificatory systems are subjective. "In civilizations without boats," he writes, "dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates" (27). Without heterotopias, there would be no possibility for imagination, for the unknown, or for resistance. Edward Soja writes, heterotopias are "places where many spaces converge and become entangled" and it is this "simultaneity of differences in space that charges the heterotopia with social and cultural meaning and connectivity. Without such a charge, the space would remain fixed, dead, immobile, undialectical" (15).

Ben Genocchio questions whether language will ever be able to speak such difference (41). However, I believe that that it can be figured through utopian discourse as conceptualized by Fredric Jameson. This may not be surprising since Foucault himself asserts that there is a connection between heterotopias and literary utopias. He writes that between them "there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience" which he explains through the mirror. Both utopias and heterotopias are noplaces that demonstrate the constructed nature of space but, on the one hand, literary utopias are representations that act as reflections which present space as binary and produce a certain self-awareness. Heterotopias, on the other hand, demonstrate the actual heterogeneity and virtuality of space as multiple sets of social relations. Jameson's utopian discourse can be deployed to figure the sets of relations and multiple trajectories which create heterotopias and make place a noplace.

* * *

In order to deploy utopian discourse in such a way, I now turn to Fredric Jameson's multiple examinations of the genre of utopia. Unlike the critics of utopian literature discussed earlier, Jameson does not see utopian literature as either transformative or as a simple reflection of history. Utopian discourse, he

argues, cannot be transformative because we cannot escape our ideological embeddedness. He asserts that utopia's "deepest subject" is "our inability to conceive it ... our failure to present the other of what is" that "leave[s] us alone with this history" ("Islands" 21). For Jameson, the study of utopian literature is connected to history but rather than indicating historical social scarcity, it becomes an examination of the genre's social contract. He asserts that "genres are … literally institutions, social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artefact" (*Political* 106). Like other institutions, genre can be deconstructed and historicized. Jameson writes:

> generic specification and description can, in a given historical text, be transformed into the detection of a host of distinct generic messages— some of them objectified survivals from older modes of cultural production, some anticipatory, but all together projecting a formal conjuncture through which the 'conjuncture' of coexisting modes of production at a given historical moment can be detected and allegorically articulated. (*Political* 99)

In other words, genres are never pure and can be deconstructed to reveal their complex and contradictory historical process and shifts in modes of production. As for utopian texts, he examines their "proper use" and "the ways in which their relationship to social history is to be interrogated and decoded" ("Progress" 153), or, put another way, he offers "prescriptions for reading and instructions for the appropriate application of [utopian discourse] to the Real" ("Islands" 11).

As a Marxist critic, Jameson employs Marxist models of society and history. He maintains the base and superstructure model whereby the base consists of the economic mode of production on which the superstructure, consisting of social and political ideologies, rests. Therefore, Jameson conceives of history not as continuous and rational progress, but as a series of discontinuous epochs that succeed one another ("Islands" 13). Each epoch is a closed ideological system that cannot be "modified or developed or 'resolved'" but rather "generates all of the logical possibilities and permutations implicit in its

structure and is then abandoned" to be gradually replaced by the next ("Islands" 13). History is thus more of a "discontinuous jolt from 'moment' to 'moment'" than "a kind of 'synthesis' of the preceding contradiction" ("Islands" 13).

For Jameson, utopian discourse arises in the moment of the jolt or the transition from one mode of production to another, and through its unintentional structural discontinuities, it figures the transitional moment's inevitable contradictions ("Islands" 21). He argues that in such a transitional moment, we cannot know or conceptualize the world abstractly or understand it through scientific theory ("Islands" 15). Utopian fiction cannot, therefore, represent its cultural moment as a coherent totality. What it does represent, however unintentionally, is the experience of existing within and among contradictory ideologies. Instead of reading utopian literature for clues to the aspirations of the text's author and its generating class, he examines it in order to locate these social contradictions.

In "Of Islands and Trenches," Jameson turns to Thomas More's *Utopia* as an example. He notes that More's cultural moment was the moment of transition between capitalism and feudalism. *Utopia* is neither a critique of an older feudalism from a nascent capitalism that looks back and judges its past, nor is it a critique of a new capitalism from the perspective of a dying feudalism. Instead, it is a negation of both capitalism and feudalism. Jameson observes that in *Utopia*, "Book One, with its lengthy debate between Hythloday and the courtiers about conditions in England, supplies the raw material and sketches out the fundamental social contradictions on which Book Two must perform its work of transformation and neutralization and Utopian production" (15). In Book One, Hythloday's "diagnosis" of England's ills is "heterogeneous and envelops two relatively distinct explanatory systems" as it sees both capitalism and feudalism as causing the social problems to which utopia will respond (15). This "coexistence of the critique of feudalism with a critique of nascent capitalism" (19) creates a "structural inconsistency" that, Jameson argues, demonstrates "that the distance between two ideologies, between two forms of class consciousness—opens up the empty place in which *Utopia* itself emerges" (15). Jameson argues that there is

also a "lack of coincidence" between the utopian description and the narrative, or between "the verbal account of the island given by Hythloday and its possibilities of geometrical realization" (17). These "structural discrepancies," he argues, are "not random" as "their absences and lacunae" can be read as "symptoms of some deeper contradiction within the text" (17). He lists numerous examples of such inconsistencies. For example, although Utopia is supposed to be an "ideal of absolute equality," there are still remnants of a hierarchical social order as, for example, the elders are given familial authority (18). Further, even though each city is supposed to be identical and each is described as divided equally into four quadrants, the Prince and senate are impossibly located in the centre of the capital (18). These structural discrepancies figure the absence of a "theoretical discourse" that could resolve the contradictions (18). In other words, "in the absence of any genuine historical and social self-consciousness, what has been conceptually unformulizable," the contradictions between two modes of production and their ideologies, "becomes the raw material and the occasion for a very different type of mental operation … the work of *figuration*" (emphasis in original 15). He defines figuration as "pre-conceptual thinking" (16). Figuration represents these contradictions at the level of the narrative (20), where, most importantly, the presence of "multiple registers … guarantees them against any temptation to collapse one of them back into the other" (16). The narrative thus leaves the intersecting trajectories and constructions of place open in their negation of one another. In this sense, utopian discourse is the "inversion of myth" (4) or the "converse" of ideological discourse (21), which smoothes over contradictions and oppositions.

As Jameson explains, because it has no all-encompassing theoretical discourse, utopian discourse cannot smooth over its contradictions. Instead, it creates what he calls a negative dialectic. The negative dialectic provides a third alternative to Harvey's "both/and" and "either/or" dialectics. In the negative dialectic, unlike in the former, there is no synthesis (or even an easy pluralism) and unlike the latter, there is no choice, solution, or goal. In the negative dialectic, utopia functions to neutralize contradictions. Seeing utopian discourse as neutral

does not mean it is a-political but that it results in "neither a choice between …
extremes nor some 'synthesis' of them" but maintains "a stubbornly negative
relationship to both" ("Politics" 50). Importantly, he maintains, "if dialectical,
then this one is a negative dialectic in which each term persists in its negation of
the other; it is in their double negation that the genuine political and philosophic
content is to be located" ("Politics" 51). In other words, utopian discourse
maintains a back and forth movement of play between both terms.

In "Of Islands and Trenches," Jameson argues that utopian discourse is
key to understanding the "ideological function of representation" (5). He observes
that there are two stances in relation to any "linguistic object" (5). While one
stance sees the linguistic object as a static and completed representation, the other
stance sees it as a process of production. This second stance "undermines
representational categories" (5-6). Jameson argues that, as a negative dialectic,
utopian discourse should not be seen from the first stance. This stance would see
the text as "sheer representation" or "the 'realized' vision of this or that ideal
society or social ideal" (6). This is the stance taken by all the previously discussed
utopians including Foucault. As you will recall, in "Of Other Spaces," he sees the
utopian text as a mirror-reflection of society which creates estrangement or "gives
my own visibility to myself" (24). Unlike his concept of the heterotopias, that
critical light is strictly an image, a representation in/on the glass/page. However,
for Jameson, the utopian text should not be "incorporate[d] …into that more
conventional category of novels or narratives in which characters travel and do
things and stable landscapes … 'exist'" (7). Instead, utopian discourse is best
approached from the second stance which sees representation as productive, a
process, as undermining representational categories and completion. It should be
"grasp[ed]" as "an object of meditation, analogous to the riddles or *koan* of the
various mystical traditions, or the aporias of classical philosophy, whose function
is to provoke a fruitful bewilderment, and to jar the mind into some heightened
but unconceptualized consciousness" (11). This utopian production is, he asserts,
a kind of "pre-conceptual thinking-in-images" (11) or "pre-conceptual discourse"
(11) that figures the "conceptually unformulizable" (15), which is the absent

understanding of the totality caused by the presence of multiple and competing ideologies.

In this sense, utopian discourse can be seen as the opposite of Jameson's cognitive map. Whereas the cognitive map will represent what we can only know abstractly (we can know our postmodern world but cannot represent it in a way that reconciles it to our experience), utopian discourse figures what cannot be conceptualized abstractly or understood coherently (we figure, or represent, our experience in the world but cannot know it). In other words, whereas the cognitive map resolves the tension between conceptualization and experience, utopia leaves the tension open. We are left in the representational crisis which is figured within the narrative.

Jameson sees the position of the "'neuter' in general" as "problematical" because it is "both within and without the system ... without any real term or position of its own" ("Islands" 21). But what if we try to imagine how utopian discourse might function if it were removed from the Marxist emphasis on the movement of history from one mode of production to another and instead located within the multiple trajectories of the space-time dynamic? In this alternate space-time, utopian discourse and its neutralization could be employed to figure the conceptually unformulizable contradictions that arise between the multiple heterogeneous trajectories of the coeval, their multiple sets of relations and the resulting heterogeneous space, heterotopic places, and heterochronic time. This utopian discourse can acknowledge the numerous reality constructions and trajectories of the coeval without narrowing this space-time to a knowable totality and/or without positing a single space that develops unilinearly. It returns to Mannheim's conception of multiple constructions of reality and Ricoeur's and Harvey's conceptions of space as constructed yet discards Mannheim's paradox and desire for complete understanding and avoids Ricoeur's and Harvey's singularly progressive space.

Equally important, while Jameson is concerned with the social contract of genres from the side of interpretation, if we change our focus from interpretation to function, these structural discontinuities and their productive play could be

employed intentionally to represent multiple space-time trajectories and constructions of place. Jameson's perspective on utopian literature, as is demonstrated by his reading of *Utopia*, is deconstructionist. Utopia is a text at which he looks in order to examine the multiple ideologies present in both the text and its cultural moment and which make a seemingly coherent object non-coherent. We are not yet embedded within the text or the world. However, his "prescription for reading" utopias ("Islands" 11) is not that they can be read in this way, but that they *function* to express the unconceptualizable, the experience of existing within and among multiple constructions of place. Utopian discourse, therefore, is multiple, dynamic, and non-totalizable as well as functions to figure the world as the same. It recognizes and figures our embeddedness within an incomprehensible space-time dynamic and its "continuous and multiple processes of emergence" (Massey, *For* 54).

While I would agree that a complete representation of the space-time dynamic would be impossible, utopian discourse can gesture towards it. As Massey herself states, even "recognizing all [the trajectories and their shifting interrelations] is impossible" and expecting to do so would result in:

> a nightmare of guilty admission of all the stories the fullness of whose coeval existence you did not manage to recognize … What is at issue is not this but the change in perspective … the imaginative opening up of space. It is to refuse the flipping of the imaginative eye from modernist singular temporality to postmodern depthlessness; to retain at least some sense of contemporaneous multiple becomings. (*For* 120)

This sense of contemporaneous multiple becomings can be represented by deploying Jameson's utopian discourse with its negative dialectic where all terms continue on in their trajectories, "neutralize[d] by the reflexive play across [the] categories" (*Political* 286). Here is "a text … like the rest of the world" (Massey *For* 54). It is open, productive, heterogeneous, and lively.

In the following four chapters, I will examine how, first, Nicole Brossard and, then, Dionne Brand deploy utopian discourse to create texts that are like the world. These texts, with their utopian play and neutralization, create

representations that represent the crisis of representation and yet, somehow, leave us in it. The world is figured not as "a textuality *at which one looks*" but as something in which we are immersed and unable to observe, as multiply and continually being produced (emphasis in original, Massey, *For* 54). This representation does not domesticate the spatial by taming it into the textual but instead figures it as untameable. By employing utopian discourse, these authors figure an alternate geographical imagination and challenge hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place.

Chapter 3

"A Detail with Repercussions:"
Articulating the City in Nicole Brossard's *Picture Theory*

I begin my examination of Nicole Brossard's and Dionne Brand's use of
utopian discourse to figure the space-time dynamic and place as heterotopic with
a close look at Nicole Brossard's articulation of the city in *Picture Theory*. I do so
for two reasons. First, it enables me to help address the gap between the number
of representations of the city in Canadian literature and the relatively few
instances of literary criticism on these urban texts (Kröller 8, Edwards and Ivison
8). As Ann Martin argues, Canadians' "perspective on Canadian literature ... has
led us to overlook the role of the city" (44). Myles Chilton identifies that
perspective as two-fold. First, English-Canadian cultural nationalism's "literary
search for a Canadian national identity" ("Two" 51) led to an overwhelming
emphasis on man's "central engagement with the wilderness" (50) and to the
dismissal of representations of urban life. Second, "the transplanted imperial
culture" located the centre in Britain and resulted in the lack of "any sense of a
Canadian metropolitan center" (53). This lack "allow[ed] the wilderness to remain
the thematic centre of a nationalistic literature and criticism" (53). Thus, asserts
Chilton, even though Canada does not lack world-class urban centres, with
Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver considered to be global cities (50), and even
though a number of contemporary novelists are representing urban Canadian
space,[49] "the Canadian city novel and its referent, the Canadian city, remain
undertheorized as cultural spaces and discursive zones" (53). Justin D. Edwards
and Douglas Ivison agree, noting that although "Canada is an urban country" and
Canadian writers have been producing texts that engage with the Canadian urban
reality for a long time, the "critical production on Canadian literature and culture"

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[49] Chilton looks specifically at Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* and Russell Smith's *How Insensitive*,
but for other examples see Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here* and *What We All Long
For*, Gail Scott's *Heroine* and *Main Brides*, Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, Anne
Michael's *Fugitive Pieces*, and SKY Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café.*

has "largely focused on rural and wilderness spaces and small towns" (6). This undertheorization and lack of critical attention needs to be addressed.[50]

As any place, the city is a space of multiple trajectories. As Warley, Ball, and Viau state, "the palimpsestic layers of city-space exhibit its historical and contemporary multiplicity—the competing visions and discourses that formed it, as well as the many modes of habitation and use that still jostle within its porous boundaries" ("Mapping" n.p.). This palimpsestic jostling, however, is not a simple diversity. The city is "a field of multiple actors, trajectories, stories with their own energies—which may mingle in harmony, collide, even annihilate each other" (Massey, *World* 22). "Urban space," Doreen Massey writes, "is *relational* not a mosaic of simply juxtaposed differences. This place ... has to be conceptualized, not as a simple diversity," or a "simple plurality: a harmonious juxtaposing," but as "a meeting-place of jostling potentially conflicting, trajectories. It is set within, and internally constituted through, complex geometries of differential power" (emphasis in original, *World* 88-89).

Also like any place, cities are constructed; they are, as Glenn Deer argues, "socially produced through multiple discourses and genres" (120). This emphasis on the "metaphorics of the city," argues Ben Highmore, insists "that our experiences of cities are 'caught' in networks of dense metaphorical meanings" (5). These metaphorical meanings are present in our urban literatures which can reveal, maintain, and/or challenge conceptualizations of urban space.[51] "The city can be read as a trace of the desires of those who construct it," writes Lianne Moyes, including "its poets and storytellers as much as its architects and bureaucrats" ("Cities" 6). For Moyes, literary representations can "expose the

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[50] This has already begun. For examples of criticism that is not otherwise mentioned in this thesis but that has begun to address the representation of urban space in Canadian fiction, see Alison Calder's "Paper Families and Blonde Demonesses: The Haunting of History in Sky Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café*," Emily Johansen's "'Streets are the Dwelling Place of the Collective:' Public Space and Cosmopolitan Citizenship in Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For*," Lianne Moyes' "Writing the Montreal Mountain: Below the Thresholds at which Visibility Begins," Douglas Ivison's "'A Reader's Guide to the Intersection of Time and Space': Urban Spatialization in Hugh Hood's *Around the Mountain*," and, of course, the essays included in Justin D. Edwards and Douglas Ivison's *Downtown Canada: Writing Canadian Cities*.

[51] Literature, write Edwards and Ivison, "has contributed to and shaped the production of the city" (9).

ideologies that subtend" the dominant construction of the city, as well as "offer an alternative map of the city, an alternative cartography of desire" (6).[52]

The second reason why I begin with an examination of *Picture Theory* is that, with its depiction of a group of lesbian feminists who gather on what seems to be a utopian island, it is the most classically utopian of all the texts examined here. The novel has already been read as utopian. For example, Louise Forsyth states that it "pushes ... into another dimension of space, that of vision and utopia" ("Destructuring" 341), and Lorraine Weir argues that it presents "the goals of Brossard's utopia" and is "an offering of hope in a still patriarchal world" (352).[53] However, rather than reading it as a classic utopian depiction of an ideal place or of transformative goals, I argue it should be read as utopian discourse.

Brossard's utopianism should be seen as a response to the critical feminist and lesbian utopias of the 1960s and 1970s. Typically, feminist utopias such as *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy, and *The Wanderground: Stories of the Hill Women*, by Sally Miller Gearhart, challenge patriarchy by positing societies centred around a feminist and/or lesbian politic where women construct their own geography, usually emphasizing pastoral and non-urban space. For example, in *Woman on the Edge of Time* the protagonist, Connie, must choose to act in the present of a late twentieth-century Californian city in order to avoid an even more terrifyingly patriarchal urban future and construct instead a pastoral society where humanity can live according to more natural feminist ideals. Similarly, in *The Wanderground*, a lesbian community establishes itself outside the patriarchal city where they can foster their more healthful and intimate connections to nature. Unlike these fictions, one of *Picture Theory*'s main concerns is to counter the patriarchal connection between woman and the land. Brossard asserts that "historically, men have established an analogy between women and nature" and from this "follows a whole series of misogynistic messages which direct men to put women in their place, to control and dominate

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[52] For example, Eva-Marie Kröller writes that many contemporary Canadian writers, among whom I would include both Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand, are now depicting urban space as "permeable and hybridic in unprecedented ways" (6).
[53] See also Lynne Huffer's general discussion of Brossard's utopianism, "From Lesbos to Montreal: Nicole Brossard's Urban Fictions" (103-105).

them" (Interview with Ingrid Joubert 46). Her desire to change this "metaphoric network which relates to nature and which binds men and women" leads her to sever the connection and associate women with urban space by locating her female characters in the centre of power (46). In doing so, she provides an alternate construction of the city where it is heterotopic, composed of multiple and competing trajectories and their constructions of place, some of which counter patriarchy's construction of woman. Further, by representing numerous trajectories coming together continually to create urban space, she counters the connection between woman and place as static and authenticating by presenting place as multiple, open, dynamic, and interrelational. As Brossard states in *Baroque at Dawn*, "It will avail us nothing to raise our voices if by so doing we reinforce the landscapes of the status quo" (119).

Another difference from typical feminist utopias is that Brossard connects utopia to language. Jean Pfaelzer compares classic feminist utopias with the texts of feminist discourse theorists arguing they are both concerned with space. While discourse theorists focus on "women's space: the gap, the rupture, the enclosure, the absence of female inscription in discourse and history," feminist utopian authors concern themselves with "utopian space: no place, the inversion, the hole in history which signifies and allows for the fantasy and the wish" (282). Both "deconstruct material space," but they diverge over what comes next:

> Feminist discourse theorists … deconstruct representational (read 'masculine') space: subvert the old order by subverting the old perceptual orders. Dislocate syntax. Dislocate plot. Dislocate persona. Utopian authors construct ideal space in order to subvert inequality and inevitability. Dislocate geography. Dislocate time. Dislocate historical determinism. (282)

Comparing the two, she argues that the discourse theorists' emphasis on women's location outside patriarchal language perpetuates "the notion of women as outsiders to history" (290). She contends that if "women can remove themselves from patriarchy only through the ruptures of the avant-garde" then "the liberated space eliminates repression . . . by eliminating representation" thereby further

marginalizing women (290). Instead, she posits utopia as the new *avant-garde* arguing, "unlike the imagined space of the discourse theorists, the literary utopia reinscribes women in history, language and narrative activity" (284).

Like Pfaelzer, Brossard sees transgression without vision as leaving women outside sense and therefore outside language, politics, and history. In an interview with Janice Williamson, Brossard outlines the difference between transgressive and visionary writing: "you transgress the permissible social space in order to make space for your desire. Transgression is defiance and can also be read as an attempt at renewal," but "if we accept that transgression marginalizes those who do it, then we must ask the question: since the feminine is already marginalized in a patriarchal society, how can we transgress the law without marginalizing ourselves more" ("Before" 59)? Brossard answers her own question by stating, "Personally, I can say that writing a feminist consciousness … brought me to shift from the word 'transgression' to the word 'vision'" (59). As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, this shift would be the transition from her second to third stage where she employs a feminist politic to work on language (Godard, "Nicole" 122). Therefore, unlike Pfaelzer, Brossard does not see transgression and utopia in opposition but rather brings them together. She tells us:

> [M]y poetic is essentially to make space for the unthought. As a woman, I am left with a language that has either erased or marginalized women as subjects. Therefore in my poetic I perform what is necessary to make space for women's subjectivity and plurality, to make space for a positive image of women. This task engages me to question language—symbolic and imaginary, from all angles and dimensions. …In the desire and necessity to reinvent language, there is certainly an intention for happiness, a utopian thrust, a serious responsibility. ("Poetic" 81)

Nicole Brossard brings these two movements together, locating her feminist utopia not in any particular place or time but in language itself.

Instead of being seen as a classic utopian novel, *Picture Theory* should be seen as an example of utopian discourse aimed at re-articulating the city. For

Brossard, utopia does not present goals, construct an ideal society, or even reflect historical scarcity. Rather, utopia is an emotion; it is the motivating desire at the heart of discursive reality constructions. In particular, Brossard is concerned with the desire at the centre of constructions of space, time, place, and, of course, woman. As motivating desire, utopia, as it does for Ricoeur, Mannheim, and Harvey, connects to non-dominant trajectories and reality constructions that challenge hegemonic ideology. However, for Brossard, utopian desire is multiplied, not binary. Like Foucault's heterotopia, it can recognize that multiple ideologies in utopian frames work against and alongside the hegemonic reality construction. As we have seen, in *Picture Theory*, Brossard is concerned with re-articulating urban space in order to counter the connection between women and the land and make space for women in the city. To represent city space in such a way, she deploys utopian discourse as Fredric Jameson articulates it and presents multiple constructions of the city in a narrative of discontinuities in order to figure the unrepresentable space-time dynamic.

In this chapter, I will examine how Brossard deploys utopian discourse to reconceptualise the city as a heterotopic space of multiple trajectories and thereby demonstrate patriarchy's "invasion and occupancy of the whole of space," create an articulation of urban space that can positively articulate women, returning them to the city, and "generate ... new ways of inhabiting" urban space (Grosz 124). To do so, I will first examine how Brossard's reaction to the postmodern city differs from Fredric Jameson's and more closely aligns with that of Michel de Certeau, with the notable difference that de Certeau's city dwellers are gendered male and Brossard's are female and have a different relationship to urban space. I move on to examine the novel more fully by demonstrating, first, how Brossard depicts patriarchy's construction of the city and woman in accordance with its conceptions of space and time. Second, I outline Brossard's depiction of feminist discourse theorists' constructions of the city and woman according to their conceptions of space and time. From here, I go on to examine how Brossard builds on feminist discourse theory by adding a politic to her language play and presenting her own constructions where space becomes interrelational and time

multiple, so that the city and woman become holographic, or imaged as the momentary articulation of the coming together of multiple trajectories. The city opens to allow for multiple dynamic constructions, most importantly but not only including that of Brossard's urban radicals. I conclude by once again comparing Brossard's reaction to postmodern urban space to that of Jameson's and explaining how she deploys Jameson's utopian discourse to articulate the city differently.

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Brossard's view of the city counters Fredric Jameson's as outlined in "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." Both Brossard and Jameson see the city as representing the postmodern condition, but while Jameson finds that the unmappable postmodern city disables political action, Brossard finds it essential to it. Of "the extraordinary surfaces of the photorealist cityscape, where even the automobile wrecks gleam with some new hallucinatory splendour," Jameson states:

> The exhilaration of these new surfaces is all the more paradoxical in that their essential content—the city itself—has deteriorated or disintegrated to a degree surely still inconceivable … How urban squalor can be a delight to the eyes …, and how an unparalleled quantum leap in the alienation of daily life in the city can now be experienced in the form of strange new hallucinatory exhilaration—these are some of the questions that confront us in this moment of our inquiry. ("Postmodernism" 76)

For Brossard, however, the alienation of her characters amidst the disintegrated and disempowered patriarchal city becomes an opportunity to create a polysemic, multi-dimensional city that counters the spatial and discursive containment of women.

Counter to Jameson's desire for cognitive maps and the ability to read the city, Brossard's desire is for open texts that allow city dwellers to continually and multiply produce the city. In this way, her work is more closely aligned with the work of Michel de Certeau. Because de Certeau's conception of urban space, and space in general, is important not only to this chapter but will be referred to in

later discussions of Brossard's and Brand's texts, I spend the following pages outlining his work.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau opposes the cartographer, whom he associates with rationality, power, and form, to the poet, whom he associates with use, resistance, and practice. Cartographers, whose perspective is one of distance, view the city as a transparent text, "allow[ing] [them] to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god" (127). This city is subject to "the 'geometrical' or 'geographical' space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions" (128). It "can be dealt with as a unity" and determined rationally (129).

However, de Certeau argues that rather than a real city, cartographers, or voyeurs, construct a fiction, "the concept of a city" or an abstract "theoretical ... picture" imposed on the city by the dominant order (128). Following Foucault, he argues that the voyeurs have transformed "a human multiplicity into a 'disciplinary' society" by employing conceptual space as "procedures" or "apparatuses" that reinforce their power (130). However, expanding on Foucault, he turns to examining, not these spatial procedures but what he calls the "spatial practices" that correspond to this disciplined space (130). The Concept-city is based on "an oblivion and misunderstanding of practices," or the uses of urban space by the people on the street (128). For de Certeau, it is actual spatial practices and not spatial forms or concepts that "structure the determining conditions of social life" (130), and these can include "practices that are foreign to the ... theoretical constructions" (128). Thus, while "in discourse the city serves as a totalizing and almost mythical landmark," it "is left prey to contradictory movements that counterbalance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power" (130). The streets are thus a location for excess, for "the 'waste products' of a functionalist administration" (129). Unlike the univocal strategists, these "ordinary practitioners of the city" come together in "an unlimited diversity" as a "chorus" that changes "from step to step" (130).

De Certeau associates the users of the city with the spoken word and the open text of a long poem. Connecting walking with speech, he writes that walking

is "a space of enunciation" (98). The "geometrical space" of the urban planners is comparable to the "'proper meaning' constructed by grammarians and linguists" (100). Thus, if "a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (e.g. by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g. by a wall that prevents one from going further)," the walker, by choosing among and behaving according to these preset possibilities and interdictions, actualizes them: "he makes them exist as well as emerge" (98). However, as with language, there must be a "distinction between the forms used in a system and the ways of using this system" (98), and "the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered" (97). Spatial practice is, like speech, open to modifications of the system or spatial form. It appropriates the "topographical system on the part of the pedestrian," and is "a spatial acting out of the place" (98). The walker "moves [these possibilities and interdictions] about and he invents others" through crossing, drifting, and improvising which "privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements" (98). Both walking and language play are "deviations relative to a sort of 'literal meaning' defined by the urbanistic [and linguistic] system" (100). In other words, the walker can be a staunch grammarian and "follow the possibilities fixed by the constructed order" or can be a streetsmith, composing "spatial 'turns of phrase' that are 'rare,' 'accidental' or 'illegitimate'" (99) and transform "each spatial signifier into something else" (98).

De Certeau compares the city constructed by the voyeurs to that constructed by the walkers in relation to space, time, and identity. The Concept-city is constructed through "a threefold operation" (129). First, it must produce "its own space (*un espace propre*)," an imaginary blank space, or what I will call a "nowhere" in order to distinguish it from the noplace of the space-time dynamic. Only on such a blank space can "rational organization" represent the city as unified and "repress all the physical, mental and political pollutions that would compromise it" (129). Second, along with its own space, it must produce its own time, what de Certeau calls a "nowhen" (129). A "nowhen" is a singular "synchronic system" of time that, correlating with the nowhere, represses anything that would compromise the rational order, such as "the indeterminable

and stubborn resistances offered by traditions" (129). It is the time of "univocal ... strategies" (129) that use "perspective vision," or static cartographic representation, and "prospective" vision, or the idea of progress, to project "an opaque past and an uncertain future on to a [flat] surface that can be dealt with" (128). Describing New York as positioned within this nowhen, he writes, "New York has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future" (91). These temporal strategies override or "replace the tactics of users," which could open and multiply time and "reproduce the opacities of history" (note de Certeau's pluralisation of the resistances offered by "traditions" above) (129). Finally, along with its own conception of space and time, the Concept-city must have its own "universal and anonymous subject" (129). This subject, "'the city,' like a proper name, thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties" (129). In other words, the city becomes a discrete and classifiable entity, a transparent text, but at the cost of eliminating or misreading that which does not fit.

The city constructed by walkers is based on different conceptions of space, time, and identity. It transforms the Concept-city's blank space into a space of multiple constructions "composed by ... series of displacements and effects among the fragmented strata that form it" (108). This space cannot be divided from time because it encompasses multiple "trajectories that have a mythical structure," meaning it is, unlike perspective representation, a "jerry-built" story, "allusive and fragmented" (102). The form of this space-time is "makeshift" as "things extra and other (details and excesses coming from elsewhere) insert themselves into the accepted framework, the imposed order" and "produce anti-texts" (107).

While the Concept-city is associated with the light of reason and the nowhen, this city is connected to the shadows of opacity and multiple trajectories. The Concept-city transforms urban space "into a 'desert' in which the meaninglessness, indeed the terrifying, no longer takes the form of shadows but

becomes ... an implacable light that produces this urban text without obscurities, which is created by a technocratic power ... and which puts the city-dweller under control" (103). Conversely, the multiplied city is connected to "the stories and legends that haunt urban space" (106) and produce the "possibilities of moving into other landscapes, like cellars and bushes" (107). Described as "moving 'trees of gesture'," and therefore as opaque and dynamic, these trajectories "transform the scene" (102). They have the "capacity to create cellars and garrets" (102) and to "invent spaces" (107) or places that escape the closed space-time of the rational. These cellars and garrets "permit exits, ways of going out and coming back in" from panoptic ordered space, and create "habitable spaces" out of a prison space (106). Thus, while in his introduction, de Certeau imagines the spatial order as a ship commanding the ocean waves, represented by the island of Manhattan with the World Trade Center at its "prow" (92), he now asserts that "the surface of this order is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order" (107).

As we know from chapter one, with this alternate space-time must come an alternate subject. The subject of the practised city is not the unified and essential proper home place of the Concept-city, defined as "the technological system of a coherent and totalizing space that is 'linked' and simultaneous" (108), but is the noplace of the heterotopic city. Defining walking as "to lack a place," a process "of being absent and in search of a proper," in other words as having no home place or origin, he argues that the constant moving about in the city "makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place" (103). Rather than a home, "there is only a pullulation of passer-by, a network of residences temporarily appropriated by pedestrian traffic, a shuffling among pretences of the proper, a universe of rented spaces haunted by a nowhere [noplace] or by dreamed of places" (103).

The subject of this noplace is fragmented and multiplied as is seen in de Certeau's discussion of proper names. The dominant order attempts to contain this complex urban space under a proper name, "the city," but the practitioners of spatial practices have their own alternate geographies indicated "by their

manipulations of and with 'proper' names" (103). For example, street names are given by the spatial order in order to "hierarchize and semantically order the surface of the city" (104). They lay out the city historically in that these names are usually those of former residents, local landmarks, or historical events. However, "their ability to signify outlives its first definition," and these names can be appropriated and become "available to the diverse meanings given them by passers-by" (104). Because this polysemy "compromise[s] the univocity of the system," the functionalist spatial order tries to eliminate it by replacing street names with an even more rational pattern of numbers. However, the very attempts to exterminate this polysemy "make[s] the city a 'suspended symbolic order'" (106). Although the spatial order tries to create an *espace propre,* by doing so it paradoxically allows these "semantic overlays that insert themselves 'over and above' or 'in excess'" and "annex" part of the Concept-city to "a past or poetic realm" (106). This polysemy "inverts the schema of the *Panopticon*" (emphasis in original 108). The re-appropriation of these street names "articulat[es] a second, poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal ... meaning" and "insinuate[s] other routes into the functionalist and historical order" (105). Thus, there is "a strange toponomy that is detached from actual places and flies high over the city like a foggy geography of 'meanings' held in suspension, directing the physical deambulations below" (104). Unlike the Concept-city that is described as a wave of verticals "momentarily arrested by vision," this wave, or surface, is all "agitation" (91). These names "create a nowhere" or as I call it, a noplace, "in places; they change them into passages" (104).

Not only the subject of the city but subjectivity itself shifts from being static and essential to dynamic and created in relation to others. "Each body is an element signed by many others" (93) and is constantly in process. Subjectivity outside of that of the Concept-city exists "in spatial practices, that is, in *ways of moving into something different*" (109). Existence is "the repetition ... of a decisive and originary experience, that of the child's differentiation from the mother's body" (109). The "process of detachment from indifferentiation in the mother's body ... constitutes localization and exteriority against the background of

an absence" (109). This differentiation makes it possible to be present as a subject but only in relation to an other: the departure of the mother makes "oneself disappear (insofar as one considers oneself identical with that object), making it possible to be *there ... without* the other but in a necessary relation to what has disappeared" (emphasis in original 109). This is "the original spatial structure" that is constantly repeated. The process "inscribes" both "the law of being and the law of place" as "the passage toward the other" (109). "To practice space is thus, ... in a place, *to be other and to move toward the other*" (emphasis in original 110). This "childhood experience that determines spatial practices later develops its effects, proliferates, floods private and public spaces, undoes their readable surfaces, and creates within the planned city a 'metaphorical' or mobile city" (110).

As I will show in the following pages, Nicole Brossard's conception of the city aligns with de Certeau's critique of the Concept-city in a feminist context. The Concept-city and its rational space can be aligned with the patriarchal city and can be countered by multiplying space and time and inserting the trajectories of her walkers, whom she calls urban radicals,[54] into the urban fabric. However, de Certeau's position of the walker is gendered male. Simon During asserts, "it grants twentieth-century urban experience ... the glamour that a writer such as Walter Benjamin found in the nineteenth-century leisured observer or flâneur" not the *flaneuse* (126). As Lianne Moyes writes, "the city is a space in which women do not circulate freely" ("Cities" 7). Unlike the *flâneur* who looks, women are looked at, a "spectacle" on display which is "in fact a way of regulating their movements" (8). In other words, women have different relationships to both the city and the mother. De Certeau tantalizingly states in an aside that the "female foetus ... is introduced into another relationship to space" (109).

The understanding of urban space as multiple and discursive is particularly important for women because the rational and intelligible construction of urban space is produced through their spatial and discursive containment. As Elizabeth Grosz argues, "the ways in which space has been historically conceived have

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[54] Urban radicals will be further discussed below.

always functioned to either contain women or to obliterate them" (120). She explains that with the emphasis on the mind, the abstract, and the transcendent, "men have had to expel from their own self-representations" any hint of "corporeality, of domesticity, of the natural order" which become the domain of women. "Women become the guardians of the private and the interpersonal, while men build conceptual and material worlds" (121). Thus, men give themselves "the right to define and utilize a spatiality that reflects their own self-representations" (Grosz 121), and women are "relegated to pastoral or interior settings, both in life and literature" (Squire 4). As a cultural construction, patriarchal urban space also confines women discursively. Susan Merrill Squire observes that because women have been "perceived as closer to nature," they have traditionally "been excluded from cultural realms" (4). Women become the naturalized objects of, rather than producers of, knowledge and representation. Therefore, what should be "the palimpsest of the city," writes Ellen Servinis, narrows and "tells a primarily male story" (253)—and this story is connected to desire. The city is a "story of male desire" that "produc[es] woman as text, as pure representation" (de Lauretis 13). Teresa de Lauretis argues that "in the discursive space of the city" women are "both absent and captive" (14). They are "absent as theoretical subject[s]," or producers of knowledge, and "captive as historical subject[s]," or patriarchal constructions (14). Patriarchy constructs women in a way that correlates with its singular construction of the city. Woman becomes "the dream woman" (13). Here, "desire provides the impulse, the drive to represent, and dream the modes of representing" (13). "Built to capture men's dream," the city "finally only inscribes woman's absence" (13).

Women also have a different relationship to the mother. Girls, as do boys, separate from the mother, but they are also expected to become her, to become what has disappeared. Other than this role, woman has often been absent in the patriarchal city.[55] Consequently, women are multiply invisible to the male scopic

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[55] De Certeau champions what is considered to be women's place, the private "cave of the home," as one of the primary spaces where difference still exists (106). The home, he writes, is "still full of shadows;" it is "marked, opened up by a memory or a story, signed by something or someone else" (106). Unlike the prison space of the Concept-city, the private home with its multiple exits

eye, which, according to de Certeau, would seem to be liberating, yet confined spatially to the home and discursively to the patriarchal text of the dream woman (wife and mother), women are less able to move about freely in and reconstruct the city.

The feminist urban spatial project, as Elizabeth Grosz argues, becomes returning:

> women to those places from which they have been dis- or re-placed or expelled, to occupy those positions ... partly in order to show men's invasion and occupancy of the whole of space ... and thus the constriction of spaces available to women, and partly in order to be able to experiment with and produce the possibility of occupying, dwelling, or living in new spaces, which in their turn help generate new perspectives, new bodies, new ways of inhabiting. (124)

In order to re-place women in the city and demonstrate its patriarchal construction as well as to propose "new ways of inhabiting" (Grosz 124), Brossard releases some women from what de Lauretis calls "the dream image" and she calls "the captive image" (*Aerial* 125) by providing an alternate construction of female subjectivity, which she calls "the captivating image" (*Aerial* 126) or integral woman. Integral woman provides an alternate image of woman and mother, one that refuses women's disappearance and instead demonstrates their continuing on in their own trajectories and constructions of place. Inserting integral woman into the city enables urban radicals to break women's connection to land and/or domestic space and take part in the spatial practices that transform panoptic space into a heterotopic noplace. They can construct the city in a way that positively articulates women.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Chapter one in *Picture Theory* constructs the city as patriarchal and demonstrates its effect on women. Brossard reverses de Certeau's opposition

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and entrances is "habitable" (106). In his image of "habitable spaces" as places that "permit exits" (106), de Certeau reverses the binary between public and private space so that public urban space is connected to closure and stasis and private space is connected to instability and multiplicity. However, private space is still outside of the centres of power that control the social relations that reconstruct space-time.

between light and dark so that darkness and the forest represent patriarchal space. As Brossard states, "The first chapter … introduces the city by describing it in and through the concept of darkness (for instance: the subway, the elevator, the black-out of New York, the bars, the entrance halls of the Hotel), the blackness here being associated with the patriarchy not in contrast to white, but as the absence of light" (Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al 125). In this city, women are continually affected by patriarchy and find it next to impossible to think or speak. Before Florence Dérive leaves New York to give her lecture in Montreal, she meets her mother's friend Oriana on Broadway, in the marginalized and sexualized red light district of Times Square. Brossard writes, "Broadway/porn/ Gestalt. Florence was explaining to Oriana but a Corvette **sound traffic**, that love between anarchist, between women especially. A woman in the street turned around on the spot" (emphasis in original, *Picture* 17). The effect of the Corvette's horn on the woman in the street connects this place with male heterosexual aggression and control. This patriarchal city interrupts Florence so that her sentences are fragmentary and nonsensical, demonstrating the position and accent[56] of non-patriarchal women in the Polis.

Florence, as a radical lesbian feminist, is shown to have little sense of identity or place in New York where she "was reborn each time between the deadly streets of the city" (24). This lack of identity and an enabling construction of place is reflected in her relative position. Brossard explains that in her writing "the places mentioned in the city are almost always mentioned in reference to [her] view of writing, [her] desire to write, or to an actualization of the writing" (Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al 126). Florence, editing her lecture before she leaves, is located at a bar at the corner of Seventeenth Avenue and Forty-Second Street in Manhattan, placing her and her text in the Hudson River, off the West side of Hell's Kitchen ("New York" n.p.). In the late 1970s to early 1980s, Hell's Kitchen, including the Times Square area, was notorious for crime and drug activity, and Forty-Second Street, between Fifth Avenue and the Hudson River,

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[56] Speaking with an "accent" is how Brossard describes women's speech in a patriarchal language (*Aerial* 105). See below.

was popularly described as the armpit of the city ("Welcome" par. 2). For Brossard, however, these marginalized areas of cities represent the space of excess. She asserts that when she was growing up in Quebec, "the city was associated with sin, depravation, a place where you lose your soul" and, thus, for her, easily became associated with "delinquency, belonging, movement, excitement and excess" (Interview with Lynne Huffer 120). Yet, as a lesbian and feminist writer, Florence Dérive is beyond belonging even here and is marginalized beyond the marginal.

Florence Dérive finds belonging and an alternate construction of place at the *Hôtel de l'Institut* in Montreal. The hotel is located in the Latin Quarter, next to *Carre St. Louis*, at 3535 *rue St-Denis*, but Brossard, altering the Montreal map, lists the address further south, at 1980 *rue St-Denis*. By playing with the closed space of the map, she highlights its constructedness and fictional quality, and opens space to allow her to present an alternate construction of place. This relocation also places the hotel on the same corner as Baby Face, a popular lesbian bar. In Brossard's works, bars and bar tables are places where like-minded people gather to talk and reinforce their assumptions about and construction of the reality outside. Studying lesbian bar culture in Montreal, Julie Podmore claims bars were important "sites for constituting lesbian identities" and for "shaping patterns of territoriality among lesbians" (598). She notes that from the 1970s to the 1990s, bars created solidarity as their diverse clientele "brought a larger group of women into contact with political activism" and argues they helped to enable the first overt lesbian and gay rights activist movements (606). Brossard would seem to agree, writing of her early lesbian community, "We needed spaces where we could come together to talk about ourselves. We needed to make over the world" (*Fluid* 132-133). She describes the lesbian bar:

> In just the time it took to find myself sitting at the bar once again among
> friends or among unknown women, I was already swept up by a current of
> energy, a feverishness which, on the first beat, expressed itself in heated
> conversations and on the second, drove me onto the dance floor. … How
> many times when leaving a women's bar, as I found myself walking

among heterosexual couples … did I not experience the feeling of
suddenly being thrown into an alien world, did I not feel reality suddenly
taking a fantastic turn, becoming surreal, fictive, how many times did I not
experience the sensation of a radical break between what made sense in
the heat of the bar and what, once outside, seemed to me such an
incongruity….a slight vertigo. (*Fluid* 133-134)

Thus, it is at the hotel/bar that the place of the city is demonstrated to be
heterotopic and is constructed in a way that provides a positive articulation for
Florence Dérive.

By associating the *Hôtel de l'Institut* with the construction of reality
created in lesbian bars, Brossard sets it apart from the other hotels in *Picture
Theory*. The built space of hotels comes to figure the logic and patterns imposed
on both narrative and social reality. This representation parallels Fredric
Jameson's discussion of the Bonaventure Hotel in "Postmodernism, or The
Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." Using "utopia" to denote its more traditional
meaning of an image of a better place that exists to guide the historical narrative,
he argues that, unlike earlier modernist hotels which were elite and politicized
constructions that "insert … a new Utopian language into the tawdry and
commercial sign-system of the surrounding city" gambling that "the new Utopian
space … would fan out and transform [its surroundings] by the very power of its
new spatial language," postmodern buildings such as the Bonaventure separate
themselves from their environment and aspire to be "a total space, a complete
world," the city's "equivalent and its replacement or substitute" becoming, like
the global capitalist system that spawned them, unmappable (80-81). For
example, the lobby, which according to Jameson should be a space we
consciously map and make our way through, becomes gargantuan and "makes it
impossible for us to use the language of volume or volumes any longer, since
these last are impossible to seize" (82). It becomes "quite impossible to get your
bearings" and the resulting "milling confusion" demonstrates "the vengeance this
space takes on those who still seek to walk through it" (83). This new space leads
to "a new collective practice, a new mode in which individuals move and

congregate, something like the practice of a new and historically original kind of hyper-crowd" (81). For the hyper-crowd, space becomes a depthless hyperspace, "an element within which you yourself are immersed, without any of that distance that formerly enabled the perception of perspective or volume" (83). Thus there can be no critical distance and the hyper-crowd is nothing more than "a constant busyness [that] gives the feeling that emptiness is here absolutely packed" (82-83). Therefore, Jameson argues, the lobby of the Bonaventure symbolizes "the incapacity of our minds … to map the great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught" (84). Hyperspace then is related to time and narrative as what Jameson sees as a "culture increasingly dominated by space and spatial logic" leads to "a crisis in historicity" and "the problem of the form that time, temporality and the syntagmatic will be able to take" (71). With the loss of any critical distance, the past itself becomes hyperspace, "a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum" and "as 'referent' finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts" (66). The Bonaventure becomes "a built environment in which an aesthetic becomes politically anaesthetic" (Soja 21). As I explained in chapter one, Jameson calls for a new form of representation, cognitive maps that can counter the postmodern crisis by representing the totality and once again enable intentionality and political agency. These maps will bridge the "gap" between "existential experience and scientific knowledge" (91).

Brossard, on the other hand, celebrates the "crisis in historicity" (Jameson, "Postmodernism" 71). She, too, connects architecture and hotels to narrative. Yet her critique is of the unilinear patriarchal metanarrative, represented by Jameson's earlier elite, modernist, "Utopian" hotels, and her solution comes out of hyperspace. In an interview with Jodey Castricano and Jacqueline Larson, she elaborates on an analogy between architecture and narrative asserting there are two types of architecture: "one which has been very often used, *le récit*—the narrative, and the other which is putting new impulses into language *through* a narrative" (51). Other than the *Hôtel de l'Institut*, the hotels in *Picture Theory*,

typical upscale hotels such as the Hilton in Curaçao and the Madison in Paris, represent *le récit*, the standard patriarchal narratives that structure space-time. Michelle asserts, the "hotels grow old like the certain models of a glorious architecture caught between the multinationals and dirt accumulated on the Greek columns in the lounge" (17). In these narratives, such as Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, time is chronological and space is singular, associated with a conquerable surface to be travelled across and with woman through the "gift" of Jocasta and therefore Thebes to Oedipus. Time, as active and internal, is privileged and connected to the masculine and space, as passive and external, to the feminine.

This form of narrative and its space-time are connected to the part of the city that surrounds the Madison hotel, located on the *Boulevard St.-Germain* in the *St.-Germain des Pres* district of Paris, the previous centre of café culture, intellectualism, and non-conformity. From the 1940s to the early 1970s, this area was also the city's primary gay and lesbian space. When Michelle visits in 1980, however, *St.-Germain des Pres* is being commercialized. The area has become a thriving high-end shopping and tourist district and a patriarchal space. Michelle walks the area around her hotel but finds it impossible to be both a woman and a walker or *flâneur*.

Instead of creating her own text of the city, M.V. finds herself constructed. On the city streets, woman is either absent or caught in the dream image represented here by the mannequins in the shop windows. As Moyes argues, while "scrutinizing women and their movements allows the flâneur to move freely and to assert his presence in the city, ... the woman at whom he looks remains mired in contradiction: both invisible and visible, absent and captive," put on display as "a way of regulating [her] movements" ("Cities" 8). On the *rue du Dragon* and *rue de Buci*, Michelle tries "not to stop in front of a store window and see the mannequins chained there" (29) and comments, "from one store window to another …, I got the impression" (18). As Brossard says of the image of women in advertising, film, and books:

> the woman in the image is exposed to anyone's gaze, just as to any danger
> in the street, at any time of the day but, to look at her, you can't tell that

anything is wrong; she always has the same *affected* air. It costs her her

body, this lack of naturalness. The woman in the image affects the

existence of women, designates women to reproduction. (emphasis in

original, *Aerial* 125)

This representation of woman allows for only one possibility for women in a

patriarchal system, that of an object of male desire and of reproduction, not only

of patriarchy's children but also of its repressive system, its space-time and

narrowed construction of place. Thus, in a café trying to write, "*j'avance,

j'avance*," M.V. finds herself, paralleling Florence in Times Square, in "an

excess" that "distracts … from thought provoking writings" (29).

The anonymous narrator describes the boulevard outside the Madison:

"Outside, the bars are rejuvenated as quickly as the books in bookstores. It was as

if humanity … would often sit in a café, humanity, watching her full of

descriptions in their eyes" (18). While the lesbian bar provides a space from

which to make over the world, bars can also provide space for patriarchy. This is

represented by Daniel Judith's father, who spends his time with other like-minded

men in the tavern. This father is a woodsman, symbolizing patriarchy's

relationship with nature and woman. As Carolyn Merchant notes, "wilderness is

female to the male explorer, frontiersman, and pioneer who tame it with the brute

strength of the ax, the trap, and the gun" (147). Through the taming and civilizing

of nature/woman both are subdued and transformed into objects of male pleasure:

fruitful, nurturing, and motherly (137). Daniel Judith's father represents the

pioneers who tamed the wilderness and who track and kill the *élan*, meaning both

the moose and women's politically motivated productive imagination or

evolutionary impulse and momentum. Thus, he constructs his reality "among the

bowling machines, the Labatts and the vomittings of the patriarchal clan installed

in the taverns" (82). On the *boulevard St-Germain*, "humanity's" bars, like its

books, are also patriarchal, describing and constructing only one subject position

for woman.

From the frame of reference of her hotel window, reality "is stunted" as:

"Taxi, a door opens. A women in high heels gets out of the car and makes her

way to the lobby of the Madison. She resembles another woman to be mistaken for her as always" (34). This "women," grammatically both singular and plural, parallels integral woman[57] as she is both symbol and real, singular and multiple, but unlike integral woman, who Brossard describes as a "captivating image" (*Aerial* 125) that reflects the *essentielle* of every woman, this "women" is captive to the single image projected and reflected in the shop windows surrounding her. The Madison and its narrative, like the *St-Germain des Pres* district, are patriarchy's space. M.V. remembers, "A man's voice somewhere in the hotel was reciting a poem in a foreign language" (18). This poem is the monologue that supports the patriarchal city. She despairingly looks out the window and "*Le poème hurlait*" as she cries in her room (34).

M.V. comes to understand this construction of urban space as connected to a hegemonic construction of space and time. On vacation with her friends on an unnamed island which, through geographical references can be located as Martha's Vineyard, M.V. recognizes the urban form of the city as ideological. In their wine glasses, she sees "cities … converging" revealing "how the mind of **M**an was able to conceive himself only in the form of an arrow, scarlet, in the dark mists of time" (emphasis in original 85). Each city composed of grids is described as "a document abounding in arrows" that "crossed the cities from end to end" (85).

The grid is the space of the Concept-city and while it appears to be neutral, it is associated with the Cartesian spatial order (Genocchio 35), patriarchal power, and the Enlightenment subject. Saskia Sassen argues that both "the horizontal grid of American cities" and "the vertical grid of the corporate tower" are "imbued with ... neutrality and rationality" by being associated with precision, expertise, technology, and efficiency ("Identity" 144). She writes, "The built forms of the corporate economy are seen as representing its 'neutrality'—the fact that it is driven by technological development and efficiency, which are considered neutral" (147) and, therefore, its consolidation and growth are considered "an inevitable form that economic growth takes under these ordering

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[57] Both integral woman and the *essentielle* are discussed in depth below.

principles" (145). However, this "spatiality is one specific form assumed by the circulation of power" and is "shaped by cultural values and social norms" (147). "What is experienced as a form of rational urban organization, the grid," writes Sassen, "is actually ... the representation in urban design" of a "language of self and space" as "a modern form of power" (144).[58] Thus, Brossard depicts these arrows/streets as "furrowing space," creating the fertile trenches for the reproduction of the dominant group. They support patriarchy's subject, "arrow-man" (85). As Brossard writes, "patriarchal subjectivity stretched like a net gathering all thoughts in order to unite them in a single will to power" (87).

Man's built space of the city, like the hotel, is then connected to a singular construction of time and to a narrowed subject position for women. Man conceives of himself as an arrow moving through time, described as "dark mists" (85). Time as a whole is seen as both plural and opaque, but within it, patriarchal history sees only its own unilinear trajectory – the scarlet arrow. This narrowing of space and time leads to a narrowing of the female subject. Brossard writes that "every woman was struck" by these arrows and disfigured to fit the available subject position: "the ricocheting arrow … skinned alive profile and expression" (86). This narrowed subject, as we have seen, supports patriarchal city space.

M.V. further connects linear time to the captive woman through art history and aesthetics. Her vision in her wine glass is "called forth by the flashing intuition [the women] had passing through the history of art" (85). Earlier during her vacation, she has visited the famous Aquinnah cliffs, a popular spot where tourists can gaze at and photograph the landscape. From the lookout, they can see

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[58] Edward Soja and Elizabeth Grosz also discuss the association between spatial form and power in the city. According to Soja, "the carceral city ... underlies all urban histories and geographies" and "everywhere concentrates and projects the citadel's powers of surveillance and adherence" (28). He states that "*the first cities appeared with the simultaneous concentration of commanding symbolic forms, CIVIC CENTERS designed to announce, ceremonialize, administer, acculturate, discipline, and control*" (emphasis in original 23). These civic centres created "*spatially focussed social relations*" and "*an accordingly built environment*" which still organizes the city through "*surveillance and adherence .... To be urbanized means to adhere*" (emphasis in original 23). Grosz also argues that "the city's form and structure" is "the most immediate locus for the production and circulation of power" and adds that it "induces effects on the body" by "help[ing] produce specific conceptions of spatiality," "provid[ing] the context in which social rules and expectations are internalized or habituated in order to ensure social conformity" and by "orient[ing] and organiz[ing] familial, sexual, and social relations" through which "bodies are individuated to become subjects" (109).

the striations of clay, silt, sand and gravel that compose the island. These palimpsestic layers visually represent patriarchal time and its foundation on the captive image of woman: "So it was like this in the heart of the island, stone and water, slate and chalk. There are master masters, canvases and artisans. ... There are sculpted, white *mujeres,* legs broken, famous fragments. There were women in the rough stone … 'cut by servitude and shadows'" (76). The description brings to mind the aesthetic representations of women displayed in museums such as the Louvre. Here paintings by "master masters" such as Michelangelo's *Mona Lisa* (1503-06), Fragonard's *The Bathers* (1765), and Delacroix's *Women of Algiers* (1834) are displayed along with those "famous fragments" of Greek sculpture such as the *Venus de Milo* (c. 150 B.C.) or *Hera* (c. 565 B.C.). Described as "*mujeres,*" or wives, these images project the captive image and aid the continual reproduction of patriarchy and its narrowed space-time (76). The depiction of the cliff demonstrates linear time's foundation on the narrowed and static representation of women. Note also that it connects women to the landscape as passive beautiful objects of the gaze.

Brossard connects the Aquinnah Cliffs to the city when, in New York, M.V. connects the women in the stone to the mannequins in shop windows: "**On Fifth Avenue** … Electric passers-by pile the jewellers at the edge of cliffs. Metaphoric rocks – – – – *mujeres* Utopia *bianca*, beautiful gloved arms, shop windows, glass. **Buildings**" (emphasis in original 95). Patriarchy is represented by the passers-by who are following the grammar of the grid in downtown Manhattan. These subjects are "electric" connecting them to the clientele in Pandore, the patriarchal bar on Martha's Vineyard where "an electric current passed through the plastic beauty" (87) as the men create their world.

In the image of "plastic beauty," Brossard connects aesthetics to space-time. In patriarchy's closed space-time, beauty is thought to be an objective and universal judgement. It is separated from desire and becomes a static ideal at the heart of aesthetics and representation.[59] Brossard, however, does not see it as universal and objective. Instead of essential, universal, and unmotivated, beauty is

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[59] See the discussion of Enlightenment aesthetics in chapter six.

shown to be constructed. Recognizing beauty as cultural, as "plastic" or malleable, Brossard connects it to a motivating desire and together beauty and desire construct reality. This construction of reality is represented by the electric current of society which is currently patriarchal and is constructing the city according to their desire for beauty which for them is the captive image of woman and the closed space-time of the Concept-city. The vertical and gridded skyscrapers of downtown New York parallel the sedimented cliffs and, just as at the cliffs, at their base is a symbolic captive "women," mannequins behind the glass. Here, too, women are *mujeres* that are held captive in a single subject position by "metaphoric rocks," or diamond wedding bands (95).

Even further, M.V. writes, "From one detail, the entire continent, Arizona, the islands, Denver" (96). The linear time and geometric space of the streets, hotels, and skyscrapers extends into the lines of longitude and latitude, overlaying and mapping all reality. Like any map, this abstraction leaves out details. Thus, M.V. contends, "indecency is simply very technical, with a finger on the map showing Curaçao and Aruba, with this gesture hiding beaches and refineries" (96). In arrow-man's universe, women and place are metaphorically connected and narrowly constructed, details omitted to fit an abstract ideal that supports a stalled space-time.

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However, as was outlined by de Certeau, the spatial forms and control of the voyeur can be undermined by the spatial practices of the everyday users of the city. In relation to the spatial grid, Saskia Sassen asserts that "the neutralization of place through the grid" results in a partial representation that must be continually reproduced: "the inscription needs to be produced and reproduced, and it can never be complete because of all the other presences in the city that are inscribed in urban space" ("Identity" 145). "The lived city," in other words, "contains multiple spatialities and identities" that are omitted from representation by dominant culture (145). As an example, Sassen describes how in skyscrapers "at night a whole other work force, the cleaners, installs itself in these spaces, including the offices of the chief executives, and inscribes the space with a whole

different culture" (146-47). These changes "indicate there is no univocal relation between [details of inhabitation] and built form" (147). There is instead a complex "play of ideologies" and this allows "for politics and agency in the built environment" (147). "Yes," writes Sassen, "in some sense buildings are frozen in time. But they can be reinscribed" (147).

Brossard reinscribes the vertical and horizontal grid of the city demonstrating its lack of neutrality as well as representing other presences in and constructions of urban space. She counters the patriarchal construction of place with two places of her own, the white Montreal winter and the blue Caribbean island. M.V. asserts, "You invent a climate, a beach or a winter. Curaçao, Montréal under lee of night, a detail with repercussions" (112). In other words, as Patrick Murphy writes, "environments are no longer limited to an understanding of setting, nor are character and authorial attitudes about the environment limited to narrative development" (1099). Instead, they are understood to have consequences, to be "a fundamental feature of the ideological horizons of literary works" (1099).

These two landscapes are introduced in the section entitled "Perspective," which describes the same scene twice: "One dated the 16th of May, the other very close to it. The book scene and the rug scene" (23). In the first scene, M.V. finds herself in a snowy Montreal night. She asserts, "There is always a hotel in my life to make me understand patriarchy. I have to describe them all in order to understand the most banal entrance hall, … the rented room" (26). The entrance hall and rented room she struggles to understand are Claire's rooms "bursting with books" in Montreal (27). These rooms reflect Claire Dérive who is a border crosser and a guide for "deserter[s]" (32). Claire Dérive is aligned with the space outside sense, a position reflected in her name with "claire" translating as "clear" and "light," and "*dérive*" meaning "the surrealist associative 'drift' of the sign" (Godard, "Producing" 10). Like the other hotels, Claire Dérive's rented room represents narrative, but being a reflection of "*dérive*" as associative drift and language play, her rooms reflect the position of Jean Pfaelzer's discourse theorists or Brossard's second phase in her writing career where she prioritized language

and produced "a *neutral* body of writing" that silences the feminine (emphasis in original, *Fluid* 69). The room is described using a quote from Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* as "the strangest salon in America" (44). While the other hotels' entrance halls are associated with the darkness of patriarchy, Claire's hall is filled with light initiating the unspeakable "white scene" and reflecting her guiding of M.V. into the realm beyond language.

In the book scene, M.V. must have "eyes for the painting or the book" (44). The painting is described as "grey stele of illusion" (43) connecting it to the periodizing cliffs on Martha's Vineyard and to patriarchal space-time. The women avoid it and move quickly past. The book is *Nightwood*, which M.V. has come to borrow. All the books in Claire Dérive's rooms are described as "successive forgettings" because nowhere in them, with the marginal exception of *Nightwood*, will M.V. and Claire find a representation of lesbians (27). Even in *Nightwood*, the relationship between Nora and Robin remains implied resulting in Nora trying to comprehend the night to which she and her lover have been banished. For Brossard, these previous texts have been "improbable" for the lesbian subject in that "[e]verything conspires to ensure that the writing 'I' speak desire and not its desire;" hence, they support the *status quo* (*Aerial* 69). As Lianne Moyes states, "Barnes was reluctant to identify herself as a lesbian or a feminist" and her contemporary, Gertrude Stein, the basis for Brossard's character Sarah Dérive Stein, was reluctant, as is Sarah, to "identify herself as a lesbian, a feminist, or a woman" ("Composing" 208). This absence of lesbian representation "is dreadful" (42), and as M.V. enters Claire's estranging rooms, "an I is lost here in work / instantly on entering the house / the work quickly exhausts [her]" as she "merges with the scent of wood," referring to *Nightwood*, a text that can only imply her subject (41).

M.V., having chosen the book over the painting, clutches her briefcase or "*cartable*" "to think what follows" (42). The French word "*cartable*" includes the root "*carte*" meaning map or plot. M.V. brings her pre-existing spatial and temporal ordering systems with her in order to navigate this new space, and in those systems, the only subject position available for woman is the patriarchal

wife and mother. This is true even of the "impossible" *avant-garde* texts of the feminist discourse theorists (*Aerial* 69), which also reproduce the *status quo* in that they escape the patriarchal hermeneutic circle by positioning themselves outside the circle of sense in the void. This position results in a disabling circle of a different kind. She writes, "it seems to me that in wanting to break the linearity, it is as if we have been forced into its opposite, to turn full circle, as if the text in this had come to its own end in itself" (*Aerial* 71). Circling endlessly in the void, they are unable to affect patriarchy. Thus the only mother in the text, Sarah Dérive Stein, is described as attending multiple conferences in Hilton Hotels where she "defend[ed] the rights of **M**an" (emphasis in original 71). Therefore, in this version, Claire Dérive too becomes a mother, a source or origin that is absent in the city. Although she escapes patriarchy by transgressing the border of sense and moving into the space of nonsense, or the white space, she arrives in what Julia Kristeva calls the "extra-subjective," a-political time of an "unnameable *joissance*" (191). As Pfaelzer argues, locating women in this "dislocated" space "implies the rest of the world is men's" and positions women as historical "outsiders" (290). Claire then reproduces patriarchal space-time by not providing an alternative vision. A "helmeted woman," who seems to be the first of many as M.V. inserts the fragment, "each time more numerous," emerges from the darkness of the forest of patriarchy, drawn to "the source Claire Dérive" (50). In this love scene between M.V. and Claire, a double rose appears and refers at the same time to the women's labias and to the two worlds in this binary system.

M.V., too, dons the helmet and merges with Claire Dérive, whose voice becomes "a burn capable of overwhelming / of arousing this other / dimension" (45). It locates them in an alternate space-time: "escap[ing] from all categories denying / space itself and always fluid the moment" (45). The release into nonsense is inarticulable, expressed as three short lines on a white page: "I no longer see [Claire Dérive] coming / body dense / source and condensed woman" (46). Losing herself in Claire and in language play, M.V. is "invisible" (45) as she is "cast off [from the sentence] at pleasure suspended on [Claire Dérive's] lips" (48). Paralleling the monologue of patriarchy, her "tongue" suits Claire Dérive

"like a skin" (49) because she shares in the "one single" idea "redoubled / with the self-same" (51). As a symbol of language play, Claire Dérive leaves them in "waters time" (50) or the non-sensical fluid time of the white space, "able to agree only on excess" (51). She asserts, "the instant is rough and senseless" (20) as time/history, while rejecting linearity, becomes unnarratable. *Dérive*, we should note, can also be translated as "rudderless." In this version, *élan*, as women's motivating impulse, is stalled. It is represented by a block stereotype or mimetic Polaroid picture that repeats patriarchal reality: "cliché: click, photo, the repercussion" (20).

This book scene of May 16 connects to the first of another repeated scene found in "Screen Skin" and "Screen Skin Too," and to its construction of place, a white Montreal winter. Trying to write from her apartment, M.V. looks out her window onto the beginning of one of the longest nights of the year: "six o'clock, in December, dark and headlights," and at the stop at the end of her street, there is only "fog" (113). Patriarchy, described as a mutilated human voice that passes "through the glass [of the skyscrapers], having a right to chapter in the streets, hotels, parlours and parliaments," tells M.V. that "power spread suffering" so that "suffering became objective like playing a role on the screen" (113). Suffering in the captive image of woman has become women's role, but M.V. escapes it through discursive play: "suffering had no hold on her; each time it might unexpectedly arrive, suffering was dissipated by the effect words would produce just thinking about them. A complex rhythm was established measured in language and suffering lost itself there" so that suffering became "only a vague memory" (emphasis in original 112). Thus, M.V.'s mouth "urban volcanic, cried out so loudly, that the voice behind the glass was wearing out" and oedipal "arrow-man with the heel in a state of decomposition" screams in the metro, a representation of linear movement and narrative trajectory (113).

M.V.'s effect on patriarchy is further demonstrated by the aside referencing the Hilton in Curaçao: "the glass elevator in the Hilton has broken down at the third floor" (113-114). In his discussion of the Bonaventure, Jameson posits the elevator, like the metro, as a symbol of narrative trajectory through

postmodern space. The freedom of the "older promenade" of the *flâneur* is replaced by the "people movers," machines which contain and control movement and, more importantly, feel like "movement proper" but are only the emblem of movement, empty signs like hyperspace and the hypercrowd (82). In *Picture Theory*, Brossard turns this image around and the elevators, such as those at the Madison, with its requisite man waiting to ride with M.V., and at the Hilton, also filled with heterosexual couples, parallel the cliff face and represent "movement proper," the singular linear motion through standard narrative. M.V.'s turn to discursive play causes the elevator to break down (113-114). However, the effect is not permanent. Just as the elevator will be repaired, these brief ruptures can be sutured. As Brossard argues in *The Aerial Letter*:

> any meaning shift occasions a breach of reality, if only in the way we perceive this reality. If this breach is instantaneous, we can call it rupture. From one rupture to the next, we succeed in breaking linearity. But it can be newly reconstructed, as it was, as it is, fragment by fragment. In this, the work on the text will have perhaps only altered the chronological notion of writing without, for all that, having acted on its spatio-temporal relief. (81)

Not having altered the overall space-time context, M.V. is unable to have a permanent effect on patriarchy and is left in the white space (*Picture* 114). From her window, she sees Claire Dérive "sink[ing] into the abyss of Montréal daily life" followed by Oedipal arrow-man, "at each step, the heel" (126). They are left in "fog" and darkness (113), as from their position outside sense they cannot penetrate the "dark mists" of time (85) M.V.'s war helmet rests on the worktable as the motivating evolutionary impulse of *élan* retreats from the hunter: "great urban prey galloping while the human voice carries the sirens' echo off into the distance" (115). In this state, M.V. "risked finding herself without (a) character" – a neutral writing "I" (114).

At dawn, she "had no other choice but to satiate her impressions in reality itself" and her reality, the view outside her Montreal window, is snow: "(**from [M.V.'s] window**) the morning slanted (drifting snow whiteout) slowly blocked

reality, obliged M.V. to bite singularly into the landscape" (emphasis in original 114). Her new frame of reference opens only onto white space and has no effect on the world beyond her corner. When she ventures out to pick up Claire Dérive at the airport, patriarchy still rules the world beyond her stop: "The road is snowy, slippery. Dangerous. … (from my window, white, abstraction, hyper-real street) painting, I arrive, the Hilton at the bend" (119). Looking in her rear view mirror, she notes she leaves no evidence of her passing as the snow has covered her tracks, paralleling the other avant-garde author, Sarah Dérive Stein, whose life was "always exposed to dispersion through the ideological currents of her time" (122) because about her the books "say nothing" (124). M.V.'s "lips form a single (i)dentical space; it's a dimension of silence while M.V. dreams" (115). Thus following this scene, Brossard inserts two blank pages, representing the unspeakable white space. While M.V. and Claire Dérive have created their own escapist place in M.V.'s apartment where M.V. exists in the singular "music," or monologue, "dans le bras de Claire Dérive" (128), they are "daily and lovhers. No character(s)" (127). M.V. merely "think[s] of writing" and declares, "I [write] little about Curaçao. Like a cliché, the presence of Claire Dérive stops me" (128). Here she is created in Claire's image of a-political associative drift.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

Although the book scene leaves the women in the void, it, like *Nightwood*, "prime[s] the fiction" (52) so that the repeated version, the rug scene, enables M.V. to move from transgression and excess to the more politically enabling vision and ecstasy. In the rug scene, M.V. listens "attentively in order to catch / the water the deriv(ative)," or the drift, "the scene could / claim on repeating the context" (56). One of the first drifts occurs when Claire Dérive takes M.V.'s briefcase or "*cartable,*" and places it under the mirror. Instead of relying on standard representational forms and "merg[ing] with the scent of wood" (41), M.V. now "compose[s] in the scent of the wood" (53). Building on *Nightwood*, she injects a feminist vision into her linguistic play. This feminist vision leads to another significant difference. Instead of briefly blocking the view of the painting, Claire Dérive moves in front of and "hides the oval of the mirror" (57). Brossard

connects the oval mirror to the mother, stating of this scene, "One witnesses the appearance of the mother, the mirror" (Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al 132). By standing in front of and reflecting herself in the mirror, Claire Dérive counters the captive image of the *mujeres* with the captivating hologram of integral woman.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

The hologram and integral woman are important to understanding Brossard's reconceptualization of space-time and place, both in *Picture Theory* and in *Mauve Desert*, which is discussed in chapter four. Consequently, I will spend the following paragraphs examining them. Around the time of writing *Picture Theory*, Brossard's conception of the function of utopian discourse shifts from a conception similar to Paul Ricoeur's where ideologies in utopian frames challenge hegemonic ideology and turn the hermeneutic circle into a spiral, to a conception similar to Michel Foucault's where multiple ideologies, or sets of social relations, work against and alongside hegemonic constructions. This shift allows for an alternate geographical imagination as a singular space modified unilinearly becomes heterogeneous and dynamic.

Although she disagrees with the feminist discourse theorists, she imagines her work on language and discursive reality construction as beginning in the void, or the nonsense, beyond the hermeneutic circle. Explaining her addition of a politic to her language play, Brossard writes, "from the void, I would then translate … into the feminine by a shift in meaning going from excess to ecstasy, from circle to spiral, and from void to opening" (*Aerial* 71). She envisions a feminine culture continually spiralling into the void where language can be transgressed and transformed and then returning to the centre in order to renew sense and modify social reality. She writes, "A lesbian who does not reinvent the word ['world'(136)] is a lesbian in the process of disappearing" (*Aerial* 122). The shift here from "word" to "world" demonstrates Brossard's belief in the connectedness between language and place.

This transformation of language begins with women's inherent "accent" that results from speaking a language within which they are never fully integrated

(*Aerial* 105). By their accents, women recognize one another and passively modify language as accents "create misunderstandings, ambiguities, even nonsense" that intervene with patriarchy's pathological "one-way sense" (*Aerial* 105). Words become imbued with a "polyvalent value" (*Aerial* 110), and "'one-way thinking' falters under a continuous onslaught of words going off in all directions" revealing the void (*Aerial* 110-111). However, feminist and lesbian readers and writers, whom she calls urban radicals, must invest this polyvalence with ecstasy and vision or they risk being forever lost outside sense without agency. Working in this "imaginary territory," urban radicals employ "elusive derived writing" or "writing adrift" (*Aerial* 76) in order to write the *inédit* or "the not-yet said" (Hunter 211). Language begins to reflect woman's *sens*, where "*sens*" signifies the coming together of both meaning and sensation (Knutson 14). *Sens* is generated when language reflects woman's materially situated body: its historical context, sexuality and environment (Brossard, *Aerial* 77-78). Making *sens*, urban radicals continually draw the territory of the imaginary into the sense of the centre, creating a spiral.

This process of making *sens* is connected to emotion, to the motivating desire which Brossard calls "utopia" (*Aerial* 121).[60] For her, "utopia is not a dream, it is an emotion" (Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al 127). It is not a goal, perfect social state, or community but is the motivating desire at the heart of representation and interpretation. Brossard insists, "emotion becomes civilization … it does have consequences" (Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al 127). Whereas patriarchal desire is for the patriarchal utopia of geometric space, linear time, and the captive image, urban radicals' desire is for an alternate geographical imagination and subject position for women. For urban radicals, utopia is experienced in the void, in "the mental space replete with possibilities," from which they resignify language in order to make *sens* (*Aerial* 76). It is "the emotion and vital utopia of what makes sense and nonsense," the desire to shift

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[60] For a more in-depth connection between utopia and desire see Ruth Levitas. Her investigation of utopia concludes with her assertion that "utopia expresses and explores what is desired; under certain conditions it also contains the hope that these desires may be met in reality….The essential element in utopia is not hope, but desire" (191).

meaning and produce sense according to one's own perspective (*Aerial* 121). In *Lovhers*, she writes, "Non smettete di delirare, questo é il momento de l'utopia" or "Do not stop being delirious; this is the moment of utopia" (my translation 91). The Italian "*delirare*" translates to the French "*delire*," a commonly repeated word in Brossard's lexicon that Barbara Godard translates as "contradictorily both 'delirious' and 'about reading' or 'to unread'" ("Producing" 125-26). As Susan Holbrook argues, *deliring* does not propose direct access to meaning but subjects the text to the subject's dynamic desires (75). *Deliring* creates texts that cannot close and are always in a process of production. Locating themselves within an imagined space where sensibility and meaning come together to make *sens*, urban radicals will continually experience utopia and shatter the hermeneutic circle in order to reinvent the world/word through the spiral. Thus Brossard comments, "The lesbians and urban radicals, about whom I speak in *The Aerial Letter*, are feminists in a state of revolt, lucidity, and utopia" ("Fragments" 24).

However, the spiral turns out to be too conservative a metaphor and, as she says, "was replaced by the hologram" ("Fragments" 23). Brossard shifts her perspective to one more in line with Foucault's conception of heterotopic space. Instead of a continual binary conflict where the combatants are seen as coherent groups and space is seen as singular, she imagines multiple constructions of *sens* and place. To figure this kind of geographical imagination, she shifts from the trope of the spiral to that of the hologram.

The root words of "holography" are the Greek "*holos*" or whole and "*graphe*" or writing, and thus "holography" literally means "whole writing." In scientific terms, it is an image forming process that allows an image to be stored in three dimensions on a holographic plate or film. The holographic plate is created when a coherent beam of light is split into two beams and "the interference pattern produced by the interaction of the light diffracted from an object" and that of the "reference wave" is recorded on the plate (Thompson). The split beam creates parallax, or the apparent displacement of an object created by viewing it from multiple perspectives, such as in human vision. To reconstruct the image, the plate is re-illuminated with a coherent beam, reconstructing the

original optical field and re-creating the original scene in three dimensions (Thompson). The light field is whole, an identical reproduction of the light field emanating from the original scene. Thus, the viewer looking into the plate takes part in the representation by changing her perspective and examining the scene from different angles. Yet conventional holographic plates, such as that described here, are still permanent static recordings. Instead, Brossard figures real-time holography, a process where the recording, developing and reconstructing occur simultaneously instead of sequentially creating a dynamic three-dimensional image.

Brossard's holograms are, as Doreen Massey might say, momentary articulations or temporary cohesions. Louise Forsyth observes, Brossard "rejects all world views determined by the principle of metaphor, built on hierarchy, authority, fixity, linearity" and instead works with "principles … whereby fragments whirl together momentarily into unexpected configurations" ("To Write" 39). The three dimensional real-time hologram figures the shifting articulation of the convergence of multiple trajectories, and Brossard employs it to differently imagine both identity and place.

One such hologram is Brossard's integral woman who figures the articulation of urban radicals. She is the abstraction at the centre of the community of *deliring* women. Unlike Louis Althusser's static Absolute Subject at the centre of a "*doubly speculary*" mirror-structured system of interpellation that subjects the subjects and, therefore, reproduces identity in a way that ensures the subjects continue to take part in and reproduce a repressive system (emphasis in original 168), she is a real-time holographic image created when, acting like the mirrors in holography, urban radicals reflect each other, each slightly differently, and project a virtual image of woman created by women. She is generated from "the *essentielle*," or most positive image of each woman projected into the symbolic realm (*Aerial* 127). Brossard explains:

> Sooner or later, what is new and original in my self-image of woman (this
> is also what is hoped for) meets up with the eyes of another woman. My
> eyes come across another woman: I recognize at last the *essentielle*. I

identify / myself. The image starts to look appealing (acceleration
velocity); its general appearance is transformed. I believe this is also what
we call a very attractive proposition. (*Aerial* 127)

Integral woman is created in a specular connection when women (who are already
negatively subjected subjects in a patriarchal ideology) meet and find they desire
one another. Note, however, that the women are not subjected to the image but
rather the image itself is transformed. Like Althusser's Absolute Subject, integral
woman is specular, but whereas Althusser's absolute subject *par excellence*, God,
is created by man and creates that man in a reflection of H/his image, thereby
excluding woman and others as well as creating and maintaining a pathological
system, integral woman is continually reconstructed from the shifting reflection of
each dynamic *deliring* urban radical. The representation is no longer static and is
instead always in process. Thus, Brossard calls her the "captivating image"
(*Aerial* 125).

However, integral woman is both an abstraction at the centre of a dynamic
community of *deliring* women and is material as these women themselves are
integral women. The image of integral woman is "whole" in that it contains the
essentielle of each urban radical and each urban radical contains the image of
integral woman. Brossard explains:

The integral woman has abandoned the role of the fictitious woman
invented by men. She is a woman who originates the meaning she gives to
her life. She is simultaneously a real woman and woman born of my
thoughts upon whom I project the best in myself, say, the most positive
image I have of myself. She is also a symbolic woman who is a source of
inspiration, in short we must all invent our own integral woman if we do
not wish to remain fictitious women, which is to say patriarchal women.
(Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al 50)

Integral woman is both real, a *deliring* urban radical unreading patriarchy's
fictional "woman," and symbolic, an amalgamation of positive images of women
made by women. Like the "women" in the taxi who represents the captive image,
she is an amalgamation. In the original French "*l'intégrales*" is "a singular noun

populated by the plural collective subjectivity of all integral radical feminists"
(Wildman 114).

Integral woman is "radical," states Brossard (*Aerial* 115). She establishes
an alternate subject for some women, and this alternate subject correlates with
alternate conceptions of both space and time. As Elizabeth Grosz argues, and I
outlined in chapter one, "representations of space and time are … correlated with
representations of the subject" (99). In other words, our conceptions of space,
time, and subjectivity appear to be connected (84). Grosz maintains, "To
transform the castrated, lacking, inadequate representation of female corporeality
… the overarching context of space-time, within which bodies function and are
conceived also needs serious revision" (100). Perhaps for this reason, Brossard
writes of integral woman, "time, space, belong to her" (*Aerial* 115). As we will
see in the following discussion of *Picture Theory*, for integral woman the city is
no longer the patriarchal Concept-city, a surface to be mapped, and time is no
longer unilinear. Space is instead interrelational, "the sphere of the possibility of a
… contemporaneous plurality" (Massey, *For* 9). In such a space, time is open to
multiple trajectories. This alternate space-time leads to an alternate conception of
the place of the city. The city becomes, like the subject, holographic—a dynamic
articulation of multiple trajectories. The holographic city brings to mind de
Certeau's image of the "strange toponomy" or "foggy geography of 'meanings'
held in suspension" created by the walkers that flies over the Concept-city (104).
However, de Certeau argues, these trajectories and their constructions of place are
unrepresentable: "they cannot be fixed in a certain place by images," "nor can the
meaning of their movements be circumscribed in a text" (102). The "rhetorical
transplantation" of these "forests of gestures" "displaces the analytical, coherent
proper meanings of urbanism; it constitutes a 'wandering of the semantic'
produced by masses that make some parts of the city disappear and exaggerate
others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order"
(102). The closest we can come to representing this noplace is in "the fleeting
images" and "'embroideries' composed of letters" of "New York graffiti" (102).
Here, street graffiti subverts the proper rhetoric of the vertically and horizontally

gridded downtown composed of skyscrapers, "the tallest letters in the world"
(91). This conception of place makes place unrepresentable; however, Brossard
figures it through utopian discourse.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

In the rug scene of *Picture Theory*, Brossard counters patriarchy's captive
woman and feminist discourse theorists' absent woman with integral woman.
After Claire Dérive steps in front of the mirror, M.V. writes, "i was confronted
parallel / 'moved out of death's way' in the oval of the mirror / 'with successive
women's arms'" (58). No longer created in the image of the captive woman or of
Claire as mother, she is subject to the holographic image of integral woman, who
is formulated out of the *essentielle* of successive women. Now, instead of the
double rose, M.V. sees integral woman: "an abstraction of Claire's body / a sense
of Utopia, recognition" (60). Desiring women and reflecting each other like
mirrors, they take part in projecting "the captivating image" (*Aerial* 125). Instead
of becoming *avant-guard* writers, they become *deliring* urban radicals who can
unread patriarchal fictions and make *sens*. Working on both the word and the
world, they experience the motivating emotion of utopia.

Thus, one of the functions of the section entitled "Emotion" is to
transform the concept of utopia so that it is no longer exclusively an imagined,
separatist, and escapist place. Typically, critics see the island to which the women
retreat for a vacation as a feminist utopia (Interview with Louise Cotnoir et al
127). However, unlike Thomas More's island, Brossard's is not an imaginary
separatist place but is instead a real place in the here and now; the unnamed island
south of Cape Cod is Martha's Vineyard. As a part of the United States, it is a
patriarchal space, a microcosm of the mainland where the women are located on
the liminal space of the beach between sense and nonsense, patriarchal forest and
ocean. Brossard's resistance to creating a separatist space can be seen by what she
omits from the landscape. If the view had been clear from the Aquinnah cliffs
lookout, the women would have seen a remote island called Nomans Land which
would have been an apt location for a separatist lesbian-feminist utopia. Thus,
whenever the women travel anywhere on the island, they enter the fully

patriarchal world. Now, however, that patriarchal world becomes the nightwood, represented by the Manuel F. Correllius State Forest in the centre of Martha's Vineyard.

This place is not separatist and a-political. It is implicated in history and politics and is, therefore, associated with Claire Dérive's house rather than her apartment. Like her booked rooms, the house reflects her, but unlike "the strangest salon in America" that reflects her linguistic drift, the house reflects her as an activist and urban radical. It is a powerfully political space: "House viewed again and again in a vertical shot by most of the surveillance helicopters which made rounds above houses that might be sheltering bandaged men during the Vietnam War. Power. To be able to change America" (16). The house is a habitable space in that it provides exits from panoptic space. As Barbara Godard asserts, "*dérive*" should be translated not only as "the surrealist associative 'drift' of the sign" but also as "linguistic 'derivation' productive of language change" ("Producing" 10). It is a process that alters the word and the world. Therefore, unlike the salon, the house is a place of feminist discourse which occurs around the kitchen table.

Like the tables in bars, the kitchen table is where the women can gather to "make over the world" (Brossard, *Fluid* 133).[61] It is around Claire Dérive's table that Brossard presents her argument about utopia, transforming it from a separatist place to motivating desire. Demonstrating that it does have consequences, it is the emotion that Florence Dérive and M.V. take back to their writing tables in order to transform the city. At the table, Daniel Judith makes the argument against

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[61] Patricia Yaeger argues, following Hannah Arendt, that people are held together and space becomes habitable through "common objects" and "communal intimacy" defined as "'the presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear' to reassure us about 'the reality of the world and ourselves'" (9-10). This collective identity and "common world" is symbolized by a group of people seated around a table. The table represents the "world of things" that the people share and construct in common (10). In contrast, "life within mass society legislates vertigo not only because of its vast numbers of people" but because the table has vanished: "the world between them has lost its power to gather them together" and "ceases to offer the comforting illusion of dwelling in common" so that "meaning-filled places" become "derangements of anonymous space" (10). She asks, if the table, "the dream of a world of common things or shared materiality has vanished, what has taken its place" (17)? While Yaeger goes on to examine how "themed or prenarrated space" attempts to replace the table, Nicole Brossard instead imagines multiple smaller tables and reality constructions.

essentialist separatist feminist utopias, remarking that the word 'matriarchy' "could not be used … to elaborate some Utopia that would have restored women to their gender" (73-74). She seems to be responding not only to separatist utopian novels such as *The Wanderground*, where a lesbian community exists outside the boundaries of the patriarchal city in close harmony with nature, but also to the increase in the number of women-only utopian communities in the 1970s. While some of these communities were urban, the majority were rural, and as geographer Gill Valentine writes, many community members believed that "spatial isolation in the country meant that it was easier for women to be self-sufficient and purer in their practices than in the city" (67). She observes that "essentialist notions about women's closeness to nature meant that the countryside was identified as a female space. In contrast, the 'man-made' city was blamed for draining women's energy" (67). In many of these communities, the women desired to resurrect a matriarchal system that would eliminate all destructive patriarchal institutions (68). However, these matriarchal communities often posited their own narrow constructions of womanhood, leading to their own boundaries and exclusions. However, there is, as Daniel Judith seems to imply, no essential construction of woman to which to return. Further, these separatist communities, like the white space, have little effect on patriarchal power. Therefore, M.V. agrees with Daniel and states, "on the subject of Utopia beginning with the word woman that Utopia was not going to ensure our insertion into reality" (74). Instead, she says, "a Utopian testimony on our part could stimulate in us a quality of emotion favourable for our insertion into history" (74). Inserting a feminist politic and utopian vision into their reading and writing will stimulate an alternate desire, insert the women's trajectory into history, and generate an alternate geographical imagination.

Thus, the women forgo creating a lesbian-feminist utopian community and instead generate integral woman, the dynamic articulation of a transregional community of urban radicals. To do so, they "socialize [their] energies" (74). At the cliffs, after her revelation about unilinear time, M.V. recognizes her friends as a community of urban radicals ready for combat: "These were women who had

read a lot of books and who all lived in big cities; women made to endure in time, sea, city and love. Border crossers, radical city dwellers, lesbians" (76). They are Valkyries, "beautiful and helmeted," formidable warriors and military strategists who gather the souls of the dead to fight an apocalyptic battle that both ends and regenerates the world (76). As a community of urban radicals they produce rather than reproduce reality. Thus, on their return home from the cliffs, the weather becomes stormy and the branches that bend over and cover the road are "lit up like an electric current" (76). The women's energy, like that of the electric passers-by in New York, takes "on form like electricity through the structure of matter itself" (76) as they begin producing reality from their own motivating desire and conception of beauty.

As urban radicals, they move from passively speaking with accents to *deliring*: "the next day we read all day (time is accelerating) amplifying things from the real as if to relieve us of/with a few fictions" (77-78). Some of them are also writing. This position is represented by Claire who tells the others:

> Resorting to abstraction is a necessity for the woman who, tempted by existence, invents the project of going beyond routine daily anecdotes …. I was tempted one day to conquer reality, to make it plausible. First by insinuation, slipping a few words in slantwise: in order to grasp reality by the skin of the folds, in its dark holes as in a version without end, I fabricated for it a knowledge within my understanding. (77)

Claire Dérive creates meaning shifts that make *sens*. Unlike the temporary rupture of discursive play, these shifts produce a permanent breach. Multiplying discourse, they multiply reality constructions and make space for integral woman.

Thus, the women's "[s]ubjectivities were interpellating each other ... *toute une nuit chaude de juillet* slowly" (79). In Brossard's holographic interpellation, the subject is not subjected to a static abstraction but rather transforms the abstraction to include her *essentielle*, creating a centre that is both abstract and material, and allowing for both solidarity and difference. Now, unlike after the rain of patriarchal arrows that narrows the dark mists of time, subjects place to the abstract grid, and "skin[s] alive [woman's] profile and expression"(86) by

confining women to the captive image, in this alternate holographic interpellation, each woman "survived in profile in the abstraction" implying multiple constructions of place (77).

Compare the women's vacation to the Dérives' brother and sister-in-law's retreat to Ogunquit, a popular tourist spot long known as a gay resort town on the coast of the mainland. John is a closeted homosexual. In his secret life in Greenwich Village, he "follow[s] the boy on the docks of the Hudson River, where among men torsos are (con)fused. Elevator, boy. **Black out**" (emphasis in original 21). At this moment, he parallels the position of the women in the city. He "reels. The city is abolished in his eye" (21). Yet, passing as a heterosexual man, John, unlike Florence Dérive, is not completely outside the space of patriarchy and is removed only to the liminal place of the docks and later the mainland coast. He need not retreat entirely into the river or sea. He is married to Judith, a *mujeres* who spends her evening in the *Eidelweiss* bar, looking like "a young mother" and watching the men "brandishing their glasses to the refrain" of "Lili Marlene" (32). As a patriarch, on his journey to the coast, he "rolls smoothly along the 95 … his bloody profile cut out like a landscape in the rising sun" of a reproductive patriarchal dawn (24). John's profile is that of the patriarchal subject and fits the construction of space as a surface. However, the women's multiple profiles survive in the abstraction of integral woman and indicate a space of social relations and multiple articulations of place. Both the subject and place become holographic.

However, the women must first counter unilinear time. This begins in the rug scene of "Perspective" where M.V. and Claire Dérive no longer avoid the painting. Instead, they "traversed [it] with complexity" and discuss "the painting the method" (54). While not elaborated upon here, hints of this discussion can be found in the first conversation in "Emotion" where Oriana notes that "she did not understand why, each time certain women got together, in films for example, time seemed to stop around them after having frozen them or changed them into pillars of salt, loaded (with) symbols" (69). The captive image being a conservative image, patriarchal subject construction leaves women in a static, stalled time.

Thus, Oriana argues she has "no interest in imagining the eternal: 'On the contrary it would be our loss to forget the hours'" (69). Claire Dérive agrees time is necessary to escape the captive image but replies to Oriana, "we musn't confound … patriarchal time and ecstasy because from this confusion were born women suspended and immobile in space" (69). Women need time but they cannot employ the "hours," or unilinear Newtonian clock time. This construction of time supports patriarchy's construction of space as a surface and of women as static objects located on that surface. Instead they must turn to what Claire calls "ecstasy." This is the time M.V. experiences with Claire during the rug scene. Rather than the endless eternity of the captive image or the fluid time of the white space, in the rug scene, she briefly experiences "a time of Utopian arrest" (60). She declares, "time gives proof of the concrete in the margin / is (w)hole like a rough gesture that unveils / sense" (61). Julia Kristeva describes such an image of time when she discusses monumental time which "englobes … socio-cultural ensembles within even larger entities" (189). For Brossard, ecstasy or monumental time blasts open the cliff of linear time to reveal those moments and spaces hidden in the sediment.

This conception of time is similar to Walter Benjamin's *Jetzeit* or now-time. In "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin also calls for a rejection of linear progress, which he calls "homogenous empty time" (Illuminations 261), in order to access the past in all its moments and radically open the future. What Meredith Criglington calls his "distinctive method of messianic materialism" (87) counters even the Marxist grand narrative as any belief in linear progress weakens what he calls humanity's Messianic power to create the future and prohibits us from fully redeeming ourselves or making ourselves whole (254). Like Brossard's cliffs that speak "blatantly about days of rain, drizzle and fog as writings in the stone tell the past and the future scanned by the present as on a cathode screen" (*Picture* 75), Benjamin's progress "by dint of a secret heliotropism" turns the past "toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history" (255). Progress omits most of history and creates a present that can only ever be "shot through with chips of Messianic time," power enough to move only

towards a narrow future (263). In *Picture Theory*, this limited vision is represented by the men and women "walking around in the fog" at the cliffs and by the gift shop post cards that "transformed" memory "into a souvenir shop" (75). History becomes a string of pictures/souvenirs sutured together according to the whims of patriarchal memory.

Benjamin's historian must "blast open the continuum of history" (262) and radically open the past to history's fullness. His time is "not homogeneous, empty time" but an ecstatic time "filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]" (261). This "now-time" is represented by the chronicler who follows "the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history" (254). This "trash of history" (Benjamin "N" 48) is a "depository of historical knowledge" that can deny sedimentation (260), and with it, historians must "in every era" continually "wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it" (255). This process can be avoided only by conceiving of the present as an ambiguous and therefore momentarily stalled utopian monad, "a time of Utopian arrest" (*Picture* 60). In "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," Benjamin equates utopia with the revolutionary moment of ambiguity that stalls the historical dialectic. He writes, "Ambiguity is the pictorial image of dialectics, the law of dialectics at a standstill" (157). In other words, ambiguity captures movement by freezing it, so that in the ambiguous image, the tensions remain (are neutralized?) without resolution or synthesis. He goes on: "This standstill is utopia and the dialectic image therefore a dream image" (157). This "Utopian arrest," while revolutionary, is a dream, and the tensions will necessarily re-ignite into, really have always been in, movement. As a dream, the dialectical image also reveals the historical unconscious or what has been repressed. The goal is then to deny the temptation of the treasures of cultural progress and instead keep the past and therefore the future radically open. This is the conception of time associated with Brossard's picture theory, her drifting hologram seen as a series of momentary articulations, and that counters the static cliché of the Polaroid. As she puts it, drawing again on *Nightwood*, "an image is a stop the mind makes between uncertainties" (*Picture* 25).

Instead of positing progressive unilinear time, this alternate conception of time leaves the future radically open. Benjamin writes:

> Where thinking suddenly stops in a configuration pregnant with tensions, it gives that configuration a shock, by which it crystallizes into a monad. A historical materialist approaches a historical subject only where he encounters it as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. (*Illuminations* 262-63)

The ambiguous moment generates the monad, which appears to stop time and blast it open to multiple trajectories and tensions. Opening the past to multiple histories also radically opens the future. As Benjamin contends in his final thesis:

> We know that the Jews were prohibited from investigating the future. The Torah and the prayers instruct them in remembrance, however. This stripped the future of its magic, to which all those succumb who turn to the soothsayers for enlightenment. This does not imply, however, that for the Jews the future turned into homogenous, empty time. For every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter. (264)

Brossard's conception of time as ecstatic or monumental, like Benjamin's, unveils the lie of unilinear time. As Meredith Criglington notes, this conception of time dissipates "the historic illusion of continuity and automatic advancement ... under a critical backwards gaze" (86). As Brossard writes, time opens to "territories lying in wait for aerial memories" and in doing so will open the future (*Picture* 25).

Because of the feminist discourse shared in at the table, M.V. approaches the cliffs with this alternate conception of time and understands the significance of the representations of the captive image. As Max Pensky argues, for Benjamin, "cultural goods" such as art are "stripped of their gleam, and reconfigured" so that they "revert to their true status: as fossils unearthed from an ongoing history of compulsion, violence, and disappointment" (qtd in Criglington 100). However, M.V. not only perceives the image of the captive woman, but also sees that which it has suppressed: "in the heart of the stone a woman saying me millenary

translucid, graven in Utopian stone" (76). This is the "captivating image" of integral woman, who is waiting for the explosion that will blast open history and expose her alternate sense of time (*Aerial* 126).

This alternate conception of time connects to a different understanding of space. Space must open to include the trajectories of those who have been coexisting alongside patriarchy. It becomes "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of a contemporaneous plurality" (Massey, *For* 9). These others, no longer fixed on the surface of space, have their own trajectories and have been living and producing their own histories. For urban radicals, "[a]ll reality condenses into abstraction. Doubles, splits, swindles" (86).

The women then return to the mainland in order to intervene in the city and make its two dimensional gridded urban form multi-dimensional and holographic by inserting integral woman into its centre. As Brossard explains in an interview, her concept of "*la fille en combat dans la cité*" is the product of a choice she makes

> to stay in the *polis* in order to confront patriarchal meaning instead of
> retiring to the mythic island of the Amazons, whose subtext … is peace
> and harmony, while the subject for *la cité* is the law (not harmony), the
> written word (not the song), and constant change. … Because [she]
> want[s] all the energy and creativity that women are capable of, [she] will
> stay in the city so the law can be changed. (Huffer 120)

Her emphasis on the city as the centre of power is reinforced by her image of the lines of longitude and latitude extending out from the grid of city streets like a net or a "single will to power" (87).

The women leave the geographical community they had on the island and disperse to various cities. Their community is not connected to a delimited geographical place but is instead transnational and connected to a means of constructing place in general. [62] This transterritorial urban community is

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[62] This notion of community is connected to ideas about cities as global places. Grosz argues that because the city is "an active force in constituting bodies" and "leaves its traces on the subject's corporeality," any "dramatic transformation of the city ... will have direct effects on the inscription of bodies" (110). For Grosz, one result is the turn from geographical connection, where "the

represented by the shared act of drinking coffee. Back in New York after her holiday to Montreal and Martha's Vineyard, Florence Dérive is no longer located in the Hudson river but is living on Jane Street in Greenwich Village. She finishes writing her book and "mechanically reaches out her hand towards the coffee pot" (26). At the same time, despairing over the "women" in the taxi outside the Madison Hotel in Paris, M.V. thinks of Florence Dérive: "my black coffee this morning … I know you are sitting, in the midst of bringing a cup of coffee to your lips, just brushing the poem, this morning, when her voice hailed a taxi" (34-35). By turning to a transterritorial urban community over a geographical pastoral utopian community, Brossard locates her political challenge in the city, the centre of power, and makes it both mobile and dispersed. As she comments, "The mythic island is in me, in books, and in the women with whom I surround myself" (Huffer 120).

Note, too, that in this image, Brossard moves Florence from a numbered address in the overly rational space of the voyeur to a named street implying that she has access to alternate histories or legends and constructs place accordingly. She contributes to that "strange topography" that floats over the Concept-city. Significantly, by its name, the street is gendered female, perhaps indicating a connection to women's traditions and legends. Further, it is located in Greenwich Village ("New York" n.p.), known as New York's primary gay and lesbian space as well as home to numerous radical artists and writers. Also, being one of the

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subject's body will no longer be disjointedly connected to random others and subjects through the city's spatiotemporal layout," to other ways of connecting (110). This transformation "will fundamentally transform the ways in which we conceive both cities and bodies, and their interrelations," writes Grosz, although she admits, "what remains uncertain is how" (110). In "The Global City," Saskia Sassen argues that, because of globalization, "the national as container of social process and power is cracked" leading to the "denationalizing of ... global cities" (48). In global cities, "conceptual and operational openings for actors other than the national state," have formed (48). Some of these actors are "those whose experience of membership has not been subsumed fully under nationhood ... for example minorities, immigrants, first-nation people and many women" (48). These actors "often evince cross-border solidarities" and create openings "for the formation of new ... rights to place" (50-51). In other words, this unmooring of identity from traditional sources "engenders new notions of community" (56) that are transterritorial in that they connect "sites that are not geographically proximate" (57). As such, the global city can be "a space for a new politics" (57). Although she does not acknowledge Montreal, Sassen lists two of *Picture Theory*'s primary urban settings, New York and Paris, among "the most powerful" of these new inter-urban centers (51).

oldest neighbourhoods in the City of New York, the streets in the Village are laid out randomly ("New York" n.p.) and counter the grid of Manhattan.

A part of this alternate community, M.V. also takes the emotion of utopia with her back to her writing table in the city where that emotion will have consequences. Understanding reality as constructed and fictional, she engages with it. Her confrontation with patriarchy is structured as a series of tangos: "First tango, Anna Livia Plurabelle, the man sitting in the corridor, *la vie en prose*" (91). The tango originated in the brothels of Argentina and Uruguay and seems an odd image for Brossard to employ. According to Jorge Luis Borges in "A History of the Tango," songs with titles such as "The Corn-cob" and "The Iron Rod" were danced to on the street corners by pairs of men because "the women of the town would not want to take part in such lewd debauchery" (395). In this first standoff, the man reciting patriarchy's monologue in the corridor of the Madison Hotel meets James Joyce's Anna Livia Plurabelle, literary ancestor of M.V.'s character by the same name. M.V. and the other women are attracted to Joyce's style, but Joyce was not a feminist and, in *Finnegan's Wake*, Anna Livia Plurabelle represents, among other things, two of the buttresses of patriarchy: motherhood and linear time. Her invalid husband, Humphrey Chimpdon Earwicker, who represents the city of Dublin, dreams of her as Anna Liffey, the river that runs through and brings life to Dublin (619). She is, argues Elaine Unkeless and Suzette Henke, dreamt as "river and mother, as a powerful force to her family" and "figure of spousal and maternal altruism" (xix). But Anna Livia also symbolizes the flow or river of time and history, as can be seen in her name which breaks down to mean history (*annali*) through (*via*) beautiful women (*plurabelle*). Because Anna Livia Plurabelle is, like the captive images in the cliff, tied to patriarchal motherhood and chronology, this first tango results in M.V.'s Anna being constructed according to oedipal desire: "dressed in a scarlet gown, very low cut. Earrings, dark red lipstick. … Her life was a novel of love and adventure. She had just lost a month's salary on the green casino carpet. The man appeared. The heel of the man was in a state of decomposition" (100).

Key to "Thought" is M.V.'s realization that reality is a "[t]ext which desires its characters" (94) and "the books repeat us no matter the cities" (105). These books travel "through patriarchal time" and interpellate their audience as subjected subjects, beginning early, "fram[ing] the television set … during programmes for children" (105). As she argues, "Private Life … it's at the origin … --intimate character of complicity" (106). To create an alternate reality, rather than turning to being without a character as she did in the book scene (114), she turns to a different concept of character. Unlike the subjectivity supported by the gridded map or net, M.V. describes an outwardlooking and fluid subject in a space of social relations: "My private Life is a spherical map of influences and meeting points" (93). This life "turns around language as a hypothesis" rather than as mimetic. This type of representation is productive and in process (93). Countering the net and monologue of patriarchy, her "character" is "like a web, a text/ure of sound" (109). This character demands a different narrative and construction of place.

If the book scene of May 16th ends in a Montreal winter, the rug scene, undated and, consequently, unconnected to the linear patriarchal calendar, ends in Curaçao. In the novel, Curaçao refers to three things. First it is a real vacation to another island pirated by patriarchy where M.V. stays at the Hilton and watches some dancers mime the pirates' arrival. She drinks at the casino bar, which is full of male patrons, and looks out to see Dutch Dolls, characters from Bertha Upton's sexist and racist children's books, in the sea.[63] Yet, this is also where she meets a woman named Anna, an air stewardess with aerial vision who tells her that "one reality did not necessarily overlap another" (15). This holiday then becomes the subject matter for M.V.'s book set in Curaçao with Anna as the main character. Finally, Curaçao, and especially the blue waters of Curaçao, become a symbol for writing.

The representation of these waters changes over the course of the novel as M.V.'s relationship to representation changes. In "Screen Skin," the reflection of the sun on the water produces a dazzling whiteness, paralleling the whiteness of

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[63] For example, see Upton's "The Adventure of Two Dutch Dolls and a 'Golliwogg'."

the Montreal winter. This whiteness results in patriarchy's mutilated voice becoming a "falling star above the islands of the arid zone" (113), one of the longitudinal arrows that travel to "zones known but distant" (85). In "Emotion," while the women are *deliring*, M.V., wanting to write, searches for "the form of [her] desire … responding only to the invading thought of inscribing the contexts and atmosphere," or place, "a detail with repercussions" (112) that can renew "the effect produced by this vitality" she feels (78). She writes "around Curaçao … body happy in the waters … plunged in [her] thoughts, turned towards the shore and the Hilton or else facing the horizon" (78). Having not yet found an appropriate form, M.V. has two choices: the patriarchal narrative of the Hilton or the dazzling white space of the horizon. For now, she chooses the white space as she dives "lively into the fictional waters. Shoreless waters" (78). Once M.V. realizes reality is a "text that desires its characters" and her character is a web of spherical influences, she finds that in "the waters of Curaçao, the whiteness is dazzling … [and] [e]motion seeks then to ruse with reality, fusing it to the self is a subsequent risk" (35). Instead of risking being without character and without agency in the white space, M.V. risks producing an alternate reality or place to create a context for her alternate subject.

She turns to the "volcanic echo" (133) and to "the blue horizon of metaphors" (132). Unlike the siren's urban echo that is connected to the discourse of feminist discourse theorists, the volcanic echo refers to M.V.'s repetition of patriarchal texts in alternate contexts. "[C]ondemned never to speak first," Echo repeats with difference, "rat she says, ras she says, raz she says" (133). Reading M.V.'s work, Claire tells her that she should refrain from quoting, "forbid certain passages so that you won't repeat yourself" (72). Claire fears that quoting patriarchal texts will only repeat their narrow image of woman. M.V. responds that "no passage was forbidden" and that writing in this way she "could open [herself] up to all meanings" (72). To counter patriarchy's effect on women, M.V. begins by *deliring* and intertextually weaving the available texts. For her, these "unforeseeable liaisons" lead her "to distances [she] had to imagine, to foresee when necessary, until content emerges and makes sense" (73).

This intertextual narrative denies unilinear time. Lianne Moyes asserts, "By troubling the notion that a text has an origin and an ultimate referent, intertextuality suggests that texts have no possibility of closure, no way of stopping the cross-border play of signification among them" ("Composing" 208). *Picture Theory*, she argues, because of its demonstration of "the temporal contradictions involved in intertextual relations[,] … complicates any strictly chronological or evolutionary model of lesbian literary history" (209). Moyes focuses strictly on Brossard's connections to Barnes and Stein, but if we extend the analysis of intertextuality beyond Brossard's relationship to other lesbian writers, we can expand on Moyes statement to argue that Brossard's, and M.V.'s, intertextual connections complicate *any* chronological model of history. History is available to us only as a text, and our conception of it is affected by theories of textuality. Herb Wyile argues that as "the cumulative reverberations of prior texts," history has "affinities with fiction," as "both historical discourse and literary discourse comprise a fabric of citations, a weave of other texts" (*Speculative* 26). Therefore, theories of intertextuality can counter "the illusory unity" of a historiography that "instead of taking an openly intertextual 'form of a dialogue or a collage,' subsumes that discursive plurality to buttress its own (singular) authority" (25-26). Thus any "coherent, homogenous picture of the past" can be seen as being sutured together from "fragmentary and heterogeneous evidence" and as "an amalgam of different voices and discourses" (25-26). As intertextual, "historical discourse is an 'ordering' of other texts rather than the discovery of an 'order' in the past" (26). Thus it becomes "not so much an orderly mosaic as it is the site of discursive contestation" (27). As M.V. responds to Claire Dérive, "I confuse times because there continues to exist a vital abstraction in me which makes me tend to multiple memory" (73). The hologram, that "vital abstraction," demands recognition of multiple trajectories.[64]

M.V.'s use of intertexts is complimented by her writing in the blue horizon of metaphors which replaces both Claire's "white letters" that "blurred

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[64] See Lorraine Weir for an in-depth discussion of the connection between the hologram and intertextuality.

then and dissipated" and patriarchy's red letters (134). The blue horizon is connected to the "ultra-violet" (149), the chromatic fringe at the blue end of the spectrum of light and opposes the "infra-red," associated with the invisible centre of phallogocentrism. The narrator tells us, "Was not M.V. seeking to … sunder what was nowhere visibl(y) written in the stone and yet which made sense and flamboyant sense in the red of (id)entities, infra" (115). M.V.'s writing in the blue horizon counters phallocentrism. M.V. writes, "what the obelisks hide must be understood. All those texts whose thought had been interpolated by thousands of years of patriarchal life. …paper-myths of masculine legitimation" (133). She counters patriarchy's static stone reliefs and phallic stele with the pulsating light, the fluid articulations of integral woman at the centre of her alternate community. Again, the narrator explains, "so that's what she was seeking … that phosphorescence in the night like a permanent feminine presence taking on relief in stone. The image is fluid. Words lapidary" (115). Her words become lapidary, both cutting away as well as re-carving the cliff and revealing her trajectory in monumental time. Seen from this perspective, the screen that had reflected the role of suffering in "Screen Skin" becomes "a lithophany of changing appearance" as it displays serial images of integral woman created by urban radicals experiencing utopia as "the word *emotion* … follow[s] through on the idea" (131).

She lets her desire, her motivating emotion, guide her play with language. Playfully, she writes, "Cosmos osmosis cosmos annul, alive, a-v(o)id, gravitate, gravid" (101). The world of Joyce's Anna Livia begins to give way to that of Anna Gravidad, the integral woman or centre of gravity for a transnational community of urban radicals. M.V. goes on, "the imagination always works like this, tempted by the impossible, overflowing with utopia" (101). In the middle of her reverie, "an illuminated woman, inspired and in delirium navigating the night was approaching" (102). Now M.V. counters "The Corn Cob" with a tango of her own.

In chapter one, Florence Dérive describes music as a "[p]atriarchal machine for making the blues" (19). The patriarchal songs mentioned include

"Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," "Lili Marlene," "Don't Be Cruel," and "Won't You Wear My Ring around Your Neck." Through their repetition of the captive image, these songs make women blue, but they also stimulate the ultra violet. As was mentioned, the tango seems a strange choice as a counter to the music that supports patriarchy. However, according to Borges, the overtly sexual dance is also associated with the rebellious goucho and hoodlum (399) who stand up to order and the state. As he notes, "The sexual nature of the tango has often been noted, but not so its violence. … To speak of the fighting tango is not strong enough; I would say that the tango and the *milonga* directly express a conviction that poets have often tried to voice with words: that a fight can be a celebration" (396). Directly challenging the patriarchal soundtrack, four urban radicals dance to the fighting yet celebratory tango in M.V.'s apartment: "The cortege of bodies dancing at night the procession of girls like creative activity: our legs alternating, entwined in equilibrium, simultaneous *Premier tango à Montréal*. Tango x 4" (103). The tango symbolizes the creation of the hologram of integral woman. Brossard describes, "each note … spiralled -- -- -- -- a woman's sex is mathematical. Geo mater" (104). The women's tango, as opposed to the face-to-face position of the two dancers in the traditional dance, has four dancers and images the idea of being moved out of harm's way by "the successive arms of women." (48). Once again, we have the spiral shape of the rose connected to each woman's sex; however, this time the roses do not represent two binary reality constructions but the multiple perspectives that are necessary for the hologram. This alternate conception of woman as multiple, dynamic, and present in the city is described as a new earth mother. This mother does not disappear once the child has differentiated himself from her but continues on in her own trajectory.

While "outside it is snowing on the entire expanse of language" (103), at dawn in M.V.'s rooms, "Utopia has not stopped shining . . . through the thought [she] had for each word" (104). Now, "time changing. W(h)eather to(o)" (106). Linear time dissolves as does the fog so that the city "surrounded itself in a strange light" (107). Place also changes becoming multiplied to fit multiple profiles: "The horizon wounded, broken in its logical sequence" (106). At her

work table, M.V. is looking for the *élan*. She is "[e]ncircling the intention for the brilliant burst of things and feeling" and, unlike in *St.-Germain des Pres*, finds herself in a room of her own, undistracted and able to think "I am moving forward" (107). The section entitled "Thought" ends with M.V. "using language and the dictionary" and her textual allegiances "to go beyond" (108).

A part of a "global feminine working on architecture, time" (99), or transforming narrative form through narrative practice, M.V. can now turn away from the white Curaçao horizon and look towards the Hilton, which graphically changes from a standard hotel gridded with windows to a pentagonal pyramid now representing the hologram, and specifically the five main characters beneath a dynamic integral woman. Narrative shifts from *le récit* to the type that puts "new impulses into language *through* a narrative" (Interview with Castricano 51). In this type of non-linear, intertextual narrative, the women can tell their stories. For example, that which was merely sketched in "Screen Skin," the description of Sarah Dérive Stein's deathbed, becomes two full pages in "Screen Skin Too" and that which was left out, Sarah's lesbian love affair with Cecilia, is voiced. Thus, in "Screen Skin Too," the white space is reduced from two pages to one as the unspoken is diminished.

Note, too, that whereas in "Screen Skin" there are few references to Curaçao, "Screen Skin Too" includes the longest Curaçao section indicating M.V.'s enabling connection to representation. Anna is, once again, in the casino, but this time the text is full of images that signal her distance from patriarchal reality. She is now named Anna Gravidas and she stands among women, a tango streaming over their shoulders, and because "it is late," the casino, or world of risk where the odds are against them, is finally about to close (134). Further, the women leave their traces in time, as "at the seaside, time is sand" (32) and "sur la plage, des traces de talons, in the distance, the wounded horizon" (134). Oedipus's is no longer the only heel leaving its mark. Writing, M.V. is in the celebratory fight "engaged in a face to face confrontation with the sun" (134). The Hilton, in the sun, shines like a mirror reflecting M.V. and her wounded horizon. Now, the elevator, symbol of linear narrative, completely disappears.

The subject and the city become holographic, multiple and productive. This scene where the Hilton transforms to a pyramid contains an aside in brackets "(8, rue de Brantôme, l'éclairage.)" (134). "*Éclairage*" translates to "perspective" and "illumination." The perspective here is that of 8, *rue de Brantôme*, an address previously mentioned in chapter one when M.V. is in Paris to visit to the museum of holography at the Pompidou Centre. She finds, however, that the holograms in the Pompidou Centre, it being a state museum, support patriarchal space-time, the Concept-city and woman as captive. The holographic man is "drinking cognac surrounded by a window. He smiles almost or naturally, future and public, that will be strategically set out in the cities. When the time had come" (26). The past perfect tense indicates that the man's frame of reference opening onto reality has already and continues to strategically organize cities. The holographic woman, as a result, is the captive image. A mother, she "spreads her legs while a little girl floats in the space still linked by the cord and the lighting" (35). This mother reproduces patriarchy.[65]

The address for the Pompidou Centre, however, is 4, *rue Beauborg*, yet when M.V. visits it, she lists the address as 8, *rue Brantôme*, a few blocks to the north. As she did with the address of Florence Dérive's hotel in Montreal, Brossard is once again rewriting the map of the city in order to associate her character with an enabling construction of place. Graham Huggan argues that the "redisposition of geographical coordinates" in contemporary Canadian literature is a reaction against stability and unity and "stresses the provisionality" of cartography ("Decolonizing" 127). Brossard re-coordinates the map of the city in order to demonstrate the multiplicity of constructions of place and to fit the city to her own perspective. 8, *rue Brantôme*, is the address of a lesbian and gay bar on the edge of the Marais, *Le Blue Square*. This "*square*" or gathering place brings to mind the hologram and "*blue*" the waters off Curaçao as well as the ultra-violet end of the spectrum. Thus, Brossard associates her hologram with a community

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[65] This description of the woman is placed directly after the description of Oriana playing Brünhilde in Wagner's *Die Walküre*, indicating the kind of patriarchal rewriting that has all but erased these images of battle-hardy, independent women and the effect this rewriting has on women's subjectivity. On the stage, "Oriana sings, cries, complies and submits" to Brünhilde's father and is "[h]eard like a spell" as "destiny is rousing" (35).

generating an alternate construction of place around a table and a dance floor in a bar.

In M.V.'s apartment "[w]ords were flying in all directions" themselves now "furrowing space" and challenging the reproductive imagination associated with the Hilton and the museum (98). M.V. describes, "In the conquest, I scent out a mental space that will not be occupied with descriptions, an anecdote here, a 'natural' inclination there to remake the same (museum … Hilton)" (93). M.V.'s language play guided by her feminist politic/vision "shatter[s] the museum" (98) and its linear accumulation of time and opens her to Benjamin's *jetzeit*. She writes, "Thousands of fragments fall upon my shoulders. Material everywhere, pièces d'identité: notes, lipstick, mirror, condom, keys, money, a thousand fragments gather under your eyes in the museum" (98). As Max Pensky writes of Benjamin, she strips these "cultural goods" of their "gleam" and recognizes them as "fossils unearthed from an ongoing history of compulsion, violence, and disappointment" (qtd in Criglington 100). Rejecting such a narrowed time, she conceives of time as "flow[ing] like information in optical fibre" (97). In fibre optics, light travels through fine glass fibres by internal refraction. As if the fibre were lined with mirrors, the light continually reflects back into the cable as it moves along. Because of the way they transmit light, optical fibres can carry multiple channels or waves of information at different reflection angles without interference (Hero). Time, here, travelling like information in an optical fibre, multiplies and opens space to multiple trajectories in a dynamic simultaneity.

Claire Dérive finally verbalizes integral woman: an "abstract woman who would slip into [the] text, carrying the fiction so far that from afar, this woman participant in words, must be seen coming, virtual to infinity" (147). This woman is "[a]ll the subjectivity in the world" (153) because "each image of woman is vital to the thinking organism" (150). Yet, integral woman is not only a fluid abstraction. Her continued generation by *delering* urban radicals locates them in an alternate transregional community now described as a utopia. The anonymous narrator asserts, "I occupy space in Utopia" (150) and declares, "I am the thought of a woman who embodies me and whom I think integral. **SKIN (UTOPIA) ...** .

Gravitate serial and engrave the banks with suspended islands" (149). Lapidary, the urban radicals, who generate the hologram of integral woman and take their place in this non-geographical utopian noplace, engrave the banks, or Aquinnah Cliffs, with suspended islands, or multiple constructions of place. Only then will the narrator "be tempted by reality like a verbal vision which alternates my senses while another woman conquers the horizon at work. Utopia <u>integral woman</u>" (emphasis in original 149).

Florence Dérive is already in such a place. While she was precariously positioned in the patriarchal city in chapter one, her trip to Montreal results in her entrance into the community of urban radicals, represented by the *Hôtel de l'Institut* conflated with the lesbian bar. When she emerges from the hotel in the morning, she recognizes Sandra Artskin, an urban radical "who writes marvels without her mother ever disturbing her in order … not to confound her with another woman *whose lightly dressed body* passed in front of the hotel" (19) Their reciprocal gaze counters the captive image. Most significantly, Florence Dérive, summarizing the entire novel, thinks while listening to a tango on the beach at Martha's Vineyard:

> I am responsible for Utopia in my very desire spoken word in the sense of thought, where it is directed toward pleasure and has not become burdened with a malaise. I lean toward the beaches and shores to leave traces there, accepting before the sea, the fierce fire that ravages troubles and transforms the language suffering from a single version, the tongue that causes de/lirium. (80)

Reinforcing the idea that emotion/utopia has consequences, when Florence returns to New York, she writes a book and while composing pens, "let Aruba arrive, let the water come" (25). Aruba, sister island to Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles, signifies the similar yet different space from which she writes as an urban radical in the hologram of integral woman.

She sends M.V. and Claire Dérive an aerial letter along with a copy of her book which influences M.V.'s own trajectory. In the letter, she speaks "of mental space and of representation" and tells her "lively sisters," "How precious to me

were the days spent at the seaside" (142). This letter affects M.V. with a "will for serial circulation of spatial gestures," or alternate spatial trajectories and practices that counter the grid of the Concept-city (150). The importance of Florence Dérive's letter is underscored by a repetition of the scene in *Hologram*. In this version, M.V. meets Florence in person in a New York bar on Forty-second Street, in the armpit of the city. Affected by the patriarchal city, Florence Dérive sputters, "At certain moments we reach limits it's limit origin ex hausts ´story stele. In the crossing, smthg is (can)celled …" (168). The words "limit," "origin," and "celled" imply the imposition of the centred structure onto history, the "'story stele." This singular time and ideology affects space. When they leave, at the corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, the address for the New York Public Library, window-dressers are re-doing their displays, connecting the library's books to the captive image: "On Fifth Avenue, beautiful gloved arms" (168). The anonymous narrator interjects, "From my window, it was the episode in which M.V. stayed stuck to public codes in distress" (168). M.V. continues to replicate the proper grammar of the Concept-city. But that is in an alternate reality; in *Picture Theory*, Florence Dérive takes part in constructing integral woman. In bars, in books, and in letters, she writes "womanal)/" (17, 163). The strange typeface seems to indicate women's accent in a phallocentric language, but the construction also plays off Joyce's Anna Livia Plurabelle and can be broken down to mean "woman annali" or women's history as it "formulate[s] the 'nnameable," a word that nods to both the spoken and the unrepresentable (163).

Both writers can then take part in the serial construction of the hologram as they are "tempted by reality like a verbal vision … while another woman conquers the horizon at work" (149). M.V. emerges from the waters of Curaçao, and from the beach, watches Anna, the air stewardess, swim in the waves as the sun "wip[es] out the anecdotal cards of the casino" (151). Earlier, Florence, too, sat on the beach of Martha's Vineyard, writing while she watched the other four women, with a special focus on M.V., swim in the sea.

M.V. and Claire now watch integral woman approach from out of the desert. The desert is another representation of space beyond the hermeneutic

circle. As Brossard points out in *Baroque at Dawn*, the French word for sea is derived from the Latin *mare* which itself "comes from the Sanskrit *maru* which means desert" (191). Like the sea, "the desert is vast" (*Picture* 84/132), but in it "[a] form is on the look out for emotion, story … is lying in wait" (84). This form is both the architectural form of the pentagonal pyramid representing the dynamic hologram as well as the narrative form or "story" that "is putting new impulses into language *through* a narrative" (Interview with Costricano 51). Brossard sets this form apart from standard patriarchal form by differentiating it from the quadrilateral Egyptian pyramids, home to the sphinx, another woman believed to be "conquered" by Oedipus (132). These pyramids support the oedipal trajectory that kills women's *élan*: "La chasse à l'élan. Hunters' hatred in the Valley of Kings" (132). Instead of in the Valley of the Kings, M.V.'s pyramid surfaces in the (mauve?) ultra-violet horizons of Monument Valley, Arizona. Thus her initials, which initially associate her with Martha's Vineyard, come to associate her with Monument Valley, an association furthered by her full name, Michelle Vallé, which translates from German and French to "my-her valley." Unlike Martha's Vineyard which presents a geographic community and binary space, Monument Valley figures the multiple trajectories and heterotopic place necessary for the noplace of the space-time dynamic. The valley is a flat desolate landscape interjected with buttes and mesas rising hundreds of feet into the air. Unlike the Egyptian pyramids which are identical other than size, these craggy formations are each unique. Created out of the erosion caused by ancient rivers, they are islands in the desert, and they represent multiple reality constructions. These islands, like Martha's Vineyard, are composed of layers of sediment, connecting them to their own histories. Here is an image of multiple three-dimensional space-time constructions.

 In "Perspective," this view of space is demonstrated by Claire Dérive who, immediately after the section on time becoming whole:

   retraces precisely the circumference
  of conditioned spaces ours
  and the free zones all spiralled around

these are the musics without

there'll be neither Utopia, nor abstraction

nor any lip for bliss (62)

For Claire Dérive, there are multiple spaces and free zones, not only that of urban radicals. These multiple constructions of place are represented as multiple spirals and musics existing alongside and interacting with one another. Without these other space-time trajectories and their spiralling interrelations there can be no heterotopia and no dynamic space. As Foucault argues, without heterotopic space there would be no possibility for imagination, for the unknown, or for resistance (27) and "space would remain fixed, dead, immobile" (Soja 15). Space and place become heterogeneous and dynamic and Claire Dérive states, "in her eyes America / in the respective position of the text" (56).[66] The cliché as block stereotype, or the reproductive imagination, becomes M.V.'s declaration of love for another woman, Claire Dérive, which results in "the chapter surprise" as *élan* "com[es] out of the forest" (55).

As well as with Claire voicing integral woman, "Screen Skin Too" ends with, "This night, our eyes disclose the plans of cities" (144). Claire Dérive and M.V. insert themselves into, and thus "dis-close" or open up, the plan of the city to create, echoing de Certeau's title *The Practice of Everyday Life,* "the utopia of the everyday," the utopia of spatial practices and legends where place becomes passage (170).

M.V. declares, "Plunged into the centre of the city, I would dream of raising my eyes. … already I'd have entered into a spiral and my being of air aerial urban would reproduce itself in the glass city like an origin. I'd see this manifestly formal woman then inscribe reality, ecosystem" (149). M.V. dreams of inserting integral woman into the centre of the city as a dynamic origin or mother where the city's glass surfaces will reflect her infinitely and create a real-time

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[66] Marilyn Randall writes that in the early 1980s, French Canadian literature, influenced by the novels of Jack Kerouac, turned to images of "drifting, otherness, and the passing through of strange spaces [which] became key motifs" and were often associated with the United States (27). Randall quotes Simon Harel, "To leave [the security of Quebec] is to confront a space without boundaries, open in its immensity, … a cultural plurality. Drifting through American land is a quest for a bewitching, fascinating otherness" (27).

hologram. Now, M.V.'s gaze from her apartment window, her suspended island engraved on the cliffs/buildings, is on the city: "caught between the window ledge and the horizon" (153).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Here, too, Brossard can be compared to Jameson. Jameson argues that "the poststructuralist critique of the hermeneutic" (61) replaces what he calls the "depth models" of modernism with "a conception of practices, discourses, and textual play" (62). Or as he summarizes, "depth is replaced by surface, or by multiple surfaces (what is often called intertextuality is in that sense no longer a matter of depth)" (62). Again, this lack of depth is demonstrated through the city's architecture, this time in "the great free-standing wall of the Crocker Bank Center … a surface which seems to be unsupported by any volume" (62). He describes it thus:

> This great sheet of windows, with its gravity-defying two-dimensionality, momentarily transforms the solid ground on which we climb into the contents of a stereopticon, pasteboard shapes profiling themselves here and there around us. … If this new multinational downtown … effectively abolished the older ruined city fabric which it violently replaced, cannot something similar be said about the way in which this strange new surface in its own pre-emptory way renders our older systems of perception of the city somehow archaic and aimless, without offering another in their place? (62)

Whereas Jameson looks at the Crocker Bank Center and sees a loss of depth and a waning of affect replaced as it is by multiple surfaces and intertexts, Brossard inserts M.V.'s intertextual subject, constructed out of influences and meeting points, onto one of those surfaces reflecting it infinitely in the surrounding glass, creating the conditions for the generation of integral woman and the city as heterotopic.

Brossard inserts her urban radicals into the city and creates an alternate geographical imagination according to her own motivating desire: "above the cliffs, like islands overhanging the desert, the reality of syn-cronous women

modifies the horizon, the streets of the glass city, reflexion made mental space for a contemporary vision. De-riv(ative) drift curves the horizon" (*Picture* 167). This representation of the city connects to an alternate geographical imagination. History, or depth, becomes depths, a radical Benjaminian constellation of multiples that "light each other up in all their contradictoriness" (Gregory, *Geographical* 235). Theodor Adorno argues that the Benjaminian constellation is "a juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle" (qtd. In Gregory, *Geographical* 225). The historical constellation appears as a monad in the ambiguous utopian moment but is never static. As Adorno described, it must be composed of ever changing elements. No longer singular, history's multiple colliding and repulsing tensions and trajectories create the condition for space-time and catalyze its constant movement. M.V. declares utopia, sense, and the spiral are multiplied: "Utopia shines in my eyes. Langu age is feverish like a polysemic resource. … I am there where 'the magical appearance' begins, the coherence of wor(l)ds, perforated by invisible spirals that quicken it" (153). Her representation of the city is as a holographic articulation, a momentarily stalled and ambiguous utopian monad in a time of utopian arrest. In chapter one, flying home from France and looking out the window, she exclaims, "the cities surprise me again, repeatedly. Luminous, 'an image is a stop the mind makes between uncertainties'" (25).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

This chapter helps to address the lack of critical studies of the representation of urban space in Canadian literature by examining how, in *Picture Theory*, Nicole Brossard takes up Elizabeth Grosz's feminist project for urban space and demonstrates the hegemonic patriarchal construction of the city, replaces women in the city, and proposes "new ways of inhabiting" urban space (Grosz 124). Instead of a single space moving through linear time, she presents the city as constructed by multiple "cartograph[ies] of desire" (Moyes, "Cities" 6). In my discussion of how she accomplishes these tasks, I have aligned her with cultural theorists like Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, and postmodern

geographers such as Doreen Massey, all of whom argue that their conceptions of space make space and place unrepresentable. However, Brossard represents her urban space by redeploying Jameson's utopian discourse where, rather than functioning to figure the contradictions that arise in the historical moment between two modes of production, utopian discourse figures the contradictions that exist within multiple contemporaneous ideological reality constructions. In her concluding images of "musics" and "spirals," she alludes to innumerable coexisting discursive reality constructions, interacting and struggling with one another in various ways, or not. However, in each of the rug and book scenes, along with their correlating sections of the novel, she more fully details the reality constructions of urban radicals and feminist discourse theorists, how they counter patriarchal space-time, how they interact together and with patriarchy (or not), and how they each construct place, and the implications of such on the construction of woman. Together these multiple constructions create a complex utopian discourse that makes reading, as Jameson says, "a process of allegorical decipherment" of intense production and play ("Islands" 7). As utopian discourse, these scenes exist in a critical and negative relationship to one another. They neutralize one another. Once again, this does not mean that Brossard is a-political or even positing a neutral plurality. Instead, the narrative refuses any reconciliation or synthesis of these contradictory constructions, and represents their multiple trajectories existing all at once. Brossard obviously takes a stand in presenting these constructions and argues against both patriarchy and discourse feminism. However, she does not advocate installing another pathological system. Instead she posits a construction that can embrace the crisis of representation and the multiple intersecting and struggling trajectories of the coeval.

Brossard figures the space-time dynamic by representing multiple ideologies in utopian frames that work against and alongside the hegemonic constructions of space, time, and the place of the city. By doing so, she voices her alternate community, its trajectory, and its articulation of and by the city. While in struggle with patriarchy, this community and its construction of place are voiced in a way that does not reject alternatives or attempt to become hegemonic itself.

Further, it challenges the metaphorical connection between woman and land by severing it and locating women in the city as well as challenges the connection between woman and place as static and authenticating by making both place and woman multiple, open, and dynamic constructions.

Chapter 4

"An Enigma Entered with each Reading:"
Articulating the Land in Nicole Brossard's *Mauve Desert*

   Picture Theory reconceptualises the city as heterotopic and dynamic and
locates urban radicals in the centre of power, thereby countering the metaphoric
connection between women and land by severing it. In *Mauve Desert*, Brossard
once again sets out to counter this metaphoric connection; however, this time she
reconceptualises not the city but the land. This re-conceptualization of the land
connects to an alternate construction of woman. As I demonstrated in chapter one,
in patriarchy, women are conflated with the land and nature as spatial objects in
relation to the male temporal subject. As Diane Relke observes, "Mother Nature
… represents all that civilized man has lost; … the loss of Eden to the fallen
Adam … the loss of the intimate connection between subject and object" (17).
Both woman and place/nature are connected to "home" and authenticity and are
longed for nostalgically (Massey, *Space* 10). This connection leaves women in a
passive, depoliticized, and disabling position. Brossard re-conceptualizes the land
so that it too becomes dynamic and multiple and, therefore, refuses the
construction of both the environment and woman as static and authenticating.
Once again, this alternate representation of space is figured in a utopian discourse,
a discontinuous narrative that refuses closure and instead instigates play and
production. As utopian discourse, it leaves open multiple terms and trajectories
and figures the conceptually unformulizable, the unrepresentable space-time
dynamic and its construction of place.

   In *Mauve Desert*, Brossard re-conceptualizes the land as multiple and
dynamic and posits multiple constructions of both space and time by constructing
multiple interacting stories-so-far. She gives us the story of longman, a character
based on physicist Robert Oppenheimer, director of the Manhattan Project; the
story of Angela, a forty year-old geometrist who has done work for longman and
has witnessed the first nuclear explosion; the story of Mélanie, a fifteen year-old

lesbian coming of age in the Arizona desert, not far from the nuclear testing grounds in New Mexico; and the story of Maude Laures, a teacher at a girl's school in Montreal who finds Mélanie's, Angela's, and longman's stories in a book written by Laure Angstelle, becomes obsessed with the text, and decides to translate it. While Angstelle's original novel demonstrates her characters' induction into and reaction to the "postmodern crisis," it is Laures'ss active reading and rewriting of the story that presents the spatial dynamic and leads to an unfixed, contested, and multiple construction of space-time and place, which, as Massey argues for such places, cannot be "closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as 'home'" (*Space* 5).[67]

Brossard creates her discontinuous narrative by structuring *Mauve Desert*[68] as a narrative of translation where translation symbolizes the act of *deliring* or making *sens*. In her preface to Brossard's *Lovhers*, Barbara Godard connects the act of translation to *deliring* in that, for Godard, the translator becomes "an active participant in the creation of meaning" and the translation itself becomes "an act of reading," and thus, "the historical adventure of a subject" (7). *Mauve Desert* demonstrates this act in its tripartite structure

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[67] Brossard could also be seen to be representing place as dialogic. Concerned specifically with time and the genre of historical novels, Herb Wyile argues in *Speculative Fictions* that the contestatory nature of historical discourse derives from the nature of speech. He argues that historical discourse is "fundamentally dialogic," a site of "intense interaction and struggle" between the speaker's and another's word that can "oppose or dialogically interanimate each other" (27). One strategy to foreground such a history is to "recogniz[e] the varied, conflicting, and interpenetrating world-views of the characters" (29). Doing so "underlines that, if anything is invented, it is the idea of a homogenous, cohesive view of the past" (29). Such a theory can also be applied to space and geographical discourse. Discursively constructed, place can also be seen as "fundamentally dialogic," a site of "intense interaction and struggle" between various constructions that can "dialogically interanimate each other" (27) and question the possibility of any authentic home place. Seeing place in this way opens the either/or dialectical struggle over place posited in much of contemporary place studies (for example, non-mimetic discursive place studies and non-totalizing cartographic criticism) and by many theorists of utopian discourse (for example, Paul Ricoeur and David Harvey) as it opens place to multiple interacting (or not) constructions. Demonstrating place as dialogic employs the same strategy as demonstrating history as such and involves "recognizing the varied, conflicting, and interpenetrating world-views of the characters" (29). Thus, as Wylie asserts, "the most valuable forms of engagement with history," and I would add geography, "emerge not from insisting on an objectified and unified discourse but by permitting—indeed stressing—the interplay between different perspectives, different voices, different genres, and different texts" (30).

[68] When referring to Brossard's novel as a whole, the title will be italicized, *Mauve Desert*. When referring to Angstelle's novel within Brossard's novel, the title will be in quotation marks, as is common for chapter or section titles, "Mauve Desert." In direct quotations from the novel, the name will appear as it does in Brossard's text.

beginning with a novel "Mauve Desert," written by Angstelle, and ending with Laures'ss homolinguistic translation of the novel, "Mauve, the Horizon," which is both similar to and decidedly different from the original. Between these two versions is a section entitled "A Book to Translate," itself having a circular structure, where Laures'ss translation notes are sandwiched in the middle of a chronology of her translation process and demonstrate the feminist vision and motivating desires that drive her *deliring* of Angstelle's novel (84).

As Brossard states, "Reinventing the world is not only launching it again in a new landscape, but also activating this new landscape" ("Fragments" 23). Key to Brossard's concept of place in *Mauve Desert* is the imagined dialog between translator and author, Maude Laures and Laure Angstelle. Laures wants to know what as a translator she can make her own, and she is answered through a discussion of landscape. Angstelle's first response is that Laures must assume the traditional role of translator and attempt "reading backwards in [her] language what in [Angstelle's] flows from the source" (133). Confronted by a translator who wants to "reproach" her work, Angstelle anxiously questions, "How am I to believe for a single moment that the landscapes in you won't erase those in me?" (133). While she understands there are multiple ways of constructing place, she sees their relationship to one another as a unilinear struggle for dominance. Her view of the landscape parallels her view of translation, and of reading, which is to see the linguistic object as a completed representation, and this explains her anxiety. This stance parallels that of landscape geography and Canadian literary place studies that posit a binary struggle over a single construction of place.

Laures, however, responds with a different concept of place and of translation. She sees the landscape as a process of production. She replies to Angstelle, "true landscapes loosen the tongue in us, flow over the edge of our thought-frame" (133). Here "truth" does not mean the accurate (and singular) correspondence of an idea with reality but refers to excess and polysemy. Later in the text, Brossard writes, "What is truth?" and answers with the Greek word for truth, *aletheia* (94). Donna Bennett argues that *aletheia* suggests a revelation, an uncovering, or unveiling of what has been curtained off (813) and states that what

is unveiled is that the coherence of an "atomised world via the superimposition of law is not the only way to understand" (822). "True" landscapes are polysemic and as Fredric Jameson states of seeing the linguistic object as productive discourse, they "undermine representational categories" ("Islands" 5-6). The construction of place opens to multiple perspectives and, as Michel Foucault writes, "set[s] of relations that delineate sites" (23). Place becomes heterotopic. Angstelle understands and replies, "I remember one day buying a geology book in which I found a letter. It was a love letter written by a woman and addressed to another woman. I used the letter as a bookmark. I would read it before reading and after reading. For me that letter was a landscape, an enigma entered with each reading" (133). Reading the lesbian love letter, in which two women desire one another, has framed and mediated Angstelle's reading of geology. Both the letter and the landscape become "enigmas" or continually productive discourses. Like Fredric Jameson's understanding of the *koan* in relation to utopian discourse, these representations become productive, "grasp[ed]" as "an object of meditation" that undermines representational categories and completion, "whose function is to ... jar the mind into some heightened but unconceptualized consciousness" that figures the "conceptually unformulizable" ("Islands" 15), which is the absence of any totality caused by the presence of multiple and competing ideologies. Thus, Laures'ss question is answered. She can *delire* Angstelle's text and its construction of place.

The two versions of the novel reflect these two ways of constructing place, and, taken together as a whole, the three sections of *Mauve Desert* present Angstelle's and Laure's reconstructions of patriarchy's singular landscape: Angstelle's construction of place as binary and in struggle over the dominant construction, and Laures's polysemic productive construction of place. While implied in her translation, this construction can best be seen from an aerial view of the entire tripartite narrative.

In this chapter, I will first examine Angstelle's construction of place in "Mauve Desert," then I will discuss Laures'ss alternate conception of space, time and place as outlined in "A Book to Translate," and will move on to outline some

of the ways that Laures *delires* Angstelle's text. Finally, I will end with a discussion of how *Mauve Desert* can be seen as a utopian discourse that neutralizes coexisting ideologies and figures the unrepresentable space-time dynamic and its construction of place.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Laure Angstelle's novel takes place in the deserts of the southwestern United States between Death Valley and Albuquerque, Tucson and Ajo. Not easily made a part of the pastoral myth of America, the desert is seen by patriarchy as a wasteland, much of it designated as reserve land with penitentiaries, military exercises, bombing ranges, and nuclear facilities taking up other huge tracts. Angstelle, however, re-landscapes the southwest to represent those subjects who are outside patriarchy, non-patriarchal women and lesbians. She splits the American landscape so that it reflects not only the pastoralism supporting the centre but also the oppositional landscape of the periphery.

Specifically, Angstelle's novel takes place in the area surrounding the Mauve Motel, the last motel on Interstate 10 on the outskirts north west of Tucson in the Sonora desert. Situated at the city limit, the motel figures a liminal space between civilization and wilderness. Here Mélanie lives with her mother, Kathy Kerouac, and her mother's lover, Lorna Myher. These women symbolize women's position in patriarchy, either on the margin or outside sense as indicated by their patronyms: Kerouac refers to Jack Kerouac, beat writer, and Myher, is a nonsensical "double, reciprocal possessive" (Parker, *Liminal* 143). Situated between them, Mélanie is another liminal figure, both of the desert and of the margins.

A writer, she, too, is connected to her last name, "Kerouac." However, while Kathy connects her to the textual, Lorna connects her to the terrain. In Angstelle's construction of place, the desert represents that which is outside patriarchal sense. Geographically echoing her position beyond sense, Lorna is from Ajo, one of Arizona's most isolated settlements. There, she is conflated with nature as unknowable: "a creature among creatures" becoming "scales, pearls, claws" (85). Extending her association with the non-sensical, Lorna is illiterate

and is, therefore, fixed in the desert without voice or agency. Lorna, in fact, is only intelligible in Kathy Kerouac's arms (30). Yet, at the same time, her illiteracy puts her in a position of relative freedom and enables her to invent places that are "incompatible with the vegetation and barren soil of [Mélanie's] childhood" (12). These imagined places open Mélanie to the possibility of alternate constructions of place and to excess.

Brossard states, "the characters of my novels are *pretexts* which permit me to reflect, to install landscapes in which I can negotiate with reality, interrogate the world" (emphasis in original, "Fragments" 25-26). As lesbians, all the main female characters in "Mauve Desert" are exiled to the desert, but each has a different relationship to it. Figuring the bliss to be found outside the centre, Lorna's first lesbian kisses reveal not aridity but the desert in bloom after a rainfall—"the lacquered green leaves of a creosote bush, swept into the scarlet and sweet taste of the flowers all around" (86). Compare this to Kathy whose lesbian desire locates her in Death Valley, described by the National Parks Service website as follows: "Hottest, Driest, Lowest: A superlative desert of streaming sand dunes, snow-capped mountains, ... and three million acres of stone wilderness" (U.S.). Her relationship with Grazie's mother locates her at two vantage points on this stone wilderness. First, she arrives at Dante's View, the top of one of those snow-capped peaks overlooking the valley. In Laures'ss notes, snow comes to represent the space of linguistic play in the void outside the hermeneutic circle. For Laures, this void opens language to expressing multiple realities, but Kathy's realization of it is anything but joyous. After Dante's View, she ends up in Badwater, in the very bottom of the valley itself, the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere (29). Instead of rain and vegetation, she gets a salt flat, a dry lakebed. A lesbian located on the patriarchal side of the horizon between sense and nonsense, Kathy lives in denial—"mopp[ing] up America" and "pretend[ing] not to notice when things were dirtied" (12) —and fear—at the Motel, "fear is diffuse" (22). While she has access to language and to sense, fright is the only expression Kathy, "a woman without expression," can produce:

> Yet the voice could *take fright*. This Kathy Kerouac foresaw only too well
> when syllables suddenly started coming out of her mouth like little
> fragments of oblivion giving her the impression she was contradicting
> herself. It was in these moments, when words were both true and false,
> solemn and light, on the tip of the tongue and deep in the throat, that space
> shrank in her mouth like a hard-felt blow. (91)

Unwilling to play with language and cross the line between sense and nonsense,
when she senses language is breaking down, she feels it as a painful loss of space,
marginalizing her even further.

Mélanie is located between these two women. While Lorna's invented
places help her to acknowledge that reality is constructed, her access to her
mother's voice and its connection to patriarchal reality enable her to tell that
Lorna's imagined places were pure play. She declares, "I knew . . . because even I
knew how to distinguish between a Western diamondback and a rattlesnake,
between a troglodyte and a mourning turtledove" (12). Her connection to both
women enables her to move from "excess to ecstasy," transgression to vision
(*Aerial* 71). However, in Angstelle's novel, Mélanie's vision is in a binary
relationship and a struggle for dominance with patriarchal reality.

As she moves from excess to ecstasy, Mélanie's perception of the desert
shifts from "indescribable" (11) to "unspeakable" as that which is outside
patriarchal language shifts from nonsense to the *inédit*, or the not-yet said (28).
Driving out into the "indescribable" desert in her prologue, she explains, "inside
me was a desire which free of obstacles frightened me" (11). As a teenager, her
awakening lesbian desire locates her in the desert where that desire, now outside
patriarchy, is free of obstacles. This freedom frightens her, but this fear is
different from the diffuse fear at the Motel. "This fear," Laures writes, is "capable
of manoeuvres among the body's fluids … igniting feeling [and] stoking
excitement" (148). It "makes women attentive to the surprising sounds their voice
can produce when they are seeking in the same breath to repress the slow fear and
the definite attraction which, like a ludic and poignant impropriety, pass through
them though they are without words to comprehend" (148). Mélanie, like Lorna,

desires this emotion describing it as "beautiful" (22). But, also like Lorna, her desert without words is escapist. She is "alone like a character cut out of history" (13). It, too, is a space of denial where "like [her] mother, [she] pretended that nothing was dirtied" (13).

Mélanie is "always certain of everything," everything "except words" (23). The slipperiness of language frightens her as it does her mother, but whereas Kathy, sensing the dissolution of her voice "into disorder and chaos … knew to stop there in the image and the words" (91), Mélanie does not. Because of Lorna's invented places, language captivates her; as she says, "It fascinated me to think that dark, dryness was a word" (23). This understanding of the discursive construction of reality leads to her epiphany when, as Mélanie describes it, "One day between Phoenix and the petrified forest, I had a dream, as flamboyant as a rapture, a drift in space" (28). Literally in the desert somewhere between the Petrified Forest National Park, and Phoenix, Arizona, and figuratively between a long-dead, static patriarchal reality and a complete rebirth from its ashes, Mélanie experiences a rapturous moment, an ecstasy, where she loses not only her location in an a-political place of excess but also her tendency to denial and escapism. She tells us:

> At the end of a May afternoon, when I had veered off the road to get a closer look at an old *saguaro's* half-wounded, half-agonized silhouette, and was singing as usual—fever, fever, forever going away—, I felt fear heavy to bear. The *saguaro* swayed, real and unreal. The *saguaro*, words, all my reflexes were in slow motion and soon there was no more day, no more dawn, no more road, no more cactus, barely the instinct to think that words are nonetheless but words. (23-24)

Off the road on a spring day, a season associated with rebirth, she is allured by a half-dead, hollowed out saguaro shimmering between reality and dream as if a mirage. Cacti, *saguaros* in particular, come to symbolize phallogocentrism in the text. Maude Laures later describes, "the great *saguaros*, their stubby arms like milestones in the distance" (138). As directional markers, they are not only

symbols but also reflect the shape of men. In this moment, Mélanie understands that language and place are hegemonically constructed.

This saguaro, however, is being hollowed out, likely by a wren or troglodyte. Troglodytes are mentioned frequently in Angstelle's novel, the first reference occurring when, as I indicated, Mélanie asserts that, unlike Lorna, she knows the difference between a troglodyte and a mourning turtledove (12). Signifying a genus of wren that makes its nest in tree and cactus trunks, the word is derived from the Greek words *trogle* and *dyein*, meaning "hole" and "to go in to" and is akin to the Greek verb *trogein*, "to gnaw." The troglodyte figures Mélanie and Angela, the women who work on language in order to destroy patriarchal reality. Mélanie describes herself as "*know[ing] the parchment-like epidermis of the great agonizing cacti, all of it, the burrowing animal leaving its trace*" (emphasis in original 24). Angela, as well, is described as bird-like. On the dance floor of the Red Arrow Motel, she "flutters and wildly soars" (45). Like birds, both women also sing, and Mélanie is "singing as usual" when she is drawn to the saguaro (23). Unlike the turtledove that passively mourns, the troglodyte tears down in order to build.

Mélanie feels intense fear, but unlike at the motel, fear in the desert is beautiful (22), and Brossard writes, "beauty is before reality" (32). Mélanie's epiphany is that, through working on language, she can reinvent the world from her alternate sense of beauty and motivating desire. Brossard's concept of "beauty," as discussed in chapter three, counters Enlightenment aesthetics where beauty is separated from desire and becomes static and a-political. For Brossard, beauty is plastic and malleable, a political conception at the base of the construction of social reality. Mélanie realizes she can reinvent the world by reconceiving beauty, but beauty also "encroaches upon beings" and takes part in patriarchal reality construction. (145).

Longman's story demonstrates that beauty comes before reality for patriarchy as well. He, too, faces an unsettling epiphany, and it is also connected to his construction of place. A man of the patriarchal city, he is a tourist traveling through the desert. Instead of aridity, he "knows some lovely little footpaths,

delicately shaded areas" (17). Appearing in the same paragraph, his heterosexual desire, illustrated by his masturbating while looking at pornographic images of women, is connected to his "know[ing] *beautiful* blue lakes, the *great* petrified forest with its amethyst trees everlasting" (21). The pastoral is the beauty that constructs his reality and it hinges on easily available, objectified patriarchal women as well as on the relegation of non-patriarchal women to the desert. Yet, at the same time, the forest is petrified; his reality is static, solidified. While longman sees patriarchal reality as "great," Mélanie sees it as at the root of a disabling language: "slow snake in the desert" that "is nothing but deserted skin" at "the foot of *senitas* and *ocotillos*" (24).

Even though longman's beauty is powerful enough to construct and reproduce a universal reality, he and his landscape are in crisis. As well as lakes and forests, he thinks of snow at Princeton and "in the everlasting" (21). In the postmodern era, the white space or void is covering the centres of his ideological constructions. As Gail Scott argues, the postmodern "offers new opportunities for narrative, foregrounding also a certain tragic mode, precursor perhaps of new visions" (128). Of this tragic mode, Brossard responds, "paradoxically, this sense of the tragic permits a certain questioning and hope" ("What" 128). For Brossard, postmodernism signals "history dissolving in its acceleration: sudden weightlessness" caused by the loss of credibility of "the mediating figure of Man" ("What" 129). Without this centre, the patriarchal subject falls apart and is "constrained above all to a form of knowledge it loathes: intuition" ("What" 129). This shift results in patriarchy's conception of a crisis and in "new relations with nature" and, therefore, women ("What" 129). In *Mauve Desert*, pornography and the pastoral cannot stave off longman's crisis. He is "on fast forward," is "lost" and faints, experiencing an "explosion" as "cold reason fall[s] out on his shoulders" (27). Subject to patriarchy's postmodern crisis, longman is "broken, mirror, fraction, incapable of figuring out his wound" (31). Longman's unified subject of reason is falling apart.

Alice Parker argues the hyperreality of the desert signifies the postmodern condition ("Mauve" 111), but in "Mauve Desert," it is the intense white light of

the atomic explosion that shatters and fragments. In "The Textured Angle of Desire," Brossard describes patriarchy's reaction to postmodernism: "masculine philosophers and thinkers crown their books with titles such as *The Defeat of Thought, The Era of the Void, The Future of Negation, The Empire of the Ephemeral, The Death of Genre*, as if, having made the round of a garden laid out and cultivated by them, they are now becoming aware of its desolation and infertility" (106). This desolation is longman's epiphany. Creator of the atomic explosion, longman is given half of Robert Oppenheimer's famous line from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, spoken at the Trinity site after the first nuclear bomb was tested, "I / am / become / Death," the rest of the sentence being "the Destroyer of worlds" (*Mauve* 17, Bird and Sherwin 309). Significantly, he is also given Kenneth Bainbridge's infamous response, "Now we are all sons of bitches," linking the explosion not only to misogyny but also to the men's rebirth into illegitimacy (*Mauve* 17, Bird and Sherwin 309).

Longman finds himself in a postmodern crisis similar to that described by Fredric Jameson. As I outlined in chapter one, Jameson responds to the crisis with "an aesthetic of cognitive mapping" or "a practical reconquest of a sense of place" ("Postmodernism" 89). As Jameson calls for, longman reconstitutes his sense of place and recreates his pastoral map. He turns to God, the theological centre of patriarchy and, as Louis Althusser argues, the Absolute Subject at the centre of Christian specular interpellation (169). Through prayer, longman becomes "insensitive" to the falling debris and "recover[s] his senses" (31). As I will show when I discuss the pool below, in *Mauve Desert* water symbolizes the creation of reality in response to desire. Re-creating his reality according to his idea of beauty, longman showers, and in the shower, he sings. As in *Picture Theory*, music and singing represent reality constructions. With water running freely over his body and into his mouth, longman reformulates his world. Back in the room, he picks up the first book he sees, likely the pornographic magazine from the night before, and it calms him (37). At dawn, opening the curtains once again on reality, he recreates the pastoral, seeing "the motel lawn" nurtured by a sexualized woman "bending over a watering can" (37). Finally, he finds the photographs of

the explosion that have been slipped under his door. They are "striking evidence" and both confirm the explosion/crisis and alleviate the consequences of it for longman (39). Because longman sees the photographs as mimetic representations, they confirm for him that his reality exists. Brossard writes, "No doubt about it now, the explosion has taken place … Reality is no longer in longman's head. Reality is in the photograph – longman is free. There is no more explosion in his head" (39). Now, once again looking out the window, his frame of reference onto reality, he sees "the lawn is green" and there are "girls in swimsuits around the pool" (39).

Yet, the explosion as the postmodern condition has taken place and it opens space to reveal other trajectories. Brossard writes, Longman will "never recover from winter, he who so loved little footpaths and dew smells" (27). As De Certeau asserts, there is an "illness afflicting ... rationality" and its hold on spatial form is decaying (95). This illness opens space to others "who have outlived" the decay of a system that "was supposed to administer or suppress" them (130). Thus, Mélanie also experiences the explosion and she, too, begins to create a cognitive map of sorts (24). Counter to longman's song, Mélanie's singing in the Sonoran desert, Spanish for sonorous, represents an alternate construction of reality. After her epiphany, she moves from "having a fetishism for words" (as Brossard described herself when she was first influenced by French poststructuralism) to adding a politic and vision to her language play (*Fluid* 69). Instead of turning to photographs that reproduce reality, she turns to transformative, productive fiction where "[h]umanity would be unable to repeat itself" (38).[69] She takes out the Meteor's maintenance manual and begins writing adrift, "curving" the horizon around her (24). Maude Laures connects the Meteor to phallogocentrism, describing it as reflecting the image of a barrel cactus and covered with inscriptions written in the dust (69). Mélanie writes over the car's

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[69] As Paul Ricoeur argues, there is a "parallelism between the polarity of picture and fiction and that of ideology and utopia. In a sense all ideology repeats what exists by justifying it, and so gives a picture—a distorted picture—of what is. Utopia," which Ricoeur sees as an ideological discourse that shatters hegemonic ideology, "on the other hand, has the fictional power of redescribing life" (*Lectures* 309-10). "The picture continues the identity," he writes, "while the fiction says something else" (*Lectures* 310).

maintenance manual with her own production of reality. She writes: "I wrote *that and that again and more, that excited me, grabbed me…to write … with explosions in my head, little chalky trails through the canyons*" (emphasis in original 24). The explosions take her off the road, which represents both the abstract spatial form of the patriarchal map as well as the linear narrative that is connected to Enlightenment space-time. Here, she can produce rather than reproduce place. She proclaims, "words can reduce reality to its smallest unit: *matter* of fact. Now *matter* of fact must bring the desert back to life and color be returned to troglodytes, to coral snakes…and the mysterious stones walking Death Valley [once again be able to] leave traces of their passage in the clay" (30). Mélanie's rapture displaces her and, as a consequence of her understanding that place is discursive, the desert environment becomes a loose collection of colorless "matter." She begins speaking the unspeakable and creating an alternate construction of place that brings an alternate meaning to the desert, as that which is outside patriarchal sense; to the cactus wrens that build their nests in *saguaros* and thus tear down and rebuild language; and to coral snakes, the no longer lifeless snake skin at the root of language. By doing so, she will enable the women who have been locked in the desert to leave their traces. However, unlike longman / Oppenheimer, who has Bainbridge, she has no reader. Kathy is "absent," preferring to watch television or read patriarchal texts, and Lorna is illiterate (24). For Mélanie, the desert landscape now becomes "unspeakable;" the words to describe it exist, but are silenced. As she says, "in the frenzy of words involuntarily [she] was abdicating to silence" (28). For while "to write *I am woman* is full of consequences," it is the act of another woman reading it that makes it politically pertinent (Brossard, "Corps" 13).

She turns to her "distant sister" (19) Grazie in Albuquerque, but, while Grazie is welcoming, Mélanie declares, "there are sentences between us" (30). The narrative dissolves into fragments and ellipses as communication breaks down, reminding her of Lorna without Kathy. Grazie is not suitable because, even though they are the same age, she "will never be fifteen" (32). Fifteen is associated with Interstate 15 in Laures's translation where Laures mistranslates

the interchange Mélanie takes to Albuquerque, shifting it from Interstate 10 and Interstate 25 to Interstate 10 and Interstate 15. Beverly Curran and Mitoko Hirabayashi point out that the first junction is "real" and could be "encountered while driving from Tucson to Albuquerque" and that the shift "unsettl[es] 'certitude' and 'reality' by translating the road into a time warp, where Mélanie's '15' years is the site of the story" (114). In addition, heading west from Tucson, Interstate 10 meets Interstate 15 in California, where Interstate 15 goes north towards Death Valley. In the setting of "Mauve Desert," "fifteen" is the way to the superlative desert, and Grazie, living in her home in the city, is not of the wilderness.

Mélanie next turns to Angela who, unlike Grazie, has experienced both the desert and the explosion. On the dance floor, she tells Mélanie that "things are exploding in her head" and that "nothing is impossible if in the realm of the improbable" they keep "an eye out for beauty on the horizon" (45). Angela, too, realizes she can produce an alternate reality based on voicing the *inédit*. She is the perfect reader for Mélanie, and the two meet at the bar in the Red Arrow Motel.

The bar is an extension of the pool deck. Katherine Conley argues the pool represents an awareness of an alternate sense of time (150). The pool and bar, places where heat is relieved and thirst is quenched, figure not only time but also space and the construction of reality in response to the desire for beauty. At the pool, "beauty infallibly wins desire over" and, currently, reality is constructed and upheld by patriarchal beauty, the girls in swimsuits (67). Unlike the men who swim freely, indicating their ability to construct reality in order to quench their desire, the women on the pool deck can only dip their feet. Confined to sunbathing, they are targets of the male gaze turning them into "pillars of salt, fixed in time, eyes closed" (67). This description brings to mind Oriana's comment in *Picture Theory* that when women gather "time seemed to stop around them" and this changes "them into pillars of salt, loaded (with) symbols" (69). The women on the pool deck are subject to patriarchy's conservative captive image and, therefore, are located in a stalled time and narrow subject position. Lorna, later Mélanie, and finally Maude Laures are the only women who enter the

pool at will and they can do so because they re-construct place according to their alternate desire and beauty

Connected to the pool, the bars in *Mauve Desert*, like the ones in *Picture Theory*, are places where people gather to reinforce their assumptions about reality. As I mentioned, Mélanie and Angela meet at the bar in the Red Arrow Motel. The name of the motel associates it with *Picture Theory*'s scarlet arrow, patriarchy's narrow unilinear time that supports its gridded construction of space. As discussed in chapter three, this construction of space-time spreads over the world "like a net gathering all thoughts in order to unite them in a single will to power" (*Picture* 87). It also "skin[s] alive" women's profiles or confines them to replicating the captive image and refuses alternate constructions of place. Therefore, the bar at the Red Arrow Motel figures a discursive reality construction based on heterosexuality and the male gaze. The bar has television screens to project patriarchal episodes and posters of cholla cacti and pastoral fields of lupine. Here, the music that creates reality is broadcast by a "jukebox" with its "glow of lights" illuminating "G-string[s]" (32). As well, the surfaces are glossy: mirror and glass reflecting subjects and reproducing reality. But reality need not be reproduced. There are hints of other presences in the bar for on the side opposite that which adjoins the pool, the bar opens to the desert, and the posters also include a picture of lightening over Tucson and "the rare spectacle of great *saguaros* under a blanket of snow" (77).

As I will show when I discuss Laures's conception of time, dawn comes to signify the moment when a single version of reality is constructed out of all the possibilities. Desiring dawn, Mélanie comes face-to-face with Angela on the dance floor and "beauty is suspended, the beauty that precedes reality" (45). As two women dancing, Mélanie and Angela interrupt the heterosexual desire that maintains longman's pastoralism and attempt to produce an alternate reality. However, to counter patriarchal reality, they must also counter longman's unilinear time.

This time is connected to his pastoralism through Christian doctrine. Carolyn Merchant argues that the Christian agricultural origin story and its

movement from Eden into the desert wasteland results in men becoming "the agents of transformation" and of recovery, "saviours, who through their own agricultural labor have the capacity to re-create the lost garden on earth" (133). Relating this to the colonization of the New World, where "Euramerican men acted to reverse the decline initiated by Eve," changing "first the eastern wilderness and then the western deserts into cultivated gardens" (140), Merchant notes that "the story of Western civilization ... can be conceptualized as a grand narrative of fall and recovery" where "the recovery plot is the long, slow process of returning humans to the Garden of Eden" (133).

Merchant goes on to argue that gender is key to the structure of the recovery narrative in which gendered nature and culture go through three stages. While original Eve/nature is "virgin, pure, and light—land that is pristine," original Adam/culture is "the image of God as creator, initial agent, activity" (137). In the second and current stage, Eve/nature is fallen, "disorderly and chaotic; a wilderness, wasteland, or desert requiring improvement" and Adam/culture is "the agent of earthly transformation, the hero who redeems the fallen land" (137). Merchant writes "While fallen Adam becomes the inventor of the tools and technologies that will restore the garden, fallen Eve becomes the nature that must be tamed into submission" (137). Finally, Eve/nature becomes mother, "an improved garden, a nurturing earth bearing fruit, a ripened ovary, maturity" and Adam/culture becomes father, "the image of God as patriarch, law and rule" (137). Thus, argues Merchant, "the Enlightenment idea of progress is rooted in the recovery of the garden lost in the Fall .... The controlling image of Enlightenment is the transformation from desert wilderness to cultivated garden" (137). In other words, patriarchy's nostalgic longing for a nurturing and authenticating pastoral home place constructs time/history as a linear narrative where humanity is driven to re-construct a lost Eden, paradise lost being patriarchy's conception of the beauty that comes before a pastoral reality.

Angela and Mélanie, women who reject their fallen image and instead desire women, come together on the dance floor to interrupt patriarchy's sustained prayer. Doing so, they can stop the progress of unilinear time and interrupt the

recovery narrative. They "are inseparable and distant in the midst of eternity" (45). Mélanie declares, "There is no more time," meaning both that she is about to run out of time with Angela and that they interrupt longman's singular timeline (46).

However, Angela and Mélanie, in their desire for dawn, envision a binary either/or dialectic over a single space. They want to replace patriarchal reality by replicating patriarchy's methods and installing an alternate but still single reality. Laures questions whether it is "possible to think of beauty as preceding all reality, *paradise lost*, … without succumbing to the definite attraction of nostalgia crossed with fervor: a sustained prayer" (145-146). The prayer or chant, similar to *Picture Theory*'s monologue, continually reproduces a singular construction of reality.

This desire to isolate and institute a counter pathological reality is their mistake. Like Mélanie and Angela, Laures, too, dreams of "*isolating reality*" from fiction, and "soundproofing it like a room" so "no familiar noise would filter in to mislead [her] perception" (emphasis in original 144). Reality would then be static and singular, "quite palpable, concrete, dense. Colours would be precise, words useful, univocal" (144). But, as Foucault writes, "external space" or "the space in which we live," is "heterogeneous" (23). It is not a "void, inside of which we could place individuals and things" or "that could be coloured with diverse shades of light" (23). Soundproofing reality would be to repeat patriarchy's method of reality construction. Laures writes, "we who would like to isolate reality from fiction, we who would like it to count for real, here we are, by an incalculable return of imaged things, once again among familiar noises" (144).

Even further, located in a struggle against a strong dominant construction, they fail. Angstelle tells Angela, "*You died because you forgot to look around you. You freed yourself too quickly... You forgot about reality*" (emphasis in original 132). As Angstelle states, Angela is caught up and, along with Mélanie, forgets the dynamics of power and the politics of space-time. Patriarchal time violently comes between them and forces them back into patriarchal space. Arrow-like, it "slip[s] between [their] legs," "a scalpel" that "compels [them] to

reality" (46). Recognizing the threat they pose, longman murders Angela, ending the generative moment before it can succeed. He is not only the one who shoots Angela but also, as his name suggests, is time's "arrow."

This ending has been foreshadowed by the troglodyte imagery, the wren being a sacrificial animal. According to James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, in pre-Christian Europe, the wren was worshiped as King of the birds and killed once a year, at mid-winter, so that the community could receive the bird's divine virtues for the coming year (483). Further, an obsolete definition for "troglodyte" is a horned quadruped, and on the dance-floor, Angela is described as "capricant," or goat-like (45). Mélanie, the wren, and Angela, the scapegoat, are both sacrificed, banished to the wildernesses of death and silence in order to bring in another year of patriarchal space-time. Mélanie becomes "night teen," a play on the bar owner's repeated assertion that she must be nineteen by now (46). Night is the time of dreams, the unconscious that denies singular meaning. Mélanie, like Lorna, who is the only other character described as ever being fifteen (86), is left in a state of nonsense. Interstate 19 runs from Tucson to the Mexican border and is the most direct route to Ajo.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

Finding this tragic text in a second-hand bookstore, Maude Laures decides to translate it, yet she does so as a translator who *delires* or actively produces meaning. Beverly Curran writes, "constrained by the text which precedes her reading, yet intimately involved with the text she imagines, the narrative of translation refuses to be faithful to a prewritten script, to be governed by what has gone before, but, in passage from reading to writing, taps the past to slant 'reality towards the light'" (167). While she is constrained by the tragic original, Laures rewrites the novel so that it represents her own feminist politic and desires. The anonymous narrator describes Laures's reading notes as "days without rain surrounding the motel swimming pool" (53). The notes portray her motivating desire that connects to an alternate beauty and generates a different construction of place. Just as Mélanie and Lorna Myher dive into the pool, "she dives in" to the text in order to quench her desire (53). She takes Angstelle's novel with its binary

constructions of place and "mauves" it to produce a "true" polysemic landscape, a heterotopic space (*Mauve* 133). This construction of place corresponds with her own conception of the beauty that precedes reality, not the pastoral paradise lost and Eve to which patriarchy longs to return, but the desert and integral woman.

While the desert in "Mauve Desert" signifies that which is outside patriarchy's reality in a binary system, in "Mauve, the Horizon" it signifies the condition for multiple stories-so-far. Claire Omhovère argues that the desert and aridity can be used to counter the pastoral and undermine its equation with beauty. For Omhovère, the pastoral must be undermined because it has thwarted the development of a sense of place in Canada ("Poetics" 348). Brossard also turns to the desert to counter the pastoral; however, she does not want a regional or national "sense of place." She understands what such a concept can do to women and minorities in that, as Alison Calder writes, "belief in the spirit of place is closely related to the ideas of home" ("Nearest" 173). Instead, Brossard desires what could be called "place sense," the comprehension of the coeval, their multiple trajectories, and constant flux. She too uses aridity to counter the equation of beauty with the pastoral but to do so she multiplies beauty in order to counter the disabling concepts associated with the pastoral such as a sense of place and home. Therefore, like Monument Valley in *Picture Theory*, the desert in "Mauve, the Horizon," represents the space of multiple reality constructions and space-time trajectories. This is Laures's idea of beauty, and it is inexpressible: "a landscape without windows, without shelter. Observed land of silence, preexistent beauty, the desert is indescribable" (138).

Within this space, realities are created through discourse, but at the moment, these are hegemonic and patriarchal. Laures writes that the "tragedy" of the desert is that "the trembling air … corrects the geometry of the great *saguaros*" (138). In other words, the desert is overwritten by a phallocentric language, represented by the *saguaros*, those directional markers that reflect the shape of man.

In her translation, Laures instead represents the desert as polysemic and subject to multiple constructions of place. "For unexpectedly" Laures declares,

"'deceiving language' came to her as a necessary reply so that 'the fiction' be reconstituted" (61). The desert is then "streaked with mauve lightning bolts" or electric currents that represent reality constructions, enabling her to "cover every word with another in such a way that the first one not sink into oblivion. Probable modulations" (61). To do so, she counters linear time, not by stopping it, but by seeing time as a Benjaminan constellation, as I discussed in chapter three.

In *Mauve Desert*, there are two types of time. Laures writes, "There is a time of believing where we refine the natural gestures that bring us closer to the image, others that throw us back into discourse and haste" (149). The time of believing, she calls the "time of civilization," and it is unilinear, "a sandglass, a clock, a quartz" (149). Associating it with longman's mimetic photograph, she writes that "when at rest" it inclines civilization "to the image" (149). In this time, space is a surface as it "is a model valid for many conquests and conversions" (150). It is also progressive as it "designs beautiful destinies" (150).

In Laures's notes, as I mentioned, time is connected to dawn. In the dark of night, the time of dreams and the unconscious, time can "become dislocated in the core of beings and cause their story to explode" (140). Dawn is the end of night, the movement away from the polysemy and multiplicity that indicate de Certeau's legends and trajectories and towards a single reality. It "is at the edge of night, at the edge of the soul a quiet certitude, an appeasement of the eyes smitten with changes and utopias" (140). In the time of civilization, "every morning dawn whitens the world of all its purplish noises" (139). Purple being associated with mauve, the patriarchal dawn is shown to overpower the other trajectories. Thus, dawn in linear time is, Laures writes, "a song composed of perfectly round monosyllables which in the mouth are like clockwork … precious stones, a outflow of fervor in time at the quiet hour when the dew settles all its smells on the jade foliage" (140). She associates this time with the song or patriarchal monologue/sustained prayer and with phallocentric language, precious stones in the mouth, that support longman's pastoral landscape: paradise lost leading straight to dew settling on jade foliage and to longman's "lovely little footpaths, delicately shaded areas" (17). Laures, however, sees through the lie of longman's

time and recognizes its nostalgia to return to an Edenic home place as conservative and circular, not linear. Western progress, argues Merchant, is paradoxically a circular movement whereby "the unruly energy of wild female nature is suppressed and pacified. The final, happy state of nature natured is female and civilized—the restored garden of the world" (147). Indicating this circularity, the patriarchal song is composed of "round monosyllables" (140). Consequently, in Laures's version, the "Arrow" is removed from the name of the Red Arrow Motel and longman becomes o'blongman who "caresses round words … words that enchant" (173).

Laures turns instead to the second type of time, the times of discourse and haste. She calls these times the time of "vegetation" or "animation" (149), and they are a "*time of restoration*" (62). Restorative time is time as a whole, a Benjaminian constellation, described as "a flower arrangement created by thinking capable of the most mentally precise gestures, expos[ing] itself to having its intentionality reconstituted" (62). Time as a flower arrangement opens the temporal narrative to multiple trajectories. Laures writes, "It is the 'cluster of flowers' part that rushes like a torrent through my thoughts" (138). This time leads to an alternate dawn. In Angstelle's binary landscapes in struggle over a single dominant construction of space and time, dawn is most likely to open once again onto longman's landscape. Laures "cannot subscribe to 'the furor of dawn'" and sees Mélanie's "taste for dawn" when she meets Angela at the Red Arrow Motel as "a principle which exacerbates energy" and "a warning, an omen of violence" (140). But in the time of restoration, dawn can also be "a will to total availability to all the mind's side-slippings" that can lead to a "kaleidoscopic opening onto multiple gardens" (140). Laures's dawn, based in the time of vegetation, leads to a time of multiple trajectories.

In multiplying time, she can make space, as Doreen Massey defines it, "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of a contemporaneous plurality" (*For* 9). Thus, "Mauve Desert," writes Laures, "work[s] toward modifying the familiar setting" (144). In the final section of her notes, she writes she is "mated with Mélanie's voice" causing "humanity and

civilization [to] form two words" as patriarchal civilization is seen as one among many of humanity's constructions. She finds herself in the "snow again," on the "garden-side," causing "a semantic shift, a discrepancy that wounds" the *saguaro* (150). This linguistic play alters the construction of place as it creates "a hewing of the horizon which sends back versions … in the topsy-turvy things of desire and dawn" (150). In Laures's dawn, the horizon multiplies, indicating multiple constructions of place. The transformation is echoed in the authors' names, the angst or frustration of Laure Angstelle becoming the golden words of Maude Laures or "mots l'or" (Conley 147).

In a scene that parallels longman's recovery and opening of the curtains on the pastoral lawn with its requisite sexualized women sustaining it, just before starting her translation, Maude Laures parts her curtains, looks out her window, or frame of reference on reality, and thinks, "the horizon was like a great female nude very tempting for the eyes" (155). This nude is integral woman and is the beauty that comes before Laures's reality, but unlike longman's static picture, patriarchy's captive image, she is the holographic captivating image and is, therefore, like the desert, "of a polysemic, unthinkable antecedence" (145). Connected to the desert rather than to longman's paths, lakes, and forests, she represents the space-time dynamic rather than the pastoral space-as-surface. Of the nude, Laures writes, "In the exploded distance, beauty moves, impossible figure of fondling. Fragrant labella" (145). This desirous figure in the distance is obviously female: "Labella" not only translates from Italian "*la bella*" to "the beauty," but the neologism looks and sounds like "labia." Unlike longman's hegemonic construction of reality, the nude woman and the landscape connected to her are "exploded," fragmented and multiple.

The nude on the horizon is the mauve horizon, mauve being associated with both the "purplish tones" of the women in longman's pornographic magazine and with the lightning bolt trajectories that spread across the desert in dynamic space-time (21). Like the *saguaro*, she is a directional marker, but unlike the centripetal cactus that works to close down meaning, she is a centrifugal force on the horizon, constantly opening up reality. Connecting the horizon to the time of

restoration, mauve is the color Laures uses to indicate verb tenses in her translation and itself becomes a verb in her title (153). For her as for de Certeau, place becomes passage. As in longman's scene, after seeing the woman through her window, Laures picks up an envelope, but hers is full of productive translation notes, not reproductive photographs.

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Laures then *delires* Angstelle's text through her own feminist politic and desire. Now, instead of being a liminal space, the motel becomes heterotopic. Foucault, in fact, lists the "famous American motel rooms" as an example of his heterotopias (26). With their private rooms rented nightly, they are places for the temporarily homeless and/or excluded who construct space according to alternate sets of relations. His example of such excluded people are those in adulterous relationships, but Brossard locates her lesbian characters in this heterotopic space, making it their home.

Another modulation of Angstelle's text occurs in Mélanie's prologue where the women at the motel are already in a community similar to the one Mélanie struggled to create in "Mauve Desert." Laures's description of Kathy and Lorna's first dinner shifts from "they would look at each other and when they spoke their voices were full of intonations" (12) to "they were looking at each other and whenever they opened their mouths there was an emotion" (168). The look is extended by the shift in verb tense from past to past progressive. Indicating that they generate the *essentielle* and make *sens*, the coming together of both meaning and sensation (Knutson 14), their extended look and discussion now end in emotion and, as Brossard argues, "emotion becomes civilization: one reads, one thinks, one discusses, one writes, one exchanges. The emotion doesn't go in circles, it does have consequences" (Interview with Louise Cotnoir, et al 127). Making *sens* and experiencing the emotion of utopia, Kathy and Lorna are depicted as urban radicals taking part in the generation of integral woman.

Accordingly, the conversation slips from "moly and salmon mousse" (12) to "moss on the mountain tops, soft against the shins" (168). Laures writes of this moment in her notes: "They talked about a myriad marvels, about the month of

May and the moss atop the mountains which sometimes gave the impression that the desert could be conquered" (87). They now have a different relationship to place. No longer are they located in the desert of nonsense, nor even on the snowy mountain peek overlooking Death Valley. Rather, they are on mountain peaks re-covered with moss in spring after the snow has melted and color returns. Spring following winter, like dawn following night, represents the moment when reality is constructed from all the possibilities in the void. Thus, Laures makes her choices and writes her translation in the spring following a snowy winter. However, this construction of place must remain a momentary articulation or "totalizing effect" (Mouffe 372), giving only the temporary impression of conquering the desert.

 This initial generation of the hologram has consequences throughout the text. For example, the difference between Lorna and Kathy is less pronounced. Lorna no longer seems to be illiterate and instead chooses play over words. Laures translates, Lorna "hesitated then spun out some sentence to the effect that she was unable to read" (20) as "Lorna answered that writing served no purpose, that playing hard and screaming loud were more useful" (176). Kathy, too, is more playful. She is still described as mopping things up, but now instead of in fear and denial, she "made a game of it" (168). As a result, when Mélanie spills milk on the table, the milk blot shifts from representing a map of patriarchal America (12) to becoming a fluid map of utopia (168).

 In this scene, Laures locates the women in a female land of plenty. To do so, she transforms the typical dream of abundance by constructing it in relation to women's desire and female power. On the map of milk, the Florida panhandle becomes a river of milk, an image often associated with women in early patriarchal utopias that portray the land of plenty. For example, the fourteenth-century poem, "The Land of Cokaygne," describes the land of plenty as including a river of milk which, when the description turns to narrative action and the poem becomes satirical, is associated with an abbey of sexually available nuns (Garrett 1). Another example is found in the twelfth-century satire, *The Vision of MacConglinne* where MacConglinne mentions milk twenty-six times in his vision

of the land of abundance and often these references to milk are connected to sexually available women.[70] These patriarchal dreams depict women and milk in relation to male desire, but milk, and in particular rivers or lakes of milk, is an ancient image of female power and fertility.[71] In Laures's image of the land of plenty, the river of milk flows onto Mélanie's knees, connecting her to an abundant and powerful lesbian-feminist community. Because of Lorna and Kathy's holographic interpellation with one another, Mélanie's assertion in the prologue that "so many times I have sunk into the future" (13) modulates to "so many times I have ended up in utopia" (169). Signifying that Mélanie now has access to an enabling community, Kathy reads Mélanie's text and even fixes it, "leav[ing] out the narrative" (180).

Kathy, now able to play and invent, no longer experiences Badwater. Instead, her affair with Grazie's mother takes place on a "beautiful April night" where there is no snow but instead colour is returning. Both women are pregnant: "ripe, just right like syllables, echoing atop Dante's View" (185). Unlike the mothers in *Picture Theory* who reproduce the captive image, these mothers are reproducing the captivating image. Kathy's voice becomes the multiplied voice of the hologram of integral woman. Laures's describes it as "itself a presence, a sound sequence of space and time" which could "bring to mind a motet" as "every vibration of the vocal chords gave the impression of a sound originated in multiple mouths" (89). Her voice could "dissolve into disorder or chaos" as in "Mauve Desert," but as the voice of integral woman, it could also "start suddenly to shimmer like a naked female body" (91). Mélanie's description of Kathy as "a woman without expression" (19) becomes, "she was a woman whose expressionless voice could echo suddenly cause reason to worry, mislead judgment" (175). The echo in Kathy's voice takes part in the fallout of patriarchal reason by emphasizing a motet over monosyllabic harmony.

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[70] For example, a maiden rows across New Milk Lake (78) and taking "new milk" as a cure for illness is associated with taking "the fancy of an unmarried woman" (98).

[71] See *The Language of the Goddess* by Marija Gimbutas where she associates milk and streams with fertility and various goddesses in cultures throughout the western world. She notes that the streams are associated with breasts and breast milk and with the "body of the Goddess [as] the Source incarnate" (45), as the "divine Source of Nourishment"and "the Giver of Life in general" (31).

The characterization of longman likewise shifts, most notably seen in his name change to o'blongman. Curran and Hirabayashi see this name change as making his character larger and more menacing (113), but the landscape imagery indicates that longman's character weakens in Laures's text. The power of his pastoral construction of the world is fading, demonstrated by his lakes being "large" not "beautiful" (177), his forest no longer "great," and his verdant green footpaths becoming "autumn in full color" (173). Winter, the standard representation of death in a circular calendar, is approaching; consequently, Oppenheimer's line from the *Bhagavad-Gita* is replaced by a line from the medieval morality play *Everyman*, where Death comes to call all men: "*Death / I / am / Death*" (emphasis in original 173). O'blongman, no longer the bringer of death, becomes the mortal target of Death. Note too that Bainbridge's response is moved to chapter two indicating o'blongman's loss of community and is shifted to "Now we are all dogs," losing its misogynist tone (177).

As in "Mauve Desert," the narrator tells us, "it is snowing in the everlasting" (177). This snow indicates the void is encroaching on God as the centre of o'blongman's patriarchal space-time, but unlike "Mauve Desert," where longman recovers his senses through prayer, in Laures's translation, the prayer becomes one side of a responsory from the Office of the Dead, with no answering echo: "*libera, memento*" (Ottosen 8-9, *Mauve*187). In this version, o'blongman recovers his "body" (187) not his reproductive senses and ends in a disempowered state of intuition, a postmodern subject, instinctual, dreaming of being unburdened of his figures/words (191). Underscoring his inability to recover, the snow reappears in his final chapter (199).

This time when he opens the curtains at dawn, he cannot reconstruct his cognitive map and instead "seemed to sadden," seeing a woman moving a garden hose, no longer bent over a watering can (193). In Laures's notes, the garden hose on the pool deck "snakes" along and "disappears under the leaves of a flowering agave" (67). Countering the patriarchal *saguaro*, the agave, a non-cacti succulent that spreads by suckering, figures Brossard's integral woman. The garden hose,

paralleling the hollow snakeskin that is the desiccated patriarchal root of words, is nourishing the roots of a community of *deliring* urban radicals.

O'blongman's weakened state is further indicated by the shifts in verb tense that demonstrate Mélanie's ability to continue reconstructing reality after Angela's death. Mélanie's statement, "I always headed for the desert because very young I wanted to know why in books they forget to mention the desert" (12) becomes, "I have always searched for the desert, for very young I wanted to know everything about beauty" (168). The shift from simple past to present perfect tense in the independent clauses indicates the action still continues, due in part to the changes made in the dependent clauses that imply that the desert has shifted from an uncivilized space omitted from the sense of patriarchy to the space of multiple constructions arising from multiple conceptions of beauty. Affirmation of Mélanie's continuing work is also found in the addition of the following sentence to the translation, "I have never stopped crossing swords and sentiments" (176). The present perfect tense again indicates the action continues into the present. Laures desires the novel to be "an accident. Nothing tragic," and thus after Angela's murder, Mélanie continues on *deliring* (144).

O'blongman's weakened state opens space and time for the women at the Mauve Motel. Laures sees postmodernism not as a crisis but in a way that parallels those postmodernists who see it as an opportunity. In "What We Talk about on Sundays," Brossard describes postmodernity as opening a space for a feminist consciousness "to exorcise nightmares, to trace dream and utopia, to put colour and sense into the most preposterous angles of desire" (114). Doreen Massey and Patricia Yaeger relate such an understanding specifically to place. Massey writes:

> It is at least by no means a coincidence that the exultations in the uncontrollable complexity of the city (Virginia Woolf), the questioning of the very notion that a settled place to call one's own was ever a reality (Toni Morrison, bell hooks), the insistence that memory and recovery does not have to take the form of nostalgia (bell hooks), and the celebration of a multiplicity of home-places (Michéle le Doeuff). . .that all this has so

often come from those who were 'on the margins' of that old, settled (and anyway mythologized?) coherence. (*Space* 122-23)

Instead of lamenting the loss of coherent space, Patricia Yaeger asserts that postmodern geography can "represent an act of progressive political intervention" (17). She writes, "although there was once an unproblematic link between identity and place, this link has been ... severed by our growing recognition of the hybrid nature of all localities" (16). "Those familiar, ideologically bound habitats 'where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount," are shot through with other transnational "forms of solidarity and identity" that are independent of geographical proximity. Place "become[s] the site for renewed political action" (17). Rather than as a crisis, the spatial turn is seen as opening opportunities for those who cannot fit the singular space-time of patriarchy.

For these postmodernists, postmodern fragmentation does not reduce depth to a surface, but instead opens history to multiple stories. Carolyn Merchant ends her examination of the gendered recovery narrative with a call to reject the singular timeline for a history that develops out of "chaos theory" where "the comfortable predictability of the linear slips away into the uncertainty of the indeterminate" (156). Chaos theory disrupts all three patriarchal conceptions of nature. By "disrupt[ing] the idea of the 'balance of nature'," it denies any notion of nature as fruitful mother and domesticated garden (157). As well, it "undermines the myth of nature as virgin female to be developed" by questioning the idea that humans can master nature, and, finally, it celebrates the conception of woman/nature as fallen Eve by understanding "nature as active, dark, wild, turbulent, and uncontrollable" (157). Most significantly, in chaos theory, the world "emerges out of chaos" and "thus the very possibility of the recovery of a stable original garden—the plot of the recovery meta-narrative—is itself challenged" and recognized as a "story told to itself by the dominant society" which can be rewritten in order to "challenge the structures of power" (157). Merchant asks, "What would a chaotic nonlinear, nongendered history with a different plot look like?" and answers:

> A postmodern history might posit ... a multiplicity of real actors; acausal,
> nonsequential events; nonessentialized symbols and meanings; many
> authorial voices ...; dialectical action and process ...; situated and
> contextualized ... knowledge. It would be a story (or multiplicity of
> stories) that perhaps can only be acted and lived, not written at all. (157-
> 158)

These multiple stories-so-far can be correlated with Massey's conception of "a
simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one
another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism" (Massey, *Space* 3).
"Mauve, the Horizon" celebrates this postmodern space-time that counters the
encroachment of longman's beauty on the world and opens to multiple spatial
constructions and temporal trajectories.

Whereas in "Mauve Desert," Mélanie's epiphany was that she could
construct a cognitive map to challenge longman's, leading her to ask, "Reality had
a meaning, but which one?" (25), in "Mauve, the Horizon," her epiphany shifts to
knowing that there are multiple constructions of place leading her to ask, "Reality
had a meaning. How?" (181). Instead of having "barely the instinct to think that
words are nonetheless but words" (24), she has "only the survival instinct which
with one hard blow returns words to their true value" (180). "True," once again,
means excess and polysemy, and demands a productive stance. Writing in a
notebook, rather than over the Meteor's maintenance manual, she experiences
"*beauty…going gently by like a shadow, skirting the great canyons, snaking,
arroyo…hurtling among the organ pipes, the teddy bears, the thorns and the
flowers ... multi-layered life*" (180). Beauty is described as a shadow indicating
that the desert is multiply exposed, "*multi-layered*" not binary. This reading is
further supported by the multiple types of flora in the desert signifying multiple
reality constructions in the time of vegetation. She writes, "Now, *matter* of fact
must bring the desert back to life in me so that once again coral snakes…can
brush the ground with their colors. …[T]he mystery stones walking Death Valley
[must] once again mark the horizon with their weight" (185-186). She realizes
that her resignification is subjective, is, as she says, "in me" (185). Rather than

being themselves differently coloured, the coral snakes, or roots of words, brush the ground with what seems to be temporary and multiple colour. This subjective and temporary construction of place is connected to other urban radicals, those "mystery stones," who have taken part in the construction of integral woman and act as markers on the mauve horizon. Unlike the stones / women that leave their permanent traces in the clay in the valley in "Mauve Desert," and also unlike the centripetal phallic marker of the *saguaro*, these markers are on the horizon, a dynamic and centrifugal force constantly opening up reality.

Because integral woman has been created, the wren imagery disappears and Mélanie is no longer sacrificed. The troglodyte in Angstelle's prologue becomes "piscivorous" or fish eating species and refers to aquatic snakes (168). Mélanie, as an aquatic snake, is both at home in water where reality is created from beauty and, like Laures's snaking garden hose, is at the root of an alternate discourse and a community of *deliring* urban radicals.

For Mélanie, as for Kathy, "everything [is] a game of pretend" (169) resulting in patriarchal reality no longer being a "pre-text" (3) in the endlessly repetitive circle of patriarchal sense. Instead it becomes only one of the mauve lightning bolts in the desert, "a flash-fire that pretends" (169). This understanding affects the conception of place and counters the metaphoric connection between woman and land. The women now belong equally in the wilderness and the city. Mélanie describes herself as "civilization" and the city as "ruin in reverse" (175). Thus, Laures shifts the highway number to Albuquerque from Interstate 25 to Interstate 15. If Mélanie is figured by Interstate 15, Angela, who is forty years old, could be associated with Interstate 40. On any map of Arizona, the two intersect next to Death Valley in the Amargosa desert, paralleling the tragic end of "Mauve Desert." Laures, however, *delires* both text and map and resignifies Interstate 25 as 15. In doing so, she replaces the 'real' coordinates with 'fictional' ones and questions the mimetic ideal that underlies the map and that is centred around patriarchy as an origin, thus undermining the boundary between reality and fiction. Altering the coordinates on the map, she connects Mélanie and Angela in Albuquerque and underscores the successful construction of integral

woman in the city. The city being an enabling space, Mélanie has a successful connection to Grazie, now described as her "real sister" (185). No longer dividing them, sentences "distribute playfulness," and Mélanie now thinks of Lorna and the way "she has of making herself intelligible between two twisted sentences and [Kathy's] soft arms" (186).

Angela is also figured differently, transforming from a goat to a stag, another troglodyte. While she is still destroyed, she is no longer a scapegoat to maintain longman's reality. Reducing the tragedy of the novel's end, Laures imagines Mélanie and Angela recognizing the *essentielle* and generating integral woman at the Mauve Motel, days before the murder. Outside the bar, Angela says to Mélanie, "I think we look alike" and that rather than mirrors, "our eyes are better able to tell when there are no reflections" and "I recognize you" (129). Not exact mirror images of one another, but rather representing the slightly different perspectives needed to create parallax and three dimensionality, they come together to create the hologram and, not coincidentally, bring rain to the desert. During this conversation, Angela describes herself as "troating" or making the sound a stag makes when calling for a mate. Mélanie replies, "The stag. They say it is often compared to the tree of life and that it symbolizes rebirth. For the Pueblos it represents cyclical renewal" (128). The tree of life, as it appears in the King James version of the bible, is present in both the garden of Eden in Genesis and in the City of the new Jerusalem in Revelations. In the city, located at the end of time, it grows in the midst of the river of the water of life (22:1-2) and is used by the Lord to grant immortality in a static paradise.[72] Together with the tree of knowledge of good and evil from Eden, the two figure the beginning and end of longman's cyclical time. Mélanie also connects the tree of life to the Pueblos or Hopi tribes who have a cyclical calendar and enact the deer dance at the December solstice to bring rain and an abundant hunt. In the dance, participants dress as either deer or archers with the archers symbolically shooting the deer (Dutton 57-58). Mélanie, in this scene, is figured as Sagittarius, the archer,

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[72] The Lord states, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelations 2:7).

implying that she symbolically sacrifices Angela as stag or symbol of patriarchal cyclical time in order to bring life to the desert. In Laures's imagined conversation between Angstelle and Angela, Angstelle explains that she killed Angela for two reasons: first, because Angela was moving too fast and forgot reality, as seen in the original novel, and second as "reprobation" for longman and his world's "Intolerance. Madness. Violence" (132). The death of the stag at the hands of Mélanie signifies the death of patriarchal space-time.

Mélanie and Angela come together on the dance floor but instead of attempting to construct an alternate reality in a binary system, instead of "revers[ing] the probabilities in desire" (44), they "traverse all probabilities" (200). To do so, they need multiple space-time constructions and, therefore, the music "explodes" and becomes like Kathy's voice, "a great tournament of sound"—fitting for a bar "full of accents" (200-201). Angela takes the guise of both the stag and the tree of life, her singing described as both "troating" and "chanting" (200). Rather than coming to the end of time and suspending the beauty that precedes reality, "time slows" (200) and there is "beauty suddenly, slyly" (200-201). The hologram of integral woman, the beauty that wins their desire over and generates an alternate reality construction, appears and they "make reality count for real" (169), but, and this is key, only momentarily.

In "Mauve Desert," Angela wants a complete overturning. She says to Mélanie, "everything must be attempted again like a backhand, a lob in mindspace" (45). Angela's simile depicts her conception of reality as binary and in struggle, as a competition where one player comes out the victor. In Laures's self-portrait, Laures imagines the choices she must make during the translation process as a game of tennis with herself, forcing her opponent to play in the back court and competing with her to see which version of the story will win (113). But this conception of the process as either/or only replicates the means of patriarchy's construction of the world and ends in their walking home "together on the little green path" (114), reminiscent of longman's "lovely little footpaths" (17). When they reach "Joyce Street," alluding to productive discourse, they separate and the tennis game is replaced with the image of the double exposure

(114). De Certeau connects the multiple exposure or "tremulous image" that "confuses and multiples a photographed object" to "the ambiguity of figurative speech . . . that diverts and displaces meaning" (100). As in the photographs in the file folder that visually represent longman's breakdown and recovery, the multiple shadows in a double exposure indicate an awareness of multiple constructions of meaning and realities. Whereas Laures keeps the exposure doubled, in Angstelle's text, Mélanie and Angela cause the shadows to set (45). Like their creator, they see binary constructions of place in struggle. They move to generate utopia but, paralleling longman's pastoral re-construction, their reality is pathological and shuts down dynamism. "In the midst of eternity" they become both "desert and *matter* of fact as shadows set" (45). In this moment, Mélanie is consumed by Angela, writing, "Then I stop existing" (45). Significantly, the other women on the dance floor are drawn to them, and all would be reflected in the mirrors and glass generating a conservative, reproductive reality. In "Mauve the Horizon," on the other hand, the women on the dance floor, already dancing together, "avoid getting too close" to Mélanie and Angela, as multiple perspectives are necessary for the parallax that creates a three dimensional hologram (201). The shadows no longer set; the multiple exposure remains. Laures replaces Angela's tennis match with a lightning storm, representing the multiple trajectories in space-time creating reality according to different conceptions of beauty (201). Significantly, it is in the light just before a storm that the red desert sand around Phoenix and Tucson appears mauve.

Instead of being banished to the desert as "night teen" (46), Mélanie is described as "daughter of the night" (202). Night, the time of the unconscious and of de Certeau's forests and cellars, signifies the division of the subject that denies any singular meaning. Mélanie as daughter of the night connects night to Kathy and the multiplied, echoing voice of integral woman. Mélanie tells us, "There is no need amid snakes and cacti to despair, for night is always raving blue" (175), blue being the color Laures uses to indicate polysemy in her notes (153). Consequently, in this version, it is not longman/time that destroys Mélanie and Angela, but Mélanie/night that devastates Angela. O'blongman is, in fact,

"detached from the scene" (202) while "night keeps finding its way through the music, making its nest between [their] legs" (201). Angela dies because she represents patriarchy's cyclical time. Whereas in the first novel, her death leads Mélanie to declare, "the desert," or cultural unconscious, "is big" (46), in the second novel, Mélanie comments, "the devastation is great" (202). In the first scene of Brossard's next novel, *Baroque at Dawn*, Cybil Noland is making love to la Sixtine, who over the night says to Cybil, "Devastate me, eat me up" (5). La Sixtine's sexual devastation or orgasm at dawn leads to excess, causing her body to orbit the planet "as if the pleasure in her had transformed to a stupendous aerial life reflex" (5). Angela's death also leads to a devastation that opens space. Thus, Laures fulfills her desire to make the novel "Nothing tragic" (144).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Place becomes holographic or multi-dimensional. This representation of place figures the articulation of trajectories and interrelations that come together in a localized moment within the networks of space-time and is most apparent in the image on the cover of Laures's translation in Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's English translation of *Mauve Desert*. In Lotbinière-Harwood's translation, the cover of Angstelle's novel is black, a representation of the blank space to which Mélanie and Angela are exiled. Laures's cover, however, is instead mostly gray, the colour associated with shadows and the double exposure. On it is a picture of a night landscape on the horizon of which is a bright light illuminating a desert scene complete with both non-cacti succulents in the foreground and *saguaros* in the middle ground. One of the *saguaros* is brightly lit and riddled with nest holes. The photograph first brings to mind the moment of Mélanie's epiphany in both "Mauve Desert" and "Mauve, the Horizon" with their alternate constructions of and relationships to place. Yet, the picture is a night, not an afternoon, scene. Night indicates polysemy and excess and this photographic landscape, in fact, can represent many constructions of reality. The white light might be the mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion, a representation of the islands in the desert that Brossard speaks of in *Picture Theory*, or the sun rising at dawn and appeasing "eyes smitten with changes and utopias" or setting at evening

and opening onto "multiple gardens" (*Mauve* 140). It could be either the beginning or the end of de Certeau's blinding light of reason. The photograph could just as easily be one of longman's reproductive photographs of the nuclear explosion at Los Alamos or a representation of the hologram of integral woman exploding the horizon, or even the light of a laser beam encoding the scene and by extension the viewer onto a holographic plate.

This photograph is, in fact, like the tripartite narrative itself with its various characters, narrators, and focalizers, a utopian discourse, which is, as Jameson argues, more about a method of reading and of rules to applying the text to the real than it is about an examination of a dream of the perfect society ("Islands" 11). Utopian discourse demands a productive stance that engages readers within its processes of emergence and neutralizes rather than synthesizes or resolves its contradictory reality constructions. Its reflexive play and multiple readings negate one another in a complex process of neutralization, and bring "the mind up short … in a stunned and puzzled arrest of thought" ("Islands" 12). It figures the "conceptually unformulizable" ("Islands 15) and leaves us in a representational crisis that it somehow manages to represent.

Thus, instead of the desert "resolv[ing] all plots" (44) where everything beyond the masculine quest is nonsense, Laures writes, "no plot can hold up to the desert" (200). The multiplicity and polysemy of this place cannot be expressed in any standard plot and instead demands a utopian discourse. While Laures's text implies a dynamic space-time and multiple, unfixed, and contested articulations of place, these conceptions of place can only be figured through the multiple representations presented over the entire translation narrative and in their continual back-and-forth play and negation of one another. By creating such a text, Brossard represents the existential experience of existing within multiple contradictory ideologies, their trajectories, and their constructions of place without any totalizing theoretical discourse or absolute abstract understanding that would impose a cognitive map. Instead, she figures the space-time dynamic and counters the connection between woman and place as static and authenticating

and between woman and space as passive surface opposed to masculine time. Here, text, space, time, place, and women are multiple and lively.

Chapter 5

"The Tough Geography:"
Re-constructing the Land in Dionne Brand's
No Language is Neutral

As with Nicole Brossard's early texts, a handful of critics have alluded to Dionne Brand's early texts as utopian. These critics have focused on her first novel, *In Another Place, Not Here,* and its depiction of more enabling dwelling places for its main characters, Elizete, Verlia, and Abena. Heather Smyth asserts that the novel "evokes a utopian Caribbean space for gay and lesbian subjects" (146) and Pamela McCallum and Christian Olbey write that there is a "sense of a collectivity" that "combined with other similar images elevates the individual stories" of the main characters into a "search for a utopia that, never yet existing, remains to be struggled for" (175). Similar arguments could be made for the collection of poetry I examine in this chapter, *No Language is Neutral*. In this text, Brand can be seen as reconstructing Trinidad as a utopian home place for black lesbians.[73] However, such is not my argument in this chapter. Instead, I focus on Brand's deployment of utopian discourse to figure space as heterotopic, or subject to multiple sets of relations, and to create a place that positively articulates her identity.

While only a few critics have examined Brand's possible utopianism, many have examined her connections between identity and place.[74] Kit Dobson

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[73] See my discussion in "Voicing Grace" of Brand's use of utopian politics to re-create Trinidad as just such a home place (2000).

[74] For example, in "Dionne Brand," Himani Bannerji outlines Brand's "sense of the environment" (53) and her representation of her subjectivity in relation to such a place (1986), in "Poets in Limbo," Claire Harris examines Brand's complex relationship with landscape in relation to identity (1986), in "Cartographies of Be/longing," Bina Toledo Freiwald looks at Brand's exploration of the connections between identity and the home place (2000), in "Mapping the Door of No Return," Marlene Goldman examines Brand's use of drifting as a metaphor that counters the exclusivity of the nation-state and national identity (2004), in "Picking the Deadlock of Legitimacy," Ellen Quiggley writes of Brand's rejection of origin, community, and nation as a means to create alternative subjects (2005), in "Language to Light On," Kaya Fraser discusses Brand's representation of the land as a critique of the garrison mentality (2005), in "Sexual

even historicizes Brand's works and their critical contexts according to this topic. Earlier works and their criticism, Dobson observes, focus on issues surrounding the closed spaces of belonging and identity politics and tend to examine Brand's work in relation to belonging, nation, and citizenship (92).[75] As Dobson notes, recently the focus has shifted to examining the open spaces of deterritorialization and the presence of rhizomes, flow, and drift in Brand's work (91).[76] Yet, while there is certainly a shift in Brand's construction of place, the division is not quite so neat. For example, those who locate her work within the debates of nationalism, citizenship, and belonging have to address the fact that many of Brand's works reject the closed spaces that support national and identity politics. In *Land to Light On*, Brand goes so far as to assert, "I don't want no fucking country" (48). On the other hand, those who attempt to read her work as positing open spaces have to counter the fact that, as Marlene Goldman puts it, "her texts do not entirely reject the notion of belonging" and retain "notions of communion and community" (26). In fact, as late as 2007, Maia Joseph makes a strong argument that Brand's *A Map to the Door of No Return* is caught up in a production of nation and citizenship. She writes that the autobiographical text leaves Brand "wandering and wondering her way into her desired country" (90).

While as Dobson observes, Brand does shift from more closed to more open spaces,[77] in *No Language is Neutral*, she constructs place as a double articulation, as *both* open and closed. Place is open; it is an articulation of the dynamic trajectories that intersect within the "social geography of power and signification" (Massey, *Space* 3) and is, therefore, "unfixed, contested, and multiple" (Massey, *Space* 5). However, place is also closed in that it contains

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Citizenship and Caribbean-Canadian Fiction," Heather Smyth discusses Brand's construction of a "semi-utopian Caribbean space" (142) (1999), in "'Language Seemed to Split in Two'," Jason Wiens examines Brand's relationship to nation and citizenship (2000) as does Maia Joseph in "Wondering into Country" (2007), and in "'No Moon to Speak Of'," Paul Huebner discusses Brand's connections between human identity and the environment (2007).

[75] For example, Bina Toledo Freiwald reads Brand's first novel through "recent theorizations of subjectivity and agency [that] have foregrounded the centrality of belonging" (37).

[76] Some examples of these types of readings are Kaya Fraser's application of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of "deterritorialized language" to *Land to Light On*, and Marlene Goldman's argument that, in *A Map to the Door of No Return*, "the notion of drifting offers an alternative to the boundedness of home and the nation-state" (13).

[77] This shift will be discussed further in the next chapter.

"temporary cohesions of articulations of relations" and "provisional and partial enclosures" (*For* 175). In this way, place is a double articulation as it is one of the many discourses that articulate identity even as its own articulation depends on the interactions and connections of the identities found there. As Brand writes, this is a "tough geography" in which she finds "the map to coming home" (*No* 40).

In the text, Brand presents two very different constructions of the same place. These constructions correlate with coeval but unequal trajectories and positively articulate different identities. In her opening poem, "Hard against the Soul," section one, she represents Trinidad in a way that creates a sense of home and positively articulates her identity as a black lesbian. Speaking to her lover, she describes the island as follows: "this is you girl, this cut of road up / to Blanchicheuse, this every turn a piece / of blue and earth" (3). In the next stanza, she adds:

> this is you girl, this is you all sides of me
>
> hill road and dip through the coconut at Manzanilla
>
> the sea breeze shaped forest ...
>
> this wanting to fall, hanging, greening
>
> quenching the road. (3)

Brand describes herself as wanting to stay in this place, as "hesitating to walk right" (4). It is here that the lovers "make sense" so that "the dull silence" becomes "full chattering" and they find that "to be awake is more lovely than dreams" (4).

Yet, she describes this place very differently in the other poems in the collection. For example, in "Return," which directly follows this loving description of the island, Brand seems to return from this construction of place to a neo-colonial reality. Here, she finds a considerably different road and a different construction of her identity as a black woman:

> so the road, that stretch of sand and
>
> pitch struggling up, glimpses sea, village, earth
>
> bare-footed hot, women worried, still the faces,

masked in sweat and sweetness, still the eyes

watery, ancient, still the hard, distinct, brittle smell of

slavery. (10)

Based on the ideas of space as a coherent surface and history as unilinear, the place in "Return" is the dominant construction and it supports colonialism and patriarchy, providing them with positive articulations of identity. These positive articulations, however, come at the cost of denying any alternatives. In the body of *No Language is Neutral*, Brand demonstrates how she multiplies discourse, space, and time in order to re-construct place in a way that positively articulates her identity.

In this chapter, I will first examine how Brand figures the colonial and patriarchal constructions of geography, history, and language in which she is immersed. These constructions associate her with the land as a blank space to be mapped and represented and deny her a construction of the island that could positively articulate her identity and create a sense of home. Then I will move on to demonstrate how she constructs her own trajectory and inserts it into the multiple trajectories that come together to construct the place of Trinidad by countering the Western conception of time as unilinear and history as mimetic, and by accessing an alternate language and linguistic model. By inserting her own trajectory into space, she can re-create Trinidad in a way that provides her with a positive articulation and a sense of home. Finally, I will argue that this recreation of place functions as a utopian discourse in order to figure place as heterotopic and space-time as dynamic.

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Key to the representation of place in *No Language is Neutral* is Brand's description of her childhood home in Guayaguayare, Trinidad. She writes:

I used to haunt the beach at

Guaya, two rivers sentinel the country sand, not

backra white but nigger brown sand, one river dead

and teeming from waste and alligators, the other

rumbling to the ocean in a tumult . . . (22)

Here, Brand is confined to the beach by the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pilate and
Lizard rivers. The Atlantic Ocean symbolizes history (Garrett, "Voicing Grace"
36).[78] In depicting history as an ocean, Brand engages with St. Lucian poet Derek
Walcott who titles one of his poems "The Sea is History." In *Frontiers of
Caribbean Literature in English*, Walcott states that this comparison counters the
Western idea of progress, which omits whole areas of history, such as slavery,
from the Eurocentric historical trajectory (24). Instead of feeling that "people
have a destiny" and "are produced by history, and therefore can dominate it," he
asserts that there is no history (24). He states, "So if somebody asks me, as a
Caribbean person: 'Where is your history?' I would say: 'It is out there, in that
cloud, that sky, the water moving.' And, if the questioner says: 'There's nothing
there,' I would say: 'Well, that's what I think history is. There's nothing there.'
The sea is history" (24).

While Brand would seem to agree with Walcott's critique of the unilinear
progressive historical narrative, she does not discard history. She describes the
arrival of African slaves in Manzinilla, Trinidad, as: "the sea wind heaving any
remnants of / consonant curses into choking aspirate. No / language is neutral
seared in the spine's unravelling: / Here is history too" (23). As Teresa Zackodnik
writes, Brand depicts that for African-Trinidadians:

> the passage from Africa to the Caribbean and into slavery saw their
> languages harnessed and maimed, as were their bodies, until their words
> as life breath were cut off ... Brand writes the colonizer's theft of language
> as a bodily experience, as an asphyxiating loss of the body's and psyche's
> sustenance. (196)

Along with this, Brand insists that "here is history too" (23). These
Africans unloaded in Manzinilla were, as Doreen Massey says of the Aztecs, not
"simply ... phenomena 'on' this surface" but have their own histories that they
were "living and producing" (*For* 4). Thus, while Brand refuses Eurocentric

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[78] In this chapter, parts of the readings of the symbolism of the ocean and the rivers, some of the
discussion of Brand's drawing on women's, black, and lesbian discourses, and parts of the
discussion of her intertextual connections to Derek Walcott are derived from my Masters Thesis,
"Voicing Grace."

history as the only trajectory, she also refuses seeing history as empty. Instead, she insists on a history of multiple and violently intersecting trajectories, and this alternate history acknowledges space as heterogeneous. However, Brand realizes that language and history are interconnected and that, without a language of her own, she cannot construct an alternate version of African-Caribbean history, especially women's and lesbian history.

Language and linguistic models limit which histories can be told and how. As Hayden White argues, historians employ linguistic tools and theories of language to interpret the past and to "assist them in their work of 'translating' meaning across the historical continuum in order to 'make sense' of their documents" (187-88). He states that the question is not whether historians "will utilize a linguistic model to aid them in their work of translation but what kind of linguistic model will they use" (188-89). Herb Wyile describes how earlier historians imagined themselves as "able to construct an accurate representation of the past on its own terms in the same fashion as a realistic novel provides a replica—a kind of verbal mirror image—of the world" (*Speculative* 8). This objective historical discourse has been "undermined by sustained questioning of models of representation" and "the mimetic ideal" (9), resulting in a shift "away from the subject's use of language to capture or reflect that world, to a concern with how that world is constructed through the discourses of which it is an effect" (10). History thus becomes "a discursive construct" (11).[79]

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[79] This does not mean that "the 'referent' does not exist" (Jameson, *Political* 35). Instead Fredric Jameson proposes that history "is inaccessible to us except in textual form" (35). In other words, "our approach to it ... necessarily passes through its prior textualization" and "narrativization" (35). Wyile also argues that historical discourse is not radically relativist. He argues that such a view of historiography must be resisted, but not by turning to "mimetic validity" (31). Instead, absolute relativism can be avoided by "recognizing the 'discursive regularities' that govern historical writing" (31). Discourses construct the objects of which they purport to speak, and thus history becomes the "product, rather than the object," of historical discourse which itself is limited and structured through "ideological assumptions" and "the intricate relations between power and knowledge those limits inscribe" (12). Wyile writes, "historical discourse appears as an act of power, the assertion of a particular reading of the past that involves particular power relations, the exclusion of certain historical material and certain points of view, and the projection of a particular ideology" (12). These "discursive regularities ... limit ... arbitrariness" and historical discourse is instead "highly regulated rather than boundless" (31-32). The "gestural nature" of historical discourse towards a phenomenal world must, therefore, always be kept in view and continually questioned (32).

In acknowledging the connection between representation and history, Brand furthers Doreen Massey's ideas about space, time, and place. Massey calls for an awareness of other trajectories, or "stories-so-far," but seems to assume those stories simply need to be acknowledged. She says of her use of the word "story," that it "brings with it connotations of something told, of an interpreted history" but states that what she "intend[s] is simply the history, change, movement, of things themselves" (12). However, the trajectory of "things themselves" is comprehensible only through the available narrative forms which shape history's content. Even further, we are never outside discourse. Language and history are inevitably caught in the politics of interpretation and power. Those coeval stories are not just sitting somewhere waiting to be acknowledged. Who is going to tell the story of *Tenochtitlán*/*la ciudad de México*/Mexico City? In what language? Which form? The answers to these questions make a difference.

Another question, however, might be what happens to historical discourse when the linguistic tools and discursive formations within which one is immersed are actively hostile? Trinidadian-Canadian author Nourbese Philip investigates this question. She argues that by removing Africans from their cultures and bringing them to the New World where their linguistic models were forcibly stripped from them and replaced with colonial ones, "the progenitors of Caribbean society" constructed a situation where an African-Caribbean interpretation of African-Caribbean history cannot be adequately voiced (23). Colonial languages are, she asserts, "not only experientially hostile, but also etymologically hostile and expressive of the non-being of the African" (23). Concerned with English in particular, she argues that it does not have "the emotional linguistic and historical resources capable of giving voice to the particular images rising out of" being enslaved and colonised (23). These images are also inexpressible in Caribbean nation language. While nation language and "the havoc" it "wreaked upon the English language metaphorically expresses the experience of the African being brought to the New World," it is based on colonial languages, and it, too, does not allow for an African-Caribbean "distillation" of the past. Further, it is silenced by

dominant culture as "bad English" (24). Thus, Philip asserts, English became the only language "by which the past may be repossessed" (24). Although "the experience of the African in the Caribbean and the New World is now part of the English collective experience," that experience "has been and continues to be denied" (25). Philip ends her essay in a call to dislocate and even destroy English so that it can belong as much to the African in the Caribbean as it does to the "Englishman in his castle" (25).

Brand would seem to agree with Philip on the problem of voicing an adequate construction of African-Caribbean history, but she poses an alternate solution. She represents these available languages, English and Caribbean nation language, and their connection to history as the two rivers on the country sand. English is represented by the river Pilate (Zackodnik 195). Whereas Philip ends with a call to wade into the river of English and force it to "integrate the most painful of experiences – loss of [their] history and [their] word" (Philip 26), Brand depicts English as an unnavigable and uncrossable torrent. As a colonial language, it supports colonial ideology and that ideology's construction of not only history but also place. Caribbean poet Edward Kamu Brathwaite says of the effects of English on those in the Caribbean:

> In terms of what we write, our perceptual models, we are more conscious
> (in terms of sensibility) of the falling snow for instance – the models are
> all there for the falling of the snow – than of the force of the hurricanes
> that take place every year. In other words, we haven't got the syllables, the
> syllabic intelligence, to describe the hurricane. (1153)

Language provides perceptual models and the English language, as the pervasive language of power, works to support the dominant class and its constructions of time and place.

Brand's depiction of English once again contrasts with the view of Derek Walcott. In "Midsummer LII," the poem from which she takes her title, Walcott writes, "No language is neutral; / the green oak of English is a murmurous cathedral / where some took umbrage, some peace, but every shade, all, / helped widen its shadow" (506). Walcott represents English as the shading canopy of an

English oak tree that envelops and unites the world in its spreading shadow. His acceptance of English as a unifying force locates him in the imperial construction of place. In "Midsummer," he positions himself as haunting not the beach as does Brand but "the British barracks at Vigie" (506), connecting him with England and authority. While Brand agrees that no language is neutral, her use of the phrase differs from Walcott's. Instead of seeing English as unavoidably ideologically centred and, therefore, as no better or worse than any other language, Brand sees it as powerfully silencing and homogenizing. As a result, she represents English as a tumultuous and dangerous river. She describes her mother's experience of being immersed in English, and how, "weeping for the sufferer she would become," her mother wades into the river, looks into the turbulent water and sees its distorted reflection of her as a woman and as black. Without any alternative representation, she internalizes the negative ones she finds there (27). Brand writes of Walcott's English oak, "I have chewed a few / votive leaves here, their taste already disenchanting / my mothers" (34).

The Lizard River, on the other hand, represents Caribbean nation language, and connects to an alternate history and construction of place. Nation language is defined by Brathwaite as English that is influenced by the languages of slaves and labourers, particularly those of African origins (1153-54). It is, he believes, "much more closely allied to the African aspect of experience in the Caribbean" (1155). Its different stress pattern and intonation move away from the standard English pentameter and towards a rhythm "that approximates ... the environmental experience" (1154). "The hurricane," he observes, "does not roar in pentameter" (1154). For Brathwaite, it is also a language of resistance: "It may be English, but often it is in an English which is like a howl, or a shout, or a machine-gun" (1155).

Brathwaite applauds the emergence of nation language and its alternate construction of place into Caribbean literature, but Brand does not find it so liberating. Because of colonial power, it cannot voice her trajectory as black, and because of patriarchal power, it cannot voice her trajectory as a woman or a lesbian; therefore, she describes nation language as a stagnant "dead river" (22).

Unlike the tumultuous Pilate, this river has little access to the ocean or to history. Like Philip, Brand recognizes nation language is labelled an inferior dialect by the dominant culture and is absent in the centres of power such as the school or legal systems. As a language where "hush was idiom," it cannot be employed to voice a construction of the trajectory of Africans in the Caribbean (23).

Further, like English and many of the other languages from which it originates, nation language is phallocentric and does not voice an enabling construction of Brand's trajectory as a woman. Brand describes it as not only dead, but also as "teeming from waste and alligators" (22). Lizard River is a place girls should avoid. The results of women being immersed within this language are demonstrated, once again, by the poet's description of her mother:

> A woman who
>
> thought she was human but got the message, female
>
> and black and somehow those who gave it to her
>
> were like family, mother and brother, spitting woman
>
> at her . . . (27)

Along with her distorted reflection in the language of power, the poet's mother internalizes the sexism inherent in the everyday language that she speaks among friends and family. This is a language that "spits" the word "woman" and strips women of their humanity.

Brand finds neither language enabling and depicts them as sentries that confine her to the beach. This position on the beach represents her position in relation to authority and power. Unlike Walcott, who metaphorically locates himself beneath the sheltering canopy of English and takes up a position near the centre of authority and power at the British military barracks just outside his island's capital, she is positioned on a rural beach that she pointedly describes as "not / backra white but nigger brown" (22). "Backra," in nation language, means "white man," "master," or "boss" (Mason 51). Brand's location on a "nigger brown" as opposed to a "backra white" beach depicts her as removed from any association with colonial authority and power.

In this position, her black and female body is associated with the land and "signed as … open space," a surface to be mapped and represented (*Map* 38). This open space is different from the openness proposed by Massey. Whereas Massey's idea of space as open refers to the multiplicity, chaos, and chance of space, this conception of open space imagines it as an empty space more like de Certeau's *espace propre* (129), the surface of a blank page waiting to be written over. In *A Map to the Door of No Return*, Brand describes black and female bodies as the naturalized objects of knowledge and representation (37). They are, she writes, "bodies emptied of being, bodies emptied of self-interpretation, into which new interpretations could be placed" (93). Thus, these bodies are "a space not simply owned by those who embody [them] but constructed and occupied by other embodiments" (38). Therefore, in *No Language is Neutral*, any representations Brand can find of her foremothers are stories told by men. She describes listening to her uncle Ben: "The ninety year old / water of his eyes swell like the river he remember / and he say, *she was a sugar cake, sweet sweet / sweet. Yuh muma! That girl was a sugar cake"* (24)! And later, "he prepares to lie gently for his / own redemption. *I was she favourite, oh yes"* (26). Black women's lives have not often been represented in any way other than that which redeems patriarchy.

Like Brand's body, the island is also conceived of as a blank space to be mapped and represented. Trinidad is described by the colonial powers as: "Here was beauty and here was nowhere" (22). This construction makes the island sound like a utopia, the good place that is also a no place, and although it may be for some, for Brand, colonial and patriarchal Trinidad is anything but utopian. While the island is seen as beautiful, in western theories of aesthetics, the beautiful object is associated with femininity while the gaze of the beholder is associated with masculinity. Thus, Edmund Burke defines beauty as having what are considered to be female qualities: diminutiveness, smoothness, delicateness, weakness and passivity (*Philosophical*). As beautiful, the island is associated with woman and both become the external objects of the gaze and of representation as well as depoliticized. Jamaica Kincaid observes in *A Small Place* that the

Caribbean climate and geography are implicated in neo-colonialism, particularly through tourism as the islands are appropriated by wealthy developed nations as both a playground and an isolated Third world political nowhere (14). As woman's private space of the home is separated from the public sphere, the island, connected to the feminine through beauty, is geographically separated from the global centres of power.

Immersed in this colonial geography, Brand is denied a construction of the island that could positively articulate her identity and grant her a sense of belonging and home. Instead, she finds that "history" has "taught [her] eyes to / look for escape even beneath the almond leaves fat / as women" (22). She desires to escape this nowhere and immigrates to America. However, "subjects carry their places within them," as Bina Toledo Freiwald states (41), and Brand brings her position on the sentried beach with her to Canada. She writes, "Five hundred dollars / and a passport full of sand and winking water, is how / I reach here, a girl's face shimmering from a little / photograph, her hair between hot comb and afro" (28). Her confined position on the beach is referred to by the sand and water in her passport, and her relationship to the rivers/languages is mirrored in her hair style which is hot combed in an attempt to look more European and left in an afro, as a sign of being proudly black.

Unable to escape this construction of place, she finds that in either Trinidad or Canada the other place draws her desire. She describes her nostalgia for Trinidad: "Dumbfounded I walk as if these [Toronto] sidewalks are a / place I am visiting" (31). She "package[s] the / smell of zinnias and lady of the night" and "horde[s] the taste / of star apples and granadilla" (31). However, when she briefly returns to Trinidad, she realizes her longing for it as an authenticating home place has been based on a romance. Trinidad is still a place "where [she is] a woman and [her] breasts need / armour to walk" (33). She finds herself, along with another woman, confined to "watching the world from an / evening beach" as the men swim in the ocean (33). Both women and land are the objects of the male gaze as the men look back towards the shore. The women are described as attempting to "assume their presence / against the coral chuckles of male voices"

(33). Unlike the "c(h)oral" chuckle (Garrett "Voicing" 42) of those "bird[s]" that dive into the ocean "for a mouth full of fish," the women do not have an enabling connection between history and language that can voice their trajectory so that it takes part in the articulation of place (33).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

At the end of "No Language is Neutral," Brand asserts, "In another place, not here, a woman might touch / something between beauty and nowhere, back there / and here, might pass hand over hand her own / trembling life" (34). To counter the constructions of place and woman as "beautiful" and "nowhere," and time as the "back there" and "here" of unilinear progress, she needs "another place." She can construct such a place by voicing her interpretation of her trajectory which takes part in the articulation of Trinidad in the abstract but which has been temporally, representationally, and spatially suppressed by dominant culture. Voicing her story-so-far will differently articulate Trinidad, which in turn will provide her with a positive articulation of identity and a sense of home.

We will first examine how Brand counters the Western conception of time as unilinear and history as mimetic and singular. She counters the Eurocentric calendar by inaugurating a new axial moment and side-steps Western progress, not to arrive in Walcott's absent history, but to reveal a multiplicity of coeval trajectories (and space as heterotopic). To explain Brand's engagement with time, I turn to Paul Ricoeur's discussion of the calendar in *Time and Narrative.* Ricoeur argues that calendars connect our variable lived experiences of time with "mythic time" or time as a whole (3.105). "Myth," Ricoeur asserts, "enlarges ordinary time," and he tantalizingly adds in brackets, "(and space)" (3.105). Unlike cultural constructions of time that reinforce particular reality constructions, mythic time "envelops ... all reality" (3.105). It orders time "in terms of one another cycles of different duration" such as "the great celestial cycles," or "biological recurrences" (3.105). Cultural constructions of time, on the other hand, order time through calendars. Ricoeur argues these two types of time are connected. The lunar and seasonal divisions of time, repeated rituals, and festivals marked by the calendar connect a cultural construction of time to the rhythmic cycles of mythic time. But

the calendar not only "cosmologizes lived time" but it also "humanizes cosmic time" (3.109). Ricoeur argues that we can "rediscover" mythic time "at the origin of the constraints that preside over the constituting of every calendar" (3.105) and primarily that of the axial moment: "a founding event, which is taken as beginning a new era" of cultural time (3.106). Humanizing cosmic time, the axial moment is key to particular cultural constructions of time and, therefore, will be key to any change thereof (3.106). Thus, Ricoeur argues that shifting the axial moment will give rise to an alternate historical narrative in mythic time (3.108).

Therefore, to voice her construction of her alternate trajectory, Brand shifts her axial moment. *No Language is Neutral* shows Brand negotiating not only two languages, and histories but also two calendars. Like everyone in the Christian world, she must use the Gregorian calendar with its axial moment of the birth of Christ. This is the calendar that carves Eurocentric society out of mythic time by marking its rituals. Those in the Black Diaspora, however, also function in another calendar where the axial moment is the middle passage. Brand explains, "When Liney reach here is up to the time I hear about" (24). She can recall nothing of the time and place before that moment. This "tear in the world," like all axial moments, "signifies the historical moment which colours all moments" afterwards (*Map* 24). She takes a lesson from history and creates a third axial moment. This new temporal axis is her first lesbian relationship, of which the poet declares, "time begins with these gestures" (39). Through this alternate axis, Brand carves her own trajectory out of mythic time.

As well as constructing an alternate temporality, Brand constructs an alternate language. At the conclusion of "No Language is Neutral," she realizes not only that history is constructed, but also that its construction is connected to language. She writes, "each sentence ... jumps like a pulse with history and takes a / side" (34). Language and history work together, and she needs different linguistic models and linguistic tools to voice a different history. Theresa Zackodnik argues that Brand works towards a language that will "voice her experience as a multivoiced discourse in both standard English and Caribbean nation language" (194). To do so, Brand appropriates both languages to create a

heteroglossia in their intersection, choosing words from either that "affirm those branches of her identity that they have denied" (Zackodnik 201).

While English and nation language are the languages most available to Brand, she also appropriates other more enabling discourses into her heteroglossia. These other discourses are imagined as submerged in the sea. While the ocean, or history, in "No Language is Neutral" is Eurocentric, it is that way because of colonial power not because there are no other trajectories. In "Hard against the Soul," the sea is shown to represent mythic time. It contains multiple trajectories which are connected to alternate discourses. This sea is a "big belly woman," pregnant with histories, and her waves play "sometimeish historian / covering hieroglyphs and naming fearsome artefacts" (15). Note that in this image, Brand reverses the gender binary that Doreen Massey connects to time and space (*Space* 6) and associates women not with space but with time. Even further, it is a time that is pregnant, dynamic and multiple.

Brand begins recovering these trajectories by writing, "you can hardly hear my voice now, woman, / but I heard you in my ear for many years to come / the pink tongue of a great shell murmuring and / yawning, muttering tea, wood, bread, she, blue" (38). As I explain in "Voicing Grace," because of her difference as a black lesbian, Brand's voice can hardly be heard by "woman," but Brand calls on women's everyday language, which she represents as a shell, as one of the discourses that can voice her trajectory (127). This language connects to the celestial cycles of mythic time through the days and seasons: "repetitious as noons / and snow up north, the hoarse and throaty, I told you, / no milk, clean up" (38). Although submerged, this discourse survives and is able to be retrieved.

Following this section, Brand connects to lesbian history and discourse when she writes, "You can hardly hear my voice, but I heard you / in my sleep big as waves reciting their prayers / so hourly the heart rocks to its real meaning" (39). These women can hardly hear her black voice, but Brand draws on their enabling discourse. This discourse has also been submerged but speaks to her even in what she describes as her sleeping life before the axial moment when she identified as a lesbian. She writes that although "there are no poems to this," there

are "triangles, scraps, prisons of purpled cloth" (39). While there is no lesbian self-interpretation in the patriarchal literary canons, there is still discourse to be found. This voice, too, has its own coeval trajectory. She points out, "this allegiance is as flesh to bone but older" (39). Through the cycles of the tide, this language is also connected to mythic time.

Finally, to her lover, another black lesbian, she writes, "you can hardly hear my voice by now but woman / I felt your breath against my cheek in years to come / as losing my sight in night's black pause, I trace / the pearl of your sweat to morning" (40). This voice, too, is connected to mythic time as can be seen in the temporal confusion of the lines and their rejection of a simple past, present and future. There is also history here as there are "saints / of this ancestry too" (51). Here, she loses her "sight," or way of constructing reality, "in night's black pause," or the stalled axial moment when she restarts the calendar to create another cultural construction of time. In the morning, the lovers turn to each other and, Brand describes, "breasts to breasts mute prose we arc a leaping" (40). Coming face-to-face with each other in the light of morning as two black women who desire black women, they find a positive reflection that counters the distorted reflection of the black woman's body that Brand's mother experienced in her immersion in both the Lizard and Pilate rivers. The poet writes, "nothing till / now knock on my teeming skull, then, these warm / watery syllables, a woman's tongue so like a culture, / plunging toward stones not yet formed into flesh /language not yet made" (35). While she finds a positive reflection of her identity as black, a woman, and a lesbian, she is almost silenced, as the language that can voice this identity is "not yet made" (35). Without language, let alone prose, they must "arc" meaning between them (40). Thus her lover can hardly hear her voice. Nevertheless, there are "watery syllables" (35) and she adds these to her heteroglossic language in which to voice her trajectory.

Finally, having multiplied time and constructed a heteroglossic discourse that can voice her interpretation of her trajectory, Brand can construct "another place" (34). As one of the trajectories through this place known as Trinidad, she has always been a part of its abstract articulation, but she has been unable to

create a self-interpretation of her trajectory or fully take part in the discursive construction of place. Now she can insist that space is heterotopic and construct a version of place according to her set of social relations. However, place is a double articulation. It is both an articulation of the trajectories that come together at a localized moment (e.g. Brand is one of the trajectories that articulate the place known as Trinidad) and is one of the articulations of identity (e.g. one of the articulations of Brand's identity is as Trinidadian). Brand produces an alternate geography so that, in the double articulation of which place is capable, "Trinidad" articulates a positive identity for black lesbians.

With her heteroglossic language and its connection to history, she becomes one of the birds who can dive into the ocean and construct place and identity. She writes of her axial moment:

> It was as if another life exploded in my
> face, brightening, so easily the brow of a wing
> touching the surf, so easily I saw my own body, that
> is, my eyes followed me to myself, touched myself
> as a place, another life, terra. (51)

Like Pilate emptying into the sea, the image of the diving sea bird is an image of the coming together of language and history. With this enabling relationship between language and history, she is no longer an open space, no longer the naturalized object of representation and becomes instead its producer.

She can now represent this place in a way that positively articulates her identity. For example, in the Eurocentric geographical imagination that positioned her on the beach, her desire for America burned like "a fer de lance's / sting" and "turned [her] eyes against the water" (22). The poet turned to face the ocean; her desire was drawn to the centres of power. Now, instead of "itching to / run" in her "skinny pigeon toed way" (22), Brand pictures her childhood self wanting to stay, "hesitating to walk right" (7). In this version, she turns away from the Atlantic and "to Schoener's road," the road to another place (7).

Countering the beach where she is sentried, roads symbolize movement and passage, and this road represents her relationship with her lover: "this is you

girl, ... / hill road and dip through the coconut at manzinilla" (6). Travelling this trajectory reconstructs place. Speaking of the slaves delivered to the east coast of the island, she writes in "No Language is Neutral," that "to hate this, they must have been / dragged through the manzinilla spitting out the last / spun syllables for cruelty" (23). She then connects this to her previous position in a eurocentric geography, asserting, "This road / could match that" (23). Now, instead of choking aspirate, she finds a "sea breeze shaped forest of sand and lanky palm / this wanting to fall, hanging, greening / quenching the road" (6). Whereas Walcott's road is covered with rotting oak leaves, symbolizing, as Susan Gingell argues, the rot of Empire that remains in the Caribbean, Brand's road is beneath ripe Caribbean vegetation, symbolizing her location in a nourishing heteroglossic language and heterotopic place ("Returning" 45). This road, or trajectory, transports her from the sedimented beaches in the south-east, to the rocky cliffs in the north: "this is you girl, this cut of road up / to blanchicheuse, this every turn a piece / of blue and earth carrying on" (6). She goes from the patriarchal and colonial beach at Guayaguayare to a decidedly female space: La Fillete bay and Blanchicheuse, named after the washerwomen who used to launder clothes on the rocks. This less accessible terrain is also an anti-colonial space as it was home to the maroonages of escaped slaves.

The rivers, too, are re-envisioned. Still representing language, they now can voice an alternate history. To do so, Brand turns to a third river, the Mitan River which flows into the Nariva swamp, a mangrove on the Manzinilla coast, and from there, significantly, it drains into the Atlantic. In French, "Mitan" means "middle," or "in between." Thus, the river fits Zackodnik's observation that Brand creates "a heteroglossia in the intersection of nation language and standard English," what she calls "an appropriation" of or "contact" between both languages (201). The Mitan appropriates the other rivers as the Lizard River now becomes the mangrove, "that bit of lagoon alligator / long abandoned," and the tumultuous Pilate becomes the Mitan's entrance to the sea: "this river boiling like a woman in she sleep / that smell of fresh thighs and warm sweat / sheets of her like the mitan rolling into the atlantic" (7). In this language with its strong

connection to history, the poet's "dull silence" is "full chattering" as this "poem no woman / ever write for a woman" is written (7). Finally, she writes to her lover, "this is where you make sense" (7).

* * *

Counter to the conception of place in traditional geography, this place is not posited as essentialized and static, but is understood to be produced. It is more like the postmodern geography of Jane Jacobs where what is important is the struggles and politics that go into the production of space rather than the existing structure or form. For Jacobs, these struggles express residents' "sense of self and their desires for the space which constitutes their 'home'" (2). This is, as Brand writes, "the tough geography / of trenches, quarrels, placards and barricades" (40).[80] Hence, she presents an alternate and coeval patriarchal and colonial construction of Maracas and of black women in "Return." Initially immersed within this disabling geography, she finds a sense of belonging by constructing place in a way that can positively articulate her identity. She finds "the map to coming home" (40).

It could be argued that this place is utopian in that it imagines a positive space of home and belonging that shelters a more enabled subject. Yet, this imagination of place should not be seen as an escapist, static, and completed utopian no place, or as Fredric Jameson states, as "the 'realized' vision" of an "ideal" ("Islands" 6). Brand's construction of place is, like Nicole Brossard's utopian places, heterotopic. It counters the dominant construction of space as a closed and knowable set of relations centred around a false origin by demonstrating that space is social and heterogeneous. Brand's place is both a real place, as in a site within the dominant culture's set of relations, and is a noplace, in that it is also outside and counter to those relations. It is both within the categories and classificatory schema of dominant culture and demonstrates such a schema as constructed. Demonstrating the virtual nature of place and space, it opens them to multiplicity and dynamism. Although the participants are by no

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[80] See Brand's interview with Banting for a description of the "trenches" in which Brand has taken part.

means equal, this is a place that "juxtapose[es] in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 25). As Benjamin Genocchio argues about all heterotopias, it "questions the alleged coherence or totality of self-contained orders and systems" (37) and, therefore, there can no longer be any "common centre of classification ... beneath the categories" (41).

Representation, when seen as proper, as closed and static, cannot figure such difference. However, in *No Language is Neutral*, Brand employs utopian discourse to do just that. This utopian discourse is apparent in the intentional narrative discontinuities (such as her use of the utopian sections of "Hard against the Soul" to enframe the poems that present colonial geography) and the resulting play and production created through her dual representations of place, one constructed within a hegemonic ideological frame and the other within a utopian ideological frame. These two constructions come together in an ongoing negative dialectic that neutralizes each in their back-and-forth play which refuses the synthesis of the "both/and" dialectic as well as the singular choice of the "either/or" dialectic. Brand refuses to posit her own pathological and static, or even unilinear, closed space, and instead figures a dynamic space-time with multiple trajectories and constructions of place existing within a "tough geography" of power and politics. It figures the experience of existing within contradictory ideologies and their constructions of place and identity. Presented within such a utopian discourse, this place, and the black and female body to which it is metaphorically connected, is figured as open—"unfixed, contested and multiple" (Massey, *Space* 5)—as well as closed—composed of "temporary cohesions of articulations of relations" that articulate identity and enable political solidarity (Massey *For* 175).

Chapter 6

"She Undwells Solitudes, Liquors' Wildernesses:"
Turning to the Anti-Aesthetic in Dionne Brand's
<u>**A Map to the Door of No Return**</u>

As we saw in chapter one, when place is naturalized, it denies our ability to "recognize the social origins of spatial production" and to counter the inequities of spatial divisions (Chalykoff 165). In other words, place and the identities associated with it are removed from the political. Denis Cosgrove furthers such a notion by arguing that when a place is naturalized, or singularly landscaped, such a landscape is imposed by the dominant group whose power is sustained by projecting their image of the world as everyone's reality ("Geography" 128). Such a conservative space-time construction is what Dionne Brand sets out to challenge in *No Language is Neutral* by countering the hegemonic construction of Trinidad with a landscape of her own and making place binary and dynamic rather than singular and static. In this tough geography, "the picture frame" *is* broken and "the landscape inserted into the historical process" (Cosgrove, *Social* 38). This process is figured by Brand's frame narrative where her contrary landscape frames and is shown to develop in response to the dominant construction of place. As Jane Jacobs states such places are not static sites but "mark a geography in which centre and margin, Self and Other, here and there are in anxious negotiation—where there is displacement, interaction, and contest" (11). Further, Brand's double articulation aligns with Jacobs' argument that such challenges to place are not only about aesthetics but are also about the "desires for the spaces which constitute ... 'home'" as well as a "sense of self" (Jacobs 2). In other words, the politics around geography are also often a politics of identity.

However, Brand's re-construction of the Trinidadian wilderness as home in *No Language is Neutral* is problematic. Her means of constructing place in order to positively articulate her identity in many ways parallels rather than counters the treatment of both place and women in dominant culture. First, her

rewriting of the island's wilderness spaces in order to articulate her identity still posits nature as an open space, a blank page to be written over and still constructs nature as "home." In an interview with Pauline Butling, Brand reveals, "I remember driving up this road in the north of Trinidad called Maracas. You go along this almost sheer cliff up to the top of the north coast. You can look down and it just drops. But I suddenly saw the landscape of the place as having to do with my sexuality, that the landscape seemed to me to be female" (80). Second, even though her re-construction is temporary, it momentarily closes space-time and connects that construction to women. Although acknowledged as a construction, nature is still a place to turn to for "redeeming values and experiences" (Lousley 321). This place, like pastoral America, "encloses the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction" (Kolodny 4). Such a construction too easily leaves women and colonial peoples connected to a depoliticized space. Home here is still "personified by, and partakes of the same characteristics" such as nurturing, authenticating, a safe escape, "as those assigned to, Woman" and "lover" (Massey, *Space* 10). Further, her representation of the landscape as woman replicates the methods used to construct and validate imperial nation states. As Cheryl Lousley argues, home as a source of belonging and security is the basis for numerous discourses, such as nation, nature, domestic space, and community, that attempt to stall space-time (321). Brand herself points out elsewhere that woman and land are often conflated so that "the female body is either motherly or virgin, which amounts to the same thing—like land to be traversed or owned" (*Bread* 34). Finally, although she does not posit a single construction of place that is the object of combat and instead leaves both constructions in their own trajectories interacting and struggling but also coexisting, she still focuses on binary rather than multiple constructions. This binary is founded on the assumption of two broadly coherent identities and shared constructions of place.

Therefore, even though she seems to find a sense of home and belonging in Maracas, after *No Language is Neutral*, Brand moves away from a search for home. In an interview, she states that while writing *No Language is Neutral*, she

saw poetry as "redemptive," as "redeeming of ordinary people's lives" (Olbey 91). However, since then her "ideas have moved" (91). She found "a pull of the communal that can also cripple ideas to some extent, precisely because of the overwhelming nature of oppression," and states, "it can lock you into certain responses" (91). She counters this pull of the communal with continual "repositionings" so her voice "is constantly recalibrating its register against [oppressive] forces as well as against the internal stagnation of community in the face of those forces" (91). Her voice becomes more "wrought" as she cannot rest in an easily shared language of "home" (92). In fact, she states that after writing *No Language is Neutral*, she "realized that home, that whole thing that makes us feel warm and possible" is not something women have experienced and "is a place that needs to be problematized" (Butling 84). Therefore, in *A Map to the Door of No Return*, Brand rejects any identity politics, home place, and any closure of space-time. In this way, she once again extends the work of Doreen Massey who argues that place is a double articulation. For Brand, as for Massey, there are still multiple trajectories coming together in various relations, but, unlike Massey, there is no longer any "place," not even momentarily. Thus, place cannot articulate her, and instead she turns to the noplace of the Door of No Return, described by Kathy Mezei as "a domestic space that ridicules any idea of home, return, and comfort" (193).

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Brand begins *Map* by describing her childhood desire for an authenticating homeland, writing of her African-Trinidadian family, "we were not from the place where we lived and we could not remember where we were from or who we were" (5). At thirteen, she begs her grandfather to remember from what part of Africa they originated but finds he "could not summon a vision of landscape or a people which would add up to a name" (5). Brand explains that having "no name to call on was having no past; having no past pointed to the fissure between the past and the present" (5). This fissure is represented by the axial moment in the African-Caribbean calendar, the passage through the Door of No Return, or the harbours on the west coast of Africa where slaves were loaded onto the ships

headed for the Americas. Stepping through these doors caused a "tear in the world" that is not only "a physical rupture, a rupture of geography" or space but also "a rupture in history" or time (5). These ruptures lead to "a rupture in the quality of being" (5). Brand's interchange with her grandfather underscores this rupture and results in "a small space" opening in her consciousness, a space that she has since carried with her (4).

The rupture of being that Brand describes supports Elizabeth Grosz's argument that there is a correlation between the ways space, time, and the subject are conceived. Grosz observes that many of our contemporary notions of subjectivity are still derived from Enlightenment philosophers, particularly Immanuel Kant, in accordance with Euclidian and Newtonian conceptions of space and time. Rather than as constructions, space and time are seen as *a priori* categories that enable the unified subject to map and represent both geography and history. However, these Enlightenment philosophies were exclusionary and racist. For example, Thomas A. McCarthy argues that while positing a universal humanism, Kant "constructed one of the most … elaborate accounts of racial hierarchy prior to the flood tide of racial thinking accompanying nineteenth-century colonialism" (McCarthy 1).[81] Because conceptions of subjectivity are connected to conceptions of space and time, Kant's racism is connected to his geographical imagination, which is firmly grounded in the geography of knowledge production whereby knowledge is believed to be produced in certain areas, for example universities, science parks, or even the West, and the world outside those areas becomes the object of that knowledge.[82]

For Kant, Europe is the civilized, enlightened centre and the rest of the world is the uncivilized twilight of the periphery. He supports this assertion through a form of geographical determinism whereby racial differences and hierarchies are associated with environment and climate. He writes of the human race that "their seed … had developed in such a way that would make them fitted

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[81] See also Pauline Kleingeld for another discussion of Kant's racism.
[82] For more on the geography of knowledge production see Massey (*For* 74-75, 143-145).

for … a specific region of the earth" ("On" 47).[83] Kant writes that the African has "the perfect purposefulness" or development "with reference to his motherland" ("On" 44). This "purposefulness" is a biological predisposition to be less industrious which suits Africans to tropical conditions where heat and humidity hamper exertion. Temperate climates, on the other hand, have produced Europeans who "possess all the drives, talents, and predispositions to culture and civilization that make for progress towards perfection" (McCarthy 5).

Kant's geographic determinism and hierarchy must be reconciled with his universalism and his universal kingdom of ends (McCarthy 6). For Kant, all rational beings following what he calls the "categorical imperative" will create a universal kingdom of people existing in a state of peace and equality (*Fundamental*). This imperative states that each rational being must "act only on that maxim whereby [he] canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (*Fundamental*). Put another way, the categorical imperative insists that all rational beings must treat each other as ends rather than means. Kant defines "ends" as "all rational beings" who can determine their actions according to laws and "means" as everything other than rational beings, or "that which merely contains the ground of possibility" for those rational beings' actions (*Fundamental*). Thus, separating humanity from the natural world, he writes, "beings whose existence depends … on nature's have … only a relative value as means, and are therefore called things" and "rational beings … are called persons, because their very nature points them out as ends in themselves" (*Fundamental*). Rational beings, as a result, are "something which must not be used merely as means" because doing so would restrict their "freedom of action" and limit equality (*Fundamental*). However, all that is subject to the laws of nature can be "subserve[d] merely as means" (*Fundamental*). As he writes, "the system of nature … has reference to rational beings as its ends" or purpose (*Fundamental*).

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[83] As Claire Omhovère observes, the "contention ... that the empire of climate predates all empires harks back to the Hippocratic definition of a natural character as bearing the imprint of place, reacting to the influence of climate and locale" ("Poetics" 354). Such a contention supports the construction of place as exclusionary, authenticating, and timeless, and Omhovère notes that it "resurfaced during the Enlightenment to give substance to the foundation of the idea of nation" (Omhovère "Poetics" 354).

Kant, then, rewords the categorical imperative to state that all rational beings must "act as to treat humanity … in every case as an end withal, never as a means only" (*Fundamental*). Following the categorical imperative and using nature as a means to an end, they would create the "kingdom of ends" which is "proper to all persons as members" (*Fundamental*). This kingdom is to include all people. However, as McCarthy notes, it is "never made clear how the biologically inferior endowments of non-whites could be consistent with this destiny" (13). "What is clear," he continues, "is that its development will be a process of diffusion from the West to the Rest" (13). Non-Europeans in the periphery must assimilate to enlightened European culture and civilization. McCarthy ends by stating that "the problem becomes all the more pressing as the factors behind developmental unevenness are said to include biologically rooted, and thus inalterable, inequalities of natural endowment" (13).

Another way to reconcile Kant's racism with his universal humanism is to see it as necessary to it. As Terry Eagleton demonstrates, "the bourgeois subject requires some Other to assure itself that its powers and properties are more than hallucinatory ... yet such otherness is also intolerable to the subject, and must be either expelled or introjected. There can be no sovereignty without someone to reign over, yet his very presence threatens to throw one's lordship into jeopardy" (71). While some of these subjects may be assimilated, others are labelled as irrational and fit to be used as means rather than seen as ends.

Brand describes the colonial and neo-colonial perception of black bodies in just such a way. She writes, slaves' bodies were made to seem "inhuman so as to perform the tasks of exploitation of resources and acquisition of territory" (31). They "became tools sent out to conquer the natural world" (31). The black body is associated with the wilderness and naturalized as the object, not the generator, of knowledge. As Brand writes, in "Western culture the natural is always captive to science" (*Map* 36). The black body, like nature, is seen as an empty space, open to being represented, and in the closed space-time of the West, representation removes any element of the temporal. Thus, for the black body mired in a conservative construction, time stands still, and "it is as if [the black body's] first

appearance through the Door of No Return, dressed in its new habit of captive and therefore slave, is embedded in all its subsequent and contemporary appearances" (*Map* 37). Whereas the slave body was a tool for colonialist enterprises, the black body today is a tool for capitalist globalization and neo-colonialism. As Pamela McCallum and Christian Olbey argue, Brand "is concerned with the representation of the profound and deep-rooted physical and psychological effects of slavery as they persist in contemporary forms of superexploitive labour practices endemic to the contemporary process of capitalist 'globalization,' which … is merely a 'euphemism for that forbidden word, imperialism'" (164). Connecting slavery to neo-colonialism, Brand writes that the current cultural encoding of the black body "as physical prowess, sexual fantasy, moral transgression, violence, magical musical artistry" are "ascriptions … easily at hand for everyday use. Much as one would use a tool or instrument to execute some need or want" (36). Black bodies are considered to be means rather than ends.

For Brand, "To reclaim the Black body from that domesticated, captive, open space is the creative project always underway" and one way she does so is by challenging the geography of knowledge production (*Map* 43).[84] As Grosz argues, if "bodies are to be reconceived … so too must their environment and *spatio-temporal location*" (emphasis in original 84). Because space, time, and being are connected, in order to transform the ways in which bodies are constructed, "the overarching context of space-time, within which bodies function and are conceived also needs serious revision" (Grosz 100). In other words, our geographical imaginations are not neutral.[85] Massey explains, "Just as we make history in retrospect, through the stories that are told, so also we make geographies, through the implicit imaginations we deploy" (*World* 23). Geographical imaginations can be "powerful elements in the armoury of legitimation of political strategies" (24) because "when deftly mobilized," they

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[84] Once again, open space here refers to the blank page or an *espace propre* as opposed to Massey's open space as the dynamic space of multiple trajectories.

[85] As Omhovère writes, geography does not "guarant[ee] a genuine apprehension of the environment detached from aesthetic and ideological prisms," but, as is seen in Kant's work, "has often been relied upon to naturalize cultural variations" (Omhovère, "Poetics" 354).

"pass us by as self-evident, barely recognized as being the framing assumptions that they are" (23). Consequently, "challenging these hegemonic imaginations is ... essential to any wider political challenge" (24). As she later writes, "mounting any kind of challenge to the political positions [these geographical imaginations] support should mean also taking on these implicit geographies and conceptualisations of space" (115). Further, as Massey insists, we must also propose alternatives (24).

The geography of knowledge production results in two types of subjects, or what Brand, with her focus on passage over place, calls "travellers." Of the first type, she writes, "One travels; one takes oneself intact. With a will. One is a coherent being—needing nothing from the place one traveled to but food, shelter, and most importantly that the place one visits appears and in appearance yields a confirming example of one's sentience" (92). These travellers have a home and a compass. A home, or an origin, provides them with a centre that bestows authenticity and provides a position from which they can construct the world as a coherent space. In addition, a compass, as Fredric Jameson observes, grants a "relationship to the totality" by joining "existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality" ("Postmodernism" 90). This relationship to the totality enables the construction of cartographic maps and globes that construct space as a surface that can be predicted, travelled across, and conquered. This space and its traveller correlate with a narrowed unilinear time and a coherent subject. Brand's second type of traveller is excluded from such home places and "travels in disarray, undone, a consciousness formed around displacement, needing nothing that one can put a finger on, needing a centre" (92). These travellers are homeless, derelicts facing the closed doors of others. They have no origin and no compass. Without a sense of home, they have no geographically-based authenticity and no fixed point or centre from which to construct the world. Additionally, without a compass, they cannot locate themselves in relation to the totality and map the world as a coherent and predictable space. For these travellers, space is fluid and often unpredictable.

While in *No Language is Neutral* this was the space Brand countered by reconstructing Maracas so that she could find a sense of home, in *A Map to the Door of No Return*, she desires to stay in this space. As Massey calls for, she challenges the dominant geographical imagination, the geography of knowledge production, and proposes an alternative, which I call "the geography of the door." In this geographical imagination, instead of attempting to locate herself within an exclusive and closed space-time, she rejects concepts such as "home," "nation," and even "identity politics" and locates herself within the threshold of the open Door of No Return, continuously in the axial moment. From the doorway, Brand observes not a coherent and predictable geographical construction but "the territory of the door," or the overwhelming space-time dynamic (49). Place dissolves in the noplace of the passage. Along with this alternate geography, as we will see, goes a third type of traveller as subjects become intimate and interrelational.

Speaking of the space in her consciousness that was opened up through her childhood inquiries about a geographical homeland, Brand writes, "Over time it has changed shape and light as the question it evoked has changed in appearance and angle. The name of the people we came from has ceased to matter. … The question however was more complicated, more nuanced" (4). In this chapter, I will examine how Brand highlights the changes in this space, moving from a desire for a pre-existing authenticating place, to attempts, such as those in *No Language is Neutral*, to create places of belonging. From here, I will examine how, when such attempts fail, she turns first to critiquing and then to providing an alternative to the geography of knowledge production. Finally, because geography, history and subjectivity are discursive constructions, Brand posits an anti-aesthetic in order to represent the geography of the door and its construction of the black body. This anti-aesthetic is expressed in a utopian discourse.

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In *A Map to the Door of No Return*, Brand depicts herself initially as fully immersed in the unified subject's conception of space as naturally divided into

regions/nations onto which culture is overlaid and in which identity is authenticated. At thirteen, she is looking for a way to heal the wound, or space, in her consciousness through a connection to an African homeland, an authenticating pre-existing home place to which to return. Brand writes that for some in the Black Diaspora, the door "looms" not only "as a horror" but also as "a romance," a nostalgic dream of a return to African origins (*Map* 22). These origins are reinvented "as a golden past of serenity, grandeur, equality," and the door becomes "the place of the fall" (22). This attempt to return through the door inevitably fails not only because it is based on a fictional idea of home, but also because, as Massey explains, in dynamic space-time, "you can never simply 'go back,' to home or anywhere else. When you get 'there' the place will have moved on" (*For* 124). While, as a child, Brand succumbs to this nostalgia, as an adult, she understands the impossibility of such a dream and writes, "I cannot go back to where I came from. It no longer exists. It should not exist" (90). As she writes of the door in her epigraph, "there is as it says no way in; no return" (1).

But the door to an African homeland is not the only one closed to those in the Black Atlantic. Because of slavery and colonization, Brand, as we know from chapter five, has little sense of a home place in Trinidad either. In *Map*, she describes being told through various media that she is "living elsewhere," on an island like those in canonical texts such as *The Tempest* and *Treasure Island* which are "uninhabited except for monsters and spirits…pirates and buccaneers" (13). This imagination of the islands and those who live there is not restricted to fictional accounts but also influences scientific representation so that printed in the cartouches and along the borders of maps of the islands are representations of "natives, nubile and fierce" (13). The island Brand inhabits is, therefore, "mythic" (35).[86] In western representation, it signifies the uncivilized wilderness space of the Other, a nowhere that deserves the imposition of "order" through colonization. As was seen in "No Language is Neutral," in Trinidad she cannot find a sense of home and finds this door, too, is impassable.

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[86] I use "myth" here in Roland Barthes' sense of a second-order semiological system where a word, object, or image is reduced to a pure signifying function in an ideological metalanguage (113-114).

Consequently, she dreams of being and belonging elsewhere. She remembers thinking of the BBC as "a door to 'over there,' … to being in the big world," but at this door, too, she is refused entry (14). She describes herself on the beach behind her home in Guayaguayare thinking of places of which she has read: "Britain to the northeast, America to the northwest" (74). Colonialism has imposed its disabling geography on her, represented by an imaginary "road map, compressed to fit the six inch scroll of a grape leaf" (74). She compares her imaginary childhood map to early Roman maps which were "based solely on itineraries, not attesting to science or geographic study, simply maps of where they were going. So that a map looked like a graph of horizontal lines of roads heading to a destination" (142). Immersed in the geography of knowledge production, she follows this map, on which, like the veins of her grape leaf, all roads converge at one point, the West. The places in "the big world" that she hears of on the BBC become her only "possible directions" and "desires," and colonialism's map "was to be [her] itinerary" (74).

Brand attempts to follow this itinerary, but the places it leads her to depend on her exclusion. As a teenager, she dreams of travelling to cities such as London or New York believing that there she can find a home and heal the door's wounds (74). At seventeen, she moves to Toronto to join the Civil Rights Movement. Demonstrating her immersion in colonial space-time, she describes herself as the first type of traveller who has already mapped and created a version of the place she is about to visit and needs only for that place to confirm her construction. She feels she is the traveller who "knows where one is going before one arrives. The map is in your head. You merely have to begin moving to have it confirmed" (117). She has already mapped the city before she arrives, daydreaming five years prior that she is a beat poet with Allen Ginsberg in the basement bar of a New York brownstone. She remembers constructing her imagination of the bar and city from various sources, especially newspapers: "I had memorized the monograph itself—the streets it sketched, the particular contours, the landmarks" (118). Thus, "when [she] embarked, [she] was already its citizen" (118). She describes, "America was a world already conceived in my

mind … before I ever saw it. In fact, when I saw it I did not see it; I saw what I had imagined" (117). Connecting this singular construction of space to a narrowed time, she writes of the events of the Civil Rights Movement, "these moments were my city" (117). Hinting that the Door of No Return may have something to do with space-time and the production place, she describes her arrival in Canada as follows: "I stepped into the cool opening of the Door of No Return. My feet landed where my thoughts were. This is the trick of the door—to step through and be where you want to be" (118).

In the end, unlike the dominant subject, she does not have the power to step through the door and materialize the place she has imagined. In her imagination, all "the inhabitants of this city in America were African-American" (117). Impossibly, she unpacked in her apartment in Toronto and "headed for Harlem, the Apollo, 125th Street" (118). Instead of finding belonging, she finds herself waking from loneliness and feeling an affinity with the woman in Jacques Prévert's "*Rue de Seine,*" who, "in the middle of hopelessness," realizes she has been lied to (53). *Seine* translates to "dragnet," and Brand, in what she now understands as "the ubiquitous occupation of coloniality," realizes she, like the woman, is caught in a net: "in the middle of war with forces arrayed against the pleasure of being human" (53). As in *No Language is Neutral*, she finds no escape from the ruptures of the door in Canada.

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However, in Canada, Brand moves on from searching for a pre-existing home place to attempting to create a place of belonging. As mentioned, she joins the Civil Rights Movement but does not realize that its attempts to create belonging through equal human rights within nations takes part in the reproduction of the Enlightenment subject and its construction of space. Greg Mullins argues, we should be "suspicious of rights discourse that posits a universal, liberal, rights-holding subject … especially because the ideology that celebrates this liberal subject" as we saw in the discussion of Kant's racism above, "has also been used to justify European colonialism and slavery in the Americas" (1103).

When the Civil Rights Movement slowed and dispersed without creating the type of place for which Brand was looking, she joined the Black Nationalist Movement in Grenada hoping to suture her wound by creating a black nation-state. She writes, "I wanted to be free. I wanted to feel as if history was not destiny. I wanted some relief from the enclosure of the Door of No Return. That's all" (168). But the Americans invaded, ending the black socialist government, and Brand finds herself facing another closed door as she is once again unable to master its trick: "it had hit me in the chest and all the wind was gone out of me" (168). This inability to create an authenticating national home place is not surprising since such a construction supports the dominant subject, its space-time, and its social relations.

Brand returns to Canada, and although not elaborated upon in *Map*, her search for belonging becomes more one of identity politics and of re-constructing place in a way that can positively articulate her identity as was outlined in chapter five. This search for place also fails her. *No Language is Neutral*, in fact, can be read in a way that is similar to Brand's own reading of Toni Morrison's early fiction. In *A Map to the Door of No Return*, Brand argues that Morrison rewrites the "myth of America" by narrating "the African American presence that underpins the official story" (*Map* 128). Sounding much like a description of *No Language is Neutral*, Brand describes these early works as "a conversation about grace, redemption and . . . happiness" (128). Brand's early text, too, focuses on narrating presences, those of black women and black lesbians, that underpin official history. Speaking of *No Language is Neutral*, Simona Bertacco observes, "History's 'forgetful places,' indeed, enter Brand's poems again and again. The poet visits those places in order to write them back into the 'official' maps of history, those very maps that made us forget they ever existed" (10). Miriam Chancy also sees Brand as writing to fill out the historical narrative arguing Brand "utilizes poetry as a vehicle for rewriting history" (119). By narrating these presences, she can rewrite the myth of Trinidad. However, examining Morrison's attempt to rewrite the myth of America, Brand writes:

> Myth is of course seductive, but it needs material power to enforce it. The
> dominant myth overwhelms Morrison's mythmaking, leaving her
> characters stranded in a kind of inevitable failure. In history. The daily
> bulletins of Black America seen through mass media encroach on the
> space of Morrison's narratives. She cannot write fast enough to counter
> them. (*Map* 129)

Without the power to enforce her articulation, it is continually overtaken and
rewritten by others. Perhaps it is for similar reasons that Brand follows what
seemed to be a triumphant *No Language is Neutral* with the melancholic *Land to
Light On*, which opens with the bleak poem "I Have Been Losing Roads." Here,
the poet seems to address the failure of her writing to make any kind of
substantial difference. She depicts herself as a "woman / fastened to this ugly and
disappointing world" (9), a world that "no amount of will can change" (17).

Brand ends up rejecting identity politics as well as nationhood. At the
beginning of the section entitled "Finding a Compass," she is in her Toronto
apartment at 4:45 a.m., in "the foreign country of silence," reading Eduardo
Galeano's assertion that he is "nostalgic for a country which doesn't yet exist on a
map" (52). She thinks of an imagined community of "other inhabitants of silence"
who are also "circumnavigating absence" and reading Galeano at 4:45 a.m. (52).
For a moment, her desire to belong is assuaged. Canada becomes "a sweet
country" as "in that moment you know perhaps someone else is awake reading
Galeano" (53). However, she later replies to Galeano, "Dear Eduardo, I am not
nostalgic. Belonging does not interest me. I had once thought it did. Until I
examined the underpinnings" (85). Brand rejects both Galeano's dream of a
country and the identity politics figured by Galeano's readers in the country of
silence. Of nationalism, she states that while it is tempting to try to enter into the
Canadian nation, one must ask, "nation predicated on what?" (68). Her answer is
that it is predicated on ideologically-based origins, exclusions, and closed space-
time. Nation-states are not timeless origins in a naturally divided world but are
artificially created and maintained. Thus, she notes throughout the book the
cultures that existed in North America before the imposition of Eurocentric

nation-states (64). These nation-states then became neo-origins for European settler/invaders, silencing the trajectories of others and stalling space-time. Brand asserts, "national identity is a dance of artificiality since what it dances must essentially be unchanging" (72). Brand insists that nations are "configurations of origins as exclusionary power structures which have legitimacy based solely on conquest and acquisition" (64).

This rejection of national belonging is extended to identity politics. She argues that both are based on an exclusivity that causes them to "draw very definite borders … to contain their constituencies" (69). These constructions are "invariably conservative" (69) as they "calcify origins" (70) and attempt to stall the space-time dynamic. As Barbara Godard argues, identity politics reify ethnic identities by creating "positivistic image[s]" ("Notes" n.p.). Further, in the current Canadian context, identity politics are combined with the celebration of diversity and have contributed to the normalization of ethnicity. They "have done little to redress historical practices of discrimination" ("Notes" n.p.). By becoming "a fundamental characteristic of Canadian identity shared by all Canadians" rather than being "'a sign of contestation' against a troubled history of discrimination," they "function as a pedagogy of forgetting that makes possible a totalizing national discourse" ("Notes" n.p.). Thus, identity politics can also impose a narrow identity and close space-time. Of both nation and identity politics, Brand writes, "Out of a multiplicity of stories, they cobble together a narrative glossing over accident, opportunism, necessity, and misdirection" (70).

This conservative space-time necessitates an unchanging construction of place governed by the geography of knowledge production. *Map* includes a lengthy quotation from the *New York Times*, dated December 11, 1998, that describes the investigation of a Mohawk reservation accused of smuggling Chinese immigrants across the border from Canada into the United States of America. This relatively recent article not only demonstrates the exclusionary and hierarchical construction of nation-states as "the language of the piece asserts the identities 'American' and 'Canadian' as dominant over 'Mohawk' and 'Chinese'" but it also demonstrates the solidification of space-time and place that

accompanies such constructions (66). It states, "A look at a map shows you how easy it is to use the place as a vehicle for smuggling" consisting as it does of "foggy creeks" and "wooded islands" (66-67). Brand writes, "Hundreds of years after the making of its neo-origins these Canadians and Americans who police these fresh borders, materially as well as intellectually, play and dwell in the same language of their conquest. A language which summons mystery and wilderness. The passage could have been written two hundred years ago" (67). This place, constructed as an unknowable, impenetrable wilderness, and therefore, as uncivilized and threatening, like the bodies of the "human contraband" associated with it, invites these New World nations to patrol it just as it did the European settler/invaders (67). Corresponding to the representation of Trinidad as a mythic island, it is another example of the geography of knowledge production's construction of place.

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To reclaim the black (and female) body, Brand moves on to challenging the dominant geographical imagination by, first, demonstrating that it is constructed, second, by decentring it, and third, by deconstructing its representations. She demonstrates that the geography of knowledge production and the identities it posits are constructions by critiquing Western cartography, showing it to be ideological, not objective, and fictional, not mimetic. Searching for the locations of the real slave castle doorways, she "scour[s] maps of all kinds" (19), turning eventually to Charles Bricker's historical survey of European mapmaking, *Landmarks of Mapmaking: An Illustrated Survey of Maps and Mapmakers*. The text, however, is clearly ideological and embedded in hegemonic conceptions of space, time and place. Bricker collects and displays his maps according to his desire for the geography of knowledge production whereby the West and its ways of knowing are determined to be objective, universal, and advanced. He writes, "The arrival of Europeans with their own modern, scientifically constructed charts usually put a stop to local note-taking among primitive peoples… reliable as their instinctively made maps often were" (9). The binaries and hierarchies constructed with the words "modern" / "primitive,"

"charts" / "notes," and "scientifically constructed" / "instinctively made" posit Europe as the civilized enlightened centre and the rest of the world as the uncivilized darkness at its periphery.

Strengthening this belief in Europe as superior is his assumption that Western cartography is based on direct access and therefore is not constructed but mimetic. Sounding much like the author of the *New York Times* article, he writes, "maps … took shape slowly, tentatively—in the wakes of ships ploughing dark and remote seas, in the tracks of men penetrating forbidden forests and deserts" (9). He believes that maps accurately represent both the terrain and the unconstructed experiences of cartographers and does not realize that the ways that maps represent the world influence these cartographer's experiences. Brand, on the other hand, notes a Babylonian map from 500 BCE that represents the space beyond the known world with triangles representing "hazards—places where a horned bull lurks, perhaps, or where it is always twilight" (*Map* 16). Representations such as this marked *terra incognita* as already imagined. They made the metropole the centre and filled it with light and then constructed those surrounding seas as dark and remote and those forests as forbidden long before these European cartographers arrived 2000 years later.

Thus, rather than objective, Brand demonstrates Western cartography's areal differentiation and environmentally determined identities to be fiction. While she does not find the location of the real door on any of Bricker's maps, she does find his discussion of how Hiob Ludolf, founder of Ethiopian Studies, constructed a map of Abyssinia in 1683. Without ever visiting the area, Ludolf based his representation on Father Jerônimo Lobo's written travelogue from 1625 (Bricker 163). Brand writes, "Which proves to me something of which I've had a nagging inkling—that places and those who inhabit them are indeed fictions" (18). She declares, "These cartographers, they were artists and poets. They were dreamers and imaginers surely as I" (200). The fictional quality of cartography is further demonstrated by a European map of the Antilles published in 1784, at the height of the slave trade. The map is adorned with "ships under full sail; cartouches of sovereigns, great explorers, and welcoming nubile natives" (200).

Note the way the fictional representation of the island's inhabitants has changed over time according to the cartographers' objectives and desires. When the imperialist Europeans were first mapping the area, they depicted the natives as "nubile" and "welcoming." However, two hundred years later, on the colonialist maps Brand sees at school, the natives are "nubile and fierce" (13). Like the land, while their depiction as available for penetration and exploitation remains the same, the description of their response to that exploitation shifts from inviting, which supports imperialism's project, to needing colonization and control, which supports the brutal forces of colonization. Most clearly demonstrating the map's fictional quality, the trade winds that fill the ships' sails are represented as the breath of angels. She contends, "You must remember this is one point of the middle passage. … those cherubs, their sweet lips pursed, blow a rough trade. Only an artist could render an angel here" (200). Moreover, it is not only the images drawn in the margins that take artistic liberty. Cognitive schemas such as longitude, latitude, and compass roses are all cultural methods of representation that tame space into a single static surface.

Second, realizing its fictional nature, Brand challenges the dominant geographical imagination by decentring it and thereby stripping it of its claim to a closed and coherent space-time. Again, she does so by challenging the map. Because cartography represents place according to the perspectives and desires of the cartographer, perspectives and desires that are cultural, Western maps can be seen as rhetorical structures that are centred around an ideological origin that orients their coherence and maintains their stability. As Graham Huggan argues, the "claim to coherence of cartographic discourse" is undermined "by revealing that the exemplary structuralist activity involved in the production of the map (the demarcation of boundaries, allocation of points and connection lines within an enclosed, self-sufficient unit) traces back to a 'point of presence' whose stability cannot be guaranteed" ("Decolonizing" 119). According to Huggan, the claim to coherence and the stability and control that coherence establishes can be countered by demonstrating that the map's "controlling agency" has "laid false claim to the fixity of its own origins" ("Decolonizing" 119-20). Thus, Brand

writes, "all origins are arbitrary" (64) and states that the Eurocentric subject "obscures its own multiplicity" (72). Without a fixed origin at the centre, the map's singular coherence cannot be maintained.

Finally, realizing the dominant geographical imagination is constructed, fictional, and ideological, Brand moves on to deconstructing its representations. Such deconstruction is described by Huggan as a reading "which focusing on the inevitable discrepancy between the 'natural' and the 'imitated' object, displaces the 'original' presence of the West in such a way as to undermine the ideology which justifies its relations of power" ("Decolonizing" 121). Huggan argues that deconstruction allows the map's systematic inscription on a supposedly 'uninscribed' earth" to be seen as "a palimpsest covering over alternative spatial configurations" that can "indicate both the plurality of possible perspectives on, and the inadequacy of any single model of, the world" ("Decolonizing" 120). These multiple spatial perspectives lead to a "decolonization" of the map which entails "an identification of and perceived dissociation from the empowering strategies of colonial discourse (including, for example, a rejection of its false claim to a 'universal' history)" and I would add a rejection of its claim to space as surface (121). Decolonization leads to alternative geographical imaginations that emphasize a "shifting ground" and conceives of the map as "open" rather than as coherent and homogenous" or "closed" (125-26). The map is no longer connected to "the desire for homogeneity" and no longer interpreted as "a means of spatial containment or systematic organization" (124). It is re-envisioned "as the expression of a shifting ground between alternative metaphors" (125), and can lead to the "exploration of 'new territories' outlawed or negated by dominant discourse" (127). Brand once again focuses on Eurocentric maps and deconstructs and decolonizes them by demonstrating the absence of the Door of No Return from their representations. Of an early *portulans* that describes the currents around Tobago and the conditions of the island's harbours, she writes, "this gorgeous prose dissembles, it obstructs our view of its real directions, it alludes, it masks. But it points, it says, there, that is where you land the ships bringing slaves to this island" (202). Reading the map in this way, she undermines the closed

space-time of the geography of knowledge production and counters the West's claims to objective knowledge, superiority, and progress.

<center>* * *</center>

However, as Massey and Grosz call for, in her effort to reclaim the black body from its position as means, Brand not only challenges and critiques the dominant geographical imagination but posits an alternative: the geography of the door which is based on alternative conceptions of space and time. These two geographical imaginations are represented by the sea. Unlike in *No Language is Neutral*, the sea in *Map* represents not only time or history but also space, or space-time. Brand describes two constructions of the sea and relates each to one of her two types of travellers. For some, the sea is, a home place, "another country" and is the unilinear time associated with closed space (56). This ocean "feels like land" (56). It is mapped and supports the unified subjects, who, as Brand's first type of traveller does with place, "know the landmarks" and "point out this or that area as if it were a patch of ground, a small hill, or an inhabited vista" (56). This relationship with space-time is exemplified by Bricker, who not only maps space but in his historical survey of cartography, *Landmarks of Mapmaking*, maps history as well. Bricker's geography of knowledge production correlates with his conception of history as unilinear with a focus on Western superiority and progress. For example, while Gerald Roe Crone notes in his preface that the development of mapmaking was "related to the mercantile and colonial ambitions of successive historical periods," there is no mention of the horrific role played by the slave trade (6). Because everything that might counter such a focus is omitted, the landmarks of the slave trade cannot be found on any of Bricker's maps.

For others, the sea is the space-time dynamic. The sea Brand played in as a child is not only the one mapped by her grape leaf, but also "sounded like a thousand secrets, all whispered at the same time" (8). This sea is unnavigable and "overwhelms" (9). It "signifie[s] the end of traceable beginnings," of any sense of an historical or geographic origin, without which there can be no coherent narrative or place (5). This sea correlates with Brand's second traveller. Their

"origins" forgotten and their entry into new origins barred, they have "no sense of belonging" and can only "drift" (118). As Brand describes, for those in the African Diaspora, "there is the sense in the mind of not being here or there, of no way out or in. As if the door had set up its own reflection. Caught between the two we live in the Diaspora, in the sea in between ... Our inheritance in the Diaspora is to live in this inexplicable space" (20). These travellers exist within a space-time of constant, overwhelming movement and flux.

Brand describes two reactions to this position in space-time: dread and creativity. Her second type of traveller, still immersed in the geography of knowledge production, desires a centre or origin and, unable to find or create one, experiences dread. Brand perceives this reaction in V.S. Naipaul's essay "In the Middle of the Journey" and in Toni Morrison's later novel, *Paradise*. She reads *Paradise* as a shift from Morrison's earlier theme of redemption to that of dread as Morrison turns from rewriting the myth of America to voicing the overwhelming, incomprehensible position of those in the Black Diaspora. She interprets Morrison's line, directed towards those in the Diaspora, that "God is not interested in you" as suggesting "that life in the Diaspora can't be put right, the imagination cannot suffice—not on love, not on grace, not on exile. Not on anything [Morrison] can imagine at this moment anyway" (132).

Brand also sees dread in Naipaul's essay. She relates how Naipaul describes the Indian landscape as "vast tracts which will never become familiar, which will sadden" causing "the urge to escape" to "return" (*Map* 59). According to Brand, Naipaul experiences this reaction for two reasons. First, he creates a text of "ancestral estrangement and filial longing" for a return home, but India's vast tracts "will never become familiar because two generations have missed their shape" (60). India has gone on without him, and there can be no nostalgic return. Second, Brand argues, he is writing to those in "the metropole in which he has a provisional footing" (62). He attempts to construct himself as Brand's first traveller who labels the unfamiliar and unknown, the very place in which he is searching for belonging, as wilderness: hazards to be avoided and/or policed. India and its people are represented as the British represent the Caribbean islands

or European-North Americans represent the Akwesasne Indian territory: the land is "'frightening,' its people are Philistine" (*Map* 59). Thus "the landscape does not solve" either his "accursed ancestral memory" or his "crushing dislocation of self" (61). With all doors into home closed, Naipaul is forever caught "In the Middle of the Journey," and he finds it dreadful.

Unlike Morrison and Naipaul, however, Brand rejects the dominant geographical imagination and sees Diasporic space-time as not only creating dread but also opening to creativity and new discursive constructions. She avoids dread by accepting the ruptures caused by the door and refusing to desire a centre, origin, or home. Now when she encounters the door, rather than being refused entry, she refuses to attempt to step through because the door's passageway opens the closed structure of Western space-time and inspires creativity. Thus, when she is on the airplane to Johannesburg and looking at the moving map display which "makes the land below seem understandable, as if one could sum up its vastness, its differentiations in a glance, as if one could touch it, hold all its ideas in two hands," she rejects this representation of place (89). This is Bricker's conservative construction. It is a closed structure where, as Foucault points out of such structures, time becomes only "one of the various distributive operations ... for the elements that are spread out in space" (23). Thus, Brand writes, "The time, the kilometres, appear on the screen, well refined by now" (89). Rejecting this conservative geographical imagination, she wishes that she could "disembark and go to the city … calamitous and squalling" (92) where she would be "enveloped" and "overwhelmed" (89), because, "there in that city or perhaps along the road the ubiquitous Door of No Return would appear" (92). The door represents the axial moment, the "place where [her] ancestors departed one world for another; the Old World for the New" (5). As the names "Old World" and "New World" imply, it is a place where both time and space are ruptured and multiplied. She claims the threshold of the door as her origin and her destination, a space where, instead of origins and destinations, the goal is to remain in the noplace of continual passage. "That space," she writes, "is the measure of our ancestor's step through the door toward the ship. One is caught in the few feet in between. The frame of the

doorway is the only space of true existence" (20). Thus, a book that is primarily a representation of the overwhelming and inexplicable territory *of* the door is entitled *A Map* to *the Door of No Return*.

From the open doorway, she looks out onto the sea of a thousand secrets, or the multiple stories-so-far of the coeval in the space-time dynamic. This territory "is vast, its nature shiftable" (49); it is "a 'vastness' indeed 'beyond imagination'" (61). Desiring to stay in this inexplicable space-time, unlike in *No Language is Neutral*, Brand does not begin retrieving secrets from the sea in order to voice her own trajectory and create a sense of home. The sea in *Map* remains unbiased. It "reduce[s] all life to its unimportant random meaning" and takes "our happiness as minor and transitory" (9). As a result, when she prays to Yemaya, Orisha of the sea / history, and asks the goddess why many of those in the Black Diaspora have to live in poverty, Yemaya refuses her "companionship" and "camaraderie" (171) and responds, "So what" (174)? Like Morrison's representation of God, Brand's Yemaya is not interested in them. For Brand, however, this does not result in dread and hopelessness but indicates that historical reassurance and a sense of home, both of which close space-time, are not the answers to putting life right in the Diaspora.

Brand asks, "Why consider the Door of No Return" (72)? Her answer is twofold: first "because it exists without prompting. It exists despite all efforts to obscure it or change it or reinterpret it" and second, because it "is ocular. It is propitious. From it one may reflect, grasp" (72). The door and its territory exist eternally because they represent the open space-time that is continually tamed or stalled by imaginations such as home and nation. The door, she writes, "signifies space and not land" (61). Consequently, it is not exclusive to those in the Black Diaspora. While its lack of stasis and rest is particularly apparent to them, as "a nervous temporariness is [their] existential dilemma, [their] descent quicker, [their] decay faster, [their] existence far more tenuous," everything continually moves through the door (61). The effect of the Door of No Return on black bodies, she asserts, "is not a case for exclusivity, only for a certain particularity" (48). Therefore, she describes the other European, English, Caribbean, African,

and Indian immigrants she sees as "thinking of their own rough doorways" (55) and later remarks of her friend's connection to the Holocaust in Germany, "More doors, no returns" (81). Brand points out that even the Black Diaspora's real doorways in the slave castles along the African coast materialized through the Door of No Return when the taxes paid to Spain at the end of the holy war in 1492 were used to finance Columbus's voyage (84). In fact, she insists, "*All* human effort seems to emanate from this door" (emphasis added 25). The difference is that those who can execute its trick continually close the door behind them and reproduce their constructions of place.

Second, however, she chooses the door over place because, like nation or community, "it is ocular," providing a location or perspective from which "one may reflect, grasp" (72). In other words, it too provides a way of seeing the world, although, and this is key, not a coherent one. This perspective, she writes, is "propitious" (72). Instead of to a closed space-time, it opens onto multiplicity and dynamism and is, therefore, generative and creative. While the door's "effects are unremitting," she writes, it "does not claim the human being unremittingly. All that emanates from it is not dread but also creativity" (42). Juxtaposing these two emanations in a section of the text where she is at Toronto's Caribana festival, she describes herself as leaning against the door, an ambiguous description that could imply that she is either up against another closed door or that she is leaning against the frame and looking out from the doorway. Fitting the ambiguity of her location, she feels both "hopeless pain" and "elation" (41). The pain is associated with the desire for nation that many festival goers show by wearing flags and revelling in the acknowledgment of various countries by the "DJ" (41). Elation, on the other hand, is associated with creativity, with the "shows of artistry and imagination" and the "ecstasy and abandon" of the "graceful intelligence of the body" (42). As she remarks, the original Caribbean carnivals were staged by slaves in order to demonstrate their difference from their owners as well as from their construction as means. Through their creative displays they "would mock the dress and parody the ways of slave owners" and "claim their souls as free from

the slavery of their bodies" (41). Such creativity can be generated only from within the geography of the door.

If, as she writes, "places and those who inhabit them are indeed fictions," creativity is vital to their construction and reconstruction (18). Brand is keenly aware of the power of dominant representation, its connection to the geography of knowledge production and its consequences on the black body. In "Narrating Space," Patricia Yaeger writes that the dominant group "partitions space in its own way, constructing a set of classifications that 'makes it possible for a certain type of non-critical thought simply to register the resultant 'reality' and accept it at face value'" (8). Thus, "the comforts of space invite political acts of forgetting" (24), creating what Yaeger calls a "spatial amnesia" that posits space as "a neutral, isometric grid" (8). Because space, time, and being are discursive constructions, one of the key methods of maintaining spatial amnesia is through aesthetics. However, seeing space in such a way, "plays tricks with desire" (29). Seen as a blank territory to be claimed, "space has strange effects:" "it unleashes desire" by presenting it "with a 'transparency' which encourages it to surge forth in an attempt to lay claim to an apparently clear field" (Lefebvre in Yaeger 29). Yet, "searching in vain for plentitude, desire must make do with words" (Lefebvre in Yaeger 29). The resulting "disillusion leaves space empty—an emptiness that words convey" so that "spaces are devastated—and devastating" (Lefebvre in Yaeger 29). To this, Yaeger responds, "why does desire bring us back to the image of devastation or ruin, to space as emptiness or void? ... Is this imagined devastation of space a class-based nightmare about democratic acts of levelling or 'massification'" (29)? These "strange effects of space" do leave us in "a great abyss," but, writes Yaeger, "the abyss is not empty" (30). "Spatial and temporal practices," she asserts, always express social content and "are always the subject of 'intense social struggle'" (30) in what she calls "spatial delirium" (8). Space is not transparent or blank but is always already "animated by local politics," or as I would put it using Massey's terminology, already multiply constructed by the coeval (30). Yaeger argues that her space is unrepresentable not only because of the "pressure of diverse social maps multiplying space" but also because of the

"pressure of what is hidden, encrypted, repressed or unspoken in local or global histories. And this repression is exacerbated by the quiddity and seeming impenetrability of created social space" supported as it is by aesthetics (25). As de Certeau argues, she too asserts that "repression of these local spirits" is "pervasive" but also that "'haunted places are the only ones people can live in'" (Yaeger 26). She calls for "a narrative commensurable with the strange effects of space and the need to invent a poetics of geography that will take on ... the archaeology of forgetting," the hauntedness of space (24).

Since space-time is connected to being, people, too, are narrowly constructed in order to support the archaeology of forgetting. At the beginning of *Map*, Brand gives numerous examples of the dominant representations of the black body that enable the production of it as means in a capitalist system, as "a common possession, a consumer item" (39). In one scene, both she and her neighbour, who is a white male, embrace the construction of the black male body as physical prowess by watching the National Basketball Association finals. Not only do these games and their black superstars continue the connection of black bodies to nature by appreciating them for their physicality rather than mental acuity, but they also objectify and commodify these players for profit, selling these bodies to fans who want to imagine their own bodies as overtly physical, but only momentarily. She describes:

> Each time Shaquille scores a basket, he, my neighbour, makes an ecstatic, painful sound as if he is entering Shaquille's body, inhabiting Shaquille's powerful arms, his beautiful head ... The sound my neighbour makes startles me. It is guttural yet it soars; it is sexual, it hits every register of passion. I stop watching the game; halt my own dance into Damon Stoudamire's bouncy legs, his speed and fakes. (38-39)

 This is, she notes, "entering the body valued" (39). The sports figure, while not a negative image in its own right, becomes one when it is one of the few common representations available. Such narrow representations serve to construct the black body as means as well as to overwrite other more political representations.

Brand asserts, "To live in the Black Diaspora is I think to live as a fiction – a creation of empires and also a self creation" (18). The black body, as it is created by empires is, as we have seen, associated with the wilderness, perceived as a blank space, and constructed as a means to an end. Yet, the black body is also a self-creation although such self-interpretation is repressed by the spatial amnesia that grants the dominant order the comforts of space. Without the comforts of space, for Diasporans, "art, perhaps music, perhaps poetry, perhaps stories, perhaps aching constant movement—dance and speed—are the only comforts" (26). These creative acts correlate with the geography of the door and are repressed by hegemonic aesthetics. As Brand writes, living in the Diaspora "is to apprehend the sign one makes" in these dominant systems, "yet be unable to escape it except in radiant moments of ordinariness made like art" (19). Brand takes up Yaeger's call for "a narrative commensurable with the strange effects of space and the need to invent a poetics of geography that will take on" the hauntedness of space (24). Understanding its power and its connection to space, time, and being, she refuses any position outside of representation and modifies aesthetics in order to transform the overriding context of space-time and, therefore, the construction of bodies, the black body in particular.

In summary, because our conceptions of space, time and being are connected, to transform bodies, we must also transform space-time. Brand posits an alternate geography, or conception of space-time, which opens to creativity and to transforming bodies, but because space, time, and being are also discursive constructions, she must also transform and posit an alternate theory of aesthetics. Traditional aesthetics and modes of representation support the dominant geography, its single space and linear time, as well as its construction of bodies.

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Brand, first, challenges traditional aesthetics with an anti-aesthetic and, second, she finds a means of representation that is, like the geography of the door, open, heterogeneous and lively. She creates a poetics of the geography of the door that can reveal spatial delirium and take on the archaeology of forgetting. The geography of knowledge production and its desire for a single perspective

depends on forms of representation that rely on the appearance of objectivity. These forms are connected to dominant theories of aesthetics, in particular theories of "the beautiful," that posit fine art as a-political and universal. Raymond Williams argues that traditional aesthetics, "with its specialized references to art, to visual appearance, and to a category of what is 'fine' or 'beautiful', ... at once emphasized and isolated subjective sense-activity as the basis of art and beauty as distinct, for example from social or cultural interpretations" (32). For example, in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful,* Edmund Burke defines "beauty" as that which stimulates love, defined circularly as "that satisfaction which arises to the mind upon contemplating anything beautiful," in opposition to that which stimulates desire, defined as "an energy of the mind, that hurries us on to the possession of certain objects," and which causes "violent and tempestuous passions, and the consequent emotions of the body" (*Philosophical*). Separated from passion or emotion, a rational, universal beauty, and the fine art that expresses it, becomes passive. In *Critique of Judgement*, Kant also separates beauty from desire by arguing that judgments of beauty are disinterested. In other words, the beautiful object is not beautiful because it stimulates pleasure or desire. Instead, the object must be beautiful on its own terms. Static and constant, beauty is once again separated from active and motivating desire and aesthetic judgments become impossibly a-political and universal (*Critique*). As Hal Foster remarks, in traditional aesthetics, "aesthetic experience exists apart, without 'purpose,' all but beyond history" (xv). Because of its objectivity, it must also be universal, and it is believed that "art can ... effect a world at once (inter)subjective, concrete and universal—a symbolic totality" or closed system (xv).

However, what is considered objectively beautiful is made to seem subjective when, in fact, that "subjective" judgment is ideological and upheld only through power. Simon Schama observes, "what lies beyond the window pane of our apprehension ... needs a design before we can properly discern its form, let alone derive pleasure from its perception. And it is culture, convention, and cognition that makes that design; that invests a retinal impression with the quality

we experience as beauty" (12). In one of the Burnt River passages, Brand demonstrates that sensibility is, as Schama argues, cultural. She asserts that the world is "liquid," and that "we make solidity with our eyes and the matter in our brains" (141). We "set the particles of forms together" by "collect[ing] each molecule, summing them up into flesh or leaf or water or air" (141). In order to make sense of this liquidity, "we accumulate information over our lives which bring various things into solidity, into view" (141). Thus sensory impressions are not objective and universal, but are cultural. Consequently, there are various ways to construct the world. She observes that she does not construct Burnt River in the same way as the town's local residents. She contends, "I feel that I do not share the same consciousness. There is some other rhythm these people grew up in, speech and gait and probably sensibility" (141). This multiple sensibility is extended to the landscape as she notes that she sees the surrounding scrub pine as covered in "leaves" and not needles (142).

This alternate sensibility implies an alternate construction of beauty. Brand, therefore, challenges Enlightenment aesthetics with an anti-aesthetic. Hal Foster re-defines "anti-aesthetic" as "*not* intended as one more assertion of the negation of art or of representation as such" (emphasis in original xv). This, he points out, was modernism's approach which "was marked by such 'negations,' espoused in the anarchic hope of an 'emancipatory effect' or in the utopian dream of a time of pure presence, a space beyond representation" (xv). But there is no space beyond representation. Instead of negation, Foster argues for an anti-aesthetic that "signals that the very notion of the aesthetic, its network of ideas" is to be questioned. The anti-aesthetic "marks a cultural position on the present" and thus "also signals a practice, cross-disciplinary in nature, that is sensitive to cultural forms engaged in a politic (e.g., feminist art) or rooted in a vernacular—that is, to forms that deny the idea of a privileged aesthetic realm" (xv). Primarily, it is "a critique which destructures the order of representations in order to reinscribe them" (xv). In order to represent those "radiant moments of ordinariness made like art" and create a poetics of the geography of the door (19),

Brand turns to the anti-aesthetic, destructures "the beautiful," and reinscribes it as constructed, multiple, and connected to motivating and shifting desires.

Brand describes two perspectives on beauty and relates each to desire, and constructions of place, subjectivity, and social relations. The first is the traditional aesthetic, described as "a search through ruins" (193). It is the conservative construction that is "diffused of sensuality and desire" (Eagleton 91), and correlates with Brand's first type of traveller and his or her construction of space-time and being. This conception of beauty has resulted in the canonization of a narrow selection of works that support the ruling class and its spatial amnesia and in the dismissal of works that reveal spatial delirium by demanding social or political interpretations. Far from being separated from desire, this conception of beauty is connected to a hegemonic, narrowed, and reproductive desire that supported colonialism and continues to support late capitalism's neo-colonialist globalization and its desire for plenitude. Brand states that this desire "clings to an endless list of objects," to "the face of television sets and movie screens" (195), and is "glaciered in assigned objects ... petrified in repetitive clichéd gestures" (195). She writes, "We live in a world filled with commodified images of desire" (195).

The beauty based on this desire results in a reproductive space-time and construction of place. Brand describes the modern global city of Toronto as a "parking lot of a civilization" (107). Downtown is a "disposable modernity" full of buildings on land that used to be parking lots and in a decade will be parking lots once again (109). Moving through the door, the place of the city is malleable but it is continually re-constructed and endlessly repeated in order to support the dominant subject and its social order: globalized capitalism. As Rashmi Varma writes, "the impact of a neoliberalizing economy [is] concentrated in the city's topography" through "capital's endless capacity to first invest in built environment and then destroy it in order to create newer opportunities for capital accumulation" (75).[87] This reproductive beauty "must be made over and over again" (Brand, *Map* 193). Thus while "a city" can be like the door in that it "is not

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[87] See also de Certeau's description of New York (91).

a place of origins" because it is a "place of transmigrations and transmogrifications," it never fully opens to its possibilities (110).

This combination of beauty and desire and its correlating construction of space-time connect to a conception of subjectivity that supports the dominant order. This desire's "repetition is tedious" and in the end, "we become the repetition despite our best efforts" (195). In other words, we are continually drawn into subject positions that allow desire for only that which propels the system. This subject is Brand's first type of traveller and is embroiled in the geography of knowledge production and self-other social relations. Listing the names of businesses on a Toronto street, Brand indicates the identity politics that support self-other social relations, including "Afro Sound," "Vince Gasparos Meats," "Wing Po Variety," and "Coffee Time," but ends the list ironically with "Universal Beauty Supply" (111). People come here "to become perfect," but here allows only one concept of perfection, which is based on a narrowed desire and supports the dominant social order (111).[88]

Brand counters traditional aesthetics with a second perspective on beauty. This perspective recognizes beauty as constructed, connected to multiple desires, and therefore as political. She compares the two by juxtaposing her perspective to that of Derek Walcott. Looking from a distance at the double peaks of the Pitons in St. Lucia, Walcott describes the landscape in a way that takes part in traditional aesthetics, its desire for plenitude, and the construction of bodies: they are described as the "breasts of a woman serenely rising" (Brand, *Map* 173). Brand also writes of the Pitons, but instead of looking from a distance, she walks the road between the mountain peaks. Unable to "resist seeing" (100), she sees instead the coeval and writes of the local politics describing a black woman that she encounters who is living in a state of extreme poverty and emptying her "po" on a hillside that overlooks one of the Caribbean's most luxurious resorts (173). While this would not typically be considered a "beautiful" image, to Brand it is a radiant moment worthy of representation. As she asserts, "*all artists* are involved

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[88] Such perfection is comparable to Tom Moylan's concept of co-opted utopia where utopian longing is channeled towards an image of an ideal consumerist lifestyle. See chapter one.

in their time" (emphasis added 30). Thus, representations by the canonized artists she mentions throughout her text, such as Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Durer, are neither neutral nor universal. For example, da Vinci and Durer perfected realist techniques that support both the Enlightenment subject and imperialism.[89] Because "all artists are involved in their time," Walcott's representation should be seen to be as material and political as Brand's in its silence surrounding the material conditions on the island and in its associations of woman with the land and both with the feminized beauty that is the subject of the male gaze. Therefore, Brand can argue that if Walcott's representation of the Pitons is beauty, then hers of the woman with the chamber pot is as well. Rather than by searching through ruins, a conservative image of aesthetics, this second type of beauty is found "in the face of ruin," in "wreckage," and in "clear-eyed dread" (193). Brand writes, "that too is beauty" (193). Beauty, she argues, is everywhere: "The ruin of history visited on a people does not wipe out the steadfastness of beauty. Not a naïve beauty but a hard one" (193). Instead of being reproductive, this beauty is productive: "Beauty, it seems, is constantly made" (193).

This beauty is connected to a broad complex of multiple and shifting desires. As an example, through a discussion of her reading of two non-canonical texts, she describes the development of her own complex of desires. As a child, her desire is typical. Having a sweet tooth, she seeks out her grandmother's locked drawer for its klim milk powder and sweet breads, but one day, at age eight, she finds instead a book, *The Black Napoleon*. A text about the Haitian Revolution, it is not like the canonical literature Brand is given to read at school, and it connects her to an alternate desire than the one that supports Eurocentric culture. She, however, finds it, too, is beautiful. The book "took [her] away from the world, from the small intrigues of sugar and milk to the pleasures and desolation of words on a page" (186). She describes the experience of reading it

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[89] On the relationship between realism and the subject, see John Barrell who argues that realist landscapes were used to legitimate the political authority of the sovereign subject who by "correctly" reading them could prove his ability to abstract and generalize, and, consequently, to rule (19). On the relationship between realism and imperialism, see W. J. T Mitchell, who, as discussed in chapter one, argues that realism supports imperialism by demonstrating the "superiority" of western methods of representation and thus legitimates Eurocentric authority (17).

as both "a mirror" and "an ocean" (187). Reading the book is connected to the ocean because it introduces her to an alternate trajectory that displaces Europe from the centre and opens her to the territory of the door. Thus, she describes that when she read the book, she was "like a fish falling into water" (182). As a mirror, the book, like watching the face of television and movie screens, draws her desire, but this desire is for an alternate subject as the book's depiction of empowered black people counters the dominant culture's construction of black subjecthood; it was, she says, waiting for her "to fall into its face" (184). The movement between desires, from the commodified desire for plenitude represented by the sweets to the alternative desire for empowerment, however, is not progressive but is cumulative. She confesses that she still returned to the drawer to steal sugar, but she had "lost the idea that desire was plain" (187).

At thirteen, she is drawn again by her senses to read the forbidden *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Books, she states, "ask us to embody" and take "us across borders of all kinds," so when the eight girls who shared the only copy "entered the book" like anyone else "for the purposes of identifying and enacting," they were instead "flung apart … disintegrated … abstracted" (190-191). Brand explains that the girls could have identified with either Mellors, "the dark, brooding consciousness," and/or Constance, the "light," "liminal" woman (190). She writes that for them, "this paradigm of the canon was in conflict" (190). Unable to singularly determine which character or trait with which to identify, they identify with all of them: "We were she and he …. We were willing, eager to be her …. Yet we recognized the cleavage, the primitive in his cottage at the bottom of the garden. … We were him. We, on an island at the bottom of the New World, we too were representations of the primitive" (190). Thus, she emphasizes, "We emerged having reconstructed the novel into a more complex, more fluid sense of desire" (191). In this complex web of relationships, there can be no easy construction of self and other. Referring to both books, she writes, "the emotions they spoke of were perhaps contradictory to what one might simplistically call desire. But desire was disclosed as a complex. There is a range of experience within the space which is called desire" (192).

Unlike the beauty based on the hegemonic desire that supports unilinear space-time and constructs place as depicted in downtown Toronto, the beauty based on this complex of desires supports the space-time dynamic and the geography of the door. National and urban space shifts from being constantly reproduced to being multiply and dynamically constructed and subject to social relations and power. Brand says of the door that it "opens all nationalisms to their imaginative void. One stands on a street corner in Ocho Rios or in a marketplace in Montevideo or a newspaper kiosk in Chicago or Sofia, one stands there and imagines another territory, another history, and in that moment the fake emblems fall away" (49). Further, she demonstrates that what are considered to be the icons of civilization, modern global cities, may be seen by others as primitive wildernesses. She describes how an immigrant from Ethiopia, the region mapped by Hiob Ludolf as a wilderness in 1683, sees Toronto: "I come from one of the oldest cities in the world. The oldest civilization. They build a parking lot and they think that is civilization" (102). The binary division between civilization and wilderness becomes subjective and multiple so that either everything or nothing is civilized (or wilderness).

The natural environment also shifts. No longer a blank space to be written over, the land becomes one of the numerous trajectories that make up space-time. Brand presents this alternate perspective in her description of the coast of Dominica. In this section, Maracas, Trinidad, from *No Language is Neutral*, shifts to Calibishie, Dominica, another rocky shoreline. However, unlike in *No Language is Neutral* where Brand momentarily reconstructs the wilderness in order to create a positive articulation of her subjectivity and find a sense of home, here the natural environment itself is immersed in its own trajectory through dynamic space-time. She describes her impression of Calibishie as being "ochre and blue-black and nothing you can call rock but if you can imagine before rock, molten obelisk, walls of volcanic mud jagging out into the ocean, and the ocean, voluminous, swift and chaotic" (135).

Importantly, this scene, like many others in the text,[90] happens at twilight. In twilight is an image of transition and of the negation of the Enlightenment, its universals, and its dream of unity and harmony that excludes the black body by constructing it as a means to an end. Rather than harmonious, the sound of twilight in Calibishi is "ululating" (136). Further, in her discussion of the Babylonian map, Brand, like Charles Bricker, associates twilight with unmapped space (16). Whereas these spaces instil dread in those who require totality and rationality, Brand embraces the twilight. Rejecting the geography of knowledge production, she describes herself as "eating up kilometres on [her] way to where it is always twilight" (98). In *Inventory*, a personified twilight says "I / understand perfection [is] … immaculate possibility" (79), countering the perfection and narrowed subject position sought by the dwellers of the reproductive city—that "Universal Beauty Supply" (111).

This combination of beauty and desire and its correlating reconstruction of the space-time matrix enable a shift in the construction of bodies. The subject becomes interrelational, resulting in a third type of traveller. Looking at a variety of Brand's texts, critics have begun to examine Brand's representation of subjectivity as interrelational.[91] In her examination of Brand's *Inventory*, Diana Brydon posits the most extended analysis in this vein arguing that in *Inventory*, self-recognition involves complicity and co-option. In a conversation with Brydon, Brand indicates the relevance of Edward Said's summary of Gramsci to her poetry collection: "The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory … therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile an inventory" (994). In *Inventory*, Brand compiles such a list and, Brydon notes, "the traces deposited within her being reach inward and outward" (994). Brand moves

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[90] For example, Brand's reading Galeano (52), Prevert (53), Césaire (58), Coetzee and Morrison (133), visiting the Pitons (172), deciding against belonging (85), watching other immigrants in their own doorways (55), feeling the presence of the door (59), seeing the man in Dam Square who will become her character, Adrian, (211), and deciding to be a poet (58).

[91] For example, Maia Joseph writes that "Brand articulates a conceptualization of relationality" that is characterized "by implication and openness" (87). See also Ellen Quigley who states Brand "jettisons both the self and the other" (48).

from a "clear-cut politics of resistance to the more difficult politics of recognizing co-option and complicity" (996). In other words, "*Inventory* shifts the terrain from the personal (with its focus on the autonomous individual as separate from others) to the intimate (that is, to the co-constitutions of subjectivity, image, word, and world and to a self developing through relations)" (997). As intimate, the subject is seen as "always already relational. Unlike the personal, intimacy requires openness to others" (997).

Brydon argues, "The implication of each in the other poses human relations in terms of complex entanglements that twine and cut in multiple directions. It implies a theory of relation potentially quite different than that of Self and Other" (998). Social relations based on self and other rely on an ethics of individual rights and imagine the subject as an individual in competition with other individuals whose own choices may restrict him or her. Such social relations "deman[d] only a minimum moral commitment: a willingness to consider the needs of others in conjunction with one's own" (Gardner 194). Catherine Villanueva Gardner argues that if we reject the idea "that moral activity is comprised of decision making procedures between potentially competitive abstract individuals," we can open to the idea that "human ethical life and action occurs within a *web* of relationships" between "diverse humans living in varied social/historical contexts" (194). As Brand writes in *Map*, "Aren't we all implicated in each other" (166).[92] Therefore, Gardner argues, "ethical activity

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[92] It is important to note, however, that this shared implication in each other does not result in another closed structure or in a single structure changing unilinearly. I am not the first to connect Brand's texts with the discipline of human geography. Diana Brydon turns to human geography to show how Brand "engages explicitly with the challenges posed to poetic witness by ... pervasive media technologies ... in ways that compel rethinking the nature of accountability, complicity, and belonging" (991). In addition, cultural geographer Katherine McKittrick employs some of Brand's works as a part of her discussion of "what black women's historical-contextual locations bring to bear on our present geographic organization" (xxvi). However, both Brydon and McKittrick end up positing a globalized humanism: a "re-visioned humanism in relation to planetary space" (Brydon 999), or as McKittrick puts it, "our present world order" and "single world history" (136). This dissertation extends the connection between human geography and Brand's work, not only by examining different texts but also by connecting Brand to different theories of geography, theories that refuse this kind of closed structure and posit instead a space where "there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished" (Massey, *For* 11). This space is "an ever-shifting geometry of power and signification," and is inherently dynamic: always in process, never closed (*Space* 3). In this space, no place, not even

[would no longer be] restricted to the making of rational choices" in the search for plenitude and would open to other desires and values such as "cooperation, friendship, love" (194).

Depicted as a place "where spatial narratives meet up" (Massey, *For* 139), Dominica provides an obvious example of this interrelational subject. Brand describes a Dominican woman as having "the whole world … in her face:"

> 3,000 years of Ciboney, then Arawak, then Carib canoeing north from South America, before it was South America, 1,000 AD. In her face all the battles against the French and English for two centuries, the hit and hit and run and the intractable mountains that kept this island Carib until 1763; until settling to the west and east, they crept into her face, too. In her face, now African, which people? Ga? Ashanti? Ibo? (137)

The woman's exterior reflects the unpredictability of space and the multiple trajectories that have come together in the place currently called "Dominica." In her, these trajectories have left traces without an inventory. There is no single origin and social relations shift from self-other to intimate. In this imagination, a map does not delineate territory and divide environmentally-determined nationalities but becomes "a life of conversations about a forgotten list of irretrievable selves" (224). The emphasis on roots and origins is erased and, Brand quotes Wilson Harris, "it is not a question of rootlessness but of the miracle of roots, the miracle of a dialogue with eclipsed selves" (219). Importantly, Brand calls her "sister," establishing her own unknown inventory and lack of origins.[93] If any place could articulate such a subject, it could only be the noplace of the door's passageway that looks out onto the space-time dynamic.

This interrelational subject, counters the geography of knowledge production's divisions between self and other and civilization and wilderness, and

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the planet, can be seen as "closed, coherent, integrated as authentic, as 'home,' a secure retreat" or timeless origin (Massey, *Space* 5-6). These multiple, shifting, interacting trajectories also counter any unilinear transformation and reject the idea of a single system that changes over time. Even further, unlike Massey who turns to a construction of place as a momentary articulation of identity, Brand refuses even these momentary imagined closures and turns wholeheartedly to the noplace of the passage.

[93] See her description of her grandfather as from Montserrat as well as Trinidad and his lineage as Carib, African, "indefinite," and forgotten (222-223).

posits a third type of traveller, similar to Massey's outwardlooking traveller. For Massey, travel is not "'the voyagers of discovery' setting out across the oceans" or "Cortés trudging across the neck of (what was to become) Mexico" (117). In these versions of travel, the "very surface, of land or ocean, becomes equated with space itself" (117). She describes her commute by rail from London to Milton Keynes and asserts that thinking of travel in this way would produce space as a closed "landscape," as the view out the window, "the surface of the earth, a given" (117). It also "immobilize[s]" and "suspend[s] ... the place at the other end of the journey," which is imagined to be "awaiting our arrival" (120). Neither, however, is travel a movement across space as a historical palimpsest, "a product of a multitude of histories whose resonances are still there" (118). It is, she argues, "not just buried histories at issue here, but histories still being made now. Something more mobile than is implied by an archaeological dig down through the surfaces of the space of today. Something more temporal than the notion of space as a collage of historical periods (eleventh-century castle abutting nineteenth-century railroad station)" (118). So, she challenges:

> Take the train again, from London to Milton Keynes. But this time you are not just travelling through space or across it … Since space is the product of social relations you are also helping, although in this case in a fairly minor way, to *alter* space, to participate in its continuing production. You are part of the constant process of the making and breaking of links which is an element in the constitution of you, yourself, of London ..., of Milton Keynes ..., and thus of space itself. You are not just travelling through space or across it, you are altering it a little. Space and place emerge through active material practices. (118)

This process is not just spatial, but temporal as well. Time cannot stay still or move backwards, so when Massey arrives in Milton Keynes, it has moved on since she left, as will have London when she returns (118).

Thinking of space and travelling in this way, argues Massey, acknowledges the objects and people encountered as ongoing in their own trajectories. Massey's train transects innumerable on-going histories. Thus,

> recognizing all this is impossible. Every train journey (and that would be the least of it) would become a nightmare of guilty admission of all the stories the fullness of whose coeval existence you did not manage to recognize … as the train sped on. What is at issue is not this but the change in perspective … the imaginative opening up of space. It is to refuse the flipping of the imaginative eye from modernist singular temporality to postmodern depthlessness; to retain at least some sense of contemporaneous multiple becomings. (120)

Massey's traveller is an intimate subject who develops, not behind closed doors and frontiers but through social relations which are not self-other, not the meeting up of "potentially competitive abstract individuals," but the recognition of "a web of relationships" in "varied social/historical contexts" (Gardner 194). Massey writes, "We read so often of the conquest of space, but what was/is at issue is also the meeting up with others who are also journeying, also making histories. And also making geographies and imagining space: for the coeval look back, ignore you, stand in a different relation to your 'here and now'" (120).

Like Massey's traveller, Brand understands the space through which she travels as subject to multiple desires, immersed in relations of power, and composed of multiple histories "still being made" (Massey, *For* 118). Similar to Massey's train ride, Brand describes her journey on the Granville bus in Vancouver. The Door of No Return having opened the national space of Canada and the urban space of Vancouver to their "imaginative void," Brand looks out the window and observes a space that is dynamically and multiply constructed and subject to social relations and power: "This road along which the bus travels may have been a path hundreds of years ago. This jutting of land through which this path travels has lost its true name. It is now surrounded by English Bay, False Creek, and Burrard Inlet. And Granville Street, whose sure name has vanished, once was or was not a path through" (219). Any sense of unilinear time and space-as-surface is impossible. In addition, as Massey argues, the issue here is not just that of lost and buried histories but "of histories still being made now," and Brand demonstrates her awareness of such histories by describing the other

passengers on the bus, a location "where a ragged mirage of histories comes into a momentary realization" (221). Of these histories, she focuses on the four who are most attuned to the Door, who "all feign ignorance at the rupture in mind and body, in place, in time, [but who] all feel it" (221): hers, her travelling companion's, the black bus driver's and a Salish woman's. The Salish woman "might have known these names [that have vanished] several hundred years ago" but today is lost in the spatial amnesia of what is "the latest redrawing of old paths" (219/220). Brand describes: "She has not been careless, no. No, she has tried to remember, she has an inkling, but certain disasters have occurred and the street, the path in her mind, is all rubble" (220). Additionally, while the black bus driver knows the current redrawing of the city, he is on a trajectory that started on the other side of the Door, Brand imagines, moved on through the Caribbean, the United States, and into Canada. These four continue on in trajectories that are still being made.

Brand can also be seen as the third type of traveller in her depictions of a series of men she meets on her journeys. Like the passengers on the bus, these men all feel the ruptures of the Door, signified by wounds, and each is acknowledged to be on his own trajectory in his own social-historical context. Brand sees the first man, whose arm has been wounded by a cutlass in a fight, when she is a child on the beach in Guaya, and she spends some time describing Guaya's and the man's socio-historical circumstances and continuing trajectory (11). She meets the second in a shebeen in Langa, a black township in South Africa, described as "the kind of place where you want to drink in the middle of the day, perhaps all day long, dreary, such a hot, dry wasteland" (95). This man is compared to the third, who walks into a rum shop in Dominica (95). Brand writes: "The Dominican village was not Langa, but you can understand how you would need to drink in these places. Places where the physical work of collecting each devastating day cakes the body and makes it bleed" (96). Both have "manic smile(s)," and both also have wounded hands (96). Finally, there is the drug addict in Amsterdam who stumbles into Dam Square searching for a fix. His wound is not physical but psychological (although as her character Adrian in *At*

the Full and Change of the Moon, he will gouge out his own eyes). Brand writes that even when she was a child and saw the first man in Guaya, she understood the wound was "much deeper than the physical, a wound which somehow erupted in profound self-disappointment, self-hatred, and disaffection" (11).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

The question becomes how to represent such beauty? How to represent geography, history, and the body, or space, time, and being, differently? As Yaeger calls for, Brand needs an alternate narrative and she turns to a narrative that is representative of utopian discourse.

Countering the typical connection between women and beauty, Brand sees these men as beautiful and as deserving to be represented.[94] In particular, the man in Dam Square catches her eye in his "radiant moments of ordinariness made like art" (19) and will become the basis of her character Adrian. Noticing him in Dam Square, she wants to represent him, but she struggles with this desire. Her representation could not only take part in the closure of space-time that supports spatial amnesia but could also take part in the commodification and objectification of the black body. The drug addict is one of the common representations of the black body and takes part in its construction as moral transgression. In this kind of representation, the desire at the heart of interpretation is "to envy, to want to become" (194)—as it was for her and her neighbour as they watched basketball. She asks, "What is it that I wanted to pour myself into—his grief, his cold sweat, his life uncertain of its next step? And I wanted to do it only for the moment it took to put it on a page, to feel its texture, and then run back quickly to my uncomplicated hotel room and my as-yet-uncomplicated page" (194).

However, as the intimate subject, she refuses to see her environment, places and people, as a blank space to be mapped and overwritten. She writes of her travels in Amsterdam that, unlike those who mapped the New World, she

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[94] Of Guaya and the fight she witnessed, she writes, "even beauty was brutal" (11). Of the men in Langa and Dominica, she writes, "in any ... rural rum shop, shebeen, ... beauty walks in" (193). And finally, of the man in Dam square, "his anguish was beauty" (194).

"cannot reflect, question, demonize, or assimilate the monuments of Europe" because "the mythology is already known, already in place" (209). Thus, she does not describe what she is to write over, her page, as blank, but as "as-yet-uncomplicated." Her representations complicate rather than take part in the dominant mapping of space-time. As she says, "To desire may also be to complicate" (194).

In "Finding a Compass," she demonstrates that it is only once she understands representation as utopian, as open, heterogeneous, and lively, that she takes part in writing. As she states, "books leave certain sounds, a certain pacing ... They leave much more than the words. Words can be thrown together. It is their order and when they catch you – their time," to which should be added, their space (191). The section concludes with the image of Brand, once again, awake and reading at 4:45 a.m. This time, she is reading Aimé Césaire and her reading is depicted as producing meaning according to her complex of desires. She describes how "in the room at 4:45 a.m. Aimé Césaire is writing" and later at 4:50 a.m "reading this, [she] decided to be a poet. Césaire is still writing" (58). Césaire's text, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, is representative of utopian discourse in that it refuses to smooth over contradictions, undermines representational categories, and demands a productive stance. In the excerpts Brand cites, Césaire himself is dreaming of forcing language to describe the conditions and people of Martinique. Brand translates a part of his long poem: "I would have words vast enough to contain you and you, earth, tense drunken earth" (58). Because Césaire's text is productive, reading and writing occur simultaneously and, Brand argues, both are acts of desire. "Writing," Brand asserts, "is an act of desire, as is reading" (192). As acts of desire, representation and interpretation are dependent on our conception of beauty. We translate or construct the liquidity of the world and of texts according to our desires. She writes, "desire is an act of reading, of translation" (192). Further, "to write," says Brand, "is to be fully involved in this act of translation" (193). Representation can reinforce the dominant desire for space, time and being or it can complicate it, as

does Césaire, by actively reflecting a complex of desires.[95] Significantly, in between these two moments, the door has appeared. Césaire's productive writing and her productive reading create a text that figures the conceptually unformulizable and provokes an unconceptualizable consciousness of the absent understanding of totality. Brand is located in the Door's passageway, indicating her perspective onto the space-time dynamic: "At 4:45 a.m. the Door of No Return is visible. Bowed to a page, the pen moves in scars. One's body emerging naked through its rough portal. One can feel the stone of its sides with one's hands, and that is how I felt at 4:45 a.m." (59). Brand can take part in representation because the pen that marks the page, "moves in scars," or opens to ruptures in space-time like the door.

Brand's turn to utopian discourse to create "a narrative commensurable with the strange effects of space and ... a poetics of geography that will take on ... the archaeology of forgetting" (Yaeger 24)" can best be seen by looking at the entire narrative of *A map to the Door of No Return.* Like Césaire's text, it refuses to smooth over contradictions, undermines representational categories and completion, and demands a productive stance. Its various voices and focalizers create a back and forth movement of play between multiple trajectories and discursive constructions, figuring the conceptually unformulizable space-time dynamic's absent understanding of any totality by allowing for multiple ideologies in utopian frames (where utopia refers to non-dominant trajectories and reality constructions) that work against and alongside hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place.

Brand disperses examples of ideological discourses throughout the text ranging from excerpts from the journals of slave traders (22-24) and realist artists Albrecht Durer (29-30) and Leonardo da Vinci (135, 139), to newspaper articles

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[95] Note, however, that while Césaire is writing against colonization and about the contradictions of being an African-Caribbean man, he takes part in both national and identity politics through his roles in Martinique's politics and the negritude movement (Davis 1-3) and his poetry depicts land as female. He describes the island, as "great vulva raised to the sun" (45) and his street as "the private parts of the village which extends to the right and left" (43). Perhaps this is also why reading Césaire spurs Brand to become a poet and become involved in "the act of translation" and further complicate the archaeology of forgetting and spatial amnesia (192).

and radio broadcasts (46-47, 65-67, 83-84), written maps (200-201), and non-fictional books such as Bricker's *Landmarks of Mapmaking* (17-19). These are joined throughout the narrative by selections from texts by polemical poets such as Prévert (53), Césaire (58, 170), Neruda (99-103, 108), Muriel Rukeyser (109), Joy Harjo (192-193), and from obviously ideologically-aware autobiographers, cartographers, philosophers and critics, such as Eduardo Galeano (52), Ezio Bassani (196), David Turnbull (16), Chantal Mouffe (56), and Wilson Harris (219). These excerpts are joined by her own anecdotes as well as by her own written map, discussed below. The juxtapositions between these multiple texts both highlight the constructed and fictional nature of representation and create a utopian discourse. The discontinuous narrative represents the experience of existing within and among contradictory ideologies which are kept open in their continual negation and neutralization of one another, creating a negative dialectic. This text is like the world in that it figures a world that is conceptually unformulizable and cannot be known in the abstract or represented in its totality. It leaves us in the crisis of representation, and yet, somehow, also represents it.

Brand also figures such a space-time matrix and its representation of the black body through her own written map, the oral ruttier. Unlike Western cartography or Jameson's aesthetic of cognitive mapping, her map is a utopian not an ideological discourse in that it is a fluid, productive representation of the noplace of the space-time dynamic. Following a section where she defines the *portolan* as "a written description of the course along which ships sailed," the section entitled "Finding a Compass" appears to follow Jameson's history of cartography that ends with his call to create a cognitive map that can represent the postmodern sublime in some kind of totality and once again allow for intentionality (52). As I outlined in chapter one, Jameson, too, starts with the *portulans* (as he spells it), or pre-cartographic itineraries (90). The introduction of the compass, however, leads to the ability to coordinate "existential data ... with unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality" (90). The compass grants an abstract point of view from which to conceptualize longitude and latitude and create cartographic maps. Finally, with the revelation that the world was round

and not flat, cartography encounters a crisis of representation: how to represent a curved surface on a flat chart. The crisis is solved when the map is replaced with the globe as "properly representational" (92). Postmodernism and hyperspace, argues Jameson, leave us once again in a crisis of representation. He asserts that it is not that we cannot understand the totality in the abstract, but that we do not have the means to represent it. What we need is an aesthetics of global cognitive mapping that can do what the globe did in the fifteenth century: "endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system" and achieve some new mode of representing "the world space of multinational capital" so that "we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion" (92). Jameson is searching for a way to combat late capitalism; however, he remains locked within its geographical imagination as can be seen by his insistence on a totality, a "global system" or "world space," that can be fully represented (92).

Brand, too, moves from the *portolan* to the compass in "Finding a Compass" and then on to a long section entitled "Maps." However, she seems to present another perspective on Jameson's historical narrative. From her perspective, the *portolan* of Tobago, with its soundings of the bays, "command of the oceans," and directional statements creates the unrepresentable rather than combats it (201-202). It is documents such as this, and the geographical imagination behind them, that brought her ancestors to the Caribbean. Brand instead "impugn[s] the whole theory of directions" (203).

As the third type of traveller, Brand has the noplace of the Door instead of a home which is more suited to a kamal instead of a compass and an oral ruttier instead of a cartographic map. She rejects the directional compass, with its dependence on a single point from which all else is fixed and located. Instead of a navigational aid that would give her a way of connecting her position to some kind of totality, her "compass" is her shifting desires. She says of *The Black Napoleon* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, "these two books gave me a refractory hunger. Their register and compass lead me to all other books" (191). Rather than

connecting her to the totality through static maps and closed representation, this "compass" leaves her in the territory of the door. Thus, there are no globes in Brand's text, as even globes are not "properly representational" but are subjective and rhetorical in that they still employ the Eurocentric conventions of longitude, latitude, and the cardinal directions, as well as still emphasize the northern hemisphere by determining which point on a sphere is consistently found at the top. Instead of moving on to the globe, after her discussion of the compass, she goes on to connect itineraries, cartographic maps, and closed representation to nation, origins, belonging, home, and the static space-time and construction of place that these require; all of which she rejects in favour of the door.

However, cartographic maps and globes are only two of the many ways to construct space-time, as can be seen in Jay Levenson's *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, an examination of the various forms of representation that were co-present at the time when the globe was invented. Instead of to the compass, she turns to the kamal, a navigational instrument that was used by navigators from the Middle and Far East (Levenson 91). Unlike the compass that locates the user according to his or her relationship to magnetic north and within set coordinates, the kamal locates its user in relation to numerous moving stars in both hemispheres (Levenson 91). Brand's shifting desires act more like the stars needed for the kamal than the fixed point required for the compass.

Along with the kamal goes a form of representing space-time that is also fluid, the oral ruttier, defined by Brand as "a long poem containing navigational instructions which sailors learned by heart and recited from memory. The poem contained the routes and tides, the stars and maybe the taste and flavour of the waters, the coolness, the saltiness: all for finding one's way at sea" (212). Because it is both poetic and oral, the ruttier is a more useful navigational aid for a traveller who sees both place and representation as multiple and dynamic. As poetry, its figurative speech counters the singular "literal meaning" and creates "ambiguous dispositions" and "tremulous image[s]," as de Certeau says of poetic tropes (100). As oral, it is contingent and alterable. Yet in *Map*, Brand, who does not desire to be completely outside of representation, writes the oral, records it on

paper, and as Herb Wyile writes in *Speculative Fictions*, writing the oral "is a perilous task" (186). Speaking of oral histories rather than geographies, Wyile observes that written history is sometimes countered by "the contingency, flexibility, and performativity associated with oral forms" (162). Yet, doing so "can be symptomatic of a postmodern nostalgia for a kind of prelapsarian oral state" (186). However, when it "does not translate into a desire to somehow be 'out of' writing" it can "suggest the need for a contingent and contestable, rather than authoritative, historiography" (186). Wyile's argument can be equally applied to oral geographies and doing so I would argue that Brand employs the form of the oral ruttier not to escape representation but to suggest a "contingent and contestable" geography or space-time.

Fittingly, Brand's oral ruttier is a map of the sea, the Black Atlantic. She entitles it "Ruttier for the Marooned in the Diaspora" (213). Typically, maps are titled according to their subject matter. For example, one could have a map of the Atlantic Coastline or a Satellite Altimetry Map of the Atlantic Ocean Floor. Brand, however, entitles her map according to its audience, implying that the same place can be mapped differently. Overall, her ruttier is an abysmal account of life in the Black Atlantic, where "the body burns with longing for everything and nothing" (216), "coherence is incoherence, provocations of scars and knives" (218), and black bodies are mired in a stalled time, "wander[ing] as if they have no century, as if they can bound time" (213). However, there are two consequences to being subject to this space: first, these bodies are denied a coherent space and time resulting in wounds and ruptures, but second, these bodies demonstrate that hegemonic space and time are constructed, not *a priori* conditions. Those in the Diaspora counter unilinear history by "subdivid[ing] stories," and figuring "uncommunicated undone plots" (214), and they also counter space as surface, carrying "consignments of compasses whose directions tilt, skid off known maps" (214).

Once again, there are two reactions to this kind of space-time which are foreshadowed by the ambiguity of the title of her map. "Marooned" is typically defined as to be left in despair in the middle of the sea. This is the meaning for

those in her audience who are Brand's second type of travellers, immersed in the
geography of knowledge production and traditional aesthetics. This traveller
remains a "creation of empires" (18). For these Diasporans, creative "virtuosity
eludes them," and they find themselves in a state of dread within the territory of
the door (217). Embedded within the cult of the individual and an ethics based on
rights, they remain solitary rather than intimate subjects, "cast away to themselves
only" and, therefore, to "gaping limbs and topographies" or disabling
constructions of both their bodies and place (217). For them, the world is "mute
chirping" because "ululating twilight" is "unvisiting" (217). However,
"marooned" could also be used to describe a slave who has escaped the
construction and use of his or her black body. This is the meaning intended for
those who turn to creativity and self-interpretation instead of dread. These
Diasporans are, Brand writes, "gone, cast off and wandering wilfully. This is
intention as well as throwaway. This is deliberate and left. Slipstream and sailing"
(215). Instead of being eluded by virtuosity, they embrace the ululations of
twilight, or the "describable and indescribable" (136) noise of the space-time
dynamic. When they "finger a piece of string across a piece of wood and a
tremolo attacks a room, toccata erupt, coloratura saturate the walls" (217). These
quavering, rapid successions of notes demonstrate their virtuosity, and Brand
describes them as "their lost and found dereliction" (217). This time, they
intentionally abandon home and desire to remain in the passageway of the door.
They are Brand's third type of traveller, immersed in the geography of the door
and Brand's anti-aesthetic, with its alternate subject and construction of place.

Perhaps speaking of herself, she writes of one, "She undwells solitudes,
liquors' wildernesses" (215). Brand's anti-aesthetic expressed in a utopian
discourse undwells "liquors' wildernesses" (141). "Liquor" likely refers to the
"liquidity" of the world from which "we make solidity with our eyes and the
matter in our brains" (141). The placement of the apostrophe on "liquors'"
indicates a complex multiplicity of such constructions. She undwells any
wildernesses by rejecting the civilization/wilderness binary that is the basis of the
geography of knowledge production and embracing the geography of the door

where either everything or nothing is wilderness.[96] Rejecting the
civilization/wilderness binary also undwells the solitudes of self-other social
relations and denies an ethics based on individual rights replacing them instead
with the intimate subject that does not completely withdraw behind closed doors
and frontiers but opens out to others. The subject shifts from a self opposed to its
others (which supports the concept of wilderness, as well as civilization, home
and nation) to a subject radically entwined within multitudes and ethics transform
from individual rights to care, concern, friendship and responsibility for others as
well as for the construction of space.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

In *No Language is Neutral*, Brand's re-presentation of Maracas, Trinidad,
"still[s] the waters" of the postmodern sublime and "domesticate[s] dread," as
Derek Gregory says of the landscape school (*Geographical* 143), by positing a
coherent landscape (although doubly so). In doing so, she creates binary and
coherent places and overwrites difference, that of the natural environment, of the
settler-invaders, and the members of her community. Although posited only
momentarily, this claim to readability is connected to discourses such as
cartography and geometry that enframe the world and "resonates uncomfortably
with the transparency assumed by imperial visioning" (Jacobs 10). Gregory
argues such a response is Kantian in that it turns to reason "to calm the dread and
anxiety felt in the face of an absence of order, totality, and representation" (143).

In *Map*, Brand refuses such a Kantian response and instead remains a
witness "to the unrepresentable" (*Geographical*, Gregory 143). She rejects any
coherent community, refuses to posit nature as a blank space to be written over,
and rejects constructing, even if only momentarily, the stalled space-time of a
home place. Instead, in order to "avoid the pull of the communal" that can "lock
you into certain responses" (Interview with Christian Olbey 91), she turns to the
space-time dynamic and, as she says, "the discomfort of throwing everything up
in the air in order to see the possibilities that might become available" (Interview
with Pauline Butling 84). She trades the home place for the passageway of the

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[96] Wilderness, as we saw in chapter one, is always a cultural construction.

door. Consequently, neither women nor colonial peoples can be connected to a stalled and depolitized place. Her desire is for, and therefore her construction based on, the "babble of sound" or ululation and her "landscape" remains "random noise, empty signifiers whirling and clashing" (*Geographical*, Gregory 150). It is, as Gregory calls for, "a critical human geography" that "reaches out from one body to another" and requires attention be paid to "the junctures and fissures between many different histories" (*Geographical* 416). Space becomes heterogenous, place a heterotopian noplace, and time heterochronic. This unrepresentable space-time is figured through utopian discourse.

Conclusion

"The Road Knows Wherever You Find Yourself You Are:"
Rattling the Bars of Space, Time, and Place

This thesis draws on the disciplinary perspectives of postmodern cultural geography and utopian studies and applies them to the study of place in Canadian women's literature. In doing so, it extends all three areas of study. First, it extends postmodern cultural geography, as well as the cultural theory on which it draws. Postmodern cultural geographers such as Doreen Massey and Derek Gregory, and cultural theorists such as Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau, either argue that their conceptions of a socially-constructed, multiple, non-totalizable space-time dynamic cannot be represented or call for some as-yet-unknown way to represent such a space-time. As chapters three through six have argued, Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand figure such a space-time by deploying utopian discourse. However, in making this argument, this thesis also extends theories of utopian discourse. In these theories, utopia is posited in a dialectical relationship with ideology. However, while thinkers in this area, such as Karl Mannheim, Paul Ricoeur, and David Harvey, understand space-time as constructed, multiple, and dynamic, they posit either a totalized constellation of space-time trajectories that can be comprehended and manipulated or a binary struggle for domination over a single space. A more complex utopian discourse is found in Michel Foucault's theory of heterotopias which, in a way that is similar to postmodern cultural geography, sees space as heterogeneous sets of social relations and sees time as heterochronic. While Foucault separates heterotopias from literary utopias, heterotopias function like utopian discourse in that they posit multiple trajectories and reality constructions working against and alongside hegemonic constructions of space, time, and place. Foucault's heterotopic space is also seen as

unrepresentable; however, Fredric Jameson's utopian discourse and its negative dialectic can be modified to figure such a geographical imagination. Its negative dialectic can acknowledge the numerous reality constructions and trajectories of the coeval without narrowing space-time to a knowable totality and/or positing a single space that develops unilinearly. It returns to Mannheim's conception of multiple constructions of reality and Ricoeur's and Harvey's conceptions of space as fully constructed yet discards Mannheim's paradox and desire for totalization and complete understanding and avoids Ricoeur's and Harvey's singularly progressive space.

Most importantly, however, this thesis expands on the study of place in Canadian women's literature. As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis examines how Brossard and Brand have answered to the issues set out in Linda Warley, John Clement Ball, and Robert Viau's "Mapping the Ground." Because its conception of space, time, and place can be applied generally, this thesis not only continues Canadian literature's examination of the representation of the natural environment, but also examines Canadian literature's representation of urban space and, as Warley, Ball, and Viau call for, helps to address Canadian literature's lack of "critical conversations" about "cities and city life" ("Mapping" n.p.). Further, while it continues to conceive of identity as connected to place, the connection is not through environmental determinism or any regionally shared mental construction of place. Instead, it takes into account how "recent developments in cultural theory, cultural geography, and postcolonial and gender studies have encouraged new ways of articulating the intersections of language, space, time, and identity" ("Mapping"). Identity is here connected to the way in which place is constructed, to our geographical imaginations and their conceptions of space and time, and to our language and narrative forms. For Brand and Brossard, this means that identity is connected to heterotopic, dynamic noplaces which are utopian in the sense that they provide alternatives to a dystopian and totalizing ideological construction of place. Further, they are expressed through the deployment of utopian discourse. It is in this way that, Brand and Brossard have found "ways of describing the experiences of human

beings who are located in particular spaces that are neither static nor singular but can be imagined as networks of diverse social relations that are constantly in process" ("Mapping" n.p.).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

We now return to examine Dionne Brand's Burnt River passages, which were mentioned in detail in the introduction, and demonstrate how they figure postmodern geography's conception of space-time in a revised utopian discourse. In these passages, Brand depicts herself to be, once again, caught in the geography of knowledge production.[97] She believes that she already knows and can map all northern Ontario small towns: they are "unremittingly the same" (140). She writes, "the small town to which I drive every morning and which I never become so familiar with as not to think of my car as my armour, my town is the same as the rest" (140). Caught in this geographical imagination, she sees rural Burnt River as uncivilized wilderness. The landscape is frightening and the people are philistine. She describes Burnt River as filling her "with a sense of dread but also mystery" (143). Like Naipaul, she sees her surroundings as land and not space, describing, "there is a way that land defeats you, just the sum of it" (145). Of the land at Pinery Road and Concession 11, she writes: "When it is covered in snow you know that it is hardly sleeping. It is like a huge brown-backed being waiting" (145-146). In this geographical imagination, she is limited to the first type of beauty, which excludes rural Burnt River. This beauty is based on narrowed desires,[98] a single construction of place and people, and self-other social relations.

The wildflowers struggling up in this harsh environment, however, signify a moment when "the door opens and beauty walks in" (193). Now located in the geography of the door, her perception of place and people shifts. She describes

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[97] This should not be surprising since her shifting desires and constructions of place are, as noted in chapter six, cumulative rather than linear. Thus, for example, at age thirteen, she not only begs her grandfather to remember from which part of Africa they originated (3), but also memorizes the canonical "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," (77), reads *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which magnifies the dissonances of the gendered and racialized body (192), and has already dreamed of being a Beat poet in New York City (111).

[98] At the local store, she demonstrates her commodified desire by purchasing sweets and renting movies.

"the name of this place" as "beautiful, though it is beautiful in the same oppositional way as everything else. River and Burnt" (150). "River" implies the first kind of beauty while "Burnt" implies the second, a harsh and brutal beauty indicating "something terrible that happened" that alters the beauty of "river" (150). Like Vancouver, this place is haunted by the ongoing trajectory of colonialism figured by a winged being that passes over the house (151). In the geography of the door, Brand becomes the intimate subject. Perhaps feeling complicit in the continued colonization of First Nations land, Brand writes of the apparition, "it was not a peaceful thing, though it meant no harm to me, *I think*" (emphasis added 151). In this position, she opens out to the Mechanic and imagines him as on his own trajectory and in a specific socio-historical context which can be described through utopian discourse. Like the black men she has described throughout the text, he too has a certain beauty that deserves to be represented. As I mention in the introduction, she describes him as "burned by wind and snow and gas fumes. His face is scaled red with white patches. His mouth is a tight thin wire. His jeans have grown small but he hasn't disowned them" (140), and later describes, "if there is desperation here it is the kind that is slow burning, the kind that drinks beer and smokes cigarettes and is overwhelmed by the bush or the river, the kind that makes the body grow large and lumbering and listless" (149). Connecting all the men, she writes, "in any place, trailer park wasteland, rural rum shop, shebeen, sports bar, speakeasy, piss-and-beer reeking dive, beauty walks in. On any given night, even with history against you in any hardscrabble place, beauty walks in" (193).

Nicole Brossard also understands the connection between the way we construct place and identity, the need to keep both fluid and interrelational, and the importance of aesthetics, specifically constructions of beauty. As I mentioned in the introduction, Brossard rejects the Hexagone group's re-naming of the land and the rewriting of the countryside as female in their search for national identity. While this rewriting of the land would provide a positive articulation of place that could, in turn, provide a positive articulation of identity for these male separatists, as a permanent and hegemonic construction, it would, as Doreen Massey says

about national and exclusionary constructions of place, "secure the identity of"
the place by "*attempt[ing] to stabilize the meaning of particular envelopes of
space-time …* to impose the meaning to be attributed to a space, for however long
or short a span of time" (emphasis in original, *Space* 5). It would also continue to
exclude Brossard and other women from the place of power, authority, and
activity by refusing to see them as on their own trajectories and associating them
with the land as beautiful objects of the male gaze. Instead, Brossard
conceptualizes place as dynamic and unfixed and composed of multiple
trajectories described as a cacophony of multiple musics. The construction of
place and identity, as a result, become holographic. Both are momentary
articulations of multiple trajectories.

In order to be represented, these trajectories demand an alternate or anti-
aesthetic and, like Brand, Brossard, too, turns to reconceptualising beauty. For
Brossard, beauty is at the heart representation and is, therefore, central to
discursive constructions of place and identity. Her discussions of beauty imply
that the patriarchal conception of beauty as essential, universal, and separated
from desire needs to be revisited. Beauty instead is seen as constructed,
multiplied, and plastic. Connected rather than separated from a motivating desire,
these alternate conceptions of beauty can re-invent the world.

Whereas Massey and others argue that the space-time dynamic and its
multiple trajectories are unrepresentable, Brossard and Brand reject any location
outside of representation. Instead, they turn to the anti-aesthetic and to utopian
discourse. For both authors, the world (space-time) is like a text in that it is
culturally and discursively produced. Therefore, revising our notions of aesthetics
is vital to revising our geographical imaginations. While Patricia Yaeger rightly
argues that "the world of the beautiful can be treacherous for women" because it
is a "male idea" connected to "the enclosed world of femininity, of convention"
("Language" 5) and turns instead to the construction of a maternal sublime, these
authors combat "the beautiful" by reinscribing it. In doing so, they take part in the
recent return to beauty by some critics of aesthetics.[99] The sublime as a moment

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[99] As well as Brian Massumi, see Melissa McMahon, Stephen O'Connell and Steven Shaviro.

of transgression, writes Brian Massumi, has "truck with transcendence" (747). Beauty, however, "like the sublime, enfolds the dimensions of linear time. But it does so in banality, not in anxiety, and immanently, rather than transcendentally" (748). As can be seen in Massumi's discussion of beauty as disinterested, he remains partially enmeshed in traditional aesthetics. Brand and Brossard turn to beauty but they create an anti-aesthetic that, as Hal Foster defines it, "signals a practice, cross-disciplinary in nature, that is sensitive to cultural forms engaged in a politic (e.g., feminist art) or rooted in a vernacular—that is, to forms that deny the idea of a privileged aesthetic realm" (xv). To do so, they demonstrate traditional beauty's connection to hegemonic desire(s) and reinscribe "the beautiful" by connecting it to multiple and shifting desires, resulting in multiple and shifting discursive constructions of the world, or in the space-time dynamic. Thus, they remain embedded, avoiding the transcendent perspective of the sublime. To represent such an anti-aesthetic, they need a text that is like the world: open, heterogeneous, and lively. Such a text can be constructed in a narrative of utopian discourse, the function of which is to figure our embeddedness in multiple registers and their constructions of the world. In utopian discourse, neither space-time nor representation are tamed.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

In Fredric Jameson's latest work on utopian discourse, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, Jameson looks at the function of neutralization in relation to the genre of utopia as a whole rather than at its function in individual texts. He wants to see utopian neutralization as "accommodating a variety of ideologies without lapsing into the pious hopes of this or that liberal pluralism or multiculturalism" (212). Jameson connects utopia to the "crisis of representation" in postmodernism where representation is "displace[d]" in art by "a multiplicity of images, none of which corresponds to 'truth'" (212). This multiplicity of images is seen in utopian content because, as he argues, utopias cannot help but reflect the ideological positions of their creators and readers (175). Therefore, when we examine the genre of utopia as a whole, we are "confronted with the multiplicity of Utopian concerns … in violent

opposition to each other" (175). Jameson argues that it is in the entirety of all these visions that we must seek "a moment of truth" (175). However, by "truth" he does not mean a "positive phenomenon" or "full representation" (175). Instead, "truth" becomes polysemic and productive, and "the moment of truth" is a moment of "critical negativity," a "conceptual instrument designed, not to produce some full representation, but rather to discredit and demystify the claims to full representation of its opposite number" (175). Thus, the "moment of truth" of an individual utopia is "not some conceptual nugget we can extract and store away, with a view towards using it as a building block of some future system. Rather, its function lies not in itself, but in its capability radically to negate its alternative" (175). Utopia as neutral "does not seek to hold two substantive features, two positivities, together in the mind at once, but rather attempts to retain two negative ... ones, along with their mutual negation of each other" (180). Thus, the utopian oppositions found in the genre as a whole should "neither be combined in some humanist organic synthesis nor effaced and abandoned altogether: but retained and sharpened, made more virulent, their incompatibility and incommensurability a scandal for the mind, but a scandal that remains vivid and alive and that cannot be thought away, either by resolving or eliminating it" (180).

Jameson, however, still sees utopia as primarily a figuration of the contradictions that occur in the transitional moment between two modes of production. He asserts that utopias, rather than offering any kind of vision of the future, force us to think of the possibility of a radical break in a system "where the undesirability of change is everywhere dogmatically affirmed" (231). The utopian form, however, "insists that its radical difference is possible and that a break is necessary" (232). Its inability to "articulate the Utopian break in such a way that it is transformed into a practical-political transition" is seen as a "rhetorical and political strength" because it forces us to "a meditation on the impossible, on the unrealizable in its own right" (232). It is, writes Jameson, "a rattling of the bars ... and preparation for another stage which has not yet arrived" (233). But it can also

be a figuration of the space-time dynamic and a rattling of the bars in the here and now.

Nicole Brossard and Dionne Brand employ utopian discourse to rattle the bars of hegemonic space, time, and place. Jameson posits a utopian kernel, the one "grand Utopian idea or wish" (*Archaeologies* 145) that "could not be realized without transforming the system beyond recognition and which would at once usher in a society structurally distinct from this one" (147). For him, it would be "the demand for universal full employment ... at a living wage" (147). For Brand and Brossard, it appears to be our geographical imaginations. Jameson argues that the utopia that is constructed around the kernel will be fraught with ideological inconsistencies as it responds to the different conflicting desires that arise within the moment of the shift from one mode of production to another creating utopian discourse and its negative dialectic. Brand's and Brossard's utopian kernel, however, embraces these multiple ideologies and desires as they figure the space-time dynamic and the trajectories and alternate constructions of the coeval. In this way, they multiply, enliven, and combine space, time, and place countering the connections between women and colonial peoples with the land (in the civilization/wilderness binary), with space (in the space/time binary), and with place (in the space/place binary).

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