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The Aesthetics of Longing: Women Writing Landscape

M.A. Thesis in Canadian Studies

submitted by

Andrea Hossack

Student #117654

SCHOOL OF CANADIAN STUDIES

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

Canada

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**The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis**

**“The Aesthetics of Longing:
Women Writing Landscape”**

submitted by Andrea Hossack, B.J.

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Smith', written over a dotted line.

Thesis Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Johnston', written over a dotted line.

Director

School of Canadian Studies

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

January 1999

Abstract

Anna Jameson, Marian Engel, Jane Urquhart and Dionne Brand are four women writers who share a poetic and personal way of seeing, and writing about, Ontario's natural landscape. Their descriptions of landscape go beyond beauty and aesthetics, however, and cross into the territory of individual treatises of independence. By writing landscape, they assert their knowledge about their interior, as well as exterior, terrain. This thesis explores the identity politics of women and the expression of that identity by writing about place. I will assert that this mere naming and describing of landscape is itself a political act, where the map of the topography and the map of the imagination come to be one thing -- and that what the writers are mapping is their lives and their sense of the world. By writing landscape, these women writers are questing for, then staking claim to, their feminist selves.

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Chapter One: Writing A Place

Introduction

Anyone can write a landscape. They can describe the white wall of the crashing waterfall. The tall tips of the pines reaching up to the sky. It's a matter of putting paint on paper, words in a row.

But landscape description in literature can be a cliché. Writers have been describing the natural environment for so many centuries that sometimes meaning is assumed, inferred, lost. Literary landscapes are most engaging for the reader when the author is able to invest herself in that landscape, and convey its meaning to the reader.

Some landscape description, or landscape writing as I'll call it, can seem magical, transformative. This can be the result of the author attaining a certain intimacy with the chosen environment, and possessing the ability to communicate that intimacy. I have read books written in such a way that the description of the physical landscape made me speculate about what kind of conflict, reflection, or resolution was going on inside the author. When I read these passages, something

clicked; I was instantly able to relate to what the author was talking about, what she was experiencing. It was as if the physical topography had been internalized, and in the writing of it, the landscape itself had become part of the resolution. I have identified some passages of writing by Canadian women in which I see an emotional or psychological connection with natural landscape, and in an attempt to get past cliché, I have chosen to investigate what that connection is, and what it expresses -- both about the individual authors, and universally.

The pang of appreciation, I call it. It's that feeling you get in your gut when you're reading along and all of the sudden, there's something spoken in the text that speaks directly to the core of you. Recognition occurs. Adrenalin is engaged, and up from the depths of the stomach shoots the tiny thrill. This small pang of recognition is an intuitive reaction; a bell rings. That passage belongs to the reader, as well as to the writer. I would think that this is the ultimate compliment to a writer -- that for the reader, the light went on.

When I set out to investigate this pang of appreciation and to build a thesis around it, I took stock of my own experience. One element of that experience is reading, another is living.

When I sit down at the water's edge in Wawa, Ontario, or in Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula, I feel a connection to the physical landscape. Part of that feeling is nostalgia, I'm sure, as these landscapes are significant for me because of history and family. But this same feeling occurs when I am by water that is new to me as well. As I am simply looking out at a large expanse of water, I feel a sense of immensity, of expansion, as if I am more in touch with everything larger, outside and inside myself.

When I read passages in books like Jane Urquhart's Away and The Underpainter, Anne Michaels' Fugitive Pieces, and Marian Engel's Bear, I had that same sense. The writers had articulated a connection with landscape -- a way of taking physical geography into their imagination and turning it over so that it became an expression of what it is to see the world as they were seeing it -- to see it from the point of view of a woman. That was my sense of what I was experiencing. But could I really articulate it as that? Was there a women's way of seeing, and of writing?

I spoke to other women about this surge of excitement I felt when seeing, and reading about, these landscapes. They surprised me by not merely being interested, but by claiming ownership to that same feeling themselves. I presented a paper about this small phenomenon, this connecting to landscape. Although the thesis in this paper made me feel vulnerable to the rigorous criticism of a room full of listeners -- male and female -- a handful of people came up to speak to me at the end, saying that yes they understood, yes they felt the same way, and that we must be "soulmates". I had never heard anyone say this in an academic context, and though I felt that the topic was in some way legitimized by their understanding, still this was foggy territory in which to form a thesis.

So I read more. The more I read about aesthetics, geography and literature, philosophy and women's space, the more excited I got about this idea, which then seemed less amorphous and hard to nail down.

Let me describe where I think this 'women's space' begins. It begins with a moment of emotional or psychological impact: The moment occurs when a writer/observer comes across a landscape that is particular to her. She is walking or driving along, and she comes to observe, out of all of the vistas she has

taken in all day, one that makes her gasp. The actual sight itself varies with each person: it could be a string of mountains, Lake Superior, or a field of wheat. The important element is the reaction that the viewer has -- if she looks up and experiences a gasp of recognition -- as if recognizing a part of herself in that landscape. Just as when the reader intuitively recognizes a passage of writing that speaks to them, so the observer can recognize a landscape that does the same.

But does this 'women's space' always have to be found in a natural setting? Could it not also be in a city parking lot, or an apartment building or art gallery? I think there is a connection with natural, outdoor surroundings that cannot be found in an urban setting. It has to do with pastoral imagery, and a particular way of seeing.

Since I was young, there has been in me a reverence for nature. I have read this reverence in other women's writing -- in the novels of Jane Urquhart and Marian Engel, in the travelogues of Anna Jameson, and in the poetry and prose of Dionne Brand. As I was reading, it occurred to me that I was getting a 'sense of place' -- and that it seemed similar to a certain sense, or way of perceiving, that I had tried to

capture in my own narratives. Each of these women had written themselves into a landscape. But as all of the landscapes were unique -- each passage was not describing the same bay or lake -- why was I getting such a similar sense from them? What is this women's sense of place in writing?

Intuitive Research

My language is the language of landscapes. I don't mean that for me every landscape is a metaphor, or that I see myself in every landscape. It is more a case of using landscape as a vocabulary for expression in everyday life. It is also an abstract framework which allows me to speak with people whose physical surroundings are very different from mine, but who might have similarities to me in the way they relate to their environment. And on the occasion that I come face to face with a physical landscape that has particular meaning for me, there is the satisfying 'clunk' of intuition -- the sense that some part of the machinery of my own understanding and psyche has dropped into place as a result of seeing this sight.

This is how I knew that there was something worth exploring in the writing of Anna Jameson, Marian Engel, Jane Urquhart and Dionne Brand. All four of these women have written about a

part of the Ontario landscape. All four of them have incorporated descriptions of water, and of wilderness. There may be other similarities in their lives, although they lived at different times, and in very different circumstances. What I have found that they have in common is the poetic way that they see the natural landscape. Their descriptions go beyond beauty and aesthetics, however, and cross into the territory of individual treatises of independence. Somehow, through describing landscape, they have asserted their knowledge about their interior, as well as exterior, terrain. My thesis is that this mere naming and describing of landscape is itself a political act, where the map of the topography and the map of the imagination come to be one thing -- and that what the writers are mapping is their ownership over their imagination, their lives, their sense of the world. In short, by writing landscape, these women writers are questing for, then staking claim to, their feminist selves.

I can explain my selection of material and authors this way: E.R. Curtius, who wrote European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, wrote that

through loving and hating, all intuition and knowledge of value is built up... Applied to the method of scholarship, it means a flair for noticing that certain passages in a text are

'important' -- even if it is not yet clear why...
The individual traits that matter cannot be sought
out, they must flash upon the mind (Curtius 84).

Certain passages in texts have flashed upon my mind over the past few years -- passages that are either poetic descriptions of landscape, or descriptions of women's lives as they lived in landscapes and came to 'own' them. I have isolated sections of books and articles knowing not where they would lead me in terms of achieving some sort of thesis, but just that they felt important to me.

In a paper by Peter Von Matt, there is a section about the definition of culture, and how it has come to be represented by the things which are created physically, as opposed to internally. This passage flashed upon my mind:

Culture is not the object an artist creates, it is not the picture a painter paints, it is not the novel a writer writes, it is far more; it is what the object, the picture or the novel arouses in us. The only and decisive reality lies in the experience which we make with pictures, music, games and finally with flowers, landscapes and the stars (von Matt).

Similarly, what I am investigating is not the object of the landscape, but that which the landscape has aroused in women writers, and secondly, what the novels of these women writers have aroused in readers, myself included. I am seeking a

definition of the culture of women's space that has been created through women's experience of landscape and writing. And although anyone can write a landscape, not everyone can own one. I'm interested in how women have taken 'ownership' -- of space, place and landscape -- through writing.

When I think back to moments when I felt a connection to physical landscape, and was conscious of the way that the landscape was reflecting the 'place' inside me, I think about summer days spent beside Lake Huron. A friend and I would sit on the beach just a few feet away from the lake's folding and unfolding edge, gazing out at the horizon, sifting pebbles through our fingers, talking. The repetition of the action, the sureness of the horizontal line, and the rise and fall of our voices were enough to sustain an afternoon-long meditation. I was about fourteen years old. The silences between our sentences were unencumbered, even by my being aware that at this moment, the lake seemed to mirror what I felt -- calm, sure, part of something timeless. The same feeling comes over me today when I see such a huge expanse of water. Why does it all seem connected? The lake, the books on my shelf, the poetic space inside of me -- they're all the same idea.

At this point, it might be easy to pass over this idea and dismiss it as simply a Romantic sensibility. The reference to uphold this criticism would be Margaret Atwood's book Survival -- a critique of Canadian literature written in 1972, which applies a Northrop Frye system of archetypes to themes in Canadian writing involving nature. But I'm writing in 1998, after the Western world has been 're-enchanted' with a simplified interest in Eastern mysticism and spirituality, when popular culture, commerce and chakra-balancing are acceptable in combination, and North America is experiencing a coming together of the physical, commercial world and the spiritual. My cynicism is rooted in the belief that if something is worth criticizing, it is also worth looking at again. Otherwise, I wouldn't have titled the next section in this chapter

Please, Someone -- The Re-Enchantment of Margaret Atwood

I like Margaret Atwood. Her writing is often dark and funny. I agree with this part of what she has written in Survival -- that

landscapes in poems are often interior landscapes;
they are maps of a state of mind. ... The same
tendencies can be present in the descriptive

passages of novels or stories with natural settings
(Atwood 49).

Atwood's identification of the interior landscape rings true. However, Atwood also criticizes the treatment that writers have given natural landscape by relying on what she calls "the cult of the sublime" (Atwood 50). With this phrase, Atwood is talking about natural scenery which was described in the writings of early Canadian travellers or inhabitants, and the fascination they had with finding views that were visually pleasing in a way that is now considered contrived.

She asserts that "The prevailing literary mode in Nature poetry in the late eighteenth century as derived from Edmund Burke was the cult of the sublime and the picturesque" (Atwood 50), and goes on to say that this aesthetic sensibility was one which was categorically Romantic. The viewer preferred Nature over all, imbuing it with "good" qualities, and saw any mechanical, urban intrusion as "evil" (Atwood 50).

However, Atwood's point of view and the naming of the sublime as a colonial construct could be seen in the 1990s as dated cynicism. If the "cult of 'the picturesque' was an aesthetic convention" (Atwood 40) of the eighteenth century, post-colonial criticism is perhaps a political convention of the

late twentieth century. At the risk of being accused of being the Defender of Pretty Things, I will say that I find no shame in taking photographs of rural landscapes, and will admit to the occasional shifting of my camera's field of view to avoid getting hydro wires into the picture. Is this dishonest? Am I in denial that these wires could and perhaps should become recognized for their beauty in my otherwise 'picturesque' landscape? Does this count as simply trying to preserve an outmoded visual ideal?

In her book The Embroidered Tent, Marion Fowler refers to Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey (written in 1797), and the way that the characters are always "viewing the country with the eyes of persons accustomed to drawing", deciding "on its capability of being formed into pictures" (Fowler 41). Fowler points out that a book written by Sir Joshua Reynolds called Discourses may have encouraged people's ideas about what landscapes were picturesque, suggesting that "artists look at nature through the eyes of acknowledged masters. Nobody could hope to see picturesquely without recollections of painting" (Fowler 41).

Seeing something picturesque, then, was reserved for a certain class -- a viewer of economic and social means, with a previous exposure to European landscape paintings and a modern

European worldview. In this way, the landscape itself becomes an associative cultural landscape, as seeing it and appreciating it as picturesque requires that it be viewed with the accompanying piece of art in mind.

Atwood cites the writing of Susanna Moodie -- a woman who came to settle in Upper Canada with her husband, and lived not far from her sister, Catharine Parr Traill. Her trials with the new, harsh Canadian landscape are documented in her journal account, entitled Roughing It In the Bush. Atwood points to Moodie's description of the "surpassing grandeur", and mocks her choice of, and abundance of, adjectives. It's true that the journals by Susanna Moodie read today like the gripings of a privileged complainer. However, Susanna Moodie did live in nature for years, and developed -- despite enormous resentment and misgivings when she first arrived -- a relationship with her environment, which seemed to stir her otherwise regulated emotions. As contrived as the following passage may sound, and as much as its style strikes the ear of the modern reader as saccharine, there is no doubt that what Moodie was seeing affected her deeply: "...a thrill of wonder and delight pervaded my mind. The spectacle floated dimly on my sight -- my eyes were blinded with tears -- blinded by the excess of beauty" (Atwood 50).

I have been indoctrinated into various schools of cynicism, where I too have been socialized to dismiss Moodie and her outmoded language of regard. Am I also, then, to dismiss a love of landscape and perhaps a rather symmetrical regard for natural beauty, because Margaret Atwood -- whose clever observation and humour I love -- has inferred that this aesthetic convention is simple? Can a viewer in the 1990s look at landscape appreciatively without feeling as though she is verging on possessing the politics of a colonial Englishwoman?

Atwood further criticizes Susanna Moodie because of the tension or contradiction in her writing between expectation and actuality -- as if this tension were not inherent in the very fact of being human and alive.

I'm going after Margaret Atwood here. Her criticisms of Susanna Moodie are valid: we understand Moodie's position and biases based on what we know of her background. We hear the patronizing voice of colonialism in her accounts of daily life among the aboriginal people and the poverty-stricken settlers living around her. However, when it comes to analyzing her language in relation to the landscape that she saw, just the fact that she also had negative experiences, and the fact that

she seemed to protect her idealist view of the Canadian wilderness from the harsh downfalls she recounts in her journal does not mean that her moments of appreciation were flawed or inauthentic. In fact, these moments of inspiration when relating to her natural surroundings could have been the images that fuelled her with the strength to continue living in the bush. Do we not all find ourselves "gazing at the sublime natural goings-on in the misty distance -- sunsets, mountains, spectacular views -- only to be brought up short by disagreeable things in the immediate foreground" (Atwood 51)?

There can be value in naming the sublime. Though Atwood may back away from a hint of the Romantic, is it required that we find shame in articulating our own version of beauty?

What Margaret Atwood looked critically at in Survival was the use of natural imagery in Canadian literature. By the very act of her doing this, she concurred with the idea that geography was part of the national literature, the national psyche and her psyche. I do not know what Margaret Atwood herself finds beautiful, but I bet there is at least one photograph of a Muskoka sunset -- hydro wires obscured from view -- buried deep in one of her photo albums. Now, over twenty-five years after she has written her definitive criticism, I would assert

that the concept of nation being the central determinant of symbolism in writing has been replaced by the determinant of gender in writing. Still, 'place' figures prominently, even if some places cannot be found on a map.

Place, as described by a writer, can be a piece of imaginary geography. It can be an abstract notion, a place to go to for refuge, a more general term, instead of something geographically specific. Place does not have to have a concrete geographical reference.

Similarly, a piece of geography, just by its concrete existence and coordinates of longitude and latitude, is not necessarily a place. In her book of observation about her natural surroundings entitled Covote's Morning Cry, Saskatchewan writer Sharon Butala quotes Wallace Stegner, and asserts that a piece of geography cannot be a place until it is named by someone, and that the naming of the sublime -- of the appreciation of a place -- is an act which contributes intimacy to a location that may have meant something to someone, but which, until then, had gone unarticulated.

She goes on to say that in fact, the "poets" who describe place are quite necessary to a culture, because they give a

name and a specific language to vague but commonly-held truths about a society (Butala 21):

Even those who have always lived there, who know the place intimately with their bodies and their sense, usually are not conscious of minute details about it, and when a "poet" (I use the term to include prose writers, referring only to a certain sensibility) describes the place down to these minute details, they're astonished to have these particulars brought to light, gratified to have such subtleties acknowledged and pleased to be able to say that these are things they've always known (Butala 22).

If we accept the premise that some of the women writers I have read did indeed write a place, what was that place? I looked at these places geographically; many of the passages I had isolated were ones in which the author described water. Some were even describing the same water. These descriptions spoke to me and my experience, but were written out of another woman's experience. How could this be?

Marian Engel once said, "Women's experiences are a different place" (Brady 6). Is this place so specific that we can name it? Or see it?

The landscape which draws me to it is one of water and rock -- Georgian Bay, Lake Superior, and smaller lakes on the Canadian Shield. I look out across a bay and see a clean,

sharp line of rock meeting water. My eye traces the horizontal glimmer from right to left, out to the point. It could be that at this moment, I am imagining an outer projection of a simple, solid world. Ordered. It does not represent anything but what it is: natural, graceful and strong. The line looks to the eye as the granite feels to the hand.

The connection between the "seeing" of the visual image and the internalization of the image is a complex process. The eye sees, and an image is imprinted, in the same way that an original landscape can be reproduced in a photographic or electronic image. But it is the filters through which the image flows that determine how the image is internalized. John Berger claims that the mind's eye always makes an addition to the image: that of ourselves. "We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (Berger 9). This "way of seeing," always in terms of a relationship, is exactly what I am seeking to define in this thesis: if a woman's way of seeing is unique to her situation politically, economically, and socially, then it must affect her aesthetic sense -- her way of internalizing the visual.

If we then revisit the definition of picturesque, perhaps this way of picturing herself in a landscape is only one type of woman's way of relating to her environment. Perhaps the picturesque is not about perfection, denial, or a lack of dealing with the objective 'reality' of the world, but is instead a way of getting to a place within herself which she sees reflected in the picturesque scene.

Marion Fowler would not agree. She, along with Margaret Atwood, finds the idea of the picturesque a shallow prospect: "Classical art makes you think, romantic art makes you feel, but picturesque art merely makes you see" (Fowler 41). Merely makes you see? This statement is a direct dismissal of the value of the visual aspect. In my opinion, the visual is the connection to the internalized image, the starting place that spurs the writer on to commit the political act of writing.

Writer Barry Lopez has explored the relationship between the outside world and the internal one. He writes specifically about people and their relationship to nature. In his book Crossing Open Ground, he defines

two landscapes -- one outside the self, the other within. The external landscape is the one we see... One learns a landscape finally not by knowing the name or identity of everything in it, but by

perceiving the relationships in it -- like that between the sparrow and the twig (Lopez 64).

The second landscape -- the interior landscape -- that Lopez describes is

a kind of projection within a person of a part of the exterior landscape. Relationships in the exterior landscape include those that are named and discernible, such as the nitrogen cycle,and others that are uncoded or ineffable, such as winter light falling on a particular kind of granite... That these relationships have purpose and order, however inscrutable they may seem to us, is a tenet of evolution. Similarly, the speculations, intuitions, and formal ideas we refer to as "mind" are a set of relationships in the interior landscape with purpose and order; some of these are obvious, many impenetrably subtle. The shape and character of these relationships in a person's thinking, I believe, are deeply influenced by where on this earth one goes, what one touches, the patterns one observes in nature -- the intricate history of one's life on the land... (Lopez 64).

Anna Brownell Jameson went on a voyage to northern Ontario, but had spent her life in the English countryside. Marian Engel knew Ontario, knew its wilderness as an escape. Jane Urquhart was born in Geraldton, in northern Ontario, and has familiarized herself with the heritage of landscapes -- of Ontario, and of Ireland. And Dionne Brand, the fourth author I will look at in this thesis, knows the landscape of her island of birth, Trinidad, as well as other revolutionary parts of the world and her home land in Ontario, north of Toronto. It is from their experiences in these landscapes that

these women write -- that their particular images of 'mind' take shape on paper.

These thoughts are arranged, further, according to the thread of one's moral, intellectual, and spiritual development. The interior landscape responds to the character and subtlety of an exterior landscape; the shape of the individual mind is affected by land as it is by genes (Lopez 64-65).

I have walked across the pink and grey granite of the Canadian Shield since I was very young. I know how warm it gets in the afternoon, and how in the summer it keeps the warmth of the sun for hours after sunset. It looks as smooth and forgiving as a sand-dune, but the curves are solid; it's one big liquid rock. The surface is smooth enough to rollerskate on, to press your cheek to, or to clean a fish on.

The order of outer landscapes, once impressed upon our minds, helps us order our inner selves.

In the next few chapters, I will explore how women writers have taken the topography around them and internalized it to the degree that it may have provided fuel for feminist revolutions within, in the case of Anna Brownell Jameson, or that it became the external embodiment of longing and belonging, as with Marian Engel. My thesis will explore how

these internalized images of landscape became the geography of the imagination and allowed the writers to, in a sense, 'own' those landscapes, and finally, how this process gave rise to women's 'quest' literature.

I will look at the writing of women in the 1830s -- contemporaries of Susanna Moodie -- as well as women novelists in the twentieth century. Most of the writing I will refer to is located in the geographical area bordered by Lake Huron, Lake Superior, and Lake Ontario. The passages I have selected cover a time range of over a hundred and sixty years. They are addressed chronologically, though there is no evolution to their expression. They have different social and political positions and motivations, but all of these women have one thing in common: by writing about place -- by writing themselves into landscape -- these women have taken ownership over their versions of landscape, of water and of space.

Chapter Two: Women Writing Landscape in the 19th Century

Women have been writing the sublime for over a century in Canada. In 1838, a woman stood on the western shore of Lake Superior. She had long hair pulled back, and was wearing long skirts and leather boots. Her name was Anna Brownell Jameson. She stood on the shore for a while, looking out across the lake. Later she wrote about that moment, in a book titled Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada:

...while I try to put in words what was before me, the sense of its ineffable loveliness overpowers me now, even as it did then. The sun had set in that cloudless splendour, and that peculiar blending of rose and amber light that belongs only to these climes and Italy; the lake lay weltering under the western sky like a bath of molten gold...I remember standing on the shore...overcome by such an intense feeling of the beautiful -- such a deep adoration for the power that had created it -- I must have suffocated...(Harding 37).

Anna Jameson was an English journalist who had come to Canada to join her husband, Robert Sympson Jameson, the appointed Attorney General of Upper Canada. She didn't like her new life in the city. For Anna Jameson, a trip to Lake Superior was a quest of sorts -- a way of escaping an unhappy marriage and of breaking out on her own, into the wild, where she could write. Winter Studies and Summer Rambles is a book in which Jameson records her extensive travels in northern Ontario. She hires

aboriginal men to transport her across large expanses of water so that she can meet her friends at Mackinaw, at the intersection of lakes Huron, Superior and Michigan. Jameson is intrepid, sensitive, and smart, but not without the colonial attitudes and privileged expectations that her class afforded her. Luckily for modern readers, Jameson had an emotional vocabulary that was remarkable at the time; her travelogues are full of intimate disclosures and poetic descriptions of her newly-found northern wilderness landscape. In some of her passages, I believe she was describing a sort of 'woman's space' that she located inside her self-actualized feminist psyche.

Descriptions of feelings -- "an intense feeling of the beautiful," "deep adoration for the power" -- and the sensations of suffocation and being overpowered are emotions caused directly by the taking in and connecting with, the physical landscape. How the visual sight of such a landscape is translated into an emotional experience is pure magic: how could beauty be suffocating? Why is a sense of loveliness something that overpowers the viewer? There are inferences we can draw from the mention of the "power" Jameson refers to, evidence of what her own values were: she was a woman of social means who had 'married well' though she was unhappy

with her marriage, and spiritually, she lived by the Christian belief in creation.

Perhaps, to Jameson, this "overpowering" landscape was space, not place. The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan said "we have the fine humanistic distinction: Enclosed and humanized space is place. Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values" (Jones 27). That would mean that space is not humanized -- it is open and free, as opposed to comforting and "calm." The sense of being overpowered by the landscape may have occurred when the open space of Lake Superior and its vast shoreline met with what was probably a very restrictive social and moral framework of norms in Anna Jameson -- even though her behaviour, by all accounts, was more outspoken and less confined by convention than that of most other women at the time. So much unconfined space may have, in fact, felt suffocating, for someone who was used to struggling against the tight, corseted hold that nineteenth-century society had on her life.

Anna Brownell Jameson wrote this powerful passage while she was on a journey, and the fact of her being 'away' may have contributed to a greater sense of strength, and sense of self.

Writing from 'The Place Away'

In reference to the setting he created at the island home of Queequeg in Moby-Dick, Herman Melville wrote: "It is not down in any map; true places never are." (Lutwack 30)

If, when women writers are writing about landscape, they are really writing about themselves, then what role does the landscape play? It may be that the landscape provides a personal environment in which the writer may perceive a sense of self which is clear and without distraction. It may also be that in order to experience that clarity, and a 'connection' with a landscape through awareness, the writer must simply be 'away'.

In his book The Role of Place in Literature, Leonard Lutwack considers the role of the removed place in the creative process. He writes about the concept of a-centrality -- the positioning of oneself away from the "central place," by being in the "peripheral place, or the place removed from the center by distance or difficulty of access" (Lutwack 45).

The very existence of the peripheral place, in a lot of literature, leads either the "hero" or the writer to discover

"some magic object or profound understanding, which he (she) may then carry back to the central place for its enrichment" (Lutwack 45).

When a writer practices her craft in a place which is "away," it allows the writer, or viewer of the landscape, to experience the magic of the place. Part of the impressionism of a first impression is a sense of seeing something with new eyes, and that newness may be translated by the viewer as magic. Whether magic exists is a matter for debate -- but if it does, it occurs internally, as a reaction to an exterior element or catalyst.

Not all women had the language or perception to write so poetically as Anna Brownell Jameson. Other women writers approached the landscape with an entirely different sensibility.

To attempt a comparison of women describing landscape, we can take an example of what might be called "old-style" landscape writing: Lady Aberdeen's travelogue entitled Through Canada with a Kodak. Elizabeth Waterston has found that this type of writing enjoyed great popularity in the late 1800s, and was practised by many women travelling with their vice-regal husbands. Lady Aberdeen, Lady Simcoe, and Lady Dufferin are

a few of the most prolific. Waterston sums up the worst qualities of this phenomenon: the recounting of trips by rail or steamer, in self-indulgent, plodding, exhaustive, (and exhausting, for the reader) prose. Other criticisms were levelled at this genre long before Lady Aberdeen ever rode a rail car. Samuel Johnson stated in 1760 that "few books disappoint their readers more than the narrations of travellers" (Johnson in Introduction, Aberdeen xxxii).

In the midst of all this recounting of itineraries, however, is a recurring phenomenon that, to a reader in the 1990s, is striking in its repetition: it is the inability of these Victorian-era women to express themselves. They are well-educated, decent writers, with keen eyes for detail. They are able to describe political nuances (from their own privileged perspectives), describe new topographies, and make social commentary. But they, as Lady Dufferin states, "cannot" tell us how they feel. "I cannot describe the delightful travelling on these lovely lakes," she says, of a voyage across Lake Superior (Dufferin 126).

In her book The Embroidered Tent, Marian Fowler assesses why Lady Dufferin doesn't appreciate the landscape, or connect with it psychologically or emotionally:

Taking the lead from her husband in this, as in all else, Lady Dufferin sees the wilderness as a vast amusement park, there for her personal pleasure and profit. In actual fact, she doesn't really "see" it at all (Fowler 210).

Because of the colonial perspective that Dufferin would seem to have had of the Ontario wilderness, her "seeing" anything of herself in it was impossible. When the exploiter sees the land, people, and other resources which are the objects of the exploitation, the exploiter by definition sees them as alien, 'other' -- apart from herself. There is no bridging the gap of perception between the objectifier and the objectified.

Lady Aberdeen was subject to those same restrictions in perception. In her extensive travel journals, later published in book form as Through Canada with a Kodak, she marvels at the landscape, but cannot quite put her finger on how she relates to it. She wrote:

...this region has charms of its own....the artist will revel in the wild grandeur of the mountain and lake scenery all along the coast of the Lake Superior. A succession of magnificent promontories, frowning rocks and crags, surrounding the lovely bay of that vast expanse of water calling itself a lake, meets your eye as the train bears you along, and you lay down your pencil and brush in bewilderment as to which point to seize amidst so much beauty, and instead, you revert to the faithful rapid Kodak to record your memories of Thunder Bay, and Jackfish Bay, and the Lake of the Woods, and many another spot of beauty (Aberdeen 97).

The "bewilderment" that Lady Aberdeen experienced is not uncommon when a traveller meets with a new landscape. However, the facts of Lady Aberdeen's social status and position of privilege, and the restraint with which Victorian-era ladies were to conduct themselves meant that there would, by definition, be no attempt to describe what that new landscape meant to her. Lady Aberdeen may not have had the psychological vocabulary -- but more likely, she was simply not the kind of person to be an observer as well as a participant in the seeing. This duality of awareness requires that Lady Aberdeen not only see the landscape, but that she internalize it, and see herself in it.

This sounds similar to the way that philosopher John Berger explains the dual nature of women's state of being. However, it is different. Berger would explain the duality that is intrinsic in being socialized as a woman as two roles: that of the surveyor, and that of the surveyed. Since the social role of women has for centuries been one of dependence upon men, "the social presence of women has developed as a result of their ingenuity in living under such tutelage within such a limited space." (Berger 46) Berger identifies this fact of social history as the cause for "a woman's self being split

into two" (Berger 46), the two roles of the watcher and the one being watched.

In the above situation, with Lady Aberdeen staring out of the window of a train, there is in fact the presence of three perspectives: the first is of the surveyor of the landscape, Lady Aberdeen. The second is of the surveyed, in that she is watching herself being watched, by others in the same car, or those who may arrive at any minute -- women, even in such a high social station, never having the absolute assurance of privacy. But as well, there is a third dimension to this "seeing" experience: that of the internalization of the image. If Lady Aberdeen were to look out the window and feel a connection to the beauty that she marvels at, if she were to feel part of the landscape as a result of internalizing the visual image of the lake, she might have reached beyond the alienation or objectification that this new landscape presented. Instead, she took photographs, furthering her objectifying perspective by separating herself from the image by looking at it through a lens.

Lady Aberdeen's language of landscapes had a descriptive quality to it that was far removed from human emotion. It was language that was acceptable in public. And even in private

diary writing, which was what this excerpt of Lady Aberdeen's began as, the line between public and private may have been quite fine. Ladies of proper conduct might never have had enough of a sense of their private selves to ever see, then reflect back, an emotional value in their surroundings. As well, what woman knows beyond all doubt that her diary will never be read, or used against her? Even in our most private moments, we survey and edit ourselves.

"It was only after visiting Canada that Lady Aberdeen decided, in 1881, to write a contemporary travelogue for public consumption -- her first and only venture into this writing genre" (Harper in Aberdeen xxxv). The writings that Lady Aberdeen had done in private were extensively edited for publication. They have been an invaluable resource ever since; historians have had an interesting time looking at her specific definition of what was "private" and what was "public," by comparing the edited travelogue with the posthumous publication of her unedited diaries.

Evidence in that source of the author's discreet pruning of her private diary before publication offers a fascinating insight into her priorities, prejudices, and private life, particularly those parts of her private life which she was determined were to remain hidden from the public gaze (Harper in Aberdeen xxxv).

Perhaps it was, and is, only when a woman is alone and in nature that the weight of the public gaze drops away from her enough to allow her to turn her own gaze inward, or to experience no secondary gaze -- no duality of perception -- at all. I think immediately of the frame of mind that develops when I go camping alone -- but even then, in the midst of a strong day spent without surveying myself, out from the bushes pops the fear, the boogie-man hallucinations that persist, reminding me of my vulnerability.

In reading Lady Aberdeen's Through Canada with a Kodak, the reader does not have the sense of reading through a diary, as a reader may have when looking through Moodie's Roughing it in the Bush. So where is the delineation between women's writing, landscape writing, and travelogue, to be drawn? According to a Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women publication, called Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859, the diaries of women travelling may be categorized as "women's life-writing" (Gerson 20). Still, with the occasional exception, not many of the life-writings published before 1859 could be described as intimate.

Lady Aberdeen was said to have been "well aware" of her book's limitations.

Many of her observations were, she stressed, little more than superficial impressions, which were no substitute for the considered opinions of long-time residents. Places and topics were highlighted on the basis of her personal interests and experiences rather than in the pursuit of a comprehensive presentation of the condition of Canada (Harper in Aberdeen xxxiii).

Did she regret this? Was she a Victorian woman searching for a more emotional language not available to her? Perhaps along with this admission was a knowing that self-knowledge could not be suitable as a subject for writing.

There is no doubt that the publishing of one's private thoughts, even in this century, is an intimidating decision. But if we try to consider the relative vulnerability of women in the 1800s, "...we underestimate the degree to which these authors were transgressing the code that a woman's personal writing should be restricted to a private audience -- at least until after her death" (Gerson 4). Even in publishing the edited version of her travel diary, Lady Aberdeen was taking a risk.

The difference between the 'facts and figures' style of writing, and writing which, later, did express affection and prejudice, may be seen in critic Lawrence Jones' terms: the difference between the "language of the naturalist" and the

"language of the humanist" (Jones 179). In the context of theorizing about voice in the novels of Thomas Hardy, Jones describes the "tones of the naturalist, calmly explaining the how of things, as in his pedantic exposition on the relative height of cliffs along the English coast." For contrast, Jones points to other voices in Hardy's work as being "that of the humanist, questioning the why and identifying with" other characters in their "aspirations and suffering" (Jones 179).

The language of the naturalist is quite different from that of the humanist: what to the one is an "igneous protrusion" is to the other Knight's former "salvation." ...the emotive human significance is juxtaposed to the rational scientific explanation (Jones 179).

What to one writer is a description, may to another be a manifesto.

Barry Lopez has an apt analogy for explaining this difference between humanist and naturalist descriptive styles: "The difference between the relationships and the elements is the same as that between written history and a catalog of events" (Lopez 64). In reading travel writing, nature writing, or any kind of descriptive writing, I am always anticipating the point of connection -- hoping to be enlightened as a human soul and as a bird watcher or environmentalist. What a writer

can tell me about the human condition by describing a lake is always exciting to discover. Perhaps this is the self-absorbed nature of being human, or of involuntarily being the subject of constant self-surveillance.

What Barry Lopez describes in his analogy is narrative style versus list-making. But for narrative style, the writer requires a voice. And for women writing in the 1880s, that voice may have had so little practice, been silenced so many times, or had so little ownership over daily life that it had retreated to a place hidden very deep inside.

Writers of "humanist" landscape literature and journals this century may forgive the Victorians, and the "naturalist" travel writers of the 1800s for their clinical descriptions, because of the lack of a psychological discourse, and self-referential language available to them at the time. Whether it was a specific era with a codified approach to values and language, as in the Victorian example, or simply a different or non-existent sense of expression and self-understanding, writers of those eras did not have the tools.

Kenneth Clark, in his book The Gothic Revival, says that contemporary readers should withhold judgment on the expression of aesthetics in the past:

It is dangerous to speculate upon the causes of aesthetic delight in a past age. The language of psychology is of recent growth, and our forefathers had but rude instruments with which to analyse their raptures. Nowadays our greatly enlarged vocabulary has enabled us to express new shades of feeling, and has made the language of the older art-criticism, with its vague inherent values, seem empty and absurd. So we must often disregard their stated reasons and draw our conclusions more from the objects admired and the quality of the writers' enthusiasm (Clark 25).

In the previous chapter we read Margaret Atwood's criticism of Susanna Moodie's writing. This same withholding of judgment could be advised by Clark -- and Moodie's outmoded language could be excused and replaced by an appreciation for its enthusiasm.

There is a third theorization in the articulating of place in women's writing. Lawrence Jones calls a lack of sophistication in writing the difference between "the language of the naturalist" and "the language of the humanist" (Jones 179). Marni Stanley calls this distinction "showing" versus "telling" (Stanley 51).

Telling Vs. Showing

Marni Stanley has thought a lot about the writing that's been done by women about landscapes, and their travels over and through them. She separates the writing styles into two categories: guide books, and narratives (Stanley 53). Guide books are what happen when travel writing "deteriorates" into the naming of places and quoting of history. This is "showing" -- when the "narrating 'I' does not bother to develop a persona for the narrated 'I'. An objective mimesis is the goal....," Stanley says, referring to the theoretical assertions of Gerard Genette in his book, Narrative Discourse (Stanley 53).

"The Countess of Aberdeen is also keen to show. In keeping with this narrative style she is careful to avoid self-revelations..." And though the style of writing may even speak to the reader, and "adopt an air of asides and confidences to the reader -- 'I will confide to you...'," she "imparts only facts, not intimacies" (Stanley 54).

This is why the reading of a travel account like Lady Aberdeen's leaves the 1990s reader so cold. There is no revealing, no soul, nothing there for the reader to relate to.

Stanley describes this 'objective' writing style as one which adopts "a position of authority within the text. No personality and no flaws or limitations are revealed by the narrating 'I'" (Stanley 54).

"Telling," on the other hand, is a style which focusses on "the narration, rather than the representation; diegesis, not mimesis, is the goal" (Stanley 54). As Stanley defines it, the "telling" style is more akin to a fictional narrative. She describes it as more "self-revelatory, riskier, but also bolder, more assertive" (Stanley 54). Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill are presented as "tellers," because of their willingness to reveal their own frustrations and flaws to the reader. Stanley points to a passage from Moodie's Roughing it in the Bush in which she "dares to create a character for herself" (Stanley 54):

I cannot now imagine how I could have been such a fool as to give way to four-and-twenty hours to such childish fears; but so it was, and I will not disguise my weakness from my indulgent reader (Stanley 54).

This is intimacy; it is based on trust, and it makes for infinitely more engaging reading. In this example, the writer does "dare to create a character for herself," but to create a sense of intimacy that expresses a connection with place,

the writer must allow the images of the geographic space itself to invade her vocabulary.

Why didn't Lady Dufferin respond psychologically to the Canadian landscape? Marian Fowler believes that Lady Dufferin's "subconscious was much too repressed to find itself mirrored in wilderness" (Fowler 27). She cites two descriptions of white water as a stark contrast between the writing of the humanist and that of the naturalist: Lady Dufferin describes the Chaudiere Falls as "a great body of water, of a deep brown colour, which tumbles down from a good height" (Fowler 27). Anna Jameson sees the Niagara rapids and writes that they were "wild, impatient...rejoicing as if escaped from bondage" whereas for Lady Dufferin they are "merely 'very rapid indeed'" (Fowler 37).

The Imagination and Inner Life of Anna Brownell Jameson

One of Susanna Moodie's contemporaries, and one of the better "tellers" I have read, is Anna Brownell Jameson. In her travelogue Winter Studies and Summer Rambles, published in 1838, Jameson speaks independently about the landscape, Toronto society, the politics of the day and the position she

found herself in, being married to the Attorney General of Upper Canada, Robert Sympson Jameson.

It is the way that Anna Jameson is able to convey her own doubts, fantasies and misgivings about being a woman in the 1830s that makes her writing so exciting to read today. The evidence that her inner life was independent despite the social requirement for women to be submissive in the 19th century was expressed outwardly through her rebellions and strongly-spoken opinions. Another outlet was her writing.

Jameson wrote of the duality she felt:

This shaping spirit of imagination began when I was about eight or nine years old to haunt my *inner* life. I can truly say that, from ten years old to fourteen or fifteen, I lived a double existence; one outward, linking me with the external sensible world, the other inward, creating a world to and for itself, conscious to itself only (Fowler 141-142).

Again we hear the dilemma of the woman split in half; half of her living life, the other half observing herself living life. It is as John Berger has expressed: it's the trap of a woman knowing that she is subject to the public gaze, and recognizing that to preserve a part of her self, she must retreat inward, all the while monitoring her interaction with an external world which seeks to take away her independence

and, by extension, her soul. The fact that she would use a word like "haunt" to describe how her conscious self was monitoring, and in fact preserving, her subconscious self indicates that this must have been a frightening process -- to split off part of one's own being in order to seek refuge in a place that the mass society did not acknowledge, speak of, or believe existed. Any sort of duality must have felt like betrayal -- subversive, disobedient, and isolated.

Anna Brownell had a tempestuous relationship with the man that she eventually married, Robert Sympson Jameson. There was a moment before she married him that she asserted her independence in a way which at the time must have been frightening, because of a woman's economic and social dependence upon marriage: she suddenly broke off her year-old engagement. Later she changed her mind, and married him.

Marriage to Robert seemed preferable to a bleak lifetime of governessing, so, in spite of her misgivings, Anna married him in 1825, after five years of hesitation. She was thirty-one; he was twenty-seven. They were married on a Wednesday and daggers-drawn by Sunday (Fowler 143).

The articulation of place in women's landscape writing starts with the conveying of information, and occasionally rises to a level of imagination that borders on poetry. It is this

narrative writing, the "telling" of landscape -- and in so doing, the "telling" of self -- that engages a reader's imagination, and allows a landscape to come alive.

Marian Fowler has addressed many of these questions in The Embroidered Tent, but she has not attempted to connect the dots between the points of similarity in these women's lives. The closest she comes is to speculate about the connection between the women's lives and their writing. She traces the story of Anna Brownell Jameson's marriage, and alongside it, tells us of her unhappiness, her investment in her female friend Ottilie in Germany, and hints at the salvation that Anna experienced when she made her voyage into the northern Ontario landscape. She describes Jameson's writing as that of a new "Canadian genre, begun by Jameson, the feminist-picaresque." (Fowler 160)

I'll go further, to say that each of these women's landscape descriptions, their external vocabulary intermingled with the poetry of the internal landscape, was in fact a feminist treatise. Jameson was not just writing as a woman, she was writing for women -- writing "femininely speaking", as Bina Friewald would put it (Friewald 61). For Jameson as well as the three other women writers I have chosen to interpret in

this thesis, their way of seeing the landscape, the acknowledgement of the power relationships in it, and the inclusion of their own dualistic selves in their view of the landscape comprise a statement about themselves as having power, recognizing themselves in the faces and cycles of nature, and having the freedom to write all of these truths down. If it sounded poetic, people could read it as nature poetry. But other women reading it could recognize the powerful language as the words of someone who had broken out -- at least psychologically -- of the tyranny of the public gaze. To direct their self-conscious energy elsewhere was a very freeing phenomenon.

Marian Fowler wrote that this journal-writing was part of "making that archetypal quest for the androgynous self" (Fowler 12). Where there is questing -- very different from conquest, which has a men's history attached to it -- there is longing. It's this longing that I will explore in the next chapter, in the context of talking about two twentieth-century novelists, Marian Engel and Jane Urquhart.

Chapter Three: Light and Landscape: Longing and Belonging as
written by Marian Engel and Jane Urquhart

Eight pages into Marian Engel's novel Bear, there is a point where both the main character, Lou, and the reader feel the road open up in front of them, see the silver shimmer of water, and know that there is meaning in this place. We are about to leave the civilized mainland, and live among islands. Knowing this, we breathe differently, our shoulders drop an inch or two, and we open ourselves to the new landscape.

An examination of how Marian Engel used light and landscape to set free her character Lou gives us an idea of how Engel herself related to the geographical environment. It is my assertion that Marian Engel felt this 'connection with a landscape', and although her writing genre is fiction, and we cannot know that she was writing about herself, we can analyze the elements of longing in her landscapes, and attribute at least an awareness of this landscape-longing relationship to the author.

When Marian Engel wrote Bear, she had spent time with friends on St. Joseph's Island, in the North Channel between Lake Huron and Lake Superior. Locals on the island know of her

visits, and they know she spent most of her time there on a shoreline known as "Sailor's Encampment", where the channel between Canada and the United States is extremely narrow -- like a river. Coincidentally, it is the same "encampment" visited by Anna Brownell Jameson, and described as the location of an annoying encounter with blackflies in her travelogue, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (Jameson 126).

It was on St. Joseph's Island that Engel collected stories and subjects for later writing projects -- an unfinished book called Elizabeth and the Golden City, and a book called The Islands of Canada, which she published in 1981.

While visiting the island, Marian Engel developed a sense of the northern landscape and its special quality of light. In Bear, light and place comprise a physical environment and are full participants in the story of Lou's sexual and spiritual awakening on the island.

The presence of light imagery is everywhere in the novel Bear; its presence enhances the reader's own enjoyment of the imagined landscape, and illuminates our understanding of the protagonist, Lou. Engel uses light as a metaphor for love or

knowledge, light as an element that helps to create a sense of place, and light as a transformational force -- arguably a force as important in her transformation as the bear (whether real or metaphorical) itself.

As an epigraph for the novel Bear, Marian Engel chose this quote from Kenneth Clark's Landscape Into Art: "Facts become art through love, which unifies them and lifts them to a higher plane of reality; and in landscape, this all-embracing love is expressed by light" (Engel epigraph; Clark 33).

If we take Clark's idea and apply it to a reading of Bear, the passages in which light is given prominence convey Engel's intentions more explicitly. The logic goes as follows: Love is expressed in a landscape by light. Examples of this love/light abound in the novel. Most striking of all for its sheer repetition is Lou's morning ritual of waking up and greeting the day by witnessing a new kind of light, and then by feeling its contact on her skin: "The next morning when she went outside, the sun ... had real warmth to it. She stood for a moment and stretched in it" (Engel 50). The image of the stretch in the sun is cat-like; only a satisfied animal has the confidence and luxury of stretching in the sun. It is here, on Lou's third morning at the island house called

Pennarth, that she begins to enjoy living in her own skin. This is her first step toward love -- something she has not experienced in some time.

When Engel described Lou's first morning at Pennarth she conveyed in the passage an openness to the new environment, and to alert the reader as to the spiritual potential of the place, she wrote with close attention to light: "The morning light was dappled, fallow, green, a moving presence at the windows. ...When her breakfast was cooked, she carried it out to the stoop of the woodshed to sit in the light." (Engel 33)

First, the image of light as a "moving presence" establishes it almost as a separate character in the novel, glimpsing in and watching over Lou.

Secondly, we see further evidence of Lou's instinct to seek out the light, and place herself in it. This runs contrary to our original impression of Lou as a mole-like creature, "buried deep in her office" (Engel 11), preferring darkness. There is something in her new environment that begins to draw Lou out of her burrow, and allow her to begin to experience warmth. We also have a sense from Lou's past winter identity that she has stories she wants to hide -- her fuzzy

recollection of a feeling of loss, her sense of futility as she catalogued and sorted meaningless historical items, and the shame of her sexual submission to the man who is the director of her library. In her new environment, however, Lou surprises the reader with her exuberance, and the choice she often makes, to be in the light: "she took her supper out to eat on the woodshed stoop in the sun (the darkness of the kitchen seemed to indicate that whichever of the Carys had built the house had not consulted his woman)" (Engel 54).

There is a contrast here between repression and freedom which points to Lou's choice for personal freedom and illumination. It's a conscious choice; she sees dark, knows dark, and yet opts for light. It is through light that Lou starts to reveal herself, and to enjoy herself, in contrast to the earlier darkness and self-loathing that she felt. This constant seeking out of sunlight, exposing herself to the healing properties of light, demonstrates one type of love -- self-love, represented by light.

The second half of Kenneth Clark's love/light formula is this: Facts become art through light. Engel's story becomes mythic (and Lou's adventure meaningful) in the light, because the facts, or experiences, are processed internally, while Lou

sits on a step, just reflecting, and exposing herself to light. Engel places Lou in an illuminated place, to demonstrate the acquisition of wisdom: the processing of experience, in order for it to become knowledge.

Light brings meaning to Lou's life; she transfers the facts of her adventure, consciously or unconsciously, through the landscape: she sits in the sun and makes peace with herself, or gardens in the hot sun to gain absolution, and she finds love. Love in this case could also be called self-knowledge.

Literary critic Elizabeth Brady points to Engel's use of light as "a symbol for the clarity of compassionate vision" (Brady 37). In Bear, Lou demonstrates extreme compassion for her domesticated bear (which itself is the personification of compassion for a middle-aged and under-appreciated woman). In fact, she almost mistakenly transforms the bear into something human. But the most compassion that comes to light in the novel is ultimately the compassionate vision with which Lou begins to see herself.

If the sunlight that she surrounds herself with is the symbol for the clarity of compassionate vision, then a large part of compassion for oneself is seeing oneself honestly. We see a

woman start to be honest with herself about many things, and we hear her attempt to examine the many ambiguous threads that make up a life. On Cary Island, Lou lives as her true self -- knowing that she is not a good housekeeper, admitting to herself finally that the Director "screwed her," and recognizing that she is as self-sufficient and strong as anyone, and that the bush is navigable, and that her life may also be if she so chooses.

What Lou is doing, sitting outside perched on doorsteps soaking up the sun is actual, internal living -- completing herself, Elizabeth Brady might say. Brady says that in Bear, it's almost as if "the missing component of personality is instinctual and unconscious in nature, an unspecified revivifying power immanent in sunlight" (Brady 37). Philosopher Gaston Bachelard would call this light Lou's "inner light", or soul (Bachelard xxi), and says in his book The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places that the phenomenon of the light in the landscape parallels the revelation of the phenomenology of the soul. There will be further mention in a later chapter of how the study of phenomenology applies here.

On Cary Island, Engel has created a true northern landscape -- a symbolic landscape that is strong, clear, and mythic. (By northern I mean Nordic, and once again, we are seeing the landscape through the eyes of a white, middle-class woman -- this is the bias of Engel, Brady, and myself as a reader.) We feel a sense of place as we read short descriptions of the landscape; we experience it, like Lou, in large, expansive doses of water, bush, sky, and light. Coming to Cary Island, even just the approach to the water, Engel's description of the light gives us a sense of the space around Lou. But if light, and open space, are so foreign to this character, then why does she seem so ready to embrace her new surroundings so unhesitatingly?

To explore how the seer perceives light, and how that affects his or her own reaction to it, we can return to a small part of Kenneth Clark's Landscape into Art. In reference to the two painters Turner and van Gogh, Clark says that they were Northern artists in their expression, and brought with them, then, a certain sensibility when it came to light. When they were later exposed to Mediterranean landscapes, they found their vehicle for expression: "because only in these could they find that delirium of light which was to release their emotions." Only in a certain region could the painters find

a suitable subject that would satisfy their "passion for light" (Clark 181). In speaking of van Gogh, Clark says that "like Turner, he had the northern sense of light as a source of magic" (Clark 198).

In order for Lou to experience her transformation, she had to believe in some way, in magic. She looked to nature for clues and symbols, much as a fortune teller would. One night she goes outside to read her fortune in the sky: "...she went out and swam naked in the black night river. Lay on her back and watched the aurora flickering mysterious green in the magic sky" (Engel 116). The fact that she looks to the sky for magic, and that at the end of the novel, the bear becomes a constellation, tells the reader about the intertwining identities of bear/self/magic that are involved in Lou's transformation.

The reference to the light of Mediterranean landscapes is not to say that parallels should be drawn between northern Ontario and the Mediterranean. However, the passage from Clark spells out the idea that being exposed to certain landscapes affects the senses, and that one brings that sensibility to new experiences. In this sense, Barry Lopez would agree; as we read earlier, he believes that every landscape we see and know

affects our 'mind' -- our way of seeing. It sets up a framework, or aesthetic sense, against which all other experience can be measured or through which it can be filtered.

It is perhaps relevant, in exploring Engel's use of symbol and her reference to bodies of visual art in writing Bear, to know what Engel's personal landscapes were before she wrote this novel -- to know that she lived on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus for two years with her husband Howard, before they broke up.

Certainly Engel has read a lot about, or experienced and thought about, northern symbolist landscape -- where big sky, northern light, simplicity and immensity take on symbolic value. This tradition of mythic landscape painting was mainly found in Northern European or Scandinavian art, but after the Group of Seven developed and aboriginal artwork in North America became recognized by the dominant commercial culture, this type of painting could also be called Canadian.

After looking to the external applications of light symbolism with relation to aesthetic value, the reader can also look at the connections light has with internal identity. In Lou's

case, light gives her a sense of place, in herself. One example of this internal growth is in the ritual of taking food outside, and finding the sunny spot in which to feed herself. It is a comfort, and a tribute to her self-esteem. It's an offering; it's done with the most respect that Lou has paid herself in decades.

Literary critic Linda Hutcheon refers to Bear in a discussion about Canadian novelists and how this Canadian sense of place seemed to have been created specifically for and by women (Hutcheon 196). Hutcheon goes on to credit Susanna Moodie as the literary antecedent for these types of novels, in writing about the internal and external "wilderness" of women in the bush.

Marian Engel, who has described herself as a "placeless" person, described the northern landscape, and gave it value. In Bear, the place Engel creates is natural, essential, sparse, beautiful. It is often contradictory as well. The sense of place on the novel's Cary Island can be both serene and wild, can be green and healthy, but with dark corners of mystery and moral doubt. The descriptions of the physical geography of the island and the channel are varied -- the ecstasy of a blue-sky morning, the whipping up of dark waves

in a strong wind, an unpredictable snowfall, the buzzing heat of blackfly weather. This variety runs parallel to the range of human experience and emotion experienced by the novel's main character, Lou. The landscape itself often reflects the human activity of the place, as in this passage:

She loved him with such an extravagance that the rest of the world had turned into a tight meaningless knot, except for the landscape, which remained outside them, neutral, having its own orgasms of summer weather (Engel 117).

Although the author points to the landscape as remaining outside and neutral, it is not neutral: it is instead expressing exactly what the character herself felt inside. This passage demonstrates the interconnected nature of interior and exterior landscape in women's writing. It has to do with the imagination.

One of the by-products of imagination is longing, which may be a result of the relationship between place and memory. Marian Engel created longing on the northern Ontario island for Lou, because she needed Lou to come to terms with her confusing reality of being buried and unenlightened, and therefore unhappy, in the city (Toronto). She feels a sense of attachment to the land almost immediately -- a sense of belonging to the place.

Perhaps the strongest passage in the book is this one, when Lou gets her first glimpse of the island, and of self-revelation: "She passed one big island she had longed to live on all her life" (Engel 18). The character had never seen this island before, yet felt a longing for it. How can a person long for something she's never seen? The imagination has created this place first; it's the peripheral place, which is away from the central place of familiarity. Longing requires distance.

This example comes from a novel. If we take the notion of longing one step further, travel writers, then, could be said to be in a constant state of searching for the peripheral, a constant state of longing.

"Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other." (Tuan 61) As expressed in this quote by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, longing is connected to the political notion of freedom. For many women writers, political freedom was not an option -- they were living in the nineteenth century, a patriarchal society in which, depending upon class and education, they were to run households and to serve as ornament, a human embodiment of finery and refinery, or a sort of polished-up version of chattel. Of the women

writers so far profiled in this thesis, I would say that two of them expressed a longing in their work -- Anna Brownell Jameson, and Marian Engel. Longing was expressed often through landscape, but was most likely a personal longing coming from women whose inner life of imagination and ideas was far richer than their exterior life was permitted to be. Wilderness travel, for those who could afford it, was the perfect physical 'change of scenery' which may have symbolically meant relief from the blockage and barriers these women encountered in their urban social roles.

Jameson wrote of her travels in 1838, and of the joy she found in being away -- from unhappiness within a loveless marriage, and a lack of recognition for the writing talents she possessed. As the wife of Robert Jameson, the Attorney-General of Upper Canada at the time, she was known only as "the wife of." She felt no power, and though she was a published author, was politically invisible. "For a writer of travel books with an uncongenial husband, travel was the obvious answer" (Hodgins/Hobbs 119).

Over one hundred and thirty years later, Engel had the same marital problems with her husband Howard Engel, and wrote a sense of longing into her portrayals of lonely women. Engel's

emotional perception of landscape might too have been linked with her identity as a woman writer. Elizabeth Brady states that there are "two strongly linked aspects of her identity as a writer. One is that she is a Canadian writer, one a woman writer" (Brady 6).

Because she saw writing fiction as, 'in a serious emotional sense, writing social history,' she defined as one of the novels' primary functions the recreation of a sense of place -- in her case the Canadian landscape. Related to her concept of fictional place was her awareness of the effect of being a woman writer: 'It affects my writing because a part of my particular regionalism...is my gender... Women's experiences are a different place' (Brady 6).

Literary critic Elizabeth Brady mentions Engel's belief that it was in her own and other Canadian women's writing that "place and reality" converge. Brady may have been referring to a genre of writing called life writing -- a newly-recognized genre in the 1970s, and one that Marian Engel did all of her life. Engel may have said she was a ``placeless person", but she truly invested herself in St. Joseph's Island, felt enlightened by it and in it. Linda Hutcheon says that making natural landscapes symbolic is "a way to articulate and give voice to a relationship with the land. This could mean the Canadian wilderness, where the attractions

of a kind of modified mythic and romantic mode were never very far away" (Hutcheon 196).

I think that to put an even finer point on Hutcheon's assessment, the landscapes that I am addressing in this thesis actually are most concerned with water, and that the writing I am analyzing articulates and gives voice to a relationship with immensity, and with water. These two subsets of landscape are particular to women, in my opinion, because women's space is often not true real estate, as I'll discuss in Chapter Four.

A second level of longing -- and maybe an explanation of that phrase "pang of appreciation" that came up in the first chapter -- has to do with the appreciation of immensity. When I am looking at an immense expanse of water, such as Lake Superior, I am conscious of the lake, of myself, and then both are eclipsed by a third entity, which I will call an existential longing. It occurs as a result of the immensity of that which I am taking in, visually. However, "immensity is within ourselves," (Bachelard 184) says Bachelard. When we are alone, we can feel our inner immensity in the silence of our motionless selves. We can feel an expansion of simply being. It can be either a serene or an anxious moment when this

expansion is realized consciously. But when we see such an expanse outside of ourselves, like the huge, seemingly limitless water of Lake Superior, it presents us with a situation of existential longing, where inner immensity extends to reach outside and encounters geographical immensity. We realize our own insignificance in the face of this immensity. The sense of limitlessness is overwhelming. We long for limits, we long for meaning, we simply long for that which is not there.

For both of the women authors I have profiled so far -- Anna Brownell Jameson and Marian Engel -- longing pertains to their own personal rebellions. With any rejection of the conventional comes both a freedom as well as a vacuum: the absence of boundaries and social prescription can lead to existential longing -- a search for meaning in the absence of prescribed meaning. For these women, it could mean asking themselves questions about their social place -- 'if I am not the property of, the wife of, the companion to, the accommodator of, male culture, then who am I?' Or, perhaps more relevant to those who are questioning the authority of a patriarchal culture from within it, 'Am I?'

When I read Jane Urquhart's description of landscape in her novel Away, I felt that she understood and expressed some very subtle nuances of imagination, geography, and longing.

An important aspect of longing is the ability to imagine unseen landscapes. This requires visuals. Like the nineteenth-century ladies "seeing" the picturesque by recollecting the images of English landscape painting, the person who longs for something must be capable of creating a visual image in her mind. In Urquhart's novel Away, an old woman has seen enough landscape and has known enough hardship to be able to retreat to her own imaginary geography: "Esther's mind was skilled at building inner landscapes, those she has never seen, those that lie beyond the views her windows frame" (Urquhart 11).

The old woman who is doing the imagining in this passage is alone. She is inventing her own world, a limitless world perhaps, full of immense spaces and familiar places. Likely, it is an image of Ireland, as this was the home country of her ancestors, and images of Ireland permeate much of the culture of her Ontario-based family.

In another passage in Away, Urquhart writes an imaginary landscape for Eileen, who is actually Esther's grandmother,

when Eileen was still young. She is in Ottawa, and witnesses the assassination of D'Arcy McGee. A line from

a song her father had taught her kept running through Eileen's mind. 'Come fiddler, now, and play for me. Goodbye to barn and stack and tree.' She thought she knew what each of these features of an intimate landscape looked like, even though they were far away in a country she had never seen (Urquhart 331-2).

In Urquhart's writing, there is no distinction between landscapes real or imagined -- each carries the same weight of importance. Like Engel's literary character Lou, who longed for an island she had never seen before, there is longing for landscape that is ideal, is elsewhere, is somehow just not here at present.

The other side of longing is belonging. When we are not wishing ourselves elsewhere, we know we have ownership over the present landscape. The idea of something being "my" landscape -- one that holds particular meaning to me, or that I belong to, implies ownership, which historically, was not something that women had over property. Only in this century could average women really "own" much real estate. More often, they were themselves owned, in relationships of financial and social dependence upon men.

At the end of Away, Old Eileen illustrates her knowing that she has ownership over her particular landscape when she says to her granddaughter Esther, "I'm tired now. I'll go back to my view of the lake. I always knew it was the only thing that would ever be mine" (Away 355). From Urquhart's use of geography, we get a sense of rootedness, of her characters' belonging. In another of Urquhart's novels, entitled The Underpainter, the landscape acts as the subconscious of the novel, as it provides the visual basis for the main character's paintings. Austin is an artist, a single, male chauvinist, and someone who never -- until the absolute end of the novel and of his life -- makes the emotional connection to the landscape or to himself.

Austin's 'seeing' the landscape is, like other colonial eyes we have acknowledged so far in this paper, only the seeing of the 'other'. He is alienated from the landscape as he is alienated from himself and from the compassion required to love something as imperfect as a human being. In his case, that human being is both himself and Sara, his longtime companion and model for his life drawing.

It is the central tragedy in The Underpainter that the main character does not have this compassion, and can only feel through introspective flashbacks, like this one:

I knew nothing of passion then. Two decades would have to pass before I would be able to recognize it when I was in its company, and, even now, I am not certain that I ever let it slip beneath my own skin. Still, after I have looked at George's face that August afternoon, something briefly altered in me and I was able to turn and see the summer landscape as I never had before. ...This was the first time I had been moved by the tranquility rather than the violence of nature, the first time I felt the scene before me to be one of perfect harmony. I had never before suspected it was possible that landscape -- this impression -- might be a compensation for misery, for loss (Urquhart 60).

Compensation for loss -- this is the longing in Jane Urquhart's landscape. Jane Urquhart has known loss in her lifetime; her first husband was killed in an accident early on in their marriage. We cannot draw parallels between the writer's life and her writing unless we hear directly from her. However, it is a writer's familiarity with her own inner landscapes which allow her to see herself in exterior ones. Why she sees 'misery' and 'loss' is something the reader can only guess at. "And loss," he said. "The landscape of the Willow pattern is one that speaks of absence." At that time I had not often thought of landscape as a code for something else" (Urquhart 76).

Urquhart's statement, that landscape is a code for something else, helps in the interpretation of the novel as a whole. We understand as readers that we are not to read only literally, but that as we have been instructed here by the author, we are to read other levels of meaning into her literary landscapes.

Here we return to Peter von Matt's point, that culture is not the object, but what the object arouses in us. George's paintings on china were his own way of relating, his own view of culture. Austin's might have been his paintings, but he somehow missed making that essential connection. Urquhart's tragic figure only translates this connection for himself after the exploitation of people has been committed, after there were only ruins to sift through. The character of Austin Fraser is so isolated from his own emotions and soul that when Sara talks about how, like her father the miner, Austin must love light (he is painter of landscapes), he cannot internalize this statement. Austin becomes the object of the reader's loss, as he is incapable of feeling any loss himself. It is a striking moment in the novel when the reader's contempt for this ruthless character turns to pity. It is with this device that Urquhart reveals the reader's own compassion.

Throughout the novel, Urquhart's "idiosyncratic mode of regard" (Jones 182) comes to light in the form of two points of view: Sarah, whose poetic vision Austin can only guess at, but projects onto her, and the point of view of the narrator, Austin, who also objectifies the human landscape of Sara. Austin is so detached, so disengaged, from himself, as well as Sara, that he doesn't know his landscape, tries to colonize the geography of Sara's body, and except for her body, doesn't call any landscape his own. He is condemned to drift. When Sara reminds him during an argument that he has been painting her and the Lake Superior landscape for 15 years, he retorts, "Fifteen summers," as if to exempt himself from any connection to it, or to admit any attachment to the landscape or to her.

In his final visit to Sara and to Lake Superior, the landscape is too overpowering for him; he sees things too clearly:

Everything else was clear, precise, and painful to look at under that light that revealed, then blinded. Even when I turned my back to the bay the brilliance persisted, breaking through the large window and into the room. Nothing in my experience of the north shore had prepared me for this season's lucidity (Urquhart 325).

In the final scene, Austin sits, an observer, as Sara walks the long miles in the snow toward the hotel where he is waiting. He plans that he will love her, and by loving her, he

will atone for his lack of vulnerability and reciprocation in friendships with George and Augusta. He will love them back, by loving Sara. He will finally be engaged in some form of intimacy, "such blatant exposure that when I was finished she would have the entirety of my life in her possession..." (Underpainter 331). He stares at the unscarred landscape, all white.

He watches Sara approach the hotel. "She was coming steadily towards me across a pristine whiteness where everything shone. Behind her the stone man slept on, unmoved by her journey, his body hard and rigid and unchanging. Heart of granite. Bed of ice" (Underpainter 333). Here, finally, Austin has found himself in the landscape. He leaves the hotel by car, just as she is approaching it. His only contact with the landscape is the view through his rear view mirror.

Jane Urquhart finishes the novel with this thought about longing, about Austin's view of the futility of longing in the face of real life, of real emotional landscapes. He describes the painting he will paint -- the last one in his series, to be called *The Underpainter*. It will contain images of his entire life.

It will be full of beautiful dark shorelines, this painting, full of all the possibilities that we believe exist in alternative landscapes, alternative homelands. Hills and trees, gold-leaf birches, skies and lakes and distances" (Underpainter 340).

What are these alternative landscapes? They are undefined, except for the fact that they are not here. Their details are the details of the "elsewhere" that lies in the mind of the character. "The space of elsewhere" (Bachelard 184) is a space that exists in order to interfere with our own enjoyment of consciousness. It is also the space which exists most richly in the geographical landscapes of our imagination.

Expressed colloquially, it is the "grass is always greener" instinct. Expressed more poetically by Pierre-Jean Jouve in his work entitled Lyrique, it is:

"Car nous sommes où nous ne sommes pas. For we are where we are not" (Bachelard 210).

Chapter Four: Feminist Spaces/Women's Place:

The expression of longing in the novels of Marian Engel and Jane Urquhart brings us to the existence of a particular genre of women's writing -- quest writing. When it is a woman writing the quest literature, we get the emergence of the female quest archetype, which was embodied by the spirit of Anna Brownell Jameson, the passionate adventurer. The female quest archetype is connected to Marion Fowler's androgynous archetype, in that she is created via the breaking of social convention, and the travelling and acquisition of skills that were traditionally the domain of men only. As examples of female quest literature, I can think of titles like Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, Women on the Rope: The Feminine Share in Mountain Climbing, and Kabloona in the Yellow Kayak: One Woman's Journey Through the Northwest Passage.

I also think of my friend Brenda, who last summer just "knew" that she had to travel to the Yukon and paddle down the Bonnet Plume River, of an artist named Susan Duplan, moving her life and livelihood because of her need to be near water, closer to spiritual centre, as she explains it. When asked to talk about the need to be near these bodies of water, both women describe

it as an instinctual pull, a sense that they belonged there. Both describe the magnetic pull of water landscapes, and felt that they were being drawn into that particular geography by a sense of "coming home".

In this chapter, I will examine definitions of women's space, or feminist spaces, explore theories of why women's space is often space that encompasses water, and look at why these women writers may have written what they did as a form of rebellion against women's "quests" being "thwarted on every side by what we are told to be and to do" (Pratt 6).

Later in the chapter, I would like to re-address some of the "views" of landscape I have previously discussed. Because I have, up to this point, been looking at landscape through the eyes of women who were either part of colonial power structures or at least remnants of colonial structures, I would now like to seek ways of deconstructing the concept of landscape, by examining it as an imperialistic concept. Then, to illustrate how landscape can be viewed very differently in a post-colonial world, I would like to introduce a fourth writer, Dionne Brand.

First, I'd like to look at concepts of ownership. If one of the aims of this thesis is to show how four women writers figuratively 'owned' a landscape by writing it, then defining what is meant by owning is necessary.

Spatial boundaries with regard to gender were defined by feminists as long ago as in 1929, when Virginia Woolf wrote A Room of One's Own. Woolf defined the male impulse for conquest, in contrast to a woman's impulse to resist domination, and instead simply to quest, or seek. What it is that women are questing for, or seeking, may be characterized as knowledge, self-knowledge, or self. Knowledge about the world may have been the goal of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonials as they approached the New World, but through their explorations, some came to know more of themselves. Men's conquest included ownership of other men, women, or territory, but for women, "feminist theoreticians at the present time claim as territory that which is no territory" (Vlasopolos 75). One tangible example of that space is water. To take water as an example of nonterritory is helpful in addressing a question that I have had regarding the sources of writing that have 'flashed upon' my mind. Why is the landscape that I find myself attracted to, geographically and in literature, so often water?

In her article "Staking Claims for No Territory: The Sea as Women's Space", Anca Vlasopolos maps female heroines of women's novels and their interaction with water landscapes. In this thesis, we may keep in mind the relationship that Marian Engel's Lou had with the water/island landscape in Bear, and even more so, refer to Jane Urquhart's use of Lake Superior's expansive waterscape in The Underpainter.

Vlasopolos mentions the sea as a rather obvious metaphor at the core of female characters -- as "the amniotic fluid of their origin", but also as a metaphor for "the promise of unfettered possibilities outside patriarchy." (Vlasopolos 75)

Water is a "nonterritory", as it is "unconquered" (Vlasopolos 75) and unstructured. As at the time of Woolf's career, British exploration and domination of the uncharted parts of the globe had reached a peak, and the oceans represented the gaps in between the conquests. Water was often a barrier to exploration; it was unpredictable, literally at times unfathomable in its depth, and uncontrollable by humans.

In the novels that Vlasopolos chooses to analyze, "the only world into which a woman can escape from patriarchally prescribed roles is the unseen world under the sea". The

female characters are unwilling to be trapped "in the conventions of married life when they desire "many more things than the love of one human being -- the sea, the sky" (Vlasopolos 76).

Anna Brownell Jameson, Marian Engel and Dionne Brand have rejected traditional roles of women in marriage. As Marian Fowler states in The Embroidered Tent, Jameson finally rejected marriage in favour of a career in writing. Engel ended her marriage as well. Dionne Brand lives unmarried in her house north of Toronto. Jane Urquhart lives with her husband, artist Tony Urquhart, in southern Ontario. Were the choices that these women have made about marriage a conscious feminist reaction to feeling "trapped" in the confines of patriarchal institutions, like marriage? Can marriage be an institution of equal partners?

In the summer of 1998, my longtime boyfriend proposed to me. It was a sensitive proposal, done with an appreciation of what I consider to be "my" landscape: he popped the question on a pink granite rock island in the middle of Algonquin Park. With that choice of location, I think, was an unspoken acknowledgement of that longing in me, that feminist space. My

question is: can that feminist space coexist within a marriage? I still don't know what to answer.

The idea of landscape as one's 'own' has feminist resonance, as in the naming of a place of one's 'own', or Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own. Though none of the passages I have selected makes concrete reference to ownership literally, there is a sense in longing and belonging, and in the rejection of male ownership, that the female characters (and by extrapolation perhaps, the authors) feel they have ownership of some kind over the landscape, either geographic or psychological.

A classic novel of Canadian literature which explores water as a woman's space, as well as a reflection of her subconscious, is Margaret Atwood's Surfacing. The depths of a woman's ownership over her own personhood are explored through water imagery. Going back a hundred years, Susanna Moodie also expressed a particular affinity for water:

By night and day, in sunshine or in storm, water is always the most sublime feature in a landscape, and no view can be truly grand in which it is wanting. From a child, it always had the most powerful effect upon my mind (Moodie 330).

Moodie may have looked at water as the most "sublime" representation of the soul. Throughout history, water has been used to represent the depths of a human's subconscious, soul, or spirit. Henry Thoreau thought that a body of water was the closest nature came to representing the eye, and the soul. Water is also the least accessible landscape to man, and perhaps because of this it has become, at least symbolically, through literature and myth, the domain of women. For centuries, and certainly in the colonies of Upper Canada in the 1800s, men were the dominant landowners. Women have been alienated from land politically for centuries. Water is a more accessible metaphor for women, with its fluctuating boundaries and capacity to be a natural leveller of societies, its capability for destruction leading sometimes to lost property and a rejection of the patriarchal dividing up of the other, non-water landscape.

But by writing her passage about the aesthetic appreciation she had for water, did Susanna Moodie then begin to 'own' those landscapes which contained the water she thought was psychologically so important? By finding something of beauty in it, could she reconcile herself to the landscape she had initially found so alienating?

Even though we may now view people like Anna Brownell Jameson and her contemporaries, Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, as privileged practitioners of colonialism, they may also be seen as feminists of their time. I see their writing as a feminist act: it is through their journal writing that they maintain their 'room of one's own', and come to 'own' any sort of privacy or sense of themselves in a world where they were expected to give all time and attention to their men and their children. All of these women -- Anna Brownell Jameson most of all -- expressed an understanding of the injustice of their sacrifices as women. Anna Jameson wrote her novels, her travelogues, and later, wrote "feminist tracts on the plight of governesses, most of whom were grossly underpaid and exploited" (Fowler 142). It is ironic now to observe that Jameson was able to see inequality and exploitation in relationships when it came to governesses, but was unable to see it in situations like her own novel view of the aboriginal people she travelled with in northern Ontario. Nonetheless, her articles about governesses were bound to have stirred some kind of discussion about wages, work and women.

I asserted earlier that the connection with landscape that Anna Brownell Jameson, Marian Engel and Jane Urquhart expressed in their writing demonstrated their reflecting back

a sense of their free selves, and that the pieces of writing I have cited are, in a sense, feminist treatises. For women writing in the nineteenth century, the breaking away from convention of any kind, either through feminist/independent actions or through writing, can be taken as a bold statement of resistance to the patriarchy of the time. Women who gather today, in the 1990s, to share writing in the form of journals, short stories, or life-writing, may be doing the same thing -- creating a space of their own in which they may express their own personal resistance to a still-patriarchal reality -- either in their homes or at work.

Other women may feel a greater sense of accomplishment and community -- and therefore power -- by expressing their independence physically, as my friend Brenda did by mastering enough white-water paddling skill to be able to navigate down a river in the Yukon. Rock-climbing, sea-kayaking and other forms of women's outdoor sports emphasize the quest of the individual to reach higher, farther -- all for the sense of accomplishment and self-actualization. Certainly the language used in the marketing of current women's adventure tourism activities plays on these images of the questing for self -- avoiding any images of outright competition, which would be associated with a more masculine definition of conquest.

Marion Fowler has termed a woman's acquisition of traditionally male skills part of women's quest for the 'androgynous self', and she uses the relationship dynamics in the life of Catherine Parr Traill, the less dramatic of the two Strickland sisters, Catharine and Susanna Moodie, as evidence. She notes that upon Catharine's husband becoming ill, Catharine supported him, grew strong, and "discovered in herself wonderful qualities of strength, self-reliance, resourcefulness. She becomes, "in these 'masculine' attributes, superior to" him (Fowler 85). Fowler concludes that although Traill was thoroughly involved in the physicality of life in the bush, she refused to see herself as capable in these areas. Fowler states that this inability to accept this dimension of her own character is the reason that she could not connect spiritually with the same image of power in nature, and that she was consistently

refusing to engage emotionally with the strength and power of the rocks and pines and waterfalls. ...She is afraid of what she will see if she looks in the mirror. ... Internally, she is newly androgynous, but on the surface she is more "female" than ever (Fowler 85).

Landscape as an Imperial concept

Writing is the expression of the class view. The representation of perception. Most of the landscapes that have been described in this thesis so far might fall under the category of the English Rustic tradition -- the representation of landscapes perceived by those viewers who favour English countryside picturesque, or northern Ontario rustic, in the style of Group of Seven granite, trees and water.

But it's not all about the picturesque, which W.J.T. Mitchell typifies as a visual quality of colonialism. Author and critic W.J.T. Mitchell calls the concept of landscape an Imperial concept. His "Theses on Landscape" in his book Landscape and Power cut straight into the heart of landscape aesthetics that lean toward the picturesque.

We have come a long way from the innocence of Kenneth Clark's opening sentences to Landscape into Art. Most notably, perhaps, the "we" for whom Clark speaks with such assurance can no longer express itself outside of quotation marks (Mitchell 6).

This may be true, but it's not that we can't learn anything from Kenneth Clark, reading his work fifty years after it was published. Contemporary critic and writer Ann Bermingham says in her book Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic

Tradition that Kenneth Clark plays a large role in the study and understanding of landscape representation by "illuminating the formal and perceptual dimensions" and by establishing a vocabulary which would then be used as a foundation for criticism (Mitchell 30).

The picturesque landscape was associated with the 'new' way of seeing which the nineteenth-century European moderns brought with them to the colonies. Anna Brownell Jameson was one of them, along with all of the vice-regal women, Lady Aberdeen and Lady Dufferin among them. This way of seeing was dependent upon one's exposure to fine works of art, mainly English country landscapes by artists like Turner and Constable. Now, however, in the 1990s, this "we" is obsolete. No one author can speak for a pluralistic society. No one woman author can speak for, or write for, her gender. We can only speak of our personal experience, and theorize about how this may or may not apply to others like, or unlike, ourselves.

Dionne Brand is a writer who I consider shares a knowledge of landscape with Anna Brownell Jameson, with Marian Engel, and with Jane Urquhart. She also comes to 'own' her landscapes, by writing them.

However, Dionne Brand differs in that her visual imagery of the landscape is post-colonial -- she does not adopt images of the picturesque in order to express her longing through landscape. Brand's landscapes are instead harder-edged and ambivalent. She utilizes the duality of her relationship with nature to convey her politics and her vulnerability.

Space/place/landscape is always represented in relation to cultural codes that are embedded in social power structures. The three most significant power structures in contemporary American society are capitalism, patriarchy and white racial hegemony" (Jarvis 7).

For the other three writers discussed so far -- Anna Brownell Jameson, Marian Engel and Jane Urquhart -- patriarchy is the colonizing force, so the reader is faced with female characters trying to make sense of their lives outside of, and in reaction to, a patriarchal framework. There is a parallel between these white women's existential longing and Dionne Brand's existential questioning, as from a post-colonial perspective, Brand is surrounded by oppressive elements -- by whiteness, by the imbedded "heritage" of power in small town Ontario, by either a subtle or an overt hostility of the social and physical environment toward a woman of colour. As a writer, she addresses all of the oppressive elements from within her own framework of power -- questioning the

environment's passivity, its beauty. She does not find comfort in the rural Ontario landscape, but instead finds disturbing symbols of complacency and control.

Dionne Brand is everything, then, that is not embedded in the current social power structures of rural Ontario. She is an artist, she is a woman, and she is a woman of colour. She was born in Trinidad. Her place is a woman's space, but differs in how she sees the colonial definition of the "picturesque".

Like the other three women writers, Brand also writes of an imagined "place" -- where she and another can meet, "imagining ourselves big as the world and broad enough to take it in and grow ancient" (Brand 81). Here inner immensity is longed for, almost wished for -- but she recognizes that it exists, however fleeting the state of mind. In her poetry, such as her collection titled Land To Light On, Brand's vulnerability is the key to her connection with the landscape; she uses her descriptive words frugally, telling the reader only the most lucid of details: "the harsh harsh happiness of winter roads", and "quiet, quiet, earfuls, brittle, brittle ribs of ice" (Brand 8).

Dionne Brand's imaginary geography combines an understanding of oppression, and a knowledge of landscape that is malevolent, all-encompassing. "I have to think again what it means that I am here, what it means that this, harsh as it is and without a name, can swallow me up" (Brand 9). "Where is this" (Brand 14), she asks of herself and of her landscape. This question is the geographical equivalent to the existential 'Am I?'

In Dionne Brand's poetry, the landscape comes to express her own inner sense of who she is, who she might have been. The longing in this imaginary landscape is for a life that does not look on the outside as it was "supposed" to have been projected, a perfect image of her aspirations on the inside. "I had thought my life wider..." (Brand 52) "a life that I was supposed to finish by making something of it not regularly made" (Brand 9). This language of resignation, of coming to terms with one's self, and the way that it is expressed using physical, geographical terminology -- wider, water, drifts, maps, seas, sands and ice -- is how Dionne Brand reconciles herself with her physical environment.

In a radio interview, Dionne Brand once said that she had an ambivalent relationship with the Ontario landscape, and that

she does not believe in belonging at all. "Belonging is not certain; a lot of people die because of a ridiculous certainty" (Brand, CBC Radio interview). With this statement alone, Brand tells us of the range of her experience -- having seen landscapes other than Ontario, other than the one in which she is currently living.

She addresses her relationship with the landscape instead as one of "coming to terms with myself out there" (Brand, CBC Radio interview). Perhaps her way of gaining control, of 'owning' some measure of the landscape around her, is to give it up. She does not try to dominate; she is no colonizing force. "I have given up on land to light on..." she says in one of her poems. "I was never committed. Not ever, to offices or islands, continents, graphs, whole cloth, these sequences or even footsteps" (Brand 47).

Attached to this notion of not belonging, of not seeking to belong, is Dionne Brand's explanation of the word "wilderness": "There is this notion of wilderness -- a Canadian idea of wilderness -- and that's a neo-colonial euphemism for "a place that is not mine" (Brand, CBC Radio interview). The explorers of wilderness have throughout history been people who wanted to conquer, to dominate. Even

the women who travelled through the wilderness of Upper Canada in the 1800s, though they may only have been 'questing' after knowledge or after landscapes external and internal, were still in a position to refer to this 'other', unfamiliar, wild landscape as a wilderness. It is only when they spent time in that landscape that they came to see themselves as part of it, or reflected in its visual imagery.

Dionne Brand has spoken of the idea of getting to know a wilderness. She referred to the wilderness as a vast psychological image that a person constructs, then can either make peace with, or stand back and revere. Of her own 'coming to terms with' herself out in that wilderness, she says, "one grows into this imagination, this wilderness" (Brand, CBC Radio interview). For Brand, wilderness is also a way of describing the geography of the imagination -- a landscape that is unknown, but sometimes familiar.

The concept of landscape may be an imperial construct, simply by the fact that its boundaries are created in the imagination. As W.J.T. Mitchell writes, it may even be simply a medium, a vehicle for concepts and superimposed constructions of power. As with all artificial constructs, it depends upon the imagination that is describing the landscape.

It depends upon the perceiver, the one who is "seeing" it. I do not object to W.T.J. Mitchell's definition, but rather make the "imperial" nature of landscape dependent upon the mindset and intentions of the perceiver. If the intention of the viewer of the landscape is to colonize and dominate, it is an imperial concept. If the intention of four women writers was to describe landscape, and in doing so, gain dominion over their feminist selves, does this excuse the method by which they were able to conceptualize a "self"?

Not all landscape writing is picturesque. That's not to say that all post-colonial writing and thinking is anti-picturesque, only that there are more layers of understanding within the seer, and about what is being seen. Dionne Brand says that if she has "longed for anything, it is shadows -- regions of darkness" (Brand, CBC Radio interview). In contrast to this recognition of the pluralistic nature of modern, or post-modern existence, the writing of Anna Brownell Jameson seems naive. Dionne Brand is writing herself, even as she is aware of the idea of 'other'. She is writing her landscape, just as Jameson, Engel, and Urquhart wrote theirs. All four women writers were writing an expression of their own inner life into their work, charting their own progression of

understanding about how the exterior landscape they were seeing related to them, and how they saw themselves in it.

Chapter 5: The Blurriness of it All

April Gornik is a Canadian-born landscape painter, now living and working in New York City. In an interview with arts journalist Robert Enright for Border Crossings magazine, she told her story of making the shift from intellectualized and technically-proficient artist to what she considers her true self as an artist. In the interview, she talks about being educated in a school of modernist views, of critical thought, of thinking about visual art by emphasizing the conceptual, shunning the image in favour of political stances and an intellectual approach.

Gornik found this conceptual approach to art stimulating and satisfying, until she left and started to paint on her own. She says that she felt empty, alienated from her own sense of the beautiful, until she found landscape again. Working in secret for a full year until she could make a strong case for her choice of subject, April Gornik became a painter of landscapes in a time when painting was "dead" and landscapes couldn't have been further from the abstract expressionism that she had studied and internalized.

But landscapes were what made her heart zing. She sought out other landscape painters -- the American Luminist painters, like Church, Bierstadt or Caspar David Friedrich. They were painters she had never heard of, never knew existed. She felt that she was "discovering them for the first time..." and that it was "as if I had to piece the stuff together to make it my own historical antecedent" (Enright 23). Gornik felt as though she needed to have a precedent for her work, that her work would not be legitimate unless she could explain it in the context of her modernist visual art education at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in the 1970s.

I have experienced something similar in researching this topic: I have come by my evidence by accident, gathered sources I felt attracted to, and behaved as an intuitive navigator as opposed to a linear-process researcher. Like April Gornik defending her choice of romantic landscape as subject, I have read through critical texts in order to deconstruct the simple appeal of Romanticism and visual beauty. I have learned that many images of peaceful, horizontal lines are based in a European history of colonial domination and a forced tranquility; I have read about, and incorporated parts of theory about the male gaze, the political oppression of the objectified, whether it is a

person or a landscape. Most of these ideas I already knew about, either through formal education or experience. However, if I am to follow what I believe politically, the texts lead me in another direction, away from what I find visually beautiful, and meaningful. I can acknowledge that I am a white, educated woman living with relative comfort in a still-bigoted society. I am aware of inequality and injustice. If it is still true that the personal is political and the political personal, then how can I reconcile my political views and my visual sensibility?

Gornik gets this far in justifying her own path to landscape painting: "It took me many more paintings to begin to understand anything about what I was doing. I was working intuitively at the time....But at the time I wasn't really thinking about it. I was just looking at paintings that had space, light and a certain kind of power" (Enright 23).

In the four chapters previous to this one, I have looked at visual appreciation of landscape, at the passion of some women writers in describing this landscape, the connection between outer and inner landscapes, the interconnectedness of landscape and longing, and finally, looked politically at the

notion of landscape and discussed why for some writers, landscape is a colonial construct.

In this final chapter, I will show how defining these elements of landscape writing helps to explain the blurriness of genres when it comes to women writing about landscape -- how landscapes of the imagination are not far removed from actual geographical landscape, and how depictions of landscape in fiction, creative non-fiction, documentary, travel writing are all about the same thing -- perception, or a way of seeing.

My methodology throughout this essay has been to bring my own experience to it, and to look for elements in the works of four women writers which would suggest that they were writing about themselves when they wrote about landscape. If my methodology seems less structured than is expected by the reader, consider this thought from feminist theorist Ruth Salbaggio:

while theories produced by men take on certain gendered spatial contours, theories written by women...bring women's actual experience of space to discourse. Instead of shaping masculine space into something feminine, these women bring feminine space to life by writing from, through, and about the spaces women themselves have occupied (Higonnet 197).

My goal was to see if by writing landscape, these four women were, by extension, writing themselves into it, and achieved the result of expressing a sense of ownership over their particular way of seeing. The written landscapes were not simply a description of rock and water, they were a description of the way that the writer sees.

There is still a problem, however, with trying to define what a woman's way of seeing actually is. The problem lies in the word "emotion". The reason why I have not used the term 'emotional landscape' throughout this thesis is that the word implies a whole set of "feminine" characteristics which are not progressive, not new, and bring to the conversation a stereotype which is not helpful. That there is emotion in the writing that we have looked at is undeniable; my reticence to call the writers' language "emotional" language, however, speaks to my experience with stereotypes.

In her book about Great Plains fiction, entitled The Nature of the Place, Mary Dufva Quantic writes about the emotional significance that people assign to place (Quantic 169). "As Wright Morris has said, it is emotion that generates image-making, it is emotion that processes memory of place and experience" (Morris in Quantic 169).

Emotion is at the heart of impressionist culture, a style of painting, writing, and visual representation which takes a subjective approach to naturalistic external objects. Jean-Paul Sartre defined this type of writing as what occurred when the author acknowledges "the impression of objects upon his own inner state (Kronegger 20)". By this definition, the writing that we have examined, of Anna Brownell Jameson's travelogues, of Marian Engel's and Jane Urquhart's fiction, and of Dionne Brand's poetry, is impressionistic; it takes as its visual cue the outside naturalistic surroundings, and expands upon their effect when they meet with the inner landscape of the soul.

How is it, then, that the consciousness can create a 'place'? Throughout this thesis paper, I have referred to something called 'woman's place'. Poet Pierre-Jean Jouve writes about the possibility of the consciousness forming a place in which to let an image resonate. He asserts that "poetry is a soul inaugurating a form" (Bachelard xxii). The "form" that we consider could be the visual image -- the object which the mind takes in. Gaston Bachelard advances the assertion, by writing that what happens to the object, or the image of the object, when it enters the mind, is that it becomes transformed by the soul, or consciousness. He writes that

"before the interior poetic light was turned upon it, it was a mere object for the mind. But the soul comes and inaugurates the form, dwells in it..."(Bachelard xxii). In this case, instead of poetry, the result is a 'place' inside, in the consciousness -- an awareness with particular definition and boundaries. 'Woman's place' is a creation of the poetic mind when it fixes on an exterior object (landscape), takes it in, and allows the image to dwell inside.

We can take this awareness of 'woman's place' and apply it to the question of literary genre. The difficulty of the geometrics of "inside" and "outside" might give some clue as to the difficulty of categorizing women's landscape writing into various labelled genres. In his book The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How we Experience Intimate Spaces, Gaston Bachelard solves that in one simple word: poetry. He recommends throwing all categorical definitions of writing to the wind:

We must be free as regards all definitive intuitions -- and geometrism records definitive intuitions -- if we are to follow the daring of poets who invite us to the finesses of experience of intimacy, to "escapades" of imagination (Bachelard 215).

In looking at the way women writers have articulated place over a century of writing, it helps to think about intuition and imagination. There is not necessarily one genre of writing which can be described as being the best vehicle for articulating an intuitive connection to landscape, or place; it seems to pervade almost every type of writing, be it fiction, non-fiction, poetry or documentary. There is a long tradition of the documentary poem in Canadian literature, and in most personal journalism, there is reference to, and reliance on, imagination and memory. This is not esoteric stuff; this is simply the way that a landscape develops meaning in the eye of the beholder. The imagination draws images from "physical properties of space" (Bachelard 47, 103), and those images may be transformed in the mind of a writer into literature.

In theorizing about a woman's particular 'way of seeing', the question arose earlier of the existence of a woman's 'way of writing'. Of course, each woman writer writes differently; we are all human, subject to an infinite range of behaviour, perception and creation. However, if we are to accept the idea that a woman's knowledge is partially, if not completely, affected by her role as a surveyor of herself as well as a surveyed object, then it could follow that there is a

dimension of that awareness which would infuse her perspective when writing. I would not attempt to name it, and could not attempt to measure, weigh, or prove its existence. So a definitive explanation of what 'women's writing' is will not be attempted here.

But some women writers are "tellers", according to Marni Stanley, and the power of narrative -- whether it is in fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, documentary or travel writing -- affects the quality of the writing, and how absorbed the reader will be. Barry Lopez claims that the power of narrative is due to the fact that all stories are the story of the land, and that it is only through knowing about the land that we know ourselves. (Lopez 67-68)

Is it possible that in every piece of good narrative, there is part of the writer's own sense of self? I will assert that in every good piece of travel writing, there is a sense of who the writer is, and that perspective is often what propels the narrative; this is the difference between travel writing and guide books, as Marni Stanley has defined them in an earlier chapter.

I will add one further piece of anecdotal evidence to this point about narrative and storytelling: In the film The Sheltering Sky, one of the characters draws the line between the definition of a traveller and a tourist. I believe that it is the same delineation that Stanley is making. A traveller takes in the landscape in the form of a narrative, seeking to know contextually what he or she is seeing, hoping to gain an understanding of the narrative of the place. A tourist, as defined by the character in the film, does not make this attempt.

So does it all come down to good storytelling? A woman's way of seeing is her individual way of owning herself, her opinions and her sense of the world. Through writing, she communicates that particular perspective. Sigrid Weigel wrote an article called "Double Focus: On the History of Women's Writing", in which she says that the question of whether or not women write differently than men is not the point -- that this can be proved or disproved any number of ways, using any number of examples. What she is most concerned about "is the question of whether women have found their own cultural niche, whether, because they write differently from men, they have developed a way of talking which reflects their desires and

experiences, or whether they submit to the pressures and temptations of the male image of women" (Weigel 64).

Weigel goes on to state her hope that women's writing will transcend those pressures and temptations, and will seek to define itself apart from men's writing and the conventions of seeing that have been prescribed by a male-oriented western culture:

Instead of renouncing the gaze, woman will have to sharpen her vision -- not put on male spectacles but develop her own gaze, an active, non-voyeuristic gaze (Weigel 78).

Women's ways of seeing are intrinsically connected to the fact that they are women. Though there are various genres of writing in which women address questions of identity, longing and belonging, and though it is my assertion that many women writers address these questions through descriptions of inanimate landscapes which become animated by the writer's own identification with them, there is no one word or genre which best fits women's experience. Whether it is called life-writing, creative non-fiction, documentary, poetry or simply narrative, by writing landscape, women write themselves.

Through an understanding of how undetermined this women's way of writing is, we may be able to define women's opportunities

for expression differently, and in isolation, without incorporating them into or around men's space or ways of seeing -- without finding ourselves in a state of being accommodating. New ways of looking at writing, and of looking at the world, will continue to emerge.

The descriptions of landscape which I have explored, written by authors Jane Urquhart, Marian Engel, Dionne Brand and Anna Brownell Jameson, go beyond individual definitions of visual beauty, and cross into the territory of individual treatises of independence. By describing landscape, they have asserted their knowledge about their interior, as well as exterior, terrain. My thesis, that this naming and describing of landscape is itself a political act, and that what the writers are mapping is their ownership over their imagination, their lives, their sense of the world, will, I believe, contribute to a better understanding of them as writers and as women.

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