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**LOCAL INSTANCES OF SOCIAL RESISTANCE:
ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE AGE OF
GLOBALIZATION**

By

Karen Penny Morelyle, B.A. (Honours)

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
School of Canadian Studies**

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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

**“Local Instances of Social Resistance:
Artistic Expressions in the Age of Globalization”**

submitted by Karen Penny Morelyle, Hons. B.A.

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

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January 2001

Abstract

The argument put forth is that Canada's socio-political landscape is under stress due to the globalizing and homogenizing trend that is presently taking place globally. There is a form of political resistance to the global culture which has focused on the local as a fruitful form of cultural resistance. These new spaces help us connect more effectively on both an international and national context. There is a need for spatialized local identities to respond to globalized identities, a response which takes the form of political resistance. To better understand these new forms of political resistance, three different examples of creative media are used to illustrate the main thesis - creative writing, the visual arts, and architecture. The artists chosen are the artists coalition "Artists in their Environment", writer-critic Dionne Brand, and the architect Douglas Cardinal. The examinations of the artists are essential in order to fully explore the importance of articulation by all Canadians of their spatial needs.

"One person can make a difference. Every act has a significance. Every act is spiritual. Every action you take is the sum of all knowledge before you, and you impact all that comes ahead of you. You owe every action to the past and to the future. It is an awesome responsibility" (Cardinal, 1991, 92).

Douglas Cardinal

"Technology is universal in the sense that everyone is included in the economic and political world system that it engenders. It is homogeneous in the sense of standardizing culture in the various parts of the world system. Technology triumphs by breaking down particular traditions" (Angus, 1997, 77).

Ian Angus

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INTRODUCTION

Prescriptive technologies have brought into the real world of technology a wealth of important products that have raised living standards and increased well-being. At the same time they have created a culture of compliance. The acculturation to compliance and conformity has, in turn, accelerated the use of prescriptive technologies in administration, government and social services. The same development has diminished resistance to the programming of people. (Franklin, 1990, 25).

Ursula Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*

Canadians are a part of the culture of compliance about which Canadian technology critic and Professor Ursula Franklin writes. That culture is in part a result of globalization, a globalization that consists of grandiose structures designed by powerful countries and huge multi-national corporations who are, in turn, assisted by various technologies. These super-structures include freeways, office buildings and electricity networks; however, super-structures also refer to the ideologies which support and justify these huge physical structures. Is this emerging global culture something to aspire to as an ideal for Canadians? The critics of globalization suggest that despite the many advantages of diminishing boundaries, there is much to lose in the face of huge multi-national corporations and the swift movement of both people and capital. They suggest that capital will regulate governments, and that citizens will have less and less control of the socio-political spaces they inhabit. Canadians are vulnerable not only

to a loss of personal identity but to a loss of national identity, given the proximity and influence of the United States in the global marketplace.

It is in reaction to these concerns about the 'progress myth' and its effect on Canada that this thesis investigates local social movements of personal and social resistance. What are local spaces and local places, and why or even how are identity politics involved? What I have found is that there are those who still believe in the possibility of the local as a place for the mobilization of revolutionary ideas, that it can be a space of resistance, even if it is resistance against the seemingly unstoppable forces behind globalization. Therefore, "what researchers and activists need to tell themselves and each other is that resistance and alternatives are possible and they are necessary to sustain local places in the age of the global city" (Keil, 1996, 7).

The search for a clear demonstration of reaction against globalization, and in particular a reaction that is positive in a Canadian context, has led me to the place of the artist. The artist has always inhabited a unique place in society. Art can be a form of resistance against the forces behind globalization and the culture of compliance. The idea behind the creation of art as a form of resistance is that it does not buy into the corporatist mindset. It is through the eyes of

Canadian artists that the growing emphasis on the local can best be illustrated. Many people such as Martha Rosler and Marshall McLuhan believe that the artists of a culture can act like a compass, pointing in the direction that a society is reaching. Through the visions of many Canadian artists one is able to see that the celebration of our local spaces is not only an important part of being Canadian, but perhaps an essential ingredient in order for Canada to thrive. This local component in globalization is revealed through various artistic mediums.

To better understand the new forms of political resistance, three different examples of creative media are used to illustrate the main thesis - creative writing, the visual arts, and architecture. The artists chosen are the artists coalition "Artists in their Environment", writer Dionne Brand, and the architect Douglas Cardinal. These artists represent a group of individuals who partially mirror Canadian diversity in gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and region. These artists were chosen for their unique and creative artistic expression; however there are many artists who could be used as examples. Artists can be the place for the activation of resistance because they often live on the margins of dominant society and that placement often gives them the ability to have a clearer perspective of the direction that society is moving, because how they live is an act of resistance in itself, and

lastly because they have a vehicle for articulation which is a key element in achieving social resistance.

The argument put forth is that Canada's socio-political landscape is under stress due to the globalizing and homogenizing trend that is presently taking place globally. There is a form of political resistance to the global culture which has focused on the local as a fruitful form of cultural resistance. These new spaces help us connect more effectively on both an international and national context through understanding and empathy, not fear and loss of identity. There is an importance and a need for spatialized local identities in response to the globalized identities; this response is a form of political resistance.

Chapters one and two are an introduction to the theoretical work surrounding this topic, including writings on globalization, social movements, space and place, and the transformative possibilities of art.

Chapter one begins by exploring the possibility that aspects of globalization can inspire passivity. It identifies some of the worrisome aspects of this trend and its possible effects on Canada. Chapter two examines the importance of articulation when visualizing change, how the most effective site for resistance and political change is the local, and how the most effective articulations of social movements can involve art and artists.

Chapter three and four explore different examples of art and the artist expressing various forms of local spaces. The role of the narrative is key, which is why it is necessary to examine three different artistic media. Looking across various cultural media creates unique and distinct perspectives on these political topics, and it is imperative to search in more than one place for answers. The diversity of the artists is significant, and it is hoped that the variety of the choices represented articulates the imbedded diversity in Canadian society. The objective is to demonstrate that these examples of expression could be found anywhere, and therefore different media will explore different voices and different needs. Again, by looking at different categories of cultural expression, the interdisciplinary nature of this study is revealed.

Chapter three is a comprehensive examination of interviews with the artists coalition the "Artists in their Environment". They are visual artists who work in the Gatineau park area near Ottawa, and represent a local community of practice. Although their artistic styles and meanings may vary, their coalition is an interesting one as their place in the park is reflected in their art one way or another, and they use their community for greater expression of creative freedom.

Chapter four explores Douglas Cardinal and Dionne Brand. Cardinal is a Métis architect who designed the Museum of Civilization.

His creative expressions in architecture are reflective of the local spaces he is designing for, and reveal his ideas about co-existing peacefully with nature. He believes that the local people should be involved in the design process, and he has therefore created a consensus process for all of his projects. Cardinal is very critical of technology, partly because he sees the problematic effects of technology and "the reality of capitalist society where the land is owned, divided, sub-divided, sold and re-sold. Speaking out of a world that is filled with the "subjective", he cries out against this never-ending object-ivization" (Melnik, 1977, 13). The second part of chapter four studies Dionne Brand, a creative/critical writer, a black lesbian immigrant woman who writes of the importance of place, and uses it to illustrate the social activism that she is involved in, consisting of a local community of resistance.

Chapter five returns to a more theoretical reflection on the issues raised by the case studies, concluding with a positive view of the possibility in individual resistance if it is based on awareness, choice and finally articulation.

It is necessary to deconstruct and analyze the dominant ideologies in Canadian society that generate the forces behind globalization. With a discourse analysis of critiques on globalization and technology and movements of social resistance, a bridge can be

constructed to connect the ideological humanist needs of society and the individual, with the practical spatial needs of Canadian citizens. It is my contention that Canadians must embrace globalization and technological growth, but that it is possible to both debate and regulate the implementation of technologies and policies by the citizenry, business and the government. Each should play a role in the decision making process. One method of opening this discourse is through the examination of cultural media. Through these media new voices can be listened to and analyzed for their humanist input.

CHAPTER ONE

GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIAL SPACES

In the technological civilized system, people are set aside for certain tasks and the masses are conceived as a mindless entity. But we are all part of the masses. Our lives are important because we are all individuals and we all have something to contribute.

Douglas Cardinal, *Of the Spirit*

INTRODUCTION

The following study explores globalization and offers some explanation as to why we should be concerned with certain aspects of it. Some of the ramifications of the trend of globalization, including the attempt to master and exploit space, or as Henri Lefebvre describes, to "shackle and enslave it" (1991, 26) are worrisome, and it is beneficial to explore some of the possibilities that exist to better empower people in this regard. One way in which we can attempt to do this is through spatial theory, where it can be demonstrated that there are inherent positive possibilities in local actions of resistance towards globalization.

For the purposes of this study, the term "globalization" refers to the trend of ever increasing mobilization of communications and capital which enables citizens of cultures around the world to cross borders and erase boundaries as if they do not exist. The global movement of capital is another way of defining it, as the technologies

which are behind the greater communications networks, the movement of people, and the flow of goods and services are all linked to capital. Graham Todd describes globalization as, "the increasing internationalization of flows of financial capital and labour, and the integration of various national markets for the resulting production" (1994, 46).

One must not forget that technology is at the centre of globalization. Methods of transportation have become faster as demonstrated by increasingly high-speed plane, train and automobile networks. Through telephones, faxes and modems, communication is far more efficient than it was a century ago. Capital passes through borders electronically via computer networks. Even war has become technologically advanced, with conflicts fought through view-finders in jets and tanks, not through the eyes of a gun. As such, the development of technology has played an integral role in shaping a more globalized world. As it is necessary to link the ideologies behind the creation of technologies as similar to the ones behind globalization, it is imperative to recognize this fundamental premise in order to come to a fuller understanding of globalization; they often strive for the same goals.

It is for this reason that some of the notions posited by theorists Harold Innis, George Grant, Marshall McLuhan, Ursula Franklin,

Heather Menzies and Jean Baudrillard are useful for this discussion. These theorists discuss some of the inherent biases behind the implementation of technologies, and in turn the growth of globalization. It is useful to be aware of the ideologies behind globalization if one is to understand the importance of resistance by our citizenry to these ideologies. The following will outline the hegemonic framework impacting globalization and the monopolies of knowledge that arise out of these technological systems. I will examine the effects of the rigidity, the passivity, the homogeneity and universal values which are attempting to erase differences and create one ideal for all people.

One of the more important facets of globalization is the concern for hegemonic power and the resulting homogeneity that is necessary to sustain control. Hegemony is the leadership and control over the economic, political and cultural direction of a nation exercised by the dominant classes. The means is not "direct coercion of subordinate classes" (O'Sullivan, 1994, 133), but rather the consent of the people is sought and manipulated through making sense of the world through various media or propaganda, in order to follow the desires and interests of the hegemonic alliance of the dominant elite, or "power bloc" (O'Sullivan, 1994, 133). The concept of hegemony reveals "how everyday meanings, representations and activities are organized and

made sense of in such a way as to render the class interests of the dominant "bloc" into an apparently natural, inevitable, eternal and hence unarguable general interest, with a claim on everybody" (O'Sullivan, 1994, 134). The belief system, often unconscious, is propagated through a society's institutions, in reality cultural agencies, which are supposedly "neutral", such as the law, educational system and the media. In short, hegemony "naturalizes".

Canadian scholars such as Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Ian Angus and others recognize the link between technology and ideology, and the monopolies of knowledge built into the technological systems and infrastructures which imply that the hegemony becomes embedded in the system. One must acknowledge some form of hegemonic control when speaking of technologies simply due to the means necessary to create them. Monopolies are created due to the vast size of infrastructures that the communication and transportation networks need in order to compete at a global level. Few corporations can sustain that mass level, and very few governments have the access to capital in order to create them. Ian Angus suggests that "multinational, or transnational, corporations had become the leading economic force... and were really mainly American corporations extending beyond their borders into a multinational context to dominate the political economy of Canada" (Angus, 1997, 41). This

then continues the colonial dependency created with the staple theory, only this time the power and money was invested in the United States, not Great Britain. Therefore monopolies can be created because of the small number of players in the global market. Monopolies in turn create homogenization, as there are fewer choices; in this way hegemonic power is sustained.

HEGEMONIC POWER IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Harold Innis and Monopolies of Knowledge

In *The Bias of Communication* (1951), Harold Innis offers insights into the systematic biases inherent in the infrastructures of society which support those in power. He emphasizes that the bias of communication, indeed, the "disastrous effect of the monopoly of communication," (Innis, 1951, 81) in Canada reinforces the influence of those few in control, which thus shapes Canadian society. His critical look at mainstream culture enables us to ask the question of whose community are these biases helping? His work helps us to identify the areas in which control can be questioned. He examines long distance communication and the structures in place which, due to their large scale and the large amounts of money invested, are rigid, static, and capitalistic in nature. Innis deepens this argument insofar as "we are concerned with control not only over vast areas of space but also over vast stretches of time" (Innis, 1951, 64). Therefore, not

only is space shaped by those in control, but so is our perception of time and history as well, which only deepens hegemonic control. This has been demonstrated by James Carey in his discussion of the telegraph (Carey, 1988). Angus explains Carey's argument insofar as, "communication was coextensive with transportation" (Angus, 1997, 55), which is centered around dependency economics. One of the more interesting arguments that Innis and Carey explore is that there has been priority given to history and time as opposed to space and geography, which is perhaps part of the reason our society today is out of balance in terms of recognizing the importance of socialized, spatialized thought and inclusion in the designing process. This is an integral element in perceiving the critiques about technology, for in fact Angus believes that a society will be successful only if it achieves a proper balance between the biases of space and time, and is not too reliant on one monopoly of knowledge and communication specifically (Angus, 1997, 67). Thus for Canada to thrive as a whole, we should be pursuing a structural balance of all technologies and communications.

It is in this way that we can more clearly see the link with ideology, and it becomes necessary to confront these biases, so as to properly ask who is being left out of the equation. Who is it that these ideas and technologies are helping and should we be concerned?

Angus believes that Harold Innis's concepts of the "monopolies of knowledge," "open a space for the marginalized emergent knowledges that social movements invent" (1997, 8), and reject the outright universalism that the monopolies create. This universalism, and thus the rejection of those who are different and are relegated to the standpoint of the so-called "other", is how hegemonic control through ideological structures is implemented. It is also interesting to consider that perhaps it is the mass development of various technologies which has in itself helped give rise to a politics of identity formation (Angus, 1997, 62), and thus social movements.

Heather Menzies also reinforces Harold Innis's theories, emphasizing that biases are built into monopolies. For example, the people who design the technologies have, according to Menzies, so-called mental maps of reality, deciding unconsciously what is important or relative for them, which in turn becomes an aspect of the technologies themselves. She outlines the effect of homogenization in the global information society, and the difficulty of overcoming these monopolies of knowledge as they are inherently built into the infrastructures. In *Whose Brave New World?* (1996), Menzies explains the dangers of homogenization when one cannot inform one's self on one's own terms, and warns of the cultural colonization that occurs. It

is for these reasons that Menzies warns us that a further exploration into these issues is needed.

George Grant and the Progress Myth

These ideas are reinforced by George Grant in his book *Technology and Empire* (1969). He reveals that technology is not neutral, that it is socially constructed, and therefore affects the culture at large, reinforcing once again the hegemonic control of those in power. Through an exploration of the control and limitations that emerge by simply having and culturally investing in computers due to the planning and infrastructures that are needed to support them, he identifies the vast control of monopolies which are built on speed, structure, and culture. Thus, while we all use computers and modern technology in one way or another, we should not ignore that there are certain belief systems that are inherently built into the system, and those belief systems become a part of the technology itself. Generally these belief systems reflect a Western view point, typically patriarchal and elitist. Those in the upper echelons of society who have the means to sustain such developments naturally build and create businesses and infrastructures which will in turn help maintain their position. It can be described in the following fashion:

... technology has swamped the environment in Canada with artifacts (from furniture to newspapers) which represent elements of a general culture dominated either by affluent and influential consumers or by those who can, or think they can,

influence such consumers. Their simplest aim, of course, is to create a situation in which mass production can be matched by mass consumption, a culture in which for the most part everyone wants the same things (Armour, 1988, 159).

Generally they believe that bigger is always better, and that a capital driven society resulting in a consumer ideology will strengthen their control through the wealth they have increased. Angus explains it, "technological conquest of nature requires massive social institutions and control of the population through behavioural techniques...

Particular concerns, traditions, and histories must be subjugated to the universal claim of the conquest of nature incarnated in the social and economic apparatus" (Angus, 1997, 75). Consider for instance the hegemonic power of English as the global language. Most computers certainly privilege those who have control over the English language, both at the personal and business level, and in ability to compete globally both on individual and corporate levels. Now it is absolutely essential to have a variety of strong computer skills to get a job at even the most basic level. What about those who do not speak English, who do not own computers, or who have never been trained? The important point here is that while technological tools are designed, in theory, to make our lives easier, they pre-define the future method of accomplishing tasks⁸.

⁸ This can be seen with Taylorism and the development of the assembly line. Now the workers in car plants have one tiny component of knowledge and skills base to complete their job. Thus, even if workers may be able to convince their boss that they might be able to do things

Grant writes that there is no tradition left, no margin, and postulates that there has been a "colonization of consciousness" (Grant 1969). This point is germane to the problematic nature of technology, as it questions the pervasiveness of the values of those in control which become imbedded in our daily lives without people realizing it. The belief that progress and technology are synonymous is one example of this ideology. Grant reveals the "progress belief/myth" in his discussion of the "Empire of Technique", which outlines various perspectives of the debate. What the corporations may interpret as being a fact, that bigger is better, may not necessarily be so for workers or for all of society. There are many people who do not buy into the consumer lifestyle which the progress myth inevitably promotes. Yet, the discourse of progress manifests itself in every aspect of our lives, even the spaces we occupy. "Even our cities," writes Grant, "have been encampments on the road to economic mastery" (Grant, 1969, 17).

Grant questions the quality of life inside the myth of post-industrial capitalism. Some critics, such as John O'Neill, suggest that the technologized world is one which has less humanity: "whereas our technological culture is relatively universal and homogeneous, the life-

a different way, the structure of the car plant will not allow diversions from the path the car is on once production has begun.

world is local, ethnic, and richer in meaning and values than our techno-culture" (O'Neill, 1988, 17). An example of this is illustrated with the implementation of prescriptive technologies, which technology critic Ursula Franklin identifies as taking control away from the workers and placing it in the hands of the management as knowledge, skills and even social status⁹ are removed from the production line. Workers themselves being taken away from the line job is one perspective on it all. In suggesting that our minds and inner lives are being made public as opposed to private, Grant is implying that people have less and less control over our spaces and places. Homogenization, therefore, both affects and effects the implementation of these large scale technologies. While there is, admittedly, some room for creativity and empowerment, at the same time we are all given the same product, the same highways, the same mantra of what is important in today's consumer society. What these biases reveal is that there are always people who reside on the outside or the margin who do not fit into the center of mainstream dominant culture. If one does not believe that bigger is better, and that inclusion in the global society is to be aspired to, then your voice and participation will be regarded as outside the dominant view and

⁹ Heather Menzies outlines the loss of status with telephone operators once the phone companies made it all electronic in *Whose Brave New World?* (1996). Whereas once they were the center of the community, they are now relegated to tiny cubicles amongst hundreds of others, or isolated at their homes, and are nameless workers in a production line.

therefore easily discarded. Grant ends his critique with a "Lament for A Nation", which Angus sums up as follows:

whether it be orality or an impossible nation, what is loved is close, local, and requires a turn against the universalizing and homogenizing dynamics of civilization and thought. This recovery of the particular is most characteristic of Canadian thought... Can the imagination of local autonomy, the lost dream of the New World, be recovered? (Angus, 1997, 74).

Obviously Grant is being extremely cautious about the unhindered development of these systems, and expresses his deep concern over Canada's future if it continues on this track. As voices become relegated to the margins and "one's nation, one's ethnicity, and at the most basic level, one's own body are robbed of uniqueness and treated as uniform means for standardized productive and administrative tasks" (Angus, 1997, 76), there are dangers in the homogenization and universal ideas espoused by the progress myth, seen in "the exclusion of indigenous people as founders, the trivialization of ethnicity, and our inability politically to represent regionalism" (Angus, 1997, 76). Is this homogenizing nature of globalization best for Canada? Both George Grant and Ian Angus believe that the only way to keep Canada together as a respected promising country is if we recognize our particularities (Angus, 1997, 80).

Marshall McLuhan: Technology Reinventing Humans?

McLuhan takes the idea of control and the inherent biases in the infrastructures one step further than Innis or Grant by suggesting that

we actually live *in* the machines, and thus are now being shaped by the machines that man once created. He suggests that technology reinvents humans and changes human interaction. An example of this might be illustrated in the early days of the railway system, a technological infrastructure which completely changed the spatial map of most people living in eighteenth century North America. As McLuhan notes, "the railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure" (McLuhan, 1964, 8). The railway is of particular importance to Canadians whose country was virtually built around this transportation network, both physically and ideologically. How then did this image and technology influence Canadian national identity? Did our identity then become centered around an economic progress track? Perhaps it created a somewhat false alliance to a national idea which is so foreign to so many simply due to the sheer size of the country. If most Canadians do not have the opportunity or the means to travel across the mass land mass that is Canada, how can they understand who and what Canada is? Their sense of identity then becomes reliant on an image and ideology of what consists of Canada, and many will not question where that image or ideology came from originally.

Consider Marshall McLuhan's term "the medium is the message", which refers to how the emphasis is most often placed on the content that is supposedly being disseminated and not the machines and technology itself. His point is that it is often the medium of communication that can effect the absorption of the content, and even the physiological affects of the technology delivering the message, and not simply the content itself that dictates what message the public receives. For example, parents often cry in outrage that the violence on television may impact their children negatively, ignoring the studies that prove regardless of the content there may be neurological damage/impact to the children from the medium itself, the television set. Therefore, by using the term "the medium is the message", McLuhan is affirming that the technologies themselves shape and control us in subconscious ways.

Passivity

The largest concern about notions of globalization and homogenization is the passivity that it can create, or as McLuhan describes it, "the numbing or narcotic effect of new technology that lulls attention while the new form slams the gates of judgment and perception" (McLuhan, 1964, 63). Furthermore, many theorists warn that in the face of huge global forces it is difficult for one citizen to alter the rigid infrastructures in place. How can one voice make a

difference and change these spaces to suit individual needs, especially since homogenization in our society creates passivity? Who, if anyone, is making the conscious decisions which play such a vital role in mapping the shape our spaces become? Henri Lefebvre in fact asks this very question: "It concerns the silence of the 'users' of this space. Why do they allow themselves to be manipulated in ways so damaging to their spaces and their daily life without embarking on massive revolts?" (Lefebvre, 1991, 51). McLuhan explains that the pacifying nature of technologies causes detachment and non-involvement, and calls it the "technique of the suspended judgment" (McLuhan, 1964, 63). He suggests that due to the nature of technology, we become passive machines to the machines, as our nervous system cannot take the over-stimulation. He proposes that the very nature of the technologies creates subliminal acceptance, which pre-empts at a very early age the very nature of questioning and critical thinking. Television is an example of this. In *Cool Memories* (1987), Jean Baudrillard addresses the 'numbing and narcotic effect' and sardonically notes that:

We are becoming like cats, slyly parasitic, enjoying an indifferent domesticity. Nice and snug in 'the social', our historic passions have withdrawn into the glow of an artificial coziness, and our half-closed eyes now seek little other than the peaceful parade of television pictures. (Baudrillard, 1987, 24).

It is worrisome to imagine Canadians as passive “cookie-cutter” citizens, meekly accepting technological paths already chosen for us by the power-elites representing a multinational corporation whose interests do not lie within Canada. This passive homogeneity is very dangerous indeed, especially if one is to consider the strength needed for one individual to participate effectively in the ‘map-making’ of an international monopoly with a global mandate.

Jean Baudrillard and Simulacra

Another interesting critique of technology is provided by French critic Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard asserts in *Simulations* (1983), that we are living in an age of simulations, where everything is simulacra. He writes that, “it is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself, that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double” (Baudrillard, 1983, 4). He furthers his argument by writing, “The whole system becomes weightless, it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum – not unreal, but a simulacrum, never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself,” (Baudrillard, 1983, 11). It then seems impossible to put forth any sort of solution to a problem that we identify, since what we see as being the problem is only a simulacrum, a self reflexive ‘imitation’ of itself. Is it possible to fight, and resist

something so intangible, essentially a whole system of signs? It seems that Baudrillard thinks that capitalism and the consequent structures surrounding it has not only shattered human ideals, but only accelerates simulacra because it is a system built on an exchange of signs itself. He explains that:

... finally, it was capital which was the first to feed throughout its history on the destruction of every referential, of every human goal, which shattered every ideal distinction between true and false, good and evil, in order to establish a radical law of equivalence and exchange, the iron law of its power... And when it wants to fight this catastrophic spiral by secreting one last glimmer of reality, on which to found one last glimmer of power, it only multiplies the signs and accelerates the play of simulation. (Baudrillard, 1983, 43-44).

When looking at globalization, it is interesting to keep this quote in mind. After all, is it possible to have a global culture? Would not a global culture be based on a culture of consumerism, and ideals based on the imaginary for most of the worlds citizens? When considering how low the percentage is of how many people are actually connected to the internet world wide, to televisions, or even to telephones, Baudrillards' suggestions are amplified. And even for those who *can* afford to buy into the culture of consumerism, it is still a culture based on simulacra. The entertainment industry is an example. People spend hours watching a false imaginary version of the world in which everything turns out alright, everybody is beautiful, material goods are

to be sought after and riches are the norm. Not only does this simulacra world value consumer ideology and create artificial visions of an ideal beauty, but it sells clothes and products for the viewers who then buy them in an attempt to transform their own lives into something that it is not, what they see on television. In other words, what the North American media tries to sell Canadians is not necessarily based in reality for the world or Canadians. Globalization and technology are simulacra.

In *Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures* (1998), Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash reaffirm the idea of the simulacra in terms of global thinking. In fact, they assert that global thinking is impossible due to the grand scale of the world. They say,

The modern 'gaze' can distinguish less and less between reality and the image broadcast on the TV screen. It has shrunk the earth into a little blue bauble, a mere Christmas tree ornament, all too often viewed on a TV set. Forgetting its mystery, immensity and grandeur, modern man and women succumb to the arrogance of 'thinking globally' to manage planet Earth. We can only think wisely about what we actually know well. And no person, however sophisticated, intelligent and overloaded with the information age state-of-the-art technologies, can ever 'know' the Earth. (Esteva, 1998, 22)

Therefore, "global thinking" is in itself simply an illusion, as it is physically impossible to know and understand local needs at the global level. Therefore, the corporatist movement towards 'global thinking'

creates fertile ground for destructive actions on the part of multinational corporations. In other words, multi-national corporations view themselves as 'acting and thinking globally' without having any real knowledge of the cultural norms and ethics of the local communities they most effect. The decision-makers are often guided by economics rather than by knowledge of local-level needs, and as a result, multinational corporations often cause large and lasting damage to the communities in which they work. Furthermore, headquarters are often far removed from the reality of 'place,' and therefore those in power, who not only create but are also subjected to the ideal of an imagined homogeny, can ignore the potential damage that they have created¹⁰. This clearly supports Baudrillard's idea of the simulacra in today's society.

Spatial Identities

It seems that in this age of globalization, our sense of personal and local space is disappearing. Why should we focus on the local in this globalizing time? Why is it of concern? Randy William Widdis (1997) perhaps says it best:

In this world of expanding horizons and dissolving boundaries, where space becomes less important in a society where accessibility via the satellite dish and the Internet is freed from propinquity, places are no longer clear supports of identity. In this new world order,

¹⁰ This is illustrated when examining the separation evident in that most if not all head offices and manufacturing factories are located in two separate locations.

regional differences are increasingly diminished in the face of homogeneous economic forces and a global culture which promotes simplification. (Widdis, 1997,).

Are national and regional identities vanishing in reaction to globalization? With the movement towards an international breakdown of geographic borders, this is an interesting question for Canadians. Do we as Canadians have any spatial metaphors left? Is our sense of local place disappearing? What is place anyway? According to Widdis, place is seen as the foundation of identity, and it can ground identifications; place is space to which meaning has been ascribed. Identity also develops as people engage in place-making which occurs within particular, socially constructed realities that range over different spatial scales, including the space of housing, the space of community, the space of the nation-state, and the spaces of resistance and ideologies. Canadian theorist Charles Taylor goes so far as to assert that, "identit(ies) are bound up within spaces we inhabit and assign meaning to, the spaces with which we identify." (Widdis, 1997, 50)

Mental Geographies

Randy Widdis writes that geography is the device through which people construct and maintain spatial organizations, but these can be internal, and not simply externally "mapped" (1997, 54). Within those internal borders there can be cultural borders such as ethnicity, and

communities of ideas. Beyond that though, Widdis examines economic borders as well, on which he says that, "production and distribution fostered strong localism in British North American life" (1997, 54). Urbanization and industrialization contributed to regional and local variations in economic development, which has had an effect on assumptions of 'identity'. This is demonstrated in Canada with Harold Innis's hinterland staple theory. As a British colony, Canada was organized and split up with economic terms in mind. The provinces are created, with hinterland staple exploitation in mostly rural and northern areas, and the cities in the south sometimes manufacturing goods, but for the most part shipping the staples back to Britain, via complex transportation routes set up for this purpose. The fact that European powers saw profit in the New World in the exploitation of staple resources shaped how the country was built, both physically and emotionally. This is relevant in that this base on which Canada was built still effects our vision of Canada's lands and our citizens¹¹. At the same time as recognizing some of these nation-building symbols as our own (fur-trade, Hudson's Bay company, the Voyageur, etc...), we are struggling with building environmental laws that will curb the extraction of Natural Resources which can harm the land, and come to

¹¹ There are numerous examples of how this has shaped Canada: the National Energy Program, the loss of Cod fishing on the East coast, the rise in First Nation's assertion of self-determination and their demand for recognition for hunting, fishing and mining rights.

terms with communities which may or may not be based on the physical geography of the land. One thing is certain though; the ongoing discussions in the media and academic circles about Canada's "identity/ies" confirms that Canadians are rejecting the colonial-dependency track that the Staple theory reveals so clearly. We are rejecting that theory for the protection of the land, and for our identity.

What this discussion has brought to the forefront is that there are a variety of theorists who are concerned with the ongoing development of technology and globalization, and believe that citizens are at risk due to the "numbing or narcotic effect" of technology. They believe that it would be better for the development of our country if more citizens became involved in the dialogue and planning regarding these questions. Canadian spaces have been shaped, for better and for worse, by economic and technological forces with little or no dialogue with the residents and users of those spaces. An ongoing dialogue revolving the shaping of Canada's spaces to better reflect the needs of Canadians with the players involved can only empower its citizens and create a stronger Canadian society.

CHAPTER TWO

Mental Geographies

Between the time one might leave one's family or intimates in the morning and the time when one returns, each person enters into a series of group situations each of which has some degree of self-consciousness and stability. While the passengers of a commuter bus are hardly a group, the 'regulars' know and may well salute each other as well as the regular driver. Sports clubs, friends at the office, coffee 'klaatches', associations of hobbyists, the crowd of fans at a sports match, the local level of a political party, "Neighbourhood Watch' community policing, and single-issue pressure groups are all examples of neo-tribes... They are the central feature and key social fact of our own experience of everyday living. This 'underground centrality' of tribus persists despite the sociological fetish of abstractions, and of more (and often less) realist categories. (Maffesoli, 1996, 1).

Rob Shields, "Introduction" in *Time of the Tribes*.

The movement of globalization has opened up "new political spaces for local actors" (Andrew, 1997, 139). In a speech to the CRTC in the Spring of 1996 in Ottawa, Ursula Franklin called for a movement towards re-investing the meaning back into our cities. She said that we need to create a place for our children to play. People and the environment become targets of a resource-based economy as the whole world is seen as one large development. Franklin believes that in this global ideology, only capital investments matter, not people and nature. She calls for us to work together, and to express what she calls our "insults", those negative impacts that effect us and our social

system. By doing so collectively, she argues, we can make a difference; people matter and nature matters. To do this most effectively, we should organize ourselves around local sites of resistance. Space is an element of our identity, and therefore identity is beyond regionalism and community, despite any differences. Is it possible to get past the wall that identity politics can create, and focus on what we have and what we dream and want, as local citizens of this world? There are communities based on territories, on practices, and on ideologies. But how does one move from the importance in re-negotiating our local spaces to creating those local spaces as sites of resistance?

What follows will be a discussion of social resistance, the significance of articulation when challenging the status quo, what constitutes the local, and the important role that the local has in redefining local spaces and in articulating change. It will then be established that art can be an important catalyst in motivating social and political change.

Transformative Politics

Confronted with the passivity that the globalized system seems to espouse, how can one enact personal empowerment and full and meaningful participation in our society? Considering the huge, static ephemeral systems that uphold the ideologies behind globalization,

how can there be a transformative possibility through art? I have attempted to demonstrate that the biases inherent in the global system are rigid, static and cannot seemingly be changed. And yet, despite the apparent rigidities in place, there are those who firmly believe in the possibility of local movements of resistance.

The key to achieving a transformation of our spaces is to open the discourse surrounding the implementation of new policies and technologies, widen the exclusive dialogue, and explore the potentialities of transformative politics. Citizens must be able to create new narratives that open up new possibilities of how they want to live, to fully express what their local needs are. A dominant society cannot allow for the expression of everyone's needs; thus the key to transformative politics is through opening discourse and sustaining a meaningful articulation of a community's needs. Artistic expression is one method through which to achieve this. There are numerous artistic examples of such attempts in Canada at this time, examples which will be explored in chapters three and four. An examination of the literature on social movements reveals advocates of local grassroots activism, the need for articulation, and the room for a political art as a means to view these new narratives. Social critics such as Warren Magnusson, William Carroll, and bell hooks all realize and explore the potential of the local.

Deconstructing Space: Put the Meaning Back into Space

At this juncture it is important to more fully examine what is meant by "the local", and how that fits into this discussion. In the so-called "postmodern"¹ age of identity politics, where important distinctions and biases in society are revealed with regards to class, gender and ethnicity, and where voices on the margins finally begin to 'tell' their own stories and are being heard for the first time, it is a relief to find a space where we can work within those divisions and move towards an inclusive method of being². Most often defined in contradistinction to its so-called predecessor, postmodernism is a term used to describe the developmental changes and aesthetic tendencies that have taken place in literature, art, philosophy, architecture, political theory, etc... since the late 1960's. The tendencies include fragmentary narrative, discontinuous progress, self-reflexive discourse, a rejection of the totalizing notions of progress that was promoted in modernism, and also the telling and re-telling of narratives from those on the margins of dominant society. This should be of special interest to Canadians who are attempting to find common ground in the face of controversial multicultural and equal opportunity policies as it has been argued that space/place theory allows for these

¹ Please see *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* (1994) for a more complete definition.

² See Ian Angus regarding particularities and Charles Taylor and his essay on "Politics of Difference".

distinctions, and actually finds a common ground that works. Take, for instance, a four block radius of an inner-city neighbourhood in one of our urban cities such as Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal: one would probably find many people of different ethnicities, gender and class. How can a group as diverse as that expect to find enough common ground to overcome these differences in order to participate together effectively? Spatial theory not only allows for it, but encourages it because in space/place theory, those differences are acknowledged.

Spatial theory reveals the effects of spatialization in daily living and show the social impact of the social discourse on which space is shaped by the dominant society. Canadian theorist Rob Shields, who centers his work around spatial theory, writes that it is a space in which "these discourses on space [can] be linked with the symbolic creation of a sense of community and nationalism" (Shields, 1991, 6). Shields grounds all of his cultural critiques in spatial theory, for "a discourse of space composed of perceptions of places and regions, of the world as a space and of our relationship with these perceptions are central to our everyday conceptions of ourselves and of reality" (Shields, 1991, 7), and that it cannot be separated from how people live their daily lives. It grounds the theory in lived experiences, thus revealing the sometimes hidden hegemonic tendencies of a given

society, and one can use the term "*social spatialization* ... to designate this social construction of the spatial which is a formation of both discursive and non-discursive elements, practices and processes" (Shields, 1991, 7). It seems to be the only method in which Canadians can reach past the many differences that we share and at the same time respect those differences. Therefore ideas on the 'local' will be explored regarding its significance within the context of globalization.

The Potential of the Local

In his article, "Global City-Regions and Citizenship" from the collection *Local Places: In the Age of the Global City* (1996), Engin F. Isin writes that there will be a new form of politics invented by the new forms of citizenship defined by the global-city regions (1994-31). They will banish universal ideals and concentrate on local matters, practicing counter-hegemonic discourses of refusal and resistance with new forms of political expression. The work of Warren Magnusson in his *Search for Political Space* (1996), is useful insofar that he outlines the potential of local resistance. Magnusson is suggesting that it is the urban city that is at the center of political transformation, a transformation that takes place on a municipal, and therefore local, level. Thus the local has all the right ingredients to change and shape

local politics³, and power then is extended to the municipal governments. One can see evidence of this as Canadian citizens, outside of Quebec, tend to identify first as Canadians, and secondly locally⁴, not provincially. This argument is important as Magnusson opens the possibility that local spaces inherently have the possibility of shaping our politics in a globalizing world order.

Magnusson points to the multinational corporations, who are not connected to one place and who aim essentially for profit, as generating a truly global space: they have not only inherited, but also shaped our modern cities (Magnusson, 1996, 288). This is inevitable when one considers a number of factors involved in such a process, for example the vast number of jobs that multinational corporations create. A local example of this can be illustrated with Kanata, Ontario, a "bedroom community" built with technology businesses in mind. It is a small town, situated on the outskirts of the greater Ottawa metropolitan area, designed and shaped to the wills and needs of the hi-tech corporations who have agreed to operate there. Magnusson also asserts, however, that despite the impact of the global multinational corporations on urban space, the global city is also made

3 To extend this argument means that due to the mammoth scale of global systems and structures which seem to dominate our spaces, the middle government is practically bypassed altogether.

4 There are new statistics supporting this. 60% of Canadians define themselves as Canadians first or only, and 81% feel profoundly attached to Canada first (Opinion Canada, Vol. 2, No. 26, July 6, 2000). Quebecois still call themselves "Quebecois" first, with only 40% of Quebecois defining themselves as Canadians first.

up of 'social' movements which are inherently political; thus, "the crucial politics of the moment are to be found in and between the social movements that constitute, maintain, or challenge the global city in which we live" (Magnusson, 1996, 292). Even if a multinational corporation has transformed the spaces in which we live, there is still a possibility to shape those spaces to reflect our needs as a community⁵.

Magnusson suggests that the city is "local and global, particular and universal, and its politics connects us to a particular time and place" (Magnusson, 1996, 295). Therefore the city is understood as a space or venue of political freedom, and the most realistic political model where all social movements come together. Reasserting the potential of these movements, Magnusson writes that "since the municipality is never adequate politically, it points to the localities and movements beyond themselves to the world outside" (Magnusson, 1996, 303). Hence, the city is the most logical place for a site of resistance, as it has the most potential in effecting change.

What needs to be emphasized is that the *local may act as an active agent in articulating change*. Thus, the argument is not suggesting that the city is the *only* possibility in asserting or articulating alternatives. In Magnusson's argument there is a danger

⁵ This has proven to be the case especially inside the Hi-tech companies. Inside these huge buildings one is reminded of a little village or mall, replete with daycare facilities, work out facilities, and restaurants.

of positing a hierarchy between the urban and rural areas. While there are more social activists in the urban setting due to the multiplicity of identities that live there, and thus there would naturally be more transgressive politics in the urban center, for the purposes of this study the emphasis is on the local; thus, Magnusson's arguments are relevant as they focus on the possibility of *the local*.

The city should not be the only focus for arguments such as his, as municipal governments are changing. One can see such change in the contemporary examples of Toronto and Ottawa with the amalgamation of smaller outlying municipalities into one larger "mega" city. With the changes in global politics today, and the cutbacks at the federal level, the municipalities are now playing a larger role in the lives of Canadian citizens as they have more responsibilities. While these increased responsibilities might not be necessarily matched with greater governing power, for better or for worse this might become a possibility in the future. Thus Magnusson's arguments should be extended to include all municipalities, not only the "global city"⁶. It is the possibility of asserting change at the local (or particular to use the language of George Grant) level which is the key to this discussion. In fact, Iain Wallace and Rob Shields both assert this link between social

⁶ Especially since in Canada only two or three cities would be considered fully "global" due to the size of the population. Most of our urban centers are smaller in scale than most of the global cities (London, Mexico City, New York).

transgressive politics and place. They assert that “these new social movements and the cultural climate that nurtures them do not take shape in the abstract: they arise in particular spaces, out of specific configurations of lived experience, and involve reinterpretation and re-appropriation of both “natural” and built environments”. (Wallace and Shields, 1997, 398)⁷. Social divisions between groups are spatialized (Shields, 1991, 29), with the hegemonic tendencies of a dominant society actually imbedded in the spatialization of a given area. Thus the analysis of social spatialization through the lens of the local can help those involved in social resistance to articulate a counter-hegemonic discourse.

Modernism to Postmodernism – Spatial definitions

Perhaps it is in reaction to modernism that one can properly begin to understand the backlash to globalization and the technological growth behind it, and the renewed interest in the “local”. As Esteva and Prakash point out, “the time has come to recognize... that the true problem of the modern age lies in the inhuman scale of many contemporary institutions and technologies” (Esteva, 1998, 26). They say that we must reduce the politics which allows for such a disproportionate scale as there are “inherently unstable and damaging

⁷ One can see how this is played out in Canadian politics of the 1990's with the huge growth of popularity in regional political parties such as the Bloc Quebecois and the Reform Party, now known as the Alliance. Both parties started as local grassroots movements as they were disenchanted in the central Canadian politics centered around Ottawa.

global forces" (Esteva, 1998, 26) at play. Randy Widdis contemplates the forces of modernism in his discussion, suggesting that, "some may point to the re-emergence of place expressed in postmodern culture as evidence of a strong reaction against homogenizing forces of modernity" (1997, 62). Canadian's search for identity supports this view that citizens are not content to live with the post-colonial image of Canada as simply mirroring Britain.

Michel Maffesoli's theories support this view in his article "The Ethics of Aesthetics" from *Theory, Culture and Society*. Maffesoli specifically concentrates on the resulting post-modern effect of "massification", which takes place in the face of globalization. He frames it in the following fashion:

"Overall, within massification... tribal groupings are organized which cohere on the basis of their own minor values, and which attract and collide with each other in an endless dance, forming themselves into a constellation whose vague boundaries are perfectly fluid. This is the characteristic of postmodern society" (Maffesoli, 1991,12).

Massification is the resurgence of the belief in the importance of the local, and one's local identities. Examples of this can be seen in the breakdown of many borders such as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and even Canada with the continuous threat of separation of Quebec. There is a world wide trend in which citizens are reasserting their local identities instead of focusing on internationally respected borders, which may not truly reflect the local population's views of their

"nation-hood". He sees it as an effect of modernism because "what was marginalized in a period of productivity is now diffracted into a multitude of central marginalities" (Maffesoli, 1991, 7), which surfaces itself as massification. Maffesoli writes that, "there is a collective sensibility... at the base of all actions, and this serves as foundation for social existence... It is an ethic in the strong sense of the term: which is to say something which leads me to recognize myself in something which is exterior to me" (Maffesoli, 1991, 17). Rob Shields calls this "labeling" (1991), in which there is a certain social significance ascribed to places, things, or groups, which help people to order their social relations and spaces.

This clearly supports Esteva's, Prakash's and Baudrillard's ideas that globalization is simulacra as people cannot relate to these external definitions of themselves, definitions which in turn begin to shape their local spaces. An example of this is the Québec Silent Revolution. Due to the pervasiveness of the English language in Quebec in the media such as advertising signs, books, and movies, many middle class French speaking Quebecois feared the loss of their cultural heritage, thus asserting their language laws and cultural rights. The fear was that if they could not see themselves in their local surroundings, then they will begin to adopt the external

definitions of themselves as their own, which manifests itself in the denial of difference.⁸

To reinforce this point, the article by Richard Cavell, "Theorizing Canadian Space: Postcolonial Articulations," (1994) has some interesting ideas concerning modernism and postmodernism and their relation to ideas on space/place theory. In using the Canadian Embassy in Washington as an example of deconstruction in his postmodernist approach to space, he explores Northrop Frye's modernist approach to space, and asserts that the building itself subverts the modernist, imperialist approach to space. Cavell argues that we must negotiate the meaning back into place, and recognize that our spaces are, in turn, filled with ourselves. Essentially, Cavell's paper helps to critique some of the modernist attitudes of considering space as being empty. He concludes that there can be many differing aspects of space and place, and that by grounding ourselves in the local we can create any type of community we want.

Cavell displaces the imperialist colonial attitudes that space is empty, and that the Canadian wilderness was empty as well. The First Nations people were subjugated to Britain's imperial power, and the environment was treated as a commodity, in that the land existed as a

⁸ This whole argument is more fully developed in Charles Taylor's "The Politics of Recognition". *Multiculturalism*. Ed. Amy Gutmann. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1994.

resource for Britain. It is useful to remind ourselves of this history, as it becomes clear how perhaps our current use of the land is reflective of Britain's historic use of the land. Are Canadians still pretending that our land is empty and that we can use it in any way we desire? Rob Shields explores this cultural bias on viewing space, explaining that the Canadian North, for example, "forms the mythic 'heartland' of Canada but remains a zone of Otherness in the spatial system of Canadian culture" (Shields, 1991, 4), and outlines how the cultural ramifications of such a perspective expose the role of spatialization in a given culture⁹.

Cavell suggests that space has been articulated as a totalizing notion which seeks to express universals and, in doing so, eliminates context. In producing for Britain, for instance, Canada was defined as a function of place. Northrop Frye's "Conclusion" to *A Literary History of Canada*, asks a fundamental question of Canadians, not "Who am I?" but "Where am I?" (Cavell, 1994, 52). With this comment Frye thus denies the significance of identity politics, and Cavell asserts that Frye's theories are not able to accommodate politicized issues, which allows him freedom to exclude social realities. From the utopian idea of "where is here?", Frye suggests an ideology of exploitation, a world which places in question the material here and now of social reality,

⁹ This is explored in detail in his article "True North Strong and Free" in *Places on the Margin* (1991).

which empowers the technological drive that, ironically, moves the technologized world further from that ideal" (1994, 85). Therefore, place becomes an abstract notion of space without social construction, which is a highly problematic approach to space.

Reconstruction of Space

Henri Lefebvre writes that "not so many years ago, the word 'space' had a strictly geometrical meaning: the idea it evoked was simply of that of an empty area" (1990, 78). Lefebvre explains the prominence of the idea of "producing space" (1990, 15), which contains an abstract universality. The impossibility of the term 'universal' when contemplating spaces echoes Esteva and Prakash's assertions on 'global thinking', being mostly simulacra. Space was an abstraction with few social dimensional points, that resonates with Frye's vision of the "real Canada as an ideal with nobody in it" (Cavell, 1994, 80). Frye identifies the formulation of Canadian space as a part from whatever it contained (such as First Nations Peoples); Canadian space therefore becomes a sense of space without place, echoing with the silence of infinite empty space. This ignores the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and reveals how both natural space and the people that inhabit that space were seen as without political significance or worth. It is in response to these outdated modernist views that one can understand the backlash to the homogenization of today's spaces.

Frye clearly articulates these modernist views when he goes on to say that, "native culture forms a tradition which should be at the headwaters of our own and should be absorbed into our traditions" (Cavell, 1994, 81). This is cultural colonization at its most insidious, where the First Nations are "naturalized" and conflated with the natural environment; thus, social and historical identities disappear, as they and the land remain abstract entities without meaning until 'granted' so by the colonizers. These imperialist attitudes towards space are at the root of the problem of technological expansion and the spectre of globalization. Growth and 'progress' developed with the designers who mapped the structures excluding any sense of social space.

Turning back to mental geographies, Henri Lefebvre delves into the ideas of social space, and writes about a "spatial code" (1991, 16) in which the production of space is also a "means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (1991, 26). He argues that social space is a tool to help reveal the structures of society, and that, "Ideology per se might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space" (1991, 44). If that is the case, then the imperial activity of mapping and surveying the land imposes abstract order on material space as a program of appropriation. While nations expanding their political and economic vistas acquired space, this colonized space not

only excluded but displaced pre-existing social space. They created the idea of a 'New World Utopia', a simulacra in itself, because no space is empty. This paved the way for exploitation, as ideologies have "created spaces which guarantee that it endures" (Lefebvre 1991, 44).

The acclaimed and controversial theorist Michel Foucault reminds us that, "the space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space" (Foucault, 1978, 87). This is a fact that Northrop Frye and his modernist approach to space and globalization forget - not only do people's internal personal landscapes differ and change, but they are also unique and distinct for each individual enmeshed in social networks. Space is in itself a social space.

Definitions of the Local

The examples of geography and physical structures such as architecture have illustrated some of the more interesting facets of the discourse surrounding spatial theory. Specifically, Cavell uses architecture to deconstruct a modernist approach to space as being 'empty', and he successfully re-establishes place as not only being a social space, but also, one which can be a site of political and social resistance. However, in order to demonstrate how community can be

grounded beyond geography and regions, and that the local can be a very powerful tool, it will be established that articulation is the key to social movements in effecting change. Feminism, that theoretical space which represents pragmatic theory, social movement and a community of resistance, will be the link between considerations of the local and social change.

Articulating Personal Possibilities

It is important to understand some of the positive aspects of the struggle for resistance. Although technology has a tendency to generate passivity, rigidity, homogenization and hegemonic control, there are those who understand that individuals have the power to reshape our spaces and our places. Positive alternatives do indeed exist. To achieve those alternatives means striving for articulation, negotiation, and fuller participation in social/political space. With more meaningful discussion and communication, then citizens will be able to articulate their needs. Empowerment will follow articulation as well as meaningful participation. The question then arises: how does one achieve articulation? It is through control of local spaces that citizens can regain their voices.

The work of Ursula Franklin is highly useful when contemplating questions of empowerment and articulation. In *The Real World of Technology* (1990), Franklin forces one to ask for whose benefits and

whose risks are the infrastructures in our spaces in place? She recognizes that technology is a system, a language, and a mindset. She identifies the interconnectedness of society and technology, and links technology as practice to culture. Franklin calls for an open discourse in which people are involved in the discussions and debates about the implementation of technologies in many aspects of our daily lives. This is an important point as it leaves room for citizens and people on the margin to communicate their needs. If there is hope in affecting change, both passivity and homogeneity must be curtailed. Franklin identifies the power in naming, or of finding one's voice and identity, especially in terms of a global society. Otherwise, she cautions, there is danger of being overcome by a homogenized culture of consumerism.

Exclusion is what needs to be fought against, and the inclusion of everyone's voices is what we should move towards. Edward Soja explains:

Deconstruction alone is not enough... no matter how effectively the critical silences are exposed. It must be accompanied by an at least tentative reconstruction grounded in the political and theoretical demands of the contemporary world and able to encompass all the scales of modern power, from the grand strategies of global geopolitics, to the 'little guy'. Reconstituted critical human geography, must be attuned to the emancipatory struggles of all those who are peripheralized and oppressed by the specific geography of capitalism (and existing socialism as well) – exploited workers, tyrannized peoples, dominated women (Soja, 1996, 87).

Lefebvre asserts that those in power set forth to actually change and shape our spaces, even through violent means, to control and subvert those who resist the imposed spatial landscape. He writes that any differences are, "forced into the symbolic forms of an art that is itself abstract" (Lefebvre, 1991, 49). For the purposes of this study, chapter three and four will introduce examples of various forms of localized art, which will be used to illustrate the attempts at reconstruction of our political spaces, and as such will hopefully be 'attuned' to those voices that have been previously silenced.

Sites of Resistance

When discussing the benefits of movements of resistance, it is important to remember that Michael Keith and Steve Pile assert that sites of resistance create new variations of spatial imaginations which are capable of confronting the past in a new way. In this way, human geographies become filled with politics and ideology (Keith and Pile, 1993, 3), which is important when trying to include previously silenced narratives. bell hooks summarizes the inherent possibilities in local sites of resistance:

Our living depends on our ability to conceptualize alternatives...Theorizing about this experience aesthetically, critically is an agenda for radical cultural practice. For me this space of radical openness is a margin – a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a 'safe' place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance (hooks, 1991, 5).

It is necessary to create a site for those who have no place that can be called home, or for those whose spaces are marginalized, in order for their struggle to find power and voice. The margin offers an alternative spatiality of radical openness. This means that those who want to include their voices are not drowned out by the dominant voices in the center because their site is filled with alternatives, which are no longer silenced nor passive. These considerations are important if one is to strive for alternative agendas for geography, and if one is to displace the traditional notions of space and place. hooks reminds us to speak from our spaces, "a radical standpoint, perspective, position, 'the politics of location' necessarily calls those of us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision." (hooks, 1991). This stance can work, as people's identities and spaces are fluid and filled with meaning, not empty like colonial attitudes towards the land.

These ideas are reaffirmed in Edward Soja's and Barbara Hooper's article, "The Spaces that Difference Makes". They examine bell hooks' stance on the margin as being a place of radical openness. They remind us of hooks' statement: "a space is there for critical exchange. This may be the central future location of resistance struggle, a meeting place where new and radical happenings can

occur” (Soja, 1996, 183). hooks calls for social action, starting from the local and then reaching towards the global. hooks finds her stance by the simultaneously political and geographic act of choosing marginality. The act of decentering the oppressive other is the insistence that one must determine how one will be and not rely on colonizing responses to determine ones legitimacy. hooks reminds us of the “definite distinction between the marginality imposed ... and that marginality one chooses as a site of resistance as location of radical openness and possibility” (Soja, 1996, 191). It is hooks that calls for a gendering of space, and who asserts that the city can be a space for radical openness, recovery and resistance. She articulates a feminist urban critique which consists of creating a new map of space, which flows from the local body to the global.

Language of Politics

While it has been established that there is a great deal of potential in local movements of resistance, the possibility of achieving fuller participation in local politics is not the main purpose of this thesis. What is key to the discussion at hand is the role of the narrative in social reform. In *Organizing Dissent* (1997), William Carroll emphasizes the importance of access to a language of politics, and the necessity of ‘discursive practices’, that create new spaces of resistance and forge new room for a systematic questioning of power

in our society; without a plurality of voices to narrate new possibilities, the same narrative by those in power will continue. Thus, the main objective is to recognize the importance of plural narratives and to create new possibilities and participation by those who have been historically silenced. Since "social movements can thus be viewed as counter-hegemonic in the sense of opposing the existing order" (Carroll, 1997, 10), Carroll's views complement this questioning regarding the power of globalizing forces in Canada. The examples of creative mediums will illustrate these points in that they represent various narratives of a counter-hegemonic nature.

Agency

When writing about space and concepts such as agency and empowerment, one must not forget about the very real possibility of exclusion from any meaningful participation in society. Although we are striving for inclusivity, the political nature of places should not be forgotten. A man may walk down a dark street at night without fear, but a woman alone could be terrified. A homeless person could be constantly expelled from a public area when a wealthy business woman could be encouraged. In *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1995), Lawrence Grossberg reminds us of some of the structures in place which are based on political relations. When speaking of agency he explores these various relations:

agency, like identity, is not simply a matter of places, but is more a matter of the spatial relations of places and spaces and the distribution of people within them... It is a matter of the structured mobility by which people are given access to particular kinds of places, and to the paths that allow one to move to and from such places...agency constitutes strategic installations; these are the specific places and spaces that define particular forms of agency and empower particular populations... Around such places, maps of subjectivity and identity, meaning and pleasure, desire and force, can be articulated. Agency is the empowerment enabled at particular sites. (Grossberg, 1995, 101-102)

An example of the spatial exclusion is illustrated by Ursula Franklin. She relates the story of how bridges and underpasses were constructed in the parkways of New York State during the 1930`s - 1960`s. They were built low enough to block the passage of double decker buses, which only black people were allowed on since they were segregated from other modes of transport. Therefore black people were barred "from the use and enjoyment of the parkland and its 'public amenities' by the technical design of the bridges" (Franklin, 1990, 71). Although it was not expressed vocally in words, the prejudice of the designers and the systemic racism inherent in the local government manifested itself in the technology of civil engineering and architecture itself, which is static and rigid and, in this case, almost impossible to change. This is an example of how one can see how the systemic biases in this case became grounded in physical reality. Most often one does not have such a physical concrete example to illustrate the biases – most often they are expressed in a

non-material fashion. Take the bridge away and it becomes very difficult to prove the inherent biases at a social level. Relate this story to Grossberg's earlier statement that "Agency is the empowerment enabled at particular sites". Grossberg reiterates the possibility of agency in these local spaces. He is grounding agency in physical places, and at the same time revealing that there are hidden social structures in place *in* those places. It is in the recognition of these social structures that agency becomes empowering.

Articulation

It has been explored how various critics believe that movements of social resistance can be effective at the local level, and yet to be truly effective, if it is the critique that social movements offer of contemporary society that help to create a counter-hegemonic force (Angus, 1997, 8), then resistance must be based on articulation, representation and dialogue. Ian Angus writes that

contemporary social movements have rediscovered the perennial possibility of human action to create new visions of the future. They have been influential beyond the numbers of their activists because they engage in an alternative form of identity formation that counters the productivist tension, marginalization, and consumerism of globalization. Any new politics of national identity will have to start by gathering these openings into its center (Angus, 1997, 10),

and this is done through articulation. Grossberg addresses the need for discursive practice when speaking of agency, and the need for the articulation of identity, which is constantly in flux. He asserts that

Cultural Studies “needs to move towards a model of articulation as ‘transformative practice’” (Grossberg, 1995, 88). The key to this is the objective of articulation as a discursive practice. Angus supports the link to practice, as he asserts that “social movements do not merely represent existing groups or interests, but *constitute* the social identities in question through the activities and ideas that they circulate” (Angus, 1997, 21). Without communication, not only do ideas become static but so do people and their so-called identities.

The Importance of Narrative

A significant point that must not be forgotten is the political nature of these new narratives and how these additions to the discourse affect globalization. A fundamental presumption of this study is the inherent possibility of inclusion in a space. The reason that the local can be such a potentially powerful place is because that potential can be based on an inclusive and equal dialogue. Obviously this does not always happen. However, that possibility exists and should be explored, and because this inclusion must be sought after, Edward Soja’s article “Exploring the Spaces that Difference Makes: Notes on the Margin” in *Thirdspace* (1993), is helpful with regards to teasing out the ramifications of cultural politics of difference and identity ideas. He is quite optimistic, and writes that postmodernism is an effective site to return empowerment to the individual as it is

inclusive, and creates alliances between others that are marginalized or subordinated, creating a "Multiplicity of Resistances" (Soja, 1996, 93).

Soja makes an important point, writing that,

hegemonic power, wielded by those in positions of authority, does not merely manipulate naively given differences between individuals and social groups, it actively produces and reproduces difference as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division that are advantageous to its continued empowerment and authority (Soja, 1996, 87).

It is easy to agree with this assertion when contemplating the role that identity politics has maintained in the current postmodern struggle to open up the narrative to those in the margins. While the critical interrogations driving the current wave of identity politics have had a huge impact in the past fifty years, it is also easy to see the divisions and differences which have been focused on by the elite and in the media in recent years. An example of this is the "Telling It Conference" in 1988 which drew an enormous amount of criticism from the media because it excluded white people from the conference. Instead of expressing the interests and aims of the conference¹⁰, the popular media presented animosity and discord amongst those in the

¹⁰ The conference was centered around examining racism in contemporary Canadian society. They felt that people needed a so-called "safe" place to express their views. As they wanted to ensure that everyone's voices were listened to and heard based on their own right, they organizers decided to not invite white people to the conference as their voices are not the ones being silenced.

cultural world¹¹. In attempts to get beyond these differences, perhaps accentuated by identity politics, we must start recognizing the common struggles that are counter-hegemonic in their attempts at destabilizing the center and re-opening the dominant ideology to participation by those who reside on the margin.

Spaces on the Margins

Soja sees bell hooks' work on the margin as an excellent space of opportunity. He writes that, "For hooks, the political project is to occupy the (real and imagined) spaces on the margins, to reclaim these lived spaces as locations of radical openness and possibility" (Soja, 1996, 99). He calls it a "spatiality of inclusion rather than exclusion, a spatiality where radical subjectivities can multiply, connect, and combine in polycentric communities of identity and resistance" (Soja, 1996, 99). hooks also uses spatial theory to her advantage, and places herself on the margin as a site of resistance.

Feminism, Space and Resistance

In *Organizing Dissent* (1997), Gail Kellough maintains that "although feminism shares with postmodernism the aim of destabilizing the discursive categories that subordinate, the feminist agenda must go beyond deconstruction – the mere removal of ideological impediments – to articulate a counter-hegemonic vision

¹¹ The media focused on the rage by certain white people for being left out as they felt that the exclusion consisted of "reverse" racism.

framed by alternative concepts of selfhood and ethics" (1997, 15).

This echoes Ursula Franklin's assertions in the power of naming and finding one's own voice as an empowering and liberating act. This is an idea which can cross many social borders such as feminism, racism, or class struggles.

Feminist critics recognize the "importance of having their voices heard, even though they continue to be met with opposition from the wider society which is aware of the powerful force that their coming together could create" (Noga Gayle, *Anatomy of Gender*, 1992, 237). Although having their voices heard is a fairly basic concept, the importance of this articulation cannot be under-emphasized. As mentioned before, identities must remain in flux so as to not become static and essentialized. Therefore, the call for "the feminist agenda to be restructured so that Black women can articulate their concerns in the effort to bring about social change" (Gayle, 1992, 238), echoes the cultural politics of difference that Soja wrote of. Although it may seem an elementary point, it must be over-emphasized that agency needs articulation to fight powerful domination. Articulation can help form counter-hegemonic discourse, by revealing the spatial relations and strategic installations that Grossberg wrote of. Articulation can be the agency empowering sites.

Community of Resistance

Feminism represents a space of resistance against our contemporary mainstream patriarchal system. This space, however, is not based in one particular geographical space, but in an ideological space. As feminism is a community of resistance, their local spaces are, in turn, internal sites. These internal sites can be just as real or imagined as local geographical areas. Two examples of this internal resistance can be found in Elspeth Probyn and bell hooks. Probyn deconstructs the various possible meanings within the term 'local', and hooks reveals the possibilities by claiming the margins as sites of resistance. hooks reminds us that, "as a radical standpoint, perspective, position, 'the politics of location' necessarily calls those of us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision." (hooks, 1991). It is useful to examine some of these ideas in order to break down any pre-conceived ideas on space being limited to one idea of place.

Knowledge of Locale

In her article "Travels in the Postmodern: Making Sense of the Local" (1990), Elspeth Probyn offers an interesting perspective and useful distinctions between definitions that constitutes the 'local'. She asserts that the construction of a wider unity and global possibilities

have served to displace a rather isolated local. However, in order to re-negotiate the local we need to replace the negative assumptions of universalism which undermine people's differences, and construct a feminist theory that starts from the fragments of one's own body, which recognizes that we cannot speak for every woman (Probyn, 1990, 177). She calls for the need for specificity, as "an unspecified local becomes the site for an unnamed politics, with the locale, location and local becoming cut off from a signifying ground... but a feminist reworking of terms can bring them down to earth" (Probyn, 1990, 178). She emphasizes both the spatial and temporal significance of how we come to know, what constitutes knowledge, where we speak from, which voices are sanctioned, and even what type of language one speaks. This is especially important for this discussion, and echoes both Ursula Franklin and Heather Menzies. They warn us to speak from our personal histories, and from our own bodies, and Probyn echoes their assertions of hierarchical knowledge. The ways in which women's practices and experiences have been historically dismissed as 'simply being local' requires that we look at the "gendering of the spatio-temporal operations". If women's voices have historically been ignored, then one can assume that a patriarchal, gender biased, sexist vision of a global village has been created. Probyn reveals the 'location' of the ideas and ideologies behind these

constructions. She asks the question of whether the subaltern can speak, and hooks reaffirms that that is indeed a possibility. I would argue that it is necessary for the subaltern to speak if we are to re-negotiate the spaces we live to reflect our true needs and interests.

It should be remembered that the local is only a fragmented set of possibilities that has the potential to be articulated into a politics of time and place. In a sense, the idea of the local is a process which can be worked on and constantly re-worked, which is an interesting contrast to the static rigidity that marks the discourse of globalization up until now. We should take the local as the starting point for our re-negotiations. In thinking how "locale" is inscribed on our bodies, in our homes, and on the streets, we can begin to loosen its ideological affects. By recognizing the stamp of patriarchy in our places, we can hopefully move outside of it. In understanding how location disqualifies certain experiences and marginalizes certain voices, we begin to realize that the knowledge of locale is important and powerful. To re-articulate the space that surrounds us, we must give voice to feminist replies. And from this starting point, the possibilities of a re-negotiated space are endless. Rosalyn Deutsche reaffirms the need to re-articulate our social spaces from the margin:

An urban space refers to intrinsic uses... to claim that the city itself speaks, then individual locations within the city, and the spatial organization of the city as a whole contain an inherent meaning determined by the imperative to fulfill needs that are

presupposed to be natural, simply practical. This obstructs that the organization, shape, and meaning of space is social, versus being abstract and neutral (Cavell, 1994, 95).

Spatial organization is never neutral, and perhaps that is why it is so imperative to articulate a site of patriarchal destabilization from the margin, and as Deutsche says, to start making decisions about the spaces one uses.

Art as Resistance

To fully grasp the critiques of globalization, it is necessary to question the structures in place and attempt to participate in the process of critique from a local stand point. One way to encourage participation and resist passive acceptance is to create dialogue. Art is one effective means of acting as a catalyst in motivating social and political change.

Yet, as mentioned in Chapter one, if Baudrillard asserts that everything is "simulacra", then how can it be demonstrated that art, itself a system of signs, can articulate and assert actual political change? Seen as such, I would contend that the vicious circle that Baudrillard has laid out seems to be a complacent system that generates passivity. Despite this, there must remain hope that it is possible to interrogate and reshape the system, and belief in the power of the individual and local systems of resistance. Baudrillard writes that, "we are still in the same boat: none of our societies know

how to manage its mourning for the real, for power, for the social itself, which is implicated in this same breakdown" (Baudrillard, 1983, 46). But the question remains: are not grassroots local groups of resistance based in some sort of reality? Some groups actually see the results of their activism, an activism which is often expressed and instigated *through* art. Art can be based on the realities of every day life. Even though art itself is a system of signs that engages with and even (re)produces reality, the following paragraphs will show that art can be highly political and extremely worthwhile¹².

Political Art

The idea of art being based on politics was explored in the essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" by Walter Benjamin. Benjamin believed that as art became more and more reproducible, largely due to new technologies introduced over time, the very foundation of art changed from being one based on ritual to one based on politics (Benjamin, 1969, 240). This is an important

12 Although Baudrillard asserts that the function of art, "has become purely promotional" (Gane, 1993, 132), this is a complex issue. Promotion and agency are not unrelated. An example of this is the book *Indigena* (1992), a compilation of First Nations art and writings that was exhibited at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. It is a book, and therefore is a form of commodity in the very fact that it can be sold, and the words on the paper definitely create a system of signs. However, the content of the book is highly political, and reveals the systematic, every-day racism experienced by First Nations Peoples in Canada. The people involved would not agree that that project is only promotional. The book became not only a political statement, but a site where they could rally around and where an intensely charged political stance and dialogue could take shape. Not only is this an example of art as resistance, but it locates itself on the margin of society. Its articulations are a part of a healing process within First Nations cultures, and its priority is not to make money, but to heal and break-down stereotypes.

transition which is obviously linked to technological expansion and growth; perhaps with this, it is more important than ever to recognize the political nature of art. As Marshall McLuhan claimed, "the artist can correct the sense ratios before the blow of new technology has numbed conscious procedures. He can correct them before numbness and subliminal groping and reaction begin" (McLuhan, 1964, 66).

There is a common thread in many theorists' works that emphasizes the fact that art resists "numbness" and has tendencies which challenge mainstream dominant society. In his article the "Author as Producer" Benjamin also speaks to the political nature of art, when he proposes that we ask, "what is the position of a work of art to the relations of production of its time?" (Benjamin, 1986, 222). He is specifying that art always has a position within a system.

Perhaps McLuhan's phrase "the medium is the message" can be appropriated and used to enhance the potential of art as a communicative device. McLuhan encouraged personal and active involvement, and mentions the possibility of the artist as a human probe into such matters. He describes the potential of the artist as a probe inasmuch as,

No society has ever known enough about its actions to have developed immunity to its new extensions of technologies. Today we have begun to sense that art may be able to provide that immunity... The artist picks up the message of cultural and technological challenges decades before its transforming impact

occurs.... He is the man of integral awareness... (McLuhan, 1964, 64-65).

This is one reason why the potential of art as resistance is important to discuss. Art can be a powerful tool, so as to inform citizens of their own spatial possibilities. However, we exist in a site in which we still must remind citizens of their inherent rights and responsibilities; local artists can assume that role by reminding people of an alternative lifestyle and by inspiring citizens towards a freedom in articulating one's needs. Therefore, it is important to explore the possibilities that exist within local spaces, and the role that local art can and does play in Canadian society. Franklin's assertions about the power of naming offers an extremely important link when examining art as resistance, as art can reinforce an individual's voice. Not only would community-based art speak to the larger local group, it would also name itself in the face of the homogenizing trends of the new globalizing society. Art is one method to achieve the necessity of 'discursive practices' which are so important and key to this struggle.

Many people tend to disregard art as simply being a form of entertainment or a collection of aesthetically interesting objects. To reemphasize the political nature of art in this discussion, the work of bell hooks is helpful with regards to teasing out the ramifications of cultural politics of difference and identity.

NAMING AS RESISTANCE

Saying 'No'... may be one of the most complete and vigorous forms of self affirmation for communities and organizations of real men and women. A unifying 'No', expressing a shared opposition, is but the other side of a radical affirmation of the heterogeneous and differentiated beings and hopes of all the real men and women involved in resisting any global monoculture. Saying 'No thanks' to mindless jobs or the medicalization of society is the negative aspect of the affirmation of a wide variety of autonomous ways to cope with globalist or nationalist aggressions upon people's communal spaces (Esteva and Prakash, 1998, 28).

One way to say 'no' to the global monoculture is through art. Art is and can be very empowering. How art and the role of the artist comes into play is revealed in the words of bell hooks.

It was this marginality that I was naming as a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives. Understanding marginality as a position of resistance is crucial for colonized people... a message from that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonizer/colonized. Marginality is the space of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. (1991, 152)

The two important aspects of this passage is the naming process as a space of resistance. This is crucial to the discussion in so far that the process of naming is integral to the space of resistance one may wish to create. In other words, without articulation there can be no transformation. In *Art on My Mind* (1995) hooks writes about the

transformation that art can produce in one's creation of an alternative vision.

Representation is a crucial location of struggle for any exploited and oppressed people asserting subjectivity and decolonization of the mind. Without a doubt, if all black children were growing up daily in an environment where they learned the importance of art and saw artists that were black, our collective black experience would be transformed (hooks, 1995, 3).

In this case, the fact that there has been so little representation of black artists reflects the common racist attitudes of the dominant culture. She feels that if representation by black people was better, then potentially, black people would have a more positive view of themselves as the images would be of themselves from within the community instead of possibly stereotypical images from outside the community¹³. The images would then reflect their needs and their voices. Better representation would also enable stronger political mobility insofar that, "aesthetics nurture the spirit and provide ways of rethinking and healing psychic wounds inflicted by assault from the forces of imperialist, racist, and sexist domination" (hooks, 1995, 5).

Dialogue

hooks identifies the need for all artists to create a dialogue which will promote diversity. She believes in the possibility of place, and re-claims the margin as a place to pursue freedom. hooks recognizes the potential in art as a form of political resistance, "because it nourishes

one's capacity to resist... [and] offers the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds..." (hooks, 1995,4).

In *The Subversive Imagination* (1994) Martha Rosler reinforces hooks' arguments, and writes that "art does play an important social role" (Rosler, 1994, 63). She asserts that, "All articulation occurs in a specific time and place, in the context of a preexisting discourse and a real politics... Political positions and movements are constantly being renegotiated from within by the pressures of groups which feel themselves to be excluded, un-represented, or under-represented" (Rosler, 1994, 66). Therefore, due to the 'dialogic' potential of art, there is, I would argue, political possibility. For example, "In literature - ... It is worthwhile to note that many oppositional writers of color, feminist writers and speculative writers' consciousness has been shaped in powerful ways by social movements" (Hunt, 1990, 203).

Writing as a local form of resistance is examined in *Marketing Place* (1993), by Ursula Kelly. Specifically she explores the potential that local writing as a cultural form has for creating cultural transformation and awareness in Newfoundland. Despite the fact that Kelly is referring to confederation and Canada's history specific to Newfoundland, her work is relevant to the debate. She complements

¹³ A very recent example of this theory in pop-culture today is the film by Spike Lee "Bamboozled" (2000).

Lawrence Grossberg in that the writing reveals the structural relations in Newfoundland, and the emphasis on articulation as a means of transformation and awareness. Similarly, she echoes William Carroll's ideas of discursive practices and narration as opening up sites of resistance.

Kelly warns that "to ignore the implications of cultural production for both oppressive and transformative actions is to fail to read critically in a global semiotics fraught with cultural dangers at every turn" (Kelly, 1993, 77). She believes in the power of literature, and reminds us that the emphasis should be put on responsible reading, which could be, "reading as reflective practice aimed at understanding our histories and cultures, and at transforming through action, our future possibilities" (Kelly, 1993, 77). According to Kelly, the transformation of culture is key in order to expand one's vision of culture and identity beyond the oppressive confines of a dominant cultural and economic history. She sees the emphasis of a celebration of culture, difference, diversity and a method which is able to change imperialist notions of history and life (Kelly, 1993, 80). Kelly calls for a cultural renewal, one in which history and culture and the representations of such in all cultural forms are reformulated. She believes that one must make the conscious political choice to undo

oppressive relations of power which dominate; therefore revisioning culture creates cultural possibilities (Kelly, 1993, 82).

Conclusion

It has been determined that those involved in social movement theory believe that the local is an effective site of resistance and empowerment for groups involved in counter-hegemonic discourses. For progress to be made and to truly challenge the status quo, articulation must be made possible so as to create new narratives, new stories, and new versions of what is necessary, needed, and true. Those on the margin have established that their voices must be listened to so as to better shape their spaces to reflect their wishes and needs. One method to achieve that is through art. Art is an excellent choice for many people as it celebrates creative freedom. For people's wishes to be truly heard and respected, they must be given the opportunity to see outside the status quo created by the dominant central elite who created their spaces in the first place. Therefore, the imagination of a community must be given a chance to develop so as to envision possibilities outside and separate from the status quo if needed. Creative expression through artistic methods is an excellent manner in which to allow people's imaginations to flow. Articulation of our local spaces is the key to a transformative politics. If one is to challenge the method in which our spaces are determined

and designed, then one must articulate a strong vision in order to change their spaces and generate different realities. One effective arena to do that is through artistic expression.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ANALYSIS OF THE GROUP "ARTISTS IN THEIR ENVIRONMENT": ART AS NEXUS OF RESISTANCE

In order to fully express the argument that art plays an important role in articulating local social resistance to hegemonic globalizing structures at work in the dominant discourse in Canadian society, the next two chapters consist of using specific examples of various artists and artistic mediums. To illustrate the full range of possibilities that exist, the present chapter examines a case study of "The Artists in their Environment", and chapter four brings in two other artists, the writer-critic Dionne Brand and architect Douglas Cardinal. It is useful to examine particular artists as the theory can then become grounded in specific examples, illustrating and revealing many of the issues that the various theories bring to the forefront.

"The Artists in Their Environment" are a group of co-operative artists defined by their space/place in relation to their "localness". At any one time in the history of the group there are 10-14 artists of various backgrounds who first came together to organize a studio tour in the Gatineau Park, where they all reside, in an attempt to interact with one another and both show and sell their art. It must be stated at the outset that they did not come together to make a political

statement and in fact say that collectively they have no political statement to make as a group. At first glance one could think that “The Artists in their Environment” organize the Studio Tour together just to make it easier for the consumer. Upon further investigation, however, it becomes apparent that this explanation is not so simple after all.

THE STUDIO TOUR

In an effort to reveal what the “artist’s tour” is all about, if only to better appreciate the full impact that the local environment might have on both the artist and the touring spectator/voyeur, it is advantageous to travel on the tour itself. The tour is situated in the Gatineau Park, the Provincial park found in the Outaouais along the Québec – Ontario border, minutes from Ottawa and the town of Hull. Although it is in Québec, there are many English inhabitants from all over Canada. Two towns border the tour: on the south west side is the village of Chelsea, a small village, peppered with a handful of restaurants and small shops geared towards Ottawa tourists. Further down north east highway five one finds the village of Wakefield, a community filled with artists and sport enthusiasts, and populated by a few more francophones. Wakefield is the true center of the region, and although the residents give special attention to the tourist arriving from Ottawa, it is not solely a tourist town. It should be pointed out

that both Chelsea and Wakefield are bedroom communities to Ottawa/Hull.

The tour itself spans two weekends at the height of autumn. The park itself is a very beautiful place, filled with rolling hills, windy roads, and bursts of colour as the trees are bright red, orange, yellow and green. The autumn colours draw thousands of visitors to the Park and to the many trails and hikes that surround the hills, and of course to Meech lake itself, the home of the controversial and failed Meech Lake Accord. As there is no large industry here since the collapse of the local tree logging industry, the residents prepare themselves for this onslaught of tourists and try to make the best of it, enough to sustain a living through the very long, isolated, difficult, cold and snowy winters. In order to capitalize on the incoming tourists as they drive around, the artists planned the timing of the tour very carefully. They plan a route which you can follow by signs or a map, and from there one can pick and choose who to visit. Part of the appeal of the tour is not only the placement of it during the height of the fall colours, but the fact that one can investigate the studios and homes of the artists and see how they live and work on a daily basis. One can talk to them about their art, and buy something if one feels compelled. This simple annual activity draws hundreds of visitors year after year,

just to have a chance to see some beautiful trees, and talk with some fascinating people.

Certain questions come to mind when I start discussing this group of artists. Why do they do it year after year? Is there some larger objective or purpose to the group, or in their participation in the group? Why do people follow it year after year and what is the appeal to the general public? What is the relation of the group to their location, and what is community for them? How important is the environment to the artists and why? Do they consider themselves to be political? What kind of an influence do they, if any, have on the local community and the visitors who visit their studios? What are their views on globalization and technology? It is these types of questions and more that I asked the artists and will now turn to.

First I must introduce the artists themselves. Although the actual number of participating artists fluctuates between 12 and 16, Linda Wright, Shawn McNevin, Marie France Nitski, Reid McLachlan, and Beccy Mason, are the five artists that I personally interviewed. Linda Wright, Shawn McNevin and Marie France Nitski are all mothers and home-makers as well as artists. Linda is originally from Montreal, Shawn is originally from Deep River, and Madame Nitski is from France, and has taught art to children for many years. Reid McLachlan is from Toronto, and builds canoes in the summer, while Beccy Mason

is the sole originator from Chelsea, who supports herself through her art, teaching canoeing, and giving lectures. Reid and Beccy live together and support themselves solely through canoeing and their art work. They all are painters by trade, with Nitski being the most technically diverse artist, creating multimedia art projects, including large and small scale sculptures, pottery and collages. The other artists in the "Artists in their Environment" Studio Tour use various media in their art works that vary from photography to candle making, leather work to glass work, and sculptures to pottery.

LINDA WRIGHT: The Inward Politics of Psychological Space

Linda Wright paints two different types of paintings: smaller, strictly landscape paintings with water-colour, and acrylic-based large pictures of children, which use very bright colours and fluid-like strokes to convey movement, spontaneity and life. For her children-focused paintings, she tries to convey what moves her at an emotional level, "I don't think a lot about where things come from. It is always upbeat and positive, expressing positive emotions, depicting the way people try, striving for things, and play" (Wright, 1999) Her children's paintings are set in outdoor settings with children playing in the water, in snow, on grass, etc. Her landscapes use water-colours to better express the "ephemeral, good for expressing atmosphere and fluid images" (Wright, 1999). The fluidness of all of her work seems to

work in stark contrast to the static, rigid structures that technology conveys. In both types of painting, the landscape is taking a larger and larger focus for her. While she would not describe her art as politically invoking change, her following statement on political art is interesting:

Some political art is quite recognizable, about issues that are happening today and in the world, and sometimes it can come closer to journalism in a way, in a way that we can buy that, but at the same time, it is easy to turn an eye and say oh that is not art that is journalism. But that only works on one level. Art that really affects change works on many levels. My art, not really, that would be a stretch. Only in that it is stressing psychological space which is of the positive variety. It is easy to make work that is remarkable in a negative way, and it is harder to make art that is remarkable in a positive way, it is like the news on television that way (Wright, 1999).

According to her definition of what makes more of an impact, I would argue that her art *is* political and the *most inwardly political* of all the artists. Wright is purposely striving to achieve positive images to counteract the negativity that she feels surrounds her, especially in the media. For example, she illustrated how negative the television news is, and what a detrimental impact it has on her children; she was so enraged at one news clip that was aired in between her children's cartoons in the later afternoon after school, that she actually called the president of CTV news to complain¹.

SHAWN MCNEVIN: "Stamping" and Sense of Space

¹ Apparently the news clip showed graphic scenes of a murdered body.

Shawn McNevin's art is an interesting example for our discussion. McNevin has an extremely diverse repertoire of painting styles. She uses oil, acrylic, water-colour, and charcoal. She has three major different themes of work to date. The first is a highly analytical perspective of concrete overpasses and bridges. All of the canvasses are extremely dark, some done in charcoal, and all of them convey huge looming structures, as if one was a tiny spec on the freeway². While they convey a feeling of starkness and power, they do indeed hold a rare beauty in them. The smooth lines of the turnpike oddly enough look quite striking. There are no people in these large canvasses, and there are no cars; all one can see are the smooth angles of these huge monolithic, concrete and static structures with the occasional street light. This series offers stark contrast to her other series of paintings, that consist of various styles of landscape paintings in which bright colours and again remarkable angles, revealed through the shadows of trees, all seem to convey the silence and peace of nature. There is no discord; each one is complete on its own terms. Her most recent works, continuing into 1999, are again quite dark, many done in charcoal, and they all include water and sometimes fire or the glow of sunlight. These seem to be in direct opposition to her freeway paintings. They too offer a surrealist

² This imagery mirrors Ursula Franklin's example of the hegemonic use of technology in the building of overpasses in the state of New York.

perspective, odd and different angles from the bows of boats, the curve of a cave, the water line on a beach; yet they are fluid and they hint at life through the inclusion of boats, fire, and the sun. It seems to me that while each one on its own may not offer a simple critique of technology, put together they do suggest a larger unease or misgiving about the technologizing trend. The looming structures of the overpasses may be striking, but they are dark and foreboding. Her landscapes depict a feeling of peace and wholeness through her use of light, texture, and framing, and her water series most directly demonstrates her critique. While they use the same sharp angles, this time life is imbued with them, with the obvious absence of any sort of technology aside from the bow of a boat. It is this series in which she first depicts humans and their relationships to one another. One such picture, called "Communication", originally created with charcoal then made larger with oil, are of two people underwater with the sun streaming from above. It is arguably trying to suggest a possible attempt at communication between humans and nature. The one thing that one can most definitely state about McNevin's work is her asserting a certain *sense of space*. As she says herself, what is perhaps most remarkable about Canada is the *sense of space*, and such, she tries to reflect that in her work. The overpasses suggest a

vastness of both time and space, which reminds one of Innis's stance in Chapter one. She believes that the vastness has an impact on people that they are not even aware of (1999), which is perhaps the best explanation of her series of the overpasses; *society at large is not even aware of its stamp on our environment.*

REID MCLACHLAN: "The Forces that Drive Humanity"

The critical links are not as direct with the work of Reid McLachlan. It is in McLachlan's work in which there are the most images of people. His work consist of figurative paintings, utilizing oil on canvas, both large and small scale. Reid describes his work as, "the forces that drive humanity", and points to the "big themes": "life, love, death, time, the big four. It is all interpersonal, the relationships, those four, that is sort of a big scope" (McLachlan, 1999). His works have evolved from the dark foreboding themes which dominated his imagination when he lived in Toronto. Now, they are full of colour and filled with people, with landscape constantly seen through windows or doorways. As the colour and life crept back into his work after he moved to Chelsea and the country, one could assume that Reid felt stifled and at odds about living in and being surrounded by an urban setting. Although his work may not directly appear to reflect his external environment, when compared to his earlier work, it becomes quite apparent. Obviously Reid's environment must seem to

be full of space and openness for him to feel more at peace and free, demonstrated through his use of colour, if by nothing else. It is interesting to note that the paintings of McLachlan's which make the greatest impact are the ones in which there is a single individual resting peacefully surrounded by nature. Two pieces specifically come to mind: one where there is a woman standing in a field of corn; the other is a man in a canoe surrounded by water and a star-and moon-filled night sky. Both of these scenes are framed by "nymphs" of some type, suggesting a metaphysical protection of man by nature, or perhaps protection of nature by those people, or even both, creating a dialectical relationship.

BECCY MASON: "The Space of Memory"

Beccy Mason's work is perhaps the most ephemeral depiction of nature, suggesting a fragile and evanescent, even volatile existence. Her medium of choice is water-colour, most often on Japanese water paper. Her light hues suggest movement and temporality, as if one can see time change with the sunset's various hues shifting and bouncing off of water. Many of the paintings depict Meech Lake and the surrounding area where Mason grew up. Her canvasses are devoid of any human presence whatsoever, perhaps a reflection of her views of humanity's destructive relationship with nature: Mason does not trust people with their care of their environment, and therefore they

remain completely absent in her paintings. Contrasted against how she defines her own work, this external perspective is extremely interesting inasmuch as,

I would say it is influenced by experiences that I have experienced in the past... So to classify my work, I would say it is figurative, dealing with emotion, and of my feelings that I have for the land... So that is how I would describe my work, figurative, and influenced by the land, not in realism but in my perception of my environment (Mason, 1999).

Mason's emotional response to how she feels "protective" about the land forces her to exclude people from the land. Considering her next point about the local landscape, this facet of Mason's aesthetic becomes even more poignant:

I paint to portray my memories. That is really important to me. A lot of memories get stirred up and then I put it on paint, and then my memory is not that great, but then... whenever I put apart of myself in the painting... that is a memory frozen in time.... You go right back to where you were... your perception of it will change, but you will still remember that point of time, where you were. (Mason, 1999)

The fascinating element of Mason's description is in how she asserts that she is inserting memories into her paintings, paintings which are, paradoxically, devoid of people. Can one go so far as to assert that her strongest relationship lies with her local space? And that her very identity is in constant interaction with that place? Her most recent series of paintings is titled "The Ice Storm Series", after the famous ice storm of 1997 in Eastern Ontario and Western Québec. This ice storm

affected both Montreal and Ottawa, in which power lines broke due to the heaviness of the frozen ice everywhere, and left citizens of Montreal and parts of Québec without power for up to three weeks. It was a devastatingly beautiful storm, with the world encased in ice. Trees, power lines, houses, fences, street lights all took on an incredible beauty due to the ice that encased them. It was a devastating storm though, for thousands of trees died due to the weight of the ice. Trees broke in half or fell down. Walking through Gatineau park was not only breathtaking, but dangerous. What an unbelievable sight to see all those trees stretched and bent completely over. Mason decided to depict these trees in her work. Instead of depicting frozen people without water or heat holed up in their cottages, she portrays the damaged trees. So although she and Reid probably felt discomfort and difficulty surviving in the midst of the storm for weeks without water or electricity, she relates that struggle with the struggle of the trees. It can be argued that her emotional feelings and reactions reveal themselves to her through her representation of nature and her direct local environment and sense of space.

MADAME MARIE-FRANCE NITSKI: "The Politics of Space: Art as Living Memory"

Among the group of artists, Madame Nitski's work is the most obvious example of political art. Nitski also uses the largest variety of

mediums to create pieces of art; anything from metal, plates, wood, paper, furniture, tarot cards, to her garden. Her work has progressed to become

more open, more crazy, more bigger, more colour, things like that, and yet it is still the same for me, the imaginary world. Whatever I learn and read I will use. I still have the love for the animals, they don't look like animals, but the animals I see around me and when I see them I paint them... when we went to Halifax, and the waves and the water and the birds, the boats and the fish will all be in my paintings. If she is important she will be there.... (Nitski, 1999)

When she went to Brazil she started to paint on metal all the themes of the Carnival (for her meaning completely without inhibitions), and her paintings contained lots of colour, movement, "things you don't want to say but want to be" (Nitski, 1999). She describes her art as, "expressionative, imaginative, imaginary world all of the time. It is not what it is there, in the beginning, it was always plenty of colour" (Nitski, 1999). Nitski loves to mix things and create collages, which explains all of the murals she has done. She loves creating large pieces. Nitski believes that art is the cornerstone of our civilization, especially when understood as the living "memory" of our history and civilization (through architecture, jewellery, music, etc...). Nitski's art really is splattered with bright varied colours, sometimes recognizable creatures, and varied themes. She has a 12 year series which focuses on the signs from the Chinese zodiac with one painting representing one animal symbol. Many of her projects help create awareness of

environmental issues. She created the "Eau est notre droit" banners, to create awareness over environmental issues surrounding water. She created one series, later turned into limited edition prints, on extinct animals. Despite these and others, Nitski has mixed thoughts about political art. While she agrees that all art has the potential to be political, she resists the pressure that might come with that, for above all she cherishes her freedom. She explains a bit further, "Political - if I am an artist I put my art outside. Automatically I am a part of society. I make a statement, fine, but I don't want more pressure. The term is too narrow. That is the problem, I can't define it" (Nitski, 1999). She explains this through her description of her creative process. She does not create a piece of art for someone, or something in particular. It must move her deep inside of her, for while she is creating, she is not aware, or as she says, "I am not a part of anybody at that point" (Nitski, 1999). If, after it is completed, it is used in a political fashion, that is positive, but she cannot create with that intention in mind.

Thus, it is quite clear that Nitski can only create what she feels very passionately about at a deep level – it just so happens that many of those passions surround her fears about the environment and technology. Considering that at one point in my discussion with Madame Nitski she admitted how painful it is for her when she is away

from nature, really it comes as no surprise that her work gravitates towards these issues.

One piece of work, titled "Life on Planet Endangered", is clearly a summary of how she feels about globalization. As usual, the canvas is covered in many bright varied colours, mostly orange, red and green. There are many animals strewn about, some upside down, others in strange positions, creating tension and a sense that the world is not as it should be. Inlaid behind many of the unrecognizable creatures are clippings taken from newspapers about extinct species of animals. There are also green splashes peppered throughout the canvas, resembling trees in distress. As a whole, the image creates a sense of alarm, chaos and fright. The red and orange colour of the creatures suggest they are in pain. The torn green trees demonstrates why they are in distress, and the papers torn and inlaid perhaps suggests a cause for the chaos. Globalization is clearly partially responsible. The title in itself suggests that she is looking globally, and not locally or nationally; Nitski is trying to represent the bigger picture. Nitski's thoughts on globalization are interesting, inasmuch as she asserts that one can most definitely have community without borders, giving Amnesty International and ecological communities as examples. For Nitski, globalization means instant knowledge of what is happening around the globe, and yet offers no time to digest anything. Nitski

finds this a frightening prospect because, “for me it is scary... we are not paying attention, we cannot absorb. In Ottawa, I know I see it, but elsewhere, we have become desensitized. We are one world, and we can’t say it is not our problem anymore. We know about it, it is danger....” (Nitski, 1999). She elaborates on the idea of localness by saying, “I am more local. In my mind I believe in one world” (Nitski, 1999). Which explains her painting.

COMMUNITY OF RESISTANCE

Quite apart from recognizing the individual talent of the artists as I sifted through the various studios, I was immediately struck by the sense of community that was so obviously prevalent. More than people being simply friendly, it was a case of people recognizing their space in the world in direct relation to their place. This was their community, and the artists were welcoming people into their spaces: the space of their community, of their geographical landscape, of their personal artistic landscape, of their political landscape, of their local landscape. They opened their homes and their art studios, and in the process of discussing with you the meaning behind their art and the tour, they shared their intimate desires and dreams. This was most definitely their space/place, and they clearly made the choice to share it with the world. Why is this act so revealing and significant? This element is extremely important to acknowledge if we are to better

understand the link between the Studio Tour and the spatial theory that I am asserting

First of all, the artists are collectively exposing a theme, the theme of a statement of resistance in the very choice of their profession. Supporting oneself as an artist in today's consumer society is difficult³, especially if one chooses not to become a commercial artist or mass-produce one's work. It is a personal commitment to choose one's quality of life over the quantity of a pay cheque, or to choose a profession based on one's dreams instead of the status of a professional designation. They made the choice to accept very low pay, and follow their dreams and ambitions in a commodified materialistic world that values commercialized trends and fashion statements, new cars, and holiday vacations. In no way am I trying to set up a hierarchy between professions; rather, I am asserting that their choice is one of pointed resistance. Our society is not one which welcomes alternative designations necessarily with open arms, as artists are often deemed to be marginal "drains on the system" as they don't "offer" anything to the system, including a large income tax. It is a statement of resistance to resist the hype of a society which has made the accreditation offered by a university

³ It must be noted that some of these artist are supported by their partner, which allows them more freedom to pursue their art than others.

education equivalent to being an educated knowledgeable citizen who has a valuable opinion to offer.

Secondly, where they live is in itself an act of resistance.

Although demographics reveal a gradual shift in recent years from that of urbanization to the beginning of a re-population of rural areas, the fact remains that most Canadians are living in urban centres, and the average Canadian left the country years ago and now lives in the city. The art scene in Toronto will tell one that that is where the action is, that is where all the innovative ideas are, and that the key to success is who you know more than what you do. However, these artists not only chose Chelsea-Wakefield to live in, but they relish in it, love it, and are passionate about their local landscape. Their surroundings have become so much a part of them that their daily routines and livelihoods are completely reliant on their landscape. One could even go so far to say that they *are* the landscape. They have even chosen a place/province which claims to be on the margins of society, and certain influential segments of the population are so unhappy with their marginalized situation that they want to separate and form their own country to counteract that marginalization. bell hooks supports this view that *where* you live can have an effect on *how* you live. She asserts that "when a people no longer have the space to construct homeplace, we cannot build a meaningful community of resistance"

(hooks, 1991, 47). The important element here is that they chose this lifestyle, they chose this landscape.

Thirdly, they opened their doors. They opened their doors and created a studio tour to show others what they do, why they do it, how they live, and why. They chose to open their space, share their lives with others, and to share what they see as the importance of art, the influential value inherent in art, and the educational capabilities of art. As Marie France Nitski puts it, "we talk about art, we talk about life, this makes it worthwhile" (Nitski, 1999). They chose to share their lifestyle, their political choices, their homes, their community, their family, their spaces. They chose to take a very private facet of their lives and make it public – they want to share. This too is an act of resistance; the resistance to privacy, the resistance to confidentiality, the resistance to public spaces, the resistance of closed and gated communities; the resistance to the tendency to close ourselves to the 'other'. Art is to be shared with, laughed over, talked with, debated over. Art is not just a private matter: art must be articulated and shared in order to have an impact, to have a purpose.

ARTICULATION OF THAT RESISTANCE

Inherent in this third fact is the notion of articulation. By sharing themselves and their art and their views, they are activating a voice. It has already been established that articulation is the keystone to

movements of resistance. Without articulation, a social movement loses power, has no "swaying" capabilities. bell hooks believes that public dialogues can act as an intervention between groups, for simply to "engage in dialogue is one of the simplest way we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences" (hooks, 1994, 130). Articulation should be understood as a signifying practice which inscribes an alternative, even subversive point of view, contrary to that of the dominant ideological system or hegemony in place. A signifying practice not only creates a new discursive system, it utilizes this discursive system within dominant discourse in order to assert a certain form of power and knowledge. Further, a signifying practice is not only about inscription, but also about *how* it manifests itself as an alternative system of knowledge. In this sense the role of articulation in relation to agency becomes clearer because a signifying practice generates the link between power and agency.

We are wedded in language, have our being in words..... Language is also a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance. Language is also a place of struggle (hooks, 1991, 146)

This quote by bell hooks makes it clearer how it is within a power structure where one can understand how a signifying practice becomes both an effect and an affect of a given power-knowledge relationship. It is through signifying practice that one can articulate one's particular position or negotiation within the power dynamic.

Articulation is a necessary ingredient of resistance, which is precisely what the Studio Tour does. In "The Ethics of Aesthetics" (1996), Michel Maffesoli argues that "The creative force creates a work of art, which is social life in its entirety" (Maffesoli, 1991, 9). In this sense, aesthetics is the expression of a collective experience, with the emphasis on the *process*. It is within the process in which we find collective cohesion and emotion; thus, it is not the final object or action which matters the most. In other words, it is not the means to an end, but the means in itself: "The collective sensibility which issues from the aesthetic form results in an ethical connection" (Maffesoli, 1991, 18). "Aesthetic" is the shared sentiment and perception of the external world by the senses among people, with the "ethic" understood as the collective bond. The purpose of the Tour is not an attempt to articulate one over-arching political statement; rather, the Studio Tour articulates a compounded multi-discursive space, which leaves room for statements or "non-statements" of any kind. By opening their doors and inviting the public, the artists are articulating

more than anything a need for community, a need which demonstrates that there is an alternative lifestyle, choices, acts, beliefs, and spaces. Because of the heterogeneous nature of a politically motivated communal discourse, resistance to a dominantly accepted lifestyle potentially generates more of an impact than any one individual monologic political statement could ever have.

There are numerous methods or examples in which the artists express resistance through their daily choices: career, lifestyle, education, personal politics, and personal ideologies. The following conversations with the artists will examine each one of these in order to reveal the actions of resistance that lie at the foundation of the group; this will help define the fundamental notion of 'artist as critic' within the group "Artists in their Environment".

SPACE, PLACE = LOCAL

What exactly are the "Artists in their Environment" articulating? What does resistance have to do with localness and spatial theory? It is my contention that the artists represent a renewed interest in the local, and that it is in fact the local which becomes the site of resistance: the artists *represent community*. Their space in their place, their place in their space. *Local is political*.

Remember Heather Menzies' quote in Chapter one on the importance of renegotiating our spatial needs on our own terms. If

one looks at the work of the artists, one comes to a broader understanding of what that renegotiation means. Recalling Franklin's quote about the power in naming, it seems to me that the artists *are* naming, they are re-naming the meaning of their local spaces. What used to be a logging community at the height of modern Canada, now bled dry with overuse, becomes a community with no specific industry. What has thrived since in the public's eye is a local community of artists. The "Artists in Their Environment" have renamed their places, have re-negotiated a new meaning to their spaces, to become a place that reflects their goals and ideologies. What does both their physical and mental 'localness' reflect? More than anything else, it reflects a respect of their environment, a respect of their diversity, a respect of their community. If, according to Baudrillard, global culture is simulacra, *then their local culture is reality*. Further, if we agree with Marshall McLuhan's statement that the artist has an "integral awareness" (McLuhan, 1964, 7), then perhaps it is beneficial to hear and see what are the ideas and ideals projected by the artists themselves.

Above all else, the artists represent a sense of community. It is interesting to note that only one of the artists is native to the area, Rebecca Mason. The rest have all chosen this site as their home. It is hard to say whether that active choice has anything to do with how

much they respect their local community and their local environment, but it is an interesting thought – is it because they were able to come to a realization as an outsider that this region is such a unique place that they consciously decided to invest in the community? What factors are at play that help to define a local area as 'home', and to invest energy into creating a community? As her father was an avid environmentalist who has a nationally recognized name ⁴, Mason is a different case than the average local Chelsea native. What cannot be ignored, however, is the affiliation of the artists to their local area. Each of them has acknowledged that they will never feel a part of or even welcome into the Québec culture, yet each of them calls Québec home. As outsiders living in Québec, they see themselves as marginalized by the marginalized, the peripheral living in the periphery. Even the political act of voting has lost its meaning and its effectiveness – they say there is no point in voting as they will have no sway in the political structure in place. Their affiliation is purely local, separate from the externally forced ⁵provincial borders. The invisible border becomes evident only with the imposed language laws of Bill

4 Bill Mason is an expert solo canoeist, filmmaker and author, who made many films including ones on canoeing and wolves.

5 "Forced" meaning decided upon years ago by governments in power, not the local inhabitants who probably do not see themselves as either Ontarian or Québécois, but their own separate region entirely of the Outaouais.

101; otherwise they move freely between provinces in their local area or region⁶.

Shawn McNevin was the most clear about not feeling a part of Québec. She says,

I will never feel included, I feel like an outsider, we always will. I am me, here, not Québécois, not necessarily Canadian, I am from Chelsea. Going back to Deep River, I feel very detached. I feel like an outsider everywhere. They are trying to define what a Québécois is, and we will never fit in, they are killing themselves over that. We have been to small communities in northern Québec, and it is so different, people are so friendly, you get past the language, what it all means, you get right down to the people and the place and it doesn't matter so much (McNevin, 1999).

What McNevin seems to be saying is that when visiting other places, the localness becomes prevalent, and people can then identify based on feelings of localness and sameness, and not on theoretical based ideas of 'what it means to be a nation'. She has clearly shaped her identity around her local area, not where she grew up, not the grander vision of her province, but around Chelsea. Perhaps another reason why she feels like an outsider everywhere else is the sense of local community that has arisen within the group of artists; McNevin would not have that community elsewhere, no matter how beautiful a region. In response to a question as to whether she affiliates herself more clearly locally, provincially, nationally, or globally, Linda Wright echoes

⁶ Ottawa is included in this region. Many inhabitants are advocates of creating a separate city state, similar to that of Washington DC, since Hull is as much a part of the government town, and yet ironically, the border cuts between the political center of activity.

McNevin's thoughts very adamantly with the statement, "I am definitely local, not Québec, not anything else" (Wright, 1999).

Now that it has been established that the artists clearly align themselves with what they deem to be the "local", I will now examine what the terms "local" and "community" mean to them.

LOCAL COMMUNITY:

When asked to describe the terms "local" and "community", the artists tended to describe local in terms of their local geography, and the term community encompassed people. Linda Wright, the least politically motivated amongst the group, commented that before she had children she would have described the term local as her local geographical landscape, but that with children also came a community of people, "there is something about kids which ties you to your community" (Wright, 1999). She was reluctant however to delve further into what her personal landscape or environment meant to her⁷.

The rest of the artists did not have as much difficulty talking about their ideas and the importance of these ideas to them. It is

⁷ Wright is in a way a contradiction. On the one hand, she views one of the most alarming facts about globalization and technology to be the potential loss of privacy (as perhaps seen here). However, she commented that one of the most rewarding facets of the artists tour was the people coming into her space, and that they would come to specifically talk about their art. She feels that most artists lack that connection, and as she puts it, "I was really thrilled" (Wright 1999). So although she obviously values the connection and the possibility of connecting with people in that way, she is at the same time very hesitant about making that connection.

interesting to note that while the definition of community is definitely centred around people, at the same time that community is centred around the environment. In terms of community, Shawn McNevin expresses what I believe to be one of the most ignored and disregarded needs of Canadian society, "the sense of needing a community" (1999). McNevin explains the sense of fulfillment and the benefits that joining the tour has afforded her as "having other artists around, this was a good way to meet others, there is always a sense of them being there, it is nice to know they are around, that you can call them up and talk" (1999). Each one of the artists made a statement about how difficult it is to find a community of like-minded artists, and this is rated as one of the largest benefits of the tour, a benefit perhaps tied with only being able to make contact with the general public. It is, however, not just a benefit, as that search for community sounded very much like an expression of their needs. Finding a local community, whether based on your views on politics, on art, or children, is not a task to be taken lightly. Not finding that sense of community can lead to isolation and alienation from the larger society. Perhaps it is only in the 'local' (be it physical or mental) that that sense of community can really take shape, as each of the artists seems to have trouble finding any sense of it on the national level (as in national identity or affiliation) unless when speaking of a national

environmental group, which I would define as being more of local community of ideas than a national affiliation. Linda Wright sums it up best when she notes that people “generally lack that connection with other people” (1999).

When asked what the role of the tour in the community was, McNevin responded that,

it brings a lot of people out. I think in our community, it is bringing out the tourists and it promotes other business too, it brings people out. Chelsea has always been known as a great artist’s community. I think that because we don’t have any centres or schools, it brings people together. It is the environment (McNevin 1999).

For McNevin, her discussion about community always comes back to the landscape. After her comment about the environment she says, “here you can just walk out into the bush and you are right there” (1999). After this, she goes on to explain why she paints what she paints.

It arrives, it comes, it is an image, a vague idea, a strong idea. It is an exploration I think. ...I have always had the influence of the environment, it has always been really strong, growing up with it, and it is such a part of me, and with the Canadian tradition and painters are always landscape. I fought it, I wanted to bury it, but then I thought what the heck, and I think when you start to travel around a lot, you realize how populated everywhere is, and I think that really has an impact that you don’t realize (McNevin, 1999).

After finally succumbing to landscape painting, McNevin’s works now encompass all types of landscape, including that of highway overpasses. For her the environment is everything: “the surrounding

of the community and the studio, I am very affected by it [the environment]. Water, light, mist, emotional things, nature basically, and how I have always felt that my work is always a reflection of my environment, internally or externally" (1999). It is crucial for Shawn to live in a place like this, where it is "open, lots of windows, trees, being able to just walk out", and they chose this place. Her wooden house, which they built themselves, is surrounded by trees, and as it is filled with windows, lends the impression that the exterior leads to the interior. It is interesting to see the natural flow in McNevin's consciousness that moves from describing her community of artists to the natural surrounding physical environment and geography; at this point, she either cannot or does not separate the two.

One of the first things that Madame Nitski spoke of was creating a community through the tour. Just the simple act of opening her door and inviting the public to see her home and see her work and her studio was the first step in creating that sense of community. For her, the first objective of the tour is to show her work to "lots and lots of people", and the result becomes community, whereas selling her art and making a living comes second. Nitski also considers herself to be more locally oriented: "I am more local. In my mind I believe in one world" (Nitski, 1999). When asked to define the local', she says,

You see because we are all from the same part of the world. Could I go to Calgary and see some artists and be completely

different? You know the Group of Seven, the group of artists, that is what we call local. They were all together, they went to the cottage together, they paint together, and if you look at the paintings, they all paint the same trees, they were living together. (Nitski, 1999)

She goes on to explain a time when she lived in Brazil for a month with a painter friend of hers and they painted together. Every day their work came closer and closer in line to each other and influenced each other because "we were thinking side by side. We would be local if we saw each other all the time" (Nitski, 1999). For her proximity means local, and yet community is broader. Community means to do things together, and to become actively involved in politics and to volunteer. For Nitski, community transgresses borders, stating two examples of Amnesty International and ecological communities.

Her personal landscape is what makes it possible for Nitski to create her art:

I can do what I do because of the forest, that's it, the environment, the nature, it is the trees, the water, I go up to the lake, I take off and I am in nature. The forest the lake the river and the trees, although I would prefer the mountains... Yes, absolutely it [the environment] effects my art, the animals, the freedom, the space, you see my paintings and there is space, absolutely, and I do walk with my dogs every day in the forest, and every day it enriches me, I come back, sometime when I go some people they laugh at me I am so new age, because I told them when I go to the forest I really hug the trees, touch the rocks, I lie on the rocks, touch it, I really believe, yes, my kids say OK mama. (Nitski, 1999)

Without any doubt in her mind at all, Nitski asserts the affect of the environment on her art, on her community, and even her well-being.

She explains the withdrawal she feels when she is unable to be present and experience her local environment,

When I don't do it, sometimes I am too busy getting ready for a show and I don't have the time to run and anything, I really feel it, I suffer, I get headaches, stomach ache, back ache, and why, because I am not running, in touch with nature, this place is nature, all around, no matter which way you go (Nitski, 1999).

This quote reflects the fact that Nitski's personal landscape is balanced between her space and her place; her physical place affects her mental space. It is interesting to see her affinity and connection with nature manifesting itself in body aches if she is absent from it, almost like withdrawal symptoms. Space is place, and place is space; for Nitski they affect each other and are intertwined around each other. Once again she demonstrates the powerful union she has with her environment, and this all-encompassing connection becomes all the more evident when examining her art, which is filled with wild, loose, vibrant images of animals, trees, people and nature. There are no rules in her paintings, where the animals are certain colours to reflect certain emotions, and people are animals too. There is no 'nature' meaning outside; nature is fluid and not contained by boundaries. Obviously, as demonstrated by all of the artists so far, there are remarkably strong ties between the local environment and the local community.

Both Reid McLachlan and Beccy Mason echo these sentiments, and add more depth as well, as they are perhaps more skeptical of what their community is, or who is included in their community. Their art also seems to reflect their personal landscape, especially in McLachlan's case. To start with, when defining the collective, Reid links the environment with the community of like-minded artists. For him, as with the others, it is crucial that both the public and himself are comfortable in the setting where he is showing his work. Thus, his natural environment is a logical choice. As Reid points out, "I am comfortable in there [his studio], so that puts me at ease as opposed to a gallery or somewhere, where I am not at all that comfortable. And I am in my own environment, so I am at ease and that puts them at ease, and it is in the natural environment" (1999). He explained the change in his art after moving from the urban setting in an apartment surrounded by people in downtown Toronto, to his present home in the Gatineau park. Before,

I was using a lot of grey, dark colours, just because I probably wasn't happy there, and all my friends were there and so I thought it was the place to be and I was fairly angst ridden, and that Toronto mentality, urban artist mentality and concrete spaces. Some people thrive on it, the noise and the people all around. I just wasn't entirely comfortable, the apartments, people upstairs downstairs, if I was painting in the middle of the night or something (McLachlan, 1999).

This very clearly sets out the effect that changing his external environment had on his personal space. His paintings now have more

colour, and unlike the other artists, are filled with people, with the landscape being a part of the paintings sometimes only through a window or a door frame.

Reid and Beccy explore the effect that the tour has on the larger community in Chelsea. Beccy explained how it was shaping their community:

It puts a friendly face on the arts community. Before the studio tour you'd have the arts group, and then the normal community and they didn't mix that well. But then the neighbours would come by, and say we never go to galleries but you seem friendly and invited to this, and feel very excited to be a part of this, exposed to the arts in this way (Mason, 1999).

Reid elaborated on this by explaining that now the public see the artists as a part of the community, and the interaction between the communities breaks down barriers and false hierarchies of what is normal and what it all means to be an artist, "they see you have a house and a car and you are normal" (McLachlan, 1999). It is extremely important for them to make contact with the larger non-artist community. Since she grew up in the area, Beccy adds an interesting perspective. She explains that the tour really helped to reconstruct people's whole ideologies. Before the larger community would barely acknowledge the artist's existence, whereas after the tour, people felt compelled to stop by and actually discuss the work, meaning they are not intimidated. Beccy asserts that bridging the gap

"makes a better community", which echoes the thoughts of all of the other artists. The privacy issue is also a major issue with Beccy, due to growing up under the spotlight with her father, and therefore she guards her privacy. Consequently, opening their doors was especially hard on her, and she really did not think she would welcome that invasive part of the tour. Instead, she finds it a positive goal to work towards, not only creating and preparing her art to be shown, but preparing for the more social side of bridging the gap and answering questions, and "making it accessible for them to understand" (Mason, 1999). Mason feels it is really beneficial for all those around to simplify the ideas and break down what can be complicated, so that not only is it of more interest and accessible to the public, but that exercise aids her as well in her creative process; reaching the public enriches her creativity.

When describing the role that art plays in the community, Beccy, like most of the other artists, brought up teaching children, both teaching them art and teaching about the freedom of lifestyles available. She then goes on to explain how the Studio Tour really brings a great deal to the larger community, especially in a commercial sense, as when the public will come to look at the art they will stop for a cappuccino and dinner, and they are really gratified by the experience so they remember it and "they get a really good feeling

about the community, and then they go back and go to a party and say Chelsea is fantastic, a great thriving community and then all of their friends come out" (Mason, 1999). Therefore, not only does the tour help create and define the community, but it has concrete advantages as well.

Beccy almost entirely equates her local physical landscape with her mental imaginary landscape, and as she paints to portray her memories, she puts a part of herself in the paintings. Her local community definitely consists of Chelsea, but it is more than that. They were both quite critical of some inhabitants of Chelsea, who "just want to drive back and forth, they just want to mow their flat suburban lawns, spend their time and money in Ottawa" (1999). Obviously, the term community encompasses more than just living there. It means being involved. Mason elaborates,

I think of all kinds of everything, the local area, the artists, the big community, neighbours, friends. My community tends to extend beyond certain borders. I think of the Pontiac tour which I'll try to go to next weekend, and support them, they are a part of the larger artistic community. And then you have the canoeing community. It is interesting, local and community I think of people, but local I think of everything including the environment. Local to me is like the trees, people are incorporated in the landscape, local flavour, the community my perception is of people. So for me the local is definitely very important (Mason, 1999).

The local is more important to Beccy, as she has difficulty separating people from the damage done to the environment. She admires about 10% of the people due to how they "fit in and treat the land".

GLOBALIZATION, LOCAL PLACES AND ACTIVISM

Beccy Mason's critical thoughts on how people treat the land, and how, in turn, they are excluded from what she considers to be her community, provides an excellent opportunity to explore the ideas of globalization and activism. While each of the artists expressed deep concern regarding globalization and technology, they all resisted being classified as *political*. It is fascinating how, after Beccy Mason, Reid McLachlan and Madame Nitski list all of the political causes that they have been involved with at any one time, that they can still consider themselves to be apolitical. After re-reading their discussions about community the answer is quite clear; their definitions of community surround being *involved*. Be it in the local art show raising money for the environmental group such as "Lands for Life", or volunteering at your children's school because of a lack of funding, it is *involvement* which creates community. Thus, while they all consider themselves to be extremely involved in the community⁸, they may not consider

⁸ It must be noted, however, that all of the artists with children note the challenge in having the time to raise a family, become involved and create their art. Therefore their involvement tended to peak while their children were young, and now they are experiencing more of a selfish time, in which they guard both their time and community efforts carefully. Therefore, they are not involved in their community at the present as much as they have been in the past.

themselves to be overtly political (using the strict definition of the world given by Beccy Mason, meaning political life and its structure, i.e. politicians, as described in her dictionary), because that is just a part of their life in their community. This is an important distinction when exploring my thesis that local movements of resistance can have more power and sway than overarching national movements not based in the local, as in fact it is the *local* which gives rise to involvement and thus movements of resistance. In fact, according to bell hooks, creating local creative spaces gives rise to a possible "new" articulation. hooks explains that "we come to this space through suffering and pain, through struggle... We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world" (hooks, 1991, 153). Hence, this clearly supports my point that the local *is* the site of resistance. Edward Soja also sheds light on this as well. He argues that creating 'creative spatial metaphors' can actually redefine our social spaces to better more informed terms:

hooks contributes significantly to a powerful revisioning not only of the cultural politics of difference but also of our conceptualization of human geographies, of what we mean by the politics of location and geohistorically uneven development, of how we creatively combine spatial metaphor and spatial materiality in an assertively spatial praxis. (Soja, 1996, 99).

These arguments are important insofar that they link cultural politics of difference, and thus social movements of resistance, with a new social definition of our social spaces. Furthermore, I contend that it is these local sites which give the needed unifying links to any national imagery, and in fact it is these separate and distinct local sites which are at the base of our sense of nationalism.

It appears that their views on globalization only reinforce the alignment they feel with their localness. Each of them expressed concern at some level as to how globalization, and in turn technology, is going to affect their local environment in the future, and thus their sense of community, and in turn Canada's identity. They were all acutely aware and worried about globalization in general, meaning not just for their local area, but for the whole world. Linda Wright describes globalization as knowing what is going on in other parts of the world, and buying things from other countries. Her husband travels a lot, and she calls him 'globalized', so for her globalization pays for their lifestyle. Despite the fact that her family is dependent on globalization financially and for her families well-being, she has many worries, but most definitely the environment and children are her top concerns. She asserts that it is the multinational corporations who hold the power, and that "it is not a conscious thing, which is

scary, there are no rules, which is the same mentality which clear cuts the forest, only on a larger scale" (Wright, 1999). Wright worries that in poorer countries there is no opportunity for the citizens to shape their local spaces, and that the power rests solely in the hands of the multinational corporations who have no grand scheme and are separated from the local place. Thus, they could be potentially (and generally are) more negligent of environmental issues due to this seemingly removed involvement. Wright acknowledges that Chelsea is "a glorified suburb, who can afford to have extensive environmental laws, [because] there is no industry here" (Wright, 1999). This statement acknowledges that those who have the power to shape their spaces are generally more wealthy and educated. This is a large concern for her:

it goes back to the split in society, the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, there is a class who is doing fine financially and we don't know why, because from the outside it looks numbing, but I guess it is not, cause lots of people love it. It would be interesting to go into a building like Mitel and see what the working conditions are, if it is like a glorified sweatshop, I never have and I always wondered, if there are all those cubicles (Wright, 1999).

She mentioned a number of times how the working conditions really worry her, as she feels those people are powerless to change things.

In contrast to Wright's fears of her growing sense of powerlessness which is an effect of globalization and technology lies her feelings of power and freedom she equates with art in the

following quote, "to a certain extent those are people who have decided what is important for them... that they are going to enjoy their life while they have it" (Wright, 1999). Freedom for Wright is limited in the technologized world. She asserts that the role of art in society "fills the void left by the lack of religion", and that art is now a "spiritual thing". For Wright, art is the act of creating, an act which is more important than the resulting piece of art in itself. This definitely echoes Madame Nitski's thoughts regarding art, and her philosophy with teaching children. "Although," Wright says, "if you can see the process behind the work, and if it inspires you, then you are reliving that act of creation and you can enjoy it" (1999). Perhaps reliving the act of creation and enjoying that sense of freedom can help fill the void left by technology.

One of the issues which concerns Linda Wright is the shift in our educational system towards a more technologized system: "One thing that really frightens me about globalization, you can't help thinking about modern technology. We are becoming less educated and more technologized. There are a lot of kids who don't know any history, and they will be making political decisions..[one day]" (Wright, 1999). Obviously, it worries her that these children will not have the history and the critical thinking skills needed to lead and govern our country. She seemed to think that the national agenda might be 'bought out' by

the big multinational corporations who seem to be making more and more decisions about how our society is being shaped.

EDUCATION

Part of articulating a multiplicity of alternatives is education. Perhaps it is taking an active role in educating our children in such a way that they are able to become free thinking responsible adults and citizens that is so appealing to some of the artists. In terms of education, Marie France Nitski was the most passionate about how influential art can and should be; according to her, art should be an integral part of the educational process. One of the most important motivators for Nitski is that she would like to give the children a chance to be free to themselves. Marie France Nitski believes in preserving the inherent free nature of children: it is very important for her to affirm and explore that side of children which seems to grow more stunted the older they are, as they become too structured, and grow more aware of the pressures and expectations of a dominant society which does not necessarily value those so-called free, inhibitionless characteristics of young children. She believes that in preserving and cherishing the "free nature" in children, the long-term effects will result in a healthier society that is able to think for itself, discern problems, and make educated decisions. Free-thinking is the key to a thriving, cutting-edge, responsible society, especially in such

a globalized world. It is obvious that competition is going to get bigger, and that there are going to be more complex and alarming problems which will require innovative and free thinking, especially surrounding areas such as the environment. The planet will need citizens who can expand their horizons of expectation, and "think outside the box".

She wants to remind them that constraints are not necessary, that the *process* of creativity is the purpose. In this way, the process itself is the way to be "true" to ourselves, a process which in turn helps with critical thinking skills. She asserts that too many limits are put on the children, and on society as well. According to Nitski: "When I paint I am not looking for a result, that is not my reason, it is the process. When I am creating things, I am in another world, it is true. Then I work with the children, and it is so free" (Nitski, 1999).

Marie-France Nitski started working with children when her own children were in school. She would start workshops at lunch because they did not get such opportunities in the school system; yet there were so many of them each day that she had to turn them away. Finally, she started offering more programs, and did murals on school walls. One of the many benefits was that then most of the kids could participate in one way or another. The other purpose in creating murals was the sheer size of the work. Nitski felt that the small pieces

of paper they used in schools were too limiting, and that the murals gave them creative space. The children loved it, but it was essential that it was on a voluntary basis only, because, when they volunteer, they are not being forced to come, they want to be there. She says, "One school, 76 kids participated, and other kids say I want to come, and I give them jobs, they want it, they love it, it is a need, they want to do it, and if you give them an opportunity to do a painting, it is good in life, it will help you out in life" (Nitski, 1999). As the goal was to feel free to express themselves in creative ways, to create their feelings and not just what they think they should draw or what they see, she is trying to teach them to assuage their inhibitions. Nitski believes that artistic expression is an invaluable tool and a life-long characteristic that society should be fostering more in its children. If children are not taught to think for themselves and express themselves creatively in independent and new ways, then they will grow up to be adults who are limited in their critical and creative thinking capabilities. This in turn creates a society that is made up of non-questioning and non-involved adults.

For Marie-France Nitski, to be free is perhaps one of the most important elements of living. This is one of the reasons why she loves creating murals with children. She feels that small pieces of paper are so limiting, and huge murals enable the children to utilize their sense

of freedom and all the space they need to be truly free and without constraints. When the children are younger, they do not have too much trouble staying free and using their imaginations. But as they grow older, especially for girls around the age of 13, they limit themselves and try to do what only they think they are supposed to do. She explains,

Ok, just to be free. When they are four, five, six, seven, they are beautiful, free, when they are eight or nine, they become conscious. I have to do a dog, look like a dog, they stop being free and they become stiffer. I say show me something I can't recognize, forget it, use your imagination, because I want to see anything you want to do but I don't want to recognize it so go and get wild, and that is for the bigger ones, not the little ones... and I don't want to recognize it, and you can't say no, they want to do what you want (Nitski, 1999).

To combat this trend of creating what they feel are society's expectations, she asks them to create picture after picture after picture, reminding them each time to break the boundaries and to create something fresh, new and unrecognizable. It takes a lot of pushing before the older children are willing to relinquish what they deem to be acceptable. She loves to do the murals because so many kids can participate, they are not confined and limited by small spaces, and everybody has their own responsibility. She says that she senses in the children a real "need, they want to do it, if you give them an opportunity to do a painting" (Nitski, 1999). Nitski cannot over-emphasize how giving young people an opportunity to be as creative

as possible will immensely help both their emotional and intellectual development.

An integral purpose behind the tour for many of the artists is the possibility of not only educating children, but of opening the boundaries around what many consider art to be. They want to express the idea that art does not have to be put up on a pedestal; art can and should be accessible to everyone at any time in any place. The reason this is such an important idea is because art has a function in society, the capacity to engage people in lively, purposeful and critical discussion in and about society. A conversation with both Reid McLachlan and Beccy Mason reveals this element of the tour. McLachlan says that one of the largest benefits for him is making contact with people and helping to educate the general public about something that they previously have not been exposed to. He says that, "I just really liked the idea of being in the studio and people coming out and coming into the studio and developing more of a personal rapport, and obviously the tour has done amazing things for that, to the point where people will phone me up, and, feel comfortable" (McLachlan, 1999). Beccy Mason supports his view and even elaborates on it, in saying that "The Studio Tour brings it to the people, makes it more accessible to the general public. Makes a better community" (Mason, 1999). They go on to explain how people are

hesitant to go to art shows because they fear they won't understand it, and do not feel comfortable enough to try it. McLachlan expounds on this by distinguishing between the 'high' arts and the sometimes mass-produced art and/or so-called "low" art. "High" art, he says, has a "rarefied air to it" which can scare some people away from it. Especially works of contemporary art, he argues, which gets press through the National Gallery and the Canada Council Grants are,

Fairly esoteric and somewhat challenging for the general public... they tend not to understand it and everything they don't understand they ignore, or are scared away from... maybe art as a whole is labeled with a tag like that, but also, the fact that they can come to our studios and see how it is produced is another way to bridge that gap, from art to general public, as they can talk to you, you can sort of tell them the ideas behind it (McLachlan, 1999).

Obviously this is a concern for both Mason and McLachlan, and one of their objectives is to break down these false barriers with the public.

Mason refines his argument:

They actually meet the artist and relate that there is a real person behind that, and they are like me, and everybody has a little art in them, everybody has a little creative drive, and I talk to people and they say, well I do this, but that is not really art, and I say no, that really is, so it is actually really encouraging them, you can encourage quite a few people because you have opened up yourself, and they see some part of them reflected in what you do, and that really encourages them and they say oh wow that is really interesting (Mason, 1999).

Therefore what they are attempting to articulate is that art can educate, but educate people about themselves. They are attempting

to tear down the walls surrounding the myths of art arguing that art is accessible to and is about, every person. There is no hierarchy of 'low' versus 'high' art. They are reminding people about that side of themselves that is perhaps repressed and silenced, as society is not inclined to appreciate creative freedom; many people's professions do not give much creative room. Making themselves available and opening themselves to the public follows my previous comments on how breaking down the barriers of public/private life could be considered an act of resistance. Mason says, "the Studio Tour, it brings it to people, it makes it more accessible to the general public" (Mason, 1999).

Like Nitski, Mason is also a strong advocate for educating children about the intrinsic value in art. For Mason,

Children are a very important part of the community, I was just called up to come and talk to the Guides and talk about being an artist, and how hard it is, and how gratifying it is, just show them what it is, and I went and had a little chat. And in its own way that really helps, that can be a real turning point for some kids, they realize there really are artists out there and they really are making a living, and they are doing what they want, and it is attainable (Mason, 1999).

It is important for Mason to educate children about the various possibilities that life holds for anybody, which is one of the reasons that she tries to make an effort to speak at those types of events when she can. She wants to remind young people to follow their hearts and

their dreams, and if you work hard enough it can happen, even if society may not recognize it as an economically sustainable profession.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

An extension on the dialogue about education is the freedom of choice, as one must be educated as to what choices are available if one is to make an educated decision. *Choice* is the key to politics for Madame Nitski. The analogy she gave about choosing to not purchase bananas from a certain country if the workers were not paid enough is an example of this. She emphasized, "this is political because of the freedom of choice" (Nitski, 1999). It is beneficial to remember that the distinction she makes between art and political art is based on awareness and choice. The crucial distinction in this argument is that if they are creating their art in a completely free way, then the very action itself makes it political. Thus, it is not the end result which is the goal, but the means, the process itself. All of the Artists in their Environment chose their lifestyle, their environmental beliefs, their community and their local spaces, and pursued their goals and desires and become artists. But perhaps it is because of where they are, that they are free in nature, that they can go and do as Nitski does and hug the trees in solitude, that the environment rejuvenates them, that their landscape and their environment and their space gives them freedom, and creative space.

Linda Wright supports Nitski's views. For her, artistic life is a political decision she equates with a free lifestyle. She considers herself to be rich in spatial freedom. Shawn McNevin also reiterates that freedom equals pursuing art, and that means to live life in a freer fashion, free from consumer ideologies and the ability to live life locally. Reid McLachlan speaks of freedom in terms of their community, as freedom encompasses their whole lifestyle, the style of their art, their creative spirit and process, their lifestyle, their local spaces and community. While each of the artists recognize the importance of freedom (specifically creative freedom both in their art and their lifestyle), each of them reiterated numerous times their personal role in helping to educate. They have all helped to teach kids about creating art and of the life of an artist. Additionally, they also expressed the helpful role talking to other people in their community is as well. Not in a formal role as a lecturer, but in an informal way of talking to them about their lifestyle, about their creative freedom, about the possibility of everyone living life in a creative way. Reiterating the fact that everyone can be creative, it is just a matter of acknowledging it and fostering it.

LIFESTYLE AND DAILY CHOICES: Place of Politics

When asked about politics, many of the artists resisted a formal definition of 'being' political. At first, most of them said that they were

not political, and they did not know what the term really meant anyway. After carefully exploring their personal definitions of political, once they realized that their first definition based on the public political life of the politicians which govern the country was extremely limiting and not a true definition for themselves, most of the artists changed their initial definition and began defining it in an extremely personal way. The term political began to encompass almost every aspect of their lives, as in their definition of art. It was interesting to see the initial resistance to the personal definition of politics that they obviously held, as it seemed to be almost be a risky declaration for them, to declare that politics could potentially encompass most of their lives, as if it was going to place them in a certain marginalized segment of the population.

In the conversation with Reid McLachlan and Beccy Mason, Mason was especially like this. When first asked, she said point blank that she was not political. But after further examining her beliefs, practices, and organizations that she was involved in on a voluntary basis, it became obvious that politics is a part of all aspects of her life. McLachlan said it the most clearly when he said, "I would not consider myself to be political. It depends, my definition might include myself, oh boy, I am not sure" (McLachlan). But Mason went on to explain:

I am a fair weather political person. I don't think of myself as a political person but I will use the political forum to get my

messages across. If I am really concerned with environmental things then I turn every screw I can to in the political sense, I will contact who I think will make a difference... I am not doing it every day...I don't know. I guess I am, because I do take up specific issues, yes I am. Yes, can't escape it, that is true. I am a terrible politician, I don't see both sides, but I do listen (Mason, 1999).

When probed further, Mason answered that yes, her art was political. Then she said, "Political is everything", (Mason, 1999), which Reid supported after he looked the term up in the dictionary, with the statement, "'affairs of state', that is everything, our art, our paintings..." (McLachlan, 1999). Nevertheless, it seemed that Beccy still struggled with defining herself as political as she kept coming back to the ideas of public politicians and voting. However, over the course of the conversation it became clear that both McLachlan and Mason are and have been involved with many different causes and groups. One example of how they used their art in a political fashion in a public forum was for the campaign focused against the Ontario government's program, "Lands for Life". The campaign was aimed at raising awareness at how the government had only allocated 6-7% of the total land of Ontario for parkland, and despite the roundtables and numbers of experts and groups lobbying for more land for environmental reasons, the government decided that this was all that the province needed. Beccy and Reid decided to help, in the best way they know how, by creating a visual image that would make a lasting

impression on the population. They created a huge red map of Ontario, with the 6-7 % highlighted in green, to help people realize what a tiny portion of land it really is. This is how Beccy describes it:

How would be the best way to help them in a visual sense? That has an incredible impact, a piece of paper with writing on it, it does have an impact, but too much writing and the public gets tired of reading about it, so if you can accompany the writing with a big huge visual thing. So we decided to make a map.... and then they sent it to press conferences in Ontario, and on tour, to show people exactly what you are talking about, because you can give percentages and numbers, but we are desensitized, there is so much out there that it becomes a turn off. It made a difference... visual aids connect you to another emotional level of people's psyche, people will remember it, relate to their way of thinking, it is not dictating what they should be thinking about because it is just a symbol" (Mason, 1999).

Reid supported this with statistics, "Consider that Canadians are bombarded with 3000 commercial images a day, they retain them too" (McLachlan, 1999), which Beccy supports adamantly. It is clear with discussions like these, that not only are they active politically, but they are knowledgeable about the effects that visual images have, and have studied it. They firmly believe that that is how their talents are used best.

It must be noted that their politics runs very closely along the lines of their beliefs about the environment. In fact, when first discussing environmental issues and globalization, Beccy was very clear and adamant about her concerns: "I get very depressed. Really, very concerned. I don't know how to verbalize it, because it is so

awful, it leaves me speechless, how awful it is" (Mason, 1999).

Specifically, they are extremely concerned with consumerism, and the long-term affects that the global consumer lifestyle will have on our planet. Nonetheless, both Mason and McLachlan believe in the educating possibilities that resides in art:

Art and words go together... but when I marry the art and the words together it becomes a very political message. [Art] is a very political tool, you can feel a sense of power, you can educate somebody and they don't even know they are being educated (Mason, 1999).

This clearly echoes the earlier educational values in art and the Studio Tour. Art can educate, and through that education, effect change in a political fashion.

Politically, Madame Nitski makes a potentially explosive statement: "Absolutely, if there was no art there would be no civilization." (Nitski, 1999). She goes on to say that art is the key-stone of our memories. She says:

Why do you remember the past civilization? Because of art, in furniture, architecture, jewelry and things like this. Obviously you would have no memory, and this is one thing, when I mean art I don't mean art painting. I mean everything eh, it could be music, dance, song, architecture. My friend says whatever you do is political, as soon as you make a mark you make a statement, you don't make a mark you still make a statement. An example is with the show for the shelter, all the money went to them. All the artists who participated in the show gave half of it. (Nitski, 1999).

The show for the shelter was a local fund-raiser at Nitski's house with a group of artists who call themselves Studio 67, many of whom

belong to the Studio Tour. The show raised money for a local abused women's shelter Ottawa. This is an example of the many political projects Madame Nitski has done some kind of artistic endeavor for. For Nitski, everything can be political, and for her it is a matter of choice. If you make a conscious choice to do something, then it can be considered to be a political act. Her example was if you buy bananas, then no that is not political, but if you chose not to buy bananas because you read somewhere that that company used slave labour, then that is political. It is about making an informed decision, and this rings true when our discussion surrounding the key to articulation in social movements is understood.

Politics for Nitski is also clearly linked to the environment. Her biggest fears lie with environmental issues, and people's apparent passivity towards those issues. She says,

One day we will go outside and say what happened, where did it go? Right now look how endangered it is. You go outside it is news the degree of UV, isn't it scary? But if people cannot touch it, they don't care, it is far away. Water we know, one day [will be threatened]... which is why I did a big banner... (Nitski, 1999).

The banner she is talking about is part of a project in Aylmer, Québec, in which eight artists created banners to create awareness about environmental issues. Nitski's banner had the title, 'eau est notre droit' ('water is our right'). For her, water is the right of everyone and she is very worried about the future and this type of issue. This is

political she says, and if we don't fight for water, then what will happen? Therefore one of the reasons she is active in projects like the banner or the women's shelter is to create awareness and commence or continue dialogue.

It is productive at this point to turn to the words of Jean-Paul Sartre. While his words are addressing writers specifically, it is my opinion that one can take his words to address the role of artists in general. On the topic of freedom he writes, "thus, whether he is an essayist, a pamphleteer, a satirist, or a novelist, whether he speaks only of individual passions or whether he attacks the social order, the writer, a free man addressing free men, has only a single subject – freedom" (Denoon, 1965, 377). What is he suggesting here? Freedom regarding what? If we remember Menzies' warning of negotiating our local spaces on our own terms, then perhaps this quote in reference to the artists becomes clearer. All of the artists are renegotiating our social sense of space, to be that of a free one. They are renegotiating the terms for their local voices and narratives which if echoed throughout the nation, would create a multiplicity of localities, but also a nation-wide sense of greater empowerment. As Franklin and Menzies both acknowledge the power in naming, perhaps the artists themselves are re-naming their spaces to reflect our local needs and wants and desires. And perhaps, if we continue to teach

our young about free creative thought, we can create new spaces to reflect our new, always changing needs, so that there remains, "a plurality of resistances" (Foucault, 1990, 96).

CONCLUSION:

It has been demonstrated that the artists all feel strongly about their sense of local space, and while it is affected by their geography, their local space is also very clearly defined by their local community as well. They share both a local geographical space, and a local mental geography, which consists of political choices about lifestyle, consumerism, freedom, and the environment. It is through their paintings and works of art that they create freedom, and at the same time remind themselves and create awareness about their environment and local spaces. It is through the images in their art that you can come to know them as individuals, their political beliefs, and also their local community. That said, there is also a stark contrast to their views and fears regarding globalization, and how it does impact their lives today and will continue to tomorrow. Each of them have fears as to what that impact will be. Meanwhile, they attempt to effect change through their art. The next chapter will examine two other artists of different artistic mediums, Dionne Brand and Douglas Cardinal. It is beneficial to look at other examples in

order to deepen the arguments put forth with other examples of analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PUT THE MEANING BACK INTO SPACE

DOUGLAS CARDINAL

In the technological civilized system, people are set aside for certain tasks and the masses are conceived as a mindless entity. But we are all part of the masses. Our lives are important because we are all individuals and we all have something to contribute.... technological society produces things without soul because its people do not have an essential experience. We remain objects as long as we remain distant, refuse to put ourselves into something (Melnik, 1977, 25)

Douglas Cardinal

THE POLITICS OF (SPATIAL) TRANSFORMATION

The work of architect Douglas Cardinal and writer-critic Dionne Brand illuminates the ideas that art can play a role in transgressive localized movements of resistance today. As architecture historically reflects both the globalizing forces effecting a place and the technology

available to those citizens at that time¹, it is appropriate to examine the work of Douglas Cardinal. Part of the critique of globalization and technology is that our spaces are being transformed without our consent or participation. It is therefore logical to demonstrate an alternative possibility through one of the most static, rigid, and dominating forces of capitalism, architecture. Franklin's example of how the systemic racism inherent the American society was then built into the very design of the bridges in New York has already been pointed out. Through his consensual design method which reflects citizen's requirements and wishes, the works and methods of Douglas Cardinal presents a stark contrast to how the medium of architecture can be implemented in such a way that it involves people in the process.

As she is grounded in and actively involved in various social movements, the other example I will turn to is Dionne Brand. As a black, feminist, lesbian civil rights activist, she is centered in the collective movements of her community, and yet admits that she writes for herself at the local level. Her writing therefore clarifies how artists can assist in the articulation of a transformative practice, and

¹ These factors can be seen simply by looking at the technological advancements, tools, and shifting styles that are used in the architecture. Historiographers can use these methods to discern the level of external advancement or involvement in a given time.

commence a working dialogue involving social movements at the local level in Canada.

DOUGLAS CARDINAL: PUT THE MEANING BACK INTO SPACE

The most prominent component of Cardinal's architecture is his belief that public buildings must symbolize the aspirations of humankind and elevate the condition of the built environment to a level that reflects innate human dignity. He believes that each structure must symbolize mankind's respect for himself, for his community and for nature; each design must be conceived as a monument to our times and to our achievements. (<http://www.dcardinal.com/douglas.htm>)

... the sense of place has succumbed to the market force. The postmodern urban landscape imposes multiple perspectives which are wedded to economic power but also facilitate the erosion of locality and the archetypal place based community by market forces. The landscape then is made into the image of capital (Keith and Pile, *Place and the Politics of Identity*, Intro).

I will begin this section on the premise that the landscape does *not have to be* made into the image of capital and there are other possibilities that exist, a premise professed by the architect Douglas Cardinal, who emphasizes the relation between one's identity and the spaces through which identity is both produced and expressed.

Douglas J. Cardinal is a renowned Aboriginal architect who was born in Calgary, Alberta, in 1934. He studied architecture at both the University of British Columbia and the University of Texas, where he graduated in 1963. He first worked in Red Deer, Alberta where he eventually opened his own practice. Cardinal first gained a reputation from buildings he designed in his local area of Alberta, designs which

expressed his progressive methodology and personal vision. This methodology is grounded “through the rituals and celebrations of traditional Indian culture. Here he has come to know and accept the Indian relationship with the land which is the basis of that culture. It is a unity with the land which is not based on nationalism or concepts of property but on spirituality” (Melnik, 1977, 10). This is in stark contrast to the methodology critiqued in chapter one regarding technology and globalization. He gained instant international reputation for excellence for his design of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, Ontario.

Cardinal’s whole career has centred on his roots as an Aboriginal person in Canada, specifically that of the Plains Indians, with a contemporary adoption of modern technologies. One of his earliest completed works, the Guloien House in Sylvan Lake, Alberta (1967), was one of a series of commissions for social and educational facilities to serve the native peoples in north-western Canada. Besides expressing his aim of combining native tradition with modern practice, it also indicated his consistent social concern by the involvement of the client in the design process. Jeannette Armstrong points out that his buildings and the “process by which its aesthetic sensibilities are achieved through the blending of new and old ideas, man-made and natural source materials, through the use of new technology and

Native spiritual visioning, speaks eloquently as a magical metaphor of what can be" (Cardinal, 1991, 114). Further, Cardinal expresses an extremely strong critique of technology and the social and environmental ramifications that arise from it in that,

I have found that by placing the needs of the human being before the needs of the systems that modern man has created, we can ensure that man is served by these systems rather than becoming a slave to them... my work as an architect express my endeavours to better the human condition, in particular that of the native people (Boddy, 1989, 8).

This point summarizes his socially progressive approach to technology inasmuch as his words express his concern with becoming a "slave" to the hegemonic ideology which creates and supports further technological and globalizing expansion. He also expresses an alternative to this method. And perhaps most importantly, his words convey an alliance and concern with the politics surrounding the First Nations' peoples in Canada. This alliance is what grounds him in his local social movements. When he writes of placing the needs of the human being before those of the machine that man created, his words resonate with the notions of the critical theorists outlined in chapter one, especially with those of Ursula Franklin who urges us to negotiate our needs on our own terms.

Technological Expansion: "Mindless Growth"

It is clear how critical Douglas Cardinal is when it comes to the subject of technology. His worries become quite evident in all of his writing:

The present technology of the dominant society is a mindless growth spreading rampant across these beautiful plains. It pollutes and destroys the land. The dominant society, enslaved by its technology, has produced an environment that is not fit for man to stand on or grow in. The immigrant culture... has changed the land to fit an immigrant concept and to nurture an alien flora... We feel the dominant society that is not in control of the land is not a fit guardian of this life source. Its technology is transforming everything, destroying everything, because its people are ignorant of the subtle balances of nature (Boddy, 1989, 123).

The words "mindless growth" could summarize one of the most imperative themes of this thesis. "Mindless growth" must be curtailed, and replaced by meaningful dialogue and participation. Cardinal asserts that

technological society produces things without soul because its people do not have an essential experience. We remain objects as long as we remain distant, refuse to put ourselves into something. At the moment we do, we become subjective. This is soul and when the architect expresses soul, the building becomes a building for all men because soul is universal" (Melnyk, 1977, 27).

If the dominant society is enslaved by the technology and are not even aware of how it could possibly limit the possibilities, then how can it be aware of the "subtle balances of nature"?

As a result of these exceptionally strong critiques, Cardinal has approached every new project in a subjective fashion. He takes into

consideration not only both the location and the physical landscape of the area, but he also takes the people involved into consideration. When examining his idea of what the design should be - a school for example - he takes a philosophical approach to what learning is all about. In fact, "Cardinal has taken the form of the circle as the base of his architectural design... The circle in his buildings is the cycle of life, the wholeness of nature. The circle is balance, harmony, equality and unity" (Melnyk, 1977, 12). Thus Cardinal attempts to unite all of these aspects into the intricate details and design of his buildings. Instead of the linear designs in North American urban cities which, according to him, exploit people, he believes that they should be centers for culture, health, education and leisure, open to the whole community, and reflective of a subjective soul-filled environment (Melnyk, 1977, 27).

Locating Needs: The Consensus Process

His first major project, the St. Mary's Church in Red Deer, is representative of his approach. As his firm states that he believes that buildings should be an "eloquent expression of an institution's aspirations" (www.jcardinal.com), he first went to the church to get to know the congregation, and to locate their needs. He spent months talking with the people of the parish, discussing with them and the church leader what they expected from the new church.

He was constantly making new models to show them, to open discussion and possibilities. His discussions with the Priest involved various interpretations of the Bible, and how that could impact their space. This church is considered one of his best works, as he took into consideration both the physical landscape and the needs of the parish into its very physical design. The description of the church is as follows:

Upon entering St. Mary's church one feels the enveloping warmth of nature, as in the shell of a seashell. Warm, richly textured walls sweep in a spiral and the ceiling dips low over the altar, bathing a monolithic stone in light that seems truly divine. This altar, architecturally and liturgically, is the building's focal point -- a six-ton mass of local stone that still bears the rough scars of the quarry. Indigenous brick forms the work on the exterior as well. Workmen were instructed to tap the bricks slightly askew in order to impart a rough, monastic appearance to the structure. Every brick was carved to shape intricate junctions between parapets and walls, challenging the skill and mastery of its masons. The building demonstrates the surprising fluidity with which brick can be used as a sculpted medium (www.jcardinal.com)

Terms such as “undulating shells” are not uncommon when describing his buildings. Before he commences any project, he

attempts to foster a consensus between everyone involved for the vision of the project. According to his firm,

he gathers all those associated with the project into an open circle and urges them to develop visions of a space unique to their individual needs -- a humane architectural environment. These ideas are synthesized and moulded into a design that reflects the shared vision. As the building takes shape Cardinal repeatedly tests it against the original vision, which he holds as a sacred oath. The consensual process allows the firm to create extraordinary, fluid, and beautiful architecture, in harmony with its inhabitants, with the environment, and with the fabric of surrounding community.
(www.jcardinal.com)

This reflects a participatory dialogue and respect for the environment while at the same time *using technology to one's advantage*². It is this aspect of including the needs of the people and the theological meaning of the church that makes it stand out compared to many architectural designs today.

Reflections of Natural Forms

Grande Prairie Regional College is an example of how Cardinal reflects the physical external landscape in the very structure of the building. Trevor Boddy points out that, "Cardinal reworked the design from inside out and from outside in, taking into account the gently rolling landscape and the meandering course of Bear Creek.

Reflections of these natural forms were captured on the external walls,

² The construction of the roof alone forced his firm to become completely electronic and adopt the newest emerging technology available, becoming the first fully electronic firm of its kind in Canada.

then passed to shape partition walls within" (1989, 59). Once again, Cardinal studied the existing school, watching how the traffic of the student population flowed in an attempt to discern the possible needs of the students and staff. He then involved them in the design process by talking and meeting with them, and even though he did not have to, he had every department individually approve the plan for their section of the building.

Finally, Douglas Cardinal was given the opportunity to submit a proposal for the new Museum of Civilization in Hull, Québec, in 1983. Most people did not think that he had a chance to win the contract, as he had the lowest profile and the fewest connections (Boddy, 1989). Many people thought that he was there simply to represent the west and the First Nations community for political reasons. Fortunately, he won the competition.

Architecture in Dialogue with Landscape

It is well known that Cardinal ignored his background as a Métis for the first half of his life. It was not until he grew older that he began to learn from his roots, and in doing so, he became quite political. He worked within the native community in Alberta, and was involved in the new healing centers. He often participated in a sweat lodge, and built one near his house in Stoney Plain. He recognizes the

importance of creating and maintaining harmony with the land and with the First Nations Peoples. When it came time for the proposal for the Museum of Civilization, Cardinal came back to Stoney Plain from Ottawa and called his friends to prepare a sweat lodge. It was this experience that he attributes for inspiring him for the design of the museum as the layout, design, purpose and philosophy behind the whole museum came to him that night. Boddy explained that "Cardinal centres his life and architecture on the discipline of the sweat lodge, the lessons of the elders, and the quiet acknowledgment of the spirit that permeates the natural order" (Boddy, 1989, 85). Cardinal describes the museum as "being a true monument to our people. I went to the ceremonial lodge and I was given the vision. It is a vision of taking technology and creating something positive with it and maintaining my way of doing in it" (Cardinal, 1991, 112). This demonstrates how local identities can influence infrastructures as large as the museum.

The landscape around the museum plays an integral role in its design. Boddy describes it in the following fashion:

When viewed from the blinkered perspective of Ontario, Ottawa can seem a claustrophobic, cloistered place, but it reads entirely differently from across the river. On such a winter day, the layered limestone bluffs, the jagged tufts of winter trees, the channeled tectonics of the partly frozen river conspire to mute the ambitions of the buildings.... As it had so often before, the notion of creating, capturing, or revealing a landscape became the focus for Cardinal's design (Boddy, 1989, 85).

The idea of architecture being in *dialogue* with the landscape is an alternative view rarely practiced in Canada today. The importance of such an idea lies in the fact that such a "dialogue" could not help but reflect local desires and encompass local needs. To re-emphasize this, Cardinal speaks to his goal of reflecting nature in our buildings:

How to develop in harmony with nature. This is the paramount factor in planning and executing our vision of the human community. Our vision is in sympathy with the land and will be opposed by the short sighted and exploitive values of the dominant society. These models will testify to our indigenous concepts of living in harmony with our environment. We will use knowledge and technology compatible with our culture to contribute to our rebirth as a viable contributing group in society. The artificial environment we construct must reflect the natural world and be in sympathy with our heritage (Boddy, 1989, 116).

It is evident how he is attempting to work with his community, or the local community, for a larger good, to create a more cohesive sense of place for those living there. The point is that he wants to work *with* nature, not against nature, and succeeds at this despite the possible rigidities that are a tendency in such technologies like architecture. Trevor Boddy affirms this point by stating that "Cardinals' curvilinear planning is a reaction to the notions of universal space of mainstream

modern architecture. Cardinal promotes a reaction, perhaps an overreaction, to the lack of accommodation to the particular qualities of place and program implicit in the dominant design ideology of the twentieth century" (Boddy, 1989, 59). To demonstrate the factuality of such a statement all one must do is walk in any number of cities, in downtown Calgary for example. The rampant monologic designs in the city have caused a homogeneous downtown core, and generated a suburbia as well. The two reflect one another and not the beautiful landscape which surrounds Calgary. Furthermore, Cardinal's aforementioned critique of the idea of a "universal space" are extremely interesting insofar that the impossible ideal of a "universal space" reminds one of homogeneous culture, and the impossible "task of sameness".

The Organic Process

It has been said of Cardinal that never has "a Canadian architect so openly appealed to our national connection with the natural order, addressed himself squarely to the ghost of the wilderness that haunts our collective psyche" (Boddy, 1989, 95). It is important to study what Cardinal has to offer because he offers an alternative view. He learns from his history as "in the past Native Aboriginals of North America lived their lives in harmony with nature and their own nature. It was a way of thinking, a way of being...Their ways were to

understand human nature and the environment and their part in it" (Cardinal, 1991, 12). What is important is that Cardinal is critical of technology without being defeatist; he uses technology to his advantage in his practice and also uses it as a tool to bring life to his ideas and philosophies of how to treat the environment, and a human's role and responsibility towards the land. He is considered by many critics to be a revolutionary designer, incorporating his indigenous beliefs and technology into a new type of architecture which has been called "an organic process where the shape and form of each room is 'wrapped', around its function. Thus the building begins with the particular, with its individual functions, but develops into a complete organism"³. This holistic approach to architecture, and the consensual method which Cardinal uses, could revolutionize the places of Canada's spaces. In the "Introduction" to *Of the Spirit*, George Melnyk describes Cardinal's contributions as evolving "a radical new identity based on the land and a new equality between immigrant and native culture" (Melnik, 1977, 10). A methodology such as this could only empower Canadian citizens, as "it is the information society and the resources of the knowledge we have in living in harmony where we can fully contribute and achieve our full potential as human

³ To hear a more complete description of the "organic process" please go to the Douglas J. Cardinal website at <http://www.djcarchitect.com>. The firm's website goes into detail about the process, describing the evolution from "one cell" into a "matrix of rooms".

beings... It is the information society that is without the understanding necessary for us to achieve our full potential as creative beings" (Cardinal, 1991, 25). He is asking everyone to partake in that creativity in order to live in harmony with our environment. In 1993 he was commissioned to design the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and has just returned to Canada to work on new projects⁴.

⁴ Cardinal is now working out of his Ottawa office, and is involved in several new projects, including an Aboriginal college in Regina, Saskatchewan, and an Elder's and children's centre in Oneida, New York. The Museum of the American Indian is to be built on the last site available on the National Mall in Washington, DC., adjacent to the Capitol Building, and is dedicated to communicating the historical and contemporary culture and cultural achievements of the Native Peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The firm's selection was based on its extensive experience in working with aboriginal groups - in Canada, the US and abroad - toward consensual design of community development plans, cultural and education centres and housing. Unfortunately Cardinal is not able to finish the project due to contract and design disputes.

DIONNE BRAND

"Writer's mean to change the world"

In the middle of afternoons driving north
on 35, stopping for a paper and a coffee,
I read the terrifying poetry of newspapers. I
notice vowels have suddenly stopped their
routine, their alarming rooms are shut,
their burning light collapsed

*the wave of takeovers, mergers and restructuring
... swept the world's ... blue chips rally in New York
... Bundesbank looms... Imperial Oil increases dividends
... tough cutbacks build confidence*

Your mouth never opens to say all this.
The breathful air of words are taken. Swept, yes.
You feel your coffee turn asphalt, you look around
and your eyes hit the dirty corners of the windy store,
stray paper, stray cups, stray oil, stray fumes of gas.
Your mouth never opens, your keys look unfamiliar.

*is Microsoft a rapacious plunderer ... or a benign
benevolent giant ... rough road ahead*

Rough road ahead they say so I leave the gas
station, leaving the paper on the counter,
not listening to the woman calling me back,
my mouth full and tasteless

Dionne Brand, *Land To Light On* (1997), 13

COMMUNITY AS RESISTANCE

The defining purpose behind the work of Dionne Brand involves both the articulation and the encouragement of transformative narratives. She does this by expressing her strong critiques of a homogeneous Canadian culture through both creative and critical

works, both prose and poetry, using the beauty and eloquence of words as her weapon. Her writing pushes the boundaries of what is considered to be fiction or critical works; she merges the two in a way that teaches the reader without being didactic. She helps to clarify for the reader what she is concerned about using real terms in a poetic fashion which succeeds at hitting home as a realistic portrayal of Canadian society. Her work uses the full richness of language to name and to identify points of resistance.

It has been emphasized that art is an effective method of cultural and political transformation. To make the link with Dionne Brand's art, we might turn to a statement by the American poet-critic Rosemarie Waldrop who writes that poetry "has social relevance. It is not just an ornament or just private, an expression of personal emotions... It can make the culture aware of itself, unveil hidden structures. It questions, resists. Hence it can at least potentially anticipate structures that might lead to social change" (Waldrop, 1990, 47). This is an important point for those who believe that poetry, and perhaps even art in general, is only for purely emotional aesthetics. Brand's work proves such critiques wrong. As Brand herself says, "One thing you do not have to do at ... any writers' conference outside Canada is explain that writers mean to change the world" (1998, 91).

Dionne Brand is an excellent choice to explore these ideas for a number of reasons. First, as a black feminist lesbian critic, she is extremely grounded in social movements⁵. Second, although she has an international perspective and she sometimes writes of places other than Canada, she is highly local in her positioning. When she writes, her sense of space and place is often very strong, and sometimes shockingly real. Brand explains her strong spatial constructs by pointing to the fact that "where I come is incredibly physically beautiful; posed against that is incredible hardship... the imagery in the early part of your life is more sensual" (Daurio, 1998, 32). This imagery becomes infused in the contrast of the beauty and problems of Canada. What happens in creating such a sense of place is that the discrimination which is imbedded in the system or the place becomes quite apparent; in this way the place grounds the discrimination in very real terms which are easily identifiable due to their locality and their sense of place. One can identify with the facts through the familiarity of the description. One can also identify with the discrimination on strong personal terms as well. Third, Brand's writing is highly political. Although the subject of her writing does not exclusively focus on technology and globalization, her writing is in and

⁵ It must be noted however, that I am not attempting to turn Dionne Brand into a representative for one social movement or group in particular. It is not the author's place to assert any particular affiliations *per se*.

of itself a statement against the trends of passive homogenization and de-politicization inherent in the movements of globalization. Both articulating and encouraging transformative narratives are the most defining purpose behind the work of Dionne Brand.

Placed Political Action: "Bathurst was the site of new definitions "

Brand's essay "Bathurst", from *Bread Out of Stone* (1994), reveals that the locus of the Torontonion black civil rights movement was centered around the Bathurst subway station. Although the consciousness-raising in this particular essay is specifically centered in Toronto, it is a larger "local" international movement as well, local in meaning and local in affiliation⁶. She describes this site not simply as a subway station, but describes it in relation to the political relations that are a part of Toronto and Canadian society. This is an example of Lawrence Grossberg's notions of agency explored in chapter two, and the structural relations built-in any place. She writes that,

Bathurst Street was the centre of the Black community in Toronto. As soon as you got here, if you were an immigrant, you made the pilgrimage to Bathurst Street... They first took you to Bathurst and Bloor to locate you, your place, the point from which you would meet this country. And your relationship to it was clear since this was the only oasis of Blacks in the miles and miles to be learned of in the white desert that was the city. They took you here for you to get a sense of your new identity, the re-definitions you knew were coming but could never have anticipated though you had some sense when you

⁶ The Civil Rights movement in the United States is an example. The commonality in the movement, in that they were striving for black equality issues and general racial awareness, localizes them in political affiliation and philosophy.

gave yourself up to the journey that you'd emptied a place for them. Bathurst was the site of new definitions (Brand, 1998, 68-69).

This subway station is filled with political meaning, influenced by which ethnic groups live in the area, where it is placed in the city, and people's reaction to it if they are outsiders moving through it. Brand describes it not only in concrete physical terms, but also in terms of emotional and lived experience. She writes of living with racism because, "it is important to document those experiences... the book talks about the randomness of racism, the way it permeates this society, the way it's just ordinary, or how it's institutional, where there are practices that you can see" (Daurio, 1998, 33).. Brand reveals the meanings inherent in the places, such as the subway station, which become part of an alternative identity being constructed by those who visit it as a pilgrimage.

Localized Resistance: "Walking back into our naturals"

Brand describes simple physical acts of resistance, such as reverting back to African inspired clothing and hair, as "walking into our naturals" (1998 , 69). She explores these physical acts of resistance and asserts that, "the new political statements get made here in the way we cut our hair and cut ourselves a bright future against the pull of the dark suits and pale dresses the rest of the subway crowd offers. We can't stand drabness no matter what our

sex..." (Brand, 1998, 76). Their physical realities and small rebellions of dressing in bright colours and reverting to traditional African inspired hairstyles are acts of resistance against the homogenizing assimilating pressures of society since there is such a marked contrast between the two. She echoes the homogenizing voices when she asks,

And why can't we just assimilate, as the letters to the editors frequently demand, and why we mustn't, and why must we just hang around Bathurst Street wearing red with canary-yellow shoes and out-landish weaves, with purple and blue drop curls. We have a different sense of style. We can't tolerate the ordinary, it's too suffocating (Brand, 1998, 79).

Here homogenization is equated with suffocating. If they are not free to live as they normally would, celebrating their culture and heritage due to the pressure from the dominant society to be the same⁷, then that is suffocating one's spirit.

Brand constructs the subway station as a site of solidarity and/or resistance. She describes protests, handing out pamphlets, a place to meet people and create awareness, and a place where they could go and feel natural, strong and beautiful, despite the placement of being the "other" on the margin. By not giving in and whispering quietly, it is a place to fight racism, "So we're not going any place, and we're not melting or keeping quiet in Bathurst Subway or on Bathurst Street or

⁷ In a corporate commercialized society, it does not profit the big business to encourage difference. Being the "same" means that the company can save on production costs as they only have to make one of everything.

any other street we take over – Eglington, Vaughan, Marlee. If our style bothers you, deal with it. That's just life happening, that's just us making our way home" (Brand, 1998, 81). The site becomes a place where they can find some freedom in their identities, "home" meaning being free to be oneself.

Her last paragraph is full of hope: "It's a corner charged with the kind of keeping on that mixes luck and hope and resignation with the way things are going to be if you're Black in this city. And then there's a whole lot of virtuosity in just getting over" (Brand 81). Her positive tone reflects the possibility in a local site as a site for agency. This is because Brand recognizes the political structural relations in society which she and her community have to contend with. She enables the site to reveal the structures and then they articulate an alternative vision of their own making on their own terms.

In "Bathurst", Brand explains how *spaces* turn into *places*, thus renaming people's identities, despite the method in which those sites first came to be. She explains how the economy forced the Black community into one area, illustrating how the economy regulates our public spaces. In fact, it was the Canadian labour market which brought the black workers to Canada in the first place. But then, after being relegated to one corner of the

city, and after no one would give them places to live, they subverted the negative “space” and turned it into a positive place to be. Further, Bathurst gave “the feeling of common purpose, the intensity of new Black pride, the possibilities for justice and the joy in these” (1998, 27). Thus the delegation by white Toronto of the containment of the black community became subverted, and this containment in one space *became* a site of resistance in itself, the “site of new definitions” (1998, 28), and a new language. This reaffirms the earlier affirmations that social movements need articulation. Brand writes, “our new awareness needed affirmation in public display because we were waking up from the dead” (1998, 30). Brand elaborates on this affirmation: “more vibrant possibilities exist in the multitude of voices now emerging in this country. These voices see the imagination as transformative, as leading out of the pessimism of colonial discourse, as making new narratives...” (1998, 131). Both articulating and encouraging transformative narratives are the most defining purpose behind the work of Dionne Brand.

To fully understand Brand’s writing as an important counter-hegemonic dialogue in Canadian society, especially the “Bathurst” piece, one must put each piece into the context of her larger body of work. When comparing her other writing to this essay, one sees the

evolution, and perhaps hope, that still exists for Brand. In poetically transforming the blank space of a subway station, which could be like any other subway station, into a site of resistance, Brand is demonstrating her inherent belief *in* the local possibility of sites of resistance.

Homogenization: "have my skin taken off"

In much of her writing, Brand describes a Canada in which people are expected to check their identities at the door when entering the country. For example, in her second essay "Driving North, Driving Home" in *Bread out of Stone* (1998), she describes the landscape as a flat, uncontested terrain which could be in any place in North America where people are anonymous beings in a cold bland land. She describes her drive home north of Toronto:

Once you hit the highway, the city is like any city in Canada, or North America. You could be outside Winnipeg or Boston, the giant electric poles and the concrete obelisks of pharmaceutical manufacturers, head offices, factories, corporate plants and hotels are implanted there like scarabs feeding off a body, they clean out any sign of where you have been... They have a strange anonymity, you can't remember their names borne on large forgettable signs (Brand, 1998, 20).

This quote demonstrates many aspects of this thesis. First, Brand is revealing the resulting anonymity from the homogenization that is taking place in Canada. Second she is critiquing the fashion in which Corporate America has shaped our cities to be devoid of

humanity and identity and describes those corporate interests as scavengers, feeding off the citizenry, which echoes the critique of globalization outlined in Chapter One. Third, she opens the door for creating a new language of politics when saying their names are forgettable. As it was filled with colours and smells and foods and naming, her "Bathurst" essay is set in direct opposition to this description. She goes on to further describe her drive:

from this point you really see the forces pressing in on a city, not the unemployed and homeless but this zone of anonymous slabs of wires and concrete and steel, behind which executives and middle managers work telephone lines and microwaves. Words *like militarised, bottom-line, downsize* occur to you. You drive faster (Brand, 1998, 20).

Brand is expanding on her critique of both technology and the corporate interests which drive it. She questions how anything vegetative grows despite the cold snowy winters, and asks, is Canada a thriving, growing, welcoming, warm (even multicultural) country? She elaborates her critique of Corporate America, and states that the interests of the "Market" have become so taken for granted that people are not even aware how far reaching these interests lie. Brand describes the anonymity of each small town as being the same, devoid of individuality or humanness. Brand states that it is her "everlasting task to read the social landscape", to always be on the look out for the next attack of racism. One can easily see how Brand reveals the hidden structures and

hegemony that exist in Canada through the spatial landscape she is describing.

The book is filled with references to the homogenizing trends of Canada: "I am black and you are white, I must have my skin taken off then in order to be like you" (1998, 31), or "This absent presence is at the core of Canadian identity, a whole set of people relegated to a present past. An emptying out of the past then, both physical and mental, seems to be crucial to the concept" (1998, 139). The homogenization of Canada is everywhere, a point made all the more salient when she writes that "all immigration is seen as fleeing a horrible past/place and arriving gratefully at an unblemished present/place" (Brand, 1998, 138). In turn, Canada presents itself "as an alluring historyless place" (Brand, 1998, 138). She continues,

at least not a place charged with a similarly hostile history... One is supposed to empty oneself of the past/place and fill oneself with the present/place – 'Canadianness'. And while that prospect might be convenient for some of us fleeing some personal domestic crisis... we are not in control of it all and we come full of ourselves – who we were and are and will become... The emptying out that this notion of 'Canadianness' or the cultural archetype requires is not only impossible but seems to me undesirable and unnecessary because it renders the society we enter also empty of the creativity, knowledges, imaginings, dreamings, life experiences that enhance human beings (Brand, 1998, 138).

One key element of this entire discussion has been just revealed.

Brand states that white Canadians when coming to Canada

wanted to leave their history and identity behind, while with black immigrants this was not necessarily so. The homogenization revealed in her description of Canada really represents Canadians' sense of space: that of the space of Canada being *empty*. The fathers of Canada always considered the Canadian landscape to be empty, without history, without people, without a story. The land in Canada was to be taken and used for resources and sold as if it was empty⁸. According to Brand, this philosophy is still solidly in place.

Not to mention that it occurs to me that white people migrated to Canada for different reasons than Black people, and there we might find the irreconcilable nature of our encounter... by the time we hit this moment white people were flying out of their history and Black people toward theirs. It might be necessary for white Canadians to eschew their past, running from ethnic wars in Europe, ethnic hierarchies and poverty. For them the romance of making a new life without the past is compelling so the idea of a Canadian – something to be filled in ready-made with a flag and an anthem and no discernible or accountable past... – appeals to white Europeans needing an empty space, a space without painful history, a past antiseptic and innocent... their interest would coalesce in the desire for a pristine and forgetful nation. Black people on the other hand.... do not wish to run from our history but to recover it; our history is to us redemptive and restorative; inasmuch as it binds us in a common quest for a balm for that pain. (1998, 37)

While this is a lengthy quote, this is an essential element in the discussion. This idea explains part of the homogenization she

⁸ The Aboriginal peoples in Canada are still fighting this imagery and myth, which is part of the reason the very term "First Nation's Peoples" came into popular use: to remind people that they are the first peoples of Canada. This whole concept was more completely explored in the next previous section by Douglas Cardinal, and also in Chapter two by the article by Richard Cavell.

speaks of, and perhaps it explains the corporate methodology (or lack thereof). It is simply that "Canada is not (and cannot ever claim to be) a homogeneous culture" (1998, 137), and that includes both the people and the spaces. They are not empty, they are not devoid of identity, or history, or story. Thus the two factors at play here are the homogenizing of peoples identities and the homogenizing perspective of the land.

Echoing hooks, Brand believes that they must write these stories and narratives in order to counter-act the homogenization that is taking place, and to reassert the positive aspects of their identity. Growing up, she could not read of other black positive role models or experiences as they were,

awfully misrepresented, stereotyped, so flat and thing, and always at service of white characters. If countries of Black people were talked about, they were represented in colonial and derogatory terms. People need their lives to be elucidated, spoken about, and it struck me that that life that I had known was pretty beautiful, so why couldn't I write it down? (Daurio, 1998, 32).

Therefore Brand is now attempting to change the homogenization that she sees surrounding her in different medias by writing down their stories.

Responsibility: "I clearly have a purpose"

It is unmistakable that Brand feels a sense of responsibility towards her community, which parallels the architectural poetics of Douglas Cardinal. She says,

I clearly have a purpose [in my writing]... Even if you think you're not writing politically, you are in some way contributing to the making of the culture that we're in.... But I'm not a social worker; I'm not an advocate for something that I'm not a part of. I believe that history, and the history of the people that I come from, is important, and that it is important to rewrite that history in a way that saves our humanity... As a woman, as a lesbian, I have to redeem my life every day, in a society that thinks I should lead an existence that's second class (Daurio, 1998, 34).

She feels that the rewriting of history is her responsibility, and that she "did not want to write poems/about stacking cords of wood, as if the world/is that simple, that quiet is not simple or content/ but finally cornered and killed. I still need the revolution" (Brand, 1997, 7). Part of that rewriting of history consists of creating a different language as well, as language is imbedded with the voice of the dominant society. bell hooks affirms that there is possibility for counter-hegemonic practice in the recognition that language itself is "also a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance" (hooks, 1991, 146).

As the title of her book of poetry *No Language is Neutral* reveals, Brand believes that language reveals the structures of society, and therefore she wants to reclaim a language that "contains the

resistances to how that language was made, because that language was made through imperialism, through the oppression of women. As women and as peoples of colour we write against that language. The more power we acquire to speak and act and so on, the more we change that language" (Daurio, 1998, 37). Her poetry reflects this in such lines as "My mouth could not find a language. I find myself instead" (Brand, 1997, 5), or "Is steady trembling I trembling when they ask me my/ name and say I too black for it. Is steady hurt I feeling/ when old talk bleed.../calling Spadina *Spadeena*/ until I listen good for what white people call it" (Brand, 1990, 29). In this poem, which is set against Spadina street in Toronto, she is writing "the talk" of the immigrant, and outlining the racism she feels by saying that she is "too black" for her own name even, which suggests that her people remain nameless without a story and perhaps not even worthy of her own name. Brand ends the poem with the statement that she doesn't even really exist in this ugly land. Charlotte Sturgess states that Brand's "poetry and her prose actively seek to problematize those perceptions of race, gender and sexuality which continually reject the Other to the margins in order to reproduce a white, heterosexual, phallic 'centre... for writing for Brand is centered on the release from oppression" (Sturgess, 1999,202). Brand accomplishes that by interrogating her cultural spaces.

In conclusion, it becomes plain that Dionne Brand and Douglas Cardinal are both optimistic that more citizens will become directly involved in shaping our culture and society. To this end, they have chosen to commence their dialogue with the transformative possibility that is inherent in art, a possibility which is reflected in how their creative endeavours illustrate *the real political possibilities in the local as a site of resistance*. The point is that they both recognize that small acts of resistance can make a difference, even if those acts do nothing but open a dialogue and challenge the status quo.

CHAPTER FIVE

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

In a democratic society such as Canada's, many people take freedom for granted. I argue that the majority of Canadian citizens do not consider that the civic structures which govern our culture and society also act as hegemonic controls which define and limit our choices for us. Using the same logic that makes such technological expansion and infrastructures so difficult to change, the bridge being an example, these ideological structures are equally as difficult to change, especially if the average citizen is not aware that they exist in the first place. For example, many citizens would not consider how the systematic racism inherent in our society limits the freedom of certain segments of the population. Most would not consider the constant sexism which is still prevalent, as seen through recent studies on the uneven employment salary comparison between males and females, despite years of education, research, and employment equity programs, to actually *limit* women's freedom. And many would not consider recent technological innovations that are *supposed* to make our days easier, as in fact limiting our freedom due to the discursive power regimes that are necessary in order to implement these

infrastructures in the first place, which in turn act as governing mechanisms¹.

But what happens when one begins to think outside of these parameters and question cultural ideology? What happens when one starts to analyze various societal infrastructures, and begins to challenge the status quo? What happens when one challenges the meaning behind our signifying practices, our very culture, which according to Ursula Franklin, really only consist of an *agreed upon system of practices, symbols and values*? What happens when one decides one does not want to conform to these “agreed upon system of values” any longer, but wants to live a different sort of reality? Is it possible? What are the ramifications of civil disobedience? Would chaos ensue? Are people truly “free” to do as they wish? I would argue that yes, they are: but within certain limits. We are all expected to follow a certain code of conduct, to avoid breaking any laws, to avoid slandering, to not avoid harming another individual. But what about taking this inquiry one step further? How does one go about challenging the status quo in our society, and how does one change our signifying practices if one does not agree with them, or is not satisfied with the status quo any longer? How does one identify the hegemonic forces at play in society if they are for the most part silent

¹ Georg Simmel’s “Bridge and Door” from *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1994, is an example.

forces of power, unsaid methods of conduct, and assumed “rules of the game”? If it is unsaid in the upper echelons of society that visible minorities are not welcome, and not considered for certain employment positions, does a visible minority really have “free” access to all levels of society? How does one change these practices?

The most important element in this discussion surrounding civil disobedience is that of *choice*. For instance, a visible minority does not really have a full range of possibilities to choose from when on a job search. That choice has been taken away from him or her by a racist mindset and the fact that those upper echelons of society hold the power to make those decisions. Ursula Franklin’s story of systemic racism being implemented in the infrastructures of society through the creation of a bridge is an excellent example of how choices can be limited and how full freedom and participation in a society can be blocked. The other element that is equally important as choice is *awareness*. If African-Americans were not aware that the bridge was designed in such a discriminatory fashion, they would not be able to do anything about it, and protests could not happen until well after the fact. Awareness and choice put together can create *more* freedom for the citizen. First the citizen must be made aware of the possibilities and then they must have choices to determine for themselves what are their needs and wants.

The role of the artist is precisely that of creating awareness, and thus opening up the possibilities of choice. The important issue here is that artists can provide awareness and choice for others – first for those in their immediate community, and through them for others. It must be reiterated: many artists are themselves *choosing* an alternative lifestyle other than the status quo that exists in Canadian society. They have decided to live in a different fashion with different goals than many citizens. Some artists are emphasizing the value they place in their local spaces, their local community, and their lifestyle which is based on respect for the environment and conservation, not material goods and a consumer lifestyle. The other ingredient is in the creation of public *awareness* of an alternative possible method of living and value system. It has already been established that artists can be more ‘aware’ than the majority of the population; the crucial step is for the artist to share that awareness with the public in an effort to educate the public and offer acceptable alternatives. They are not creating one ideal of an alternative, as that would be just as destructive as the hegemonic control that exists already. Instead, they are articulating a multiplicity of alternatives based on respect, awareness and choice.

POWER

As previously illustrated, social movements of resistance need articulation to create awareness. Social movements are trying to create awareness about an alternative to the dominant ideologies at play, whether forces of technological expansion, or the corporatist consumer ideology encouraged by huge multinational corporations. It has been argued that these corporations and these technological advancements are not always made with the approval and/or awareness of all segments of the population. This alludes to the fact that certain segments of the population do not possess the *power* to control their spaces. Michel Foucault provides a useful definition of power:

... power is apt to lead to a number of misunderstandings – misunderstandings with respect to its nature, its form, and its unity. By power, I do not mean “Power” as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body... It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization;... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society (Foucault, 1978, 92).

Foucault clarifies that what we are discussing is “a complex strategical situation” in society. He is acknowledging that there will always be strategical situations set up in society, and that it is certain segments of the population or organized groups who are better able to mobilize their power. These distinctions are helpful in avoiding a simplistic dualism of “evil corporate multinationals” and “good activists”.

Everyone in a given society will be placed somewhere within the strategical situation. Foucault goes on to explain how power is a positive force which everyone has inherently:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (Foucault, 1979, 194).

Accordingly, while I argue that there is a dominant ideology at play relaying a certain status quo to which people are expected to conform, Foucault suggests that it is not necessarily a dominant group in society who has power, but that everyone has power; it is just certain segments are utilizing that power for their advantage. He explains that, “In short this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the ‘privilege’, acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions – an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated”

(Foucault, 1979, 26). What becomes clear is that these 'strategic positions' are reinforced by the spatial affects of these positions. In other words, the dominant class shapes space and public places, and that in turn reinforces their dominance and their place in the power dynamic. Edward Soja in *Thirdspace* reinforces this argument:

Hegemonic power, wielded by those in positions of authority, does not merely manipulate naively given differences between individuals and social groups, it actively produces and reproduces difference as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division that are advantageous to its continued empowerment and authority... In this sense, hegemonic power universalizes and contains difference in real and imagined spaces and places (Soja, 1996, 87).

First, this quote echoes Dionne Brand's critique of the danger intrinsic in the dominant ideology which attempts to universalize, and thus homogenize culture to its own advantage. Second, this demonstrates that physical spaces also reinforce social spaces *and* cultural politics of identity; thus, politics surrounding space and the cultural politics of difference should not be separated. It is important to remember Foucault's point that everyone has power, that resistance can make a difference *spatially as well as socially*. Foucault reiterates this idea regarding the multiplicity of resistances:

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it,...the strictly relational character of power relationships... their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance; these play the role of

adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network (Foucault, 1978, 95).

This is the link to “articulation” as explained in Chapter Two. Social movements of resistance need articulation to create awareness of alternatives, which will always be changing depending on the local spatial needs and shifting time. Foucault sees this articulation as a positive force, and the site where power can be attained.

Foucault’s “multiplicity of differences” enriches bell hooks’ argument, and legitimizes her stance on the margin. She writes that:

marginality is much more than a site of deprivation; in fact I was saying just the opposite, that it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance. It was this marginality that I was naming as a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose – to give up or surrender as part of moving into the center – but rather of a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternative, new worlds. (hooks, 1991, 150).

This quote is important in many ways. First, it reinforces Foucault’s point that power is always both a positive and a negative force. Places on the margin were originally seen as a place where one was subjugated, or dominated by those in hegemonic control. hooks, however, now sees that place as a space of resistance, insofar that she is turning that *space* into a positive *place* of power. Second, hooks is drawing the parallel between political change and counter-hegemonic

discourse and the physical realities of individuals through the “habits of being”. Edward Soja most clearly makes the connection:

Power – and the specifically cultural politics that arise from its workings – is contextualized and made concrete, like all social relations, in the (social) production of (social) space. As Michel Foucault has argued, these links between space, knowledge, power, and cultural politics must be seen as both oppressive and enabling, filled not only with authoritarian perils but also with possibilities for community, resistance, and emancipatory change. (Soja, 1996, 86-87)

The link between space and the cultural politics of difference is further reinforced when Soja writes that resistance is changing: the margin as an effective site of resistance is a legitimate and powerful choice. He asserts that

“Those who are territorially subjugated by the workings of hegemonic power have two inherent choices: either accept their imposed differentiation and division, making the best of it; or mobilize to resist, drawing upon their putative positioning, their assigned “otherness,” to struggle against this power-filled imposition” (Soja, 1996, 87).

Both hooks and Soja points out that one can take the labels and the stance of those in the dominant discourse and use them to ones advantage. Those on the periphery can even use the dominant language of the “other” (thus on the margin, outside the central discourse), and recreate it in their own context for their own use. Soja elaborates on this, writing that “[these] choices are inherently spatial responses, individual and collective reactions to the ordered workings of power in perceived, conceived, and lived spaces” (Soja, 1996, 87).

Thus, people can actually *live* their resistance in creating an alternative spatial response to the dominant ideology in mainstream discourse. All of the artists examined in this discussion are examples of “lived resistance”.

There is one other aspect to the “resistance and emancipatory change” which Soja mentions, strengthening Foucault’s argument, especially in light of the fact that the Artists in their Environment are not politically involved in only one social movement, such as battered women for example. What are the ramifications of the “multiplicity of resistances” that abound in society? Foucault affirms that “indeed it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together. We must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable” (Foucault, 1978, 100). Therefore, while social movements might have various goals based on their specific needs or levels of awareness, their emancipatory discourse does not have to be “stable” or continuous to create change or have power. In fact, Foucault seems to suggest that we should embrace these power relations and use them to our advantage:

Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests... We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the

correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, not any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1979, 27)

Consequently, when all of the artists are educating and creating awareness about alternative lifestyles, choices, politics and ethos of living, they are creating and using knowledge, thus power.

RADICAL SUBJECTIVITY

The “emancipatory discourse” of social movements is based on articulation and language, which brings this discussion to Soja’s thoughts on “radical subjectivities”. The meaning behind the term radical subjectivity suggests both pushing the boundaries of social thought and dominant discourse, through agency. Here the subject in subjectivity is defined by language, which in turn encompasses all facets of identity, a dialogic approach to identity, including a multifaceted definition of identity in which there are a whole host of factors comprising what we mean of identity. Instead of looking at just one facet of an individual, there are a whole set of factors which contributes to the subjects “subjectivity”; factors like race, gender, class, place, locale, environment, historical time and language. The subject is seen as a “constellation” which is constantly in flux and change, not unlike language itself. Radical subjectivity is very important to this discussion, as it links the power of agency and identity together through language. And for Soja’s purposes, this is

done through the critical writings of bell hooks through a prism of space.

For hooks, the political project is to occupy the (real and imagined) spaces on the margins, to reclaim these lived spaces as locations of radical openness and possibility, and to make within them the sites where one's radical subjectivity can be activated and practiced in conjunction with the radical subjectivities of others. It is thus a spatiality of inclusion rather than exclusion, a spatiality where radical subjectivities can multiply, connect, and combine in polycentric communities of identity and resistance; here 'fragmentation' is no longer a political weakness but a potential strength: the spatiality searched for but never effectively discovered in modernist identity politics. (Soja, 1996, 99).

Thus this sense of radical subjectivity is finding its voice and outlet *through* the means of spatial politics. That is a counter hegemonic discourse enunciated in and through spatial realities; this political project is based on the margins or lived realities. These spatially centered lived realities are based on inclusion. This brings one back to chapter two, in which it was argued that it is through spatial politics that Canadian politics can find cohesion; it is one of the only arenas left in which fragmentation is accepted as reality, and which there are ways to build around. In fact, the fragmentation of identities is a given when discussing spatial politics. Identity politics has, in its attempt to build a politics of inclusion, too often excluded. Soja's point elucidates this idea, inasmuch as, "radical subjectivities can multiply, connect, and combine in polycentric communities of identity and resistance; here 'fragmentation' is no longer a political weakness but a

potential strength: the spatiality searched for but never effectively discovered in modernist identity politics" (Soja, 1996, 99).

Yet the question remains: how does civil disobedience, the freedom to choose, and radical subjectivity work together? The definition of civil disobedience would echo Ursula Franklin's definition of culture: a socially accepted code of norms, practices and universally accepted notions of symbols within a culture. What happens when one member of society chooses to refrain from socially accepted and expected activities? This is where the term freedom comes into play. The question arises: is one individual truly free to do as one wishes when one considers not abiding by these culturally accepted traditions? What happens when members of that society begin to challenge and attempt to change the rules?

The political motivation behind such actions is where radical subjectivity comes into play. The Artists in their Environment, Douglas Cardinal, and Dionne Brand are all expanding their own horizons of expectation, and thus those for their larger community and culture, which are in turn attempting to change the rules that govern society. The key lies in the fact that civil society must remain in flux, a fluid constellation of assorted narratives and open voices, in which all members of society have an opportunity to express both their needs and desires for that society, thereby effecting change in the governing

institutions and dominant ideologies at play. Adrienne Rich's words on poetry and politics remind one that these elements must work together: "The poet today must be twice-born. She must have begun as a poet, she must have understood the suffering of the world as political, and have gone through politics, and on the other side of politics she must be reborn again as a poet" (Rich, 1993, 21). The poet expresses what she sees through the politics. The question then for the citizenry is what to do with those expressions and alternative narratives? The responsibility, once they have an element of awareness and choice, then lies in the hands of the citizen, for as Foucault wrote, everyone has power.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Thus my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others (Taylor, 1994, 34).

Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition"

What are the ramifications of acknowledging and interrogating the super-structures which govern and affect all aspects of our lives? It is clear that the dynamics of technology and power are shifting in both the national and the global setting. It is for this reason that it is so imperative for citizens to become involved and participate in the future dialogue of Canadian space.

It is my argument that the local is the basis of Canadian's sense of national identity, and in fact it is these local sites of identification which help Canada survive and thrive in this postmodern globalized age. It is in acknowledging the power of local movements of resistance that one can use these forces in a positive manner, strengthening the ties that bind Canadians and the unity that we call Canada, for a, "Lack of unity does not mean the absence of a certain unity" (Maffesoli, 1991, 12). This returning to the particular can be a positive force, which is perhaps what Charles Taylor was referring to in

the "The Politics of Recognition". It is the place where citizens can combat the homogenization of Canadian society in a global world order. It is where Canadians may find their strength.

Not only do the power structures in place intrinsically shape space, but as well, "the character of the 'space myths' that come to prevail...expresses the differential social power of those who shape them." (Shields, 1997, 399). In other words spaces reveal the power dynamic in place and in particular our view of spaces.

The question remains how to achieve a return to the particular and local? Perhaps the creation of a sense of "Homeplace" which bell hooks describes is a positive, progressive movement. hooks reveals "homeplace" as the following:

Historically, African-American people believed that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous,... had a radical political dimension.... one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist... We could not learn to love or respect ourselves in the culture of white supremacy on the outside, it was there on the inside, in that 'homeplace',... that we had the opportunity to grow and develop, to nurture our spirits (hooks, 1991, 42)

Creating a "homeplace" for Canadians could perhaps give them the strength to fight the hegemonic discourse. hooks firmly believes that in this homeplace, "we can regain lost perspective, give life new meaning. We can make homeplace that space where we return for renewal and self-recovery, where we can heal our wounds and become

whole" (hooks, 1991, 49), perhaps regaining perspective in the face of the "mindless growth" that Douglas Cardinal writes of. hooks asserts that it is time for an intervention, and that people must choose the margin as a site of resistance in order to counteract the central domination that has a grip on our public narratives, for she believes that the margin is "a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/colonizer. Marginality as site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. Enter that space" (hooks, 1991, 152).

Soja calls the placement of a restructured notion of "otherness" on the margin a subversion of the hegemonic means of control through difference and division by revealing these social and spatial structures and creating a new, "basis for a new cultural politics of multiplicity and strategic alliance among all who are peripheralized, marginalized, and subordinated by the social construction of difference." (Soja, 1996, 93). Douglas Cardinal also voices this critique of division by dominant society, although his words are placed in the physical spatial division of land, arguing that the, "'ego-man" or "whiteman's knowing" is "not holistic... It's main attribute is domination through division... The goal of this immigrant culture is power over nature" (Melnyk, 1977, 13). It is so imperative to recognize the,

spatial construction of difference as a means of producing and reproducing systematic patterns of domination, exploitation, and subjection as socially constructed, context-specific "technologies" of power... these binary structures become subject to social and cultural transformation via a politics of identity and a radical subjectivity that builds upon the empowerment of the 'subaltern' against the 'hegemon' (Soja, 1996, 90)

Therefore, to take bell hooks arguments a further step, once this recognition of the spatial construction of division has taken place, it is at that point that a formation of a new narrative can take place. It is that narrative and dialogic discourse in which a new spatial response may find power and voice.

Perhaps in reaction to all of these ideas we should turn once again to the words of Douglas Cardinal, who believes that it is our personal responsibility to find a voice and participate in the processes that formulate our country. He writes that, "creativity is our responsibility, our purpose. One empowers oneself to do the impossible. The more impossible the more creative" (Cardinal, 1991, 69). In closing then, the move towards a multiplicity of resistances through creativity perhaps is one way to take empowering responsibility.

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Appendix

Reid McLachlan, "Murder in the Sunflowers"

Marie-France Nitski, "Life on Planet Endangered"

Figure 2

Shawn McNevin, "Communication"

Figure 3

Shawn McNevin

Figure 4

Beccy Mason

Figure 5